

## Creating Alignment with the Leadership Team Part 4

By Harold Chapman

### EMBRACING THE TOTAL SYSTEM

Last month we covered the principle of Customer Intimacy. This principle states we must consider the next process in the flow of value as the customer, and we must determine how much responsibility a support group has to support that value added flow.

This month we will cover the principle of Embracing the Total System in which we continually examine each part of the organization to determine how each unit interacts with and affects an event, situation, or problem. We strive to ensure that changes in one part of the organization do not negatively affect other parts of the organization. This idea is opposed to functional thinking. Functional thinking divides and isolates. This creates waste, conflict, and inefficiency. There are no isolated, autonomous systems; every system affects every other system.

Below is a comparison of Functional View vs. a Systems View:

#### ✘ Functional View:

- ✘ View things in a vacuum
- ✘ Value stimulation, highs/lows crises
- ✘ Manage events and things independently
- ✘ Separate people and isolate for control
- ✘ Functional cause and effect only
- ✘ Individual performance valued at expense of system
- ✘ Drive with fear, become risk averse

#### ✘ Systems View:

- ✘ Things understood in context
- ✘ Value harmony, stability, balance
- ✘ Manage relationships and fit
- ✘ Bring people together into teams
- ✘ Appreciate multiple factors
- ✘ System performance outweighs individual performance
- ✘ Create safe environment for change

Figure 1: Systems View Contrast

### INTERDEPENDENCE

An organization is much more like an orchestra than a bowling league. Thus, an organization must be run with an understanding of the interdependencies. An example of a violation of Embracing the Total System is incentivizing different parts of the business with contradictory goals. For example, we measure the producers of the product on the amount the producer produces or we measure the services offered on the value of the services offered. We also measure the quality department on the quality of the products or services being delivered. The producers want to ship everything, and the quality department doesn't want to ship anything. What if we



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incentivize sales and the Sales Group sells many products that are on the edge of the company’s product portfolio, ensuring that our delivered costs are too high to make a profit? Or, what if we incentivize purchasing on purchased material variance, ensuring that the materials come from low cost countries at the expense of lead time, quality, and responsiveness? Can you see how this can cause a conflict? Have you ever seen this in your organization?

## ALIGNMENT

Having the entire team focused in the right direction can help the team work smarter and not harder. The graphic below demonstrates the effects of having a misaligned team as compared to one that is unified. In the first condition (Working Hard, Misaligned), many forces pull on the organization. The net effect is that the organization can’t move upward. Upward (in this case) is toward True North (Ideal Condition). The second condition (Working Harder, Misaligned), we have the organization putting more effort toward moving toward True North, but failing to remove the other forces acting upon the organization. The net effect is a slight move toward True North, but that movement can’t be sustained. In the third condition (Working Smart, Aligned), we have removed the things that are distracting (left to right) and directionally incorrect (those items pulling us away from True North). The net effect is the team has much more upward momentum without having to add more effort.

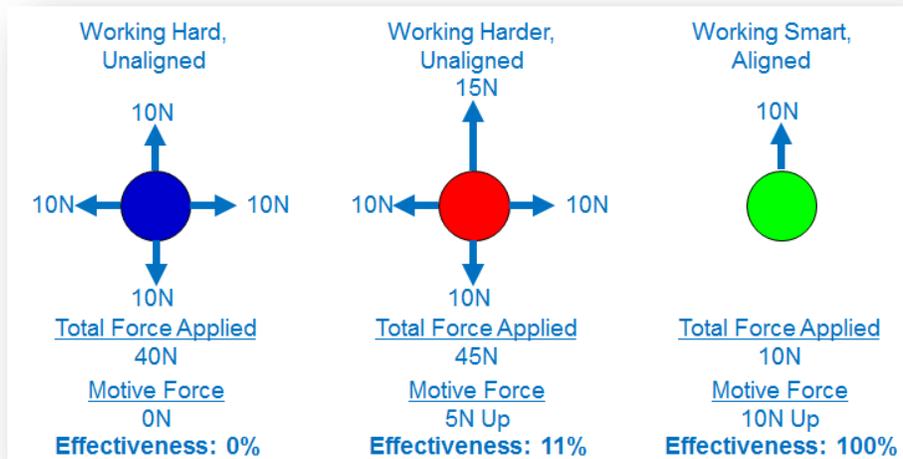
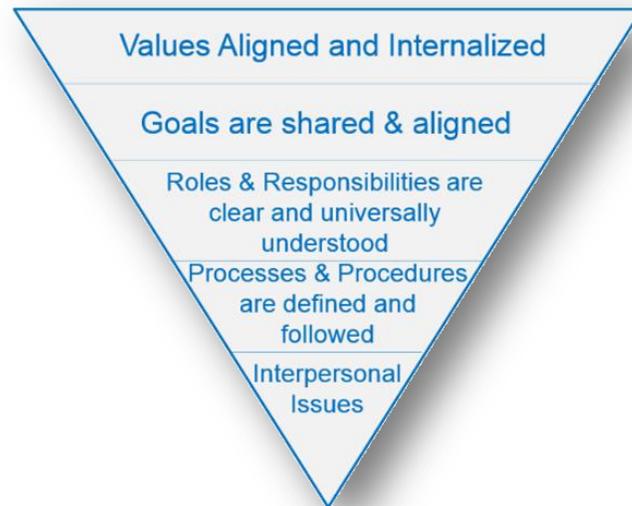


Figure 2: Organizational Force Field Diagram

## WORK FROM THE TOP DOWN

Another symptom of not having the team Embrace the Total System is “Interpersonal Conflict.” The graphic below is called the GRPI (grip-ē) model. It isn’t called VGRPI, since we added the “Values Aligned and Internalized” after the model was created to show the importance of the WHY. The most engaged people in your organization work for you, not because of WHAT you do. They work for you because of WHY you do it. You will notice that “Interpersonal Issues” is at the bottom of the inverted pyramid. Our experience tells us that “Interpersonal Issues” are rarely the cause of organizational dysfunction. It is more often a result of failing to have the items shown higher up in the diagram of the pyramid. We teach that we should work from the top down. The thought is that if your team has shared and aligned goals, clearly defined and universally understood roles and responsibilities, and processes and procedures which are defined and followed, the interpersonal issues will be manageable.





**Figure 3: GRPI Model**

Does your team Embrace the Total System? Is your team “Working Smart” vs. “Working Hard?” Are your team’s goals shared and aligned? If you answered NO to any of these questions, Drive Inc. can help. We have experienced professionals who can coach your team through the process of gaining alignment around this principle and all of the other principles. For a no-obligation introduction meeting, please contact Paul Eakle at [paul.eakle@driveinc.com](mailto:paul.eakle@driveinc.com) or 865-323-3491. Stay tuned for next month’s newsletter when we will discuss the next principle to ensure your leadership team is aligned.

