



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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Creative Managers

Managers need to develop R-mode thinking, which is more popularly known as right-brain thinking. A balanced mix from both sides of the brain, however, is needed for effective management of modern organizations.

Here are a few steps crucial for R-mode thinking:

Notice. Noticing is about paying close attention to various facets and meanings of a problem. The idea is to learn to temporarily suspend sensory shortcuts that can lead to "snap" judgments by visually "surfing" over many elements. Lingering over detail and complexity allows complicated issues to be reframed and addressed more effectively.

Subtle representation. Subtle representation concerns the ability to portray what has been noticed with nuance, detail and accuracy. It makes managers conscious of when and how symbolic shortcuts are employed in representing reality.

Fluid perspective. This is based on the idea that appearances depend upon a point of view and that appearances change with time. Multiple artistic renderings are gained from different points of view. A dynamic process must be observed from a variety of perspectives over a period of time. At General Motors, where the R-mode approach is extensively used to solve problems, teams are asked to create images of what they perceive as complex situations from different perspectives over time. This process involves pencil and paper-drawing representations of the situations as perceived by the mind's eye.

The ensuing dialogue to interpret the drawings enables knowledge sharing and sparks a new, unifying point of view.

Personalizing work: Though work requires employees to leave their avocations at home, aesthetic competencies are most exercised in avocations and interests. Employees exhibit better creative leadership through personalizing work and allowing their artistic gifts to spill over into their jobs. They thus bring more of their personal knowledge and experience to bear on the complexities of work life.

Skeptical inquiry: A disciplined use of intuition and imagination to address complex challenges requires thoughtful skepticism. Skeptical inquiry is about cultivating doubt, uncertainty, disagreement, criticism and alternative ideas to add insight and energy to a collaborative process. This skill reconciles the left-brain and right brain thinking. It permits people to retain their critical analytical thinking while developing and applying "what if?" R-mode thinking.

Star model: In the star model, members of a discussion group represent points of a star. Each member contributes to the center of the star. Creative tension is thus channeled radically between each member and the idea in the center. This procedure helps the group to respectfully preserve, explore and reconcile various viewpoints.

Portray paradoxes, conflicts and the unknown: Any challenge in an organization contains tensions, apparently incompatible parts and even some mysteries. Representing the



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problem through artistic activities allows images and ideas to evolve over time and shows development or movement among the elements. Going deeper and understanding assumptions and underlying forces is part of this evolution.

By tapping into organizational concerns with the tools of the artist, managers unleash not just their own creative powers, but also the collective creativity of their teams.