THINK-ASSESS-DESIGN: A MODEL FOR REDESIGNING
TRADITIONAL ORGANIZATIONS INTO
EMPOWERED WORK ENVIRONMENTS

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

Sandra Kay Richardson

Denton, Texas

May, 1996
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"Think-Assess-Design" is a model for guiding traditional organizations through the steps necessary to redesign themselves into a more empowered, team-based work environment. Three broad steps--think, assess, and design--provided the framework for organizational change in this case study. "Thinking steps" involved the preliminary action steps taken by the steering committee charged with overseeing this large scale redesign. This phase included the systematic thinking, planning, and decision making that was required to get the change effort off the ground. "Assessment steps" involved the diagnostic activities this organization used to guide the direction for change. This included an assessment of the organization's readiness for change, the roadblocks that may prohibit success, and the general culture and climate of the organization. "Design steps" included the activities of four pilot design teams as they worked through a sociotechnical redesign process to completely reinvent their work areas. Like a triple helix, these three broad steps intertwined to transform a highly traditional organization into an empowered work structure.
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CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW: TRANSITIONING FROM

TRADITIONAL TO TEAM BASED

The question for traditionally structured organizations, is no longer whether or not they should change; but rather, in what way will organizational changes unfold? In truth, traditionally structured organizations have almost become an anachronism in today’s business environment (Pinchot & Pinchot, 1993). There are several reasons for this.

First, traditional "bureaucratic" organizations were designed for relatively stable and predictable environments. Today however, environmental uncertainty is the norm (Pasmore, 1994). Not only is technology changing so fast that "state-of-the-art" is a moving target, but global competition, ownership turmoil, and legal changes such as deregulation are creating even more uncertainty (Nadler & Gerstein, 1992).

Second, traditional organizations were built on the assumption that workers were uneducated, had little mobility, and were driven solely by economic needs (Nadler & Gerstein; 1992; Pinchot & Pinchot, 1993). However, today’s worker is far more educated, knowledgeable, and skeptical of command and control tactics. Workers increasingly expect to have input into their jobs, in addition to demanding a sense of meaningfulness from their work life (Pasmore, 1994).
Finally, traditional structures are fast becoming obsolete because of their tendency to grow more complex, less responsive, and more inwardly focused (Nadler & Gerstein, 1992). Caught in the mire of their own complexity, huge bureaucratic systems simply are unable to respond with the swiftness and grace needed to meet environmental demands (Pasmore, 1994; Pinchot & Pinchot, 1993; Miles & Snow 1994).

Future Organizational Forms and Structures

Both researchers and practitioners have speculated about the kinds of organizational structures that will emerge in response to contemporary environmental pressures, replacing traditional forms. Miles and Snow (1994) describe the spherical network, while Pasmore (1994) envisions a polynoetic organization. Byrne (1993), discusses four contemporary organizational forms: Pepsi’s inverted pyramid, Eastman Chemical’s pizza, James Quinn’s starburst, and Charles Handy’s shamrock.

While differently shaped, there is much that these new forms have in common. First, all of these new organizational forms represent flexible, innovative structures that can quickly respond to change. Many have fluid, transitory structures and fuzzy boundaries, with autonomous work teams being used as organizational building blocks. Second, consensually developed norms and values, rather than rules and direct supervision, are used to furnish the cohesion needed to provide direction and coordination. Often, leaders come from everywhere, not a hierarchy, and are replaced interchangeably based on the knowledge and skills they offer a particular project. Third, "empowerment," or utilizing the collective genius of all organization members
is more the rule than exception. This means information, decision-making power, knowledge and rewards are more evenly spread to all areas of the organization. In addition, employees take joint responsibility for their careers and employability, by focusing on building a lattice of skills rather than climbing the ladder of hierarchy.

Many terms have been used to describe such innovative work systems. Hanna (1988) uses the term, "high performance organizations," while Walton (1985) describes them as "high commitment organizations." Lawler (1986) prefers the term, "high involvement organizations." Whichever term is used, the transition from traditional to these team-based structures represents what Porris and Silvers (1991) call "paradigmatic change"—creating and enacting a new vision that involves radical changes in the behaviors and assumptions of organizational members. Indeed, such change is about helping an organization shift paradigms.

Transitioning from Traditional to Team-Based: Special Requirements

Creating deep, pervasive change in large, culturally ossified organizations requires a fairly intricate redesign strategy, and an all-encompassing plan of action (Ledford et al, 1989; Ledford & Mohrman, 1993; Mohrman et al, 1989). Quick fix, surface level changes ensure failure (Miles et al, 1995). Redesign strategies must affect core processes (such as structure, management, decision-making, and rewards), culture (beliefs, values, norms), the organization’s mission and strategy, and the organizational paradigm or "meta rules" that guide underlying assumptions (Ledford & Mohrman, 1993).
Aside from specific design features, such change efforts also require a series of support mechanisms. Detailed strategies to cope with organizational resistance must be built, along with ways to foster intergroup coordination among change agents, and means to promote consistency and congruence in the design across all levels of the organization (Ledford et al., 1989; Miles et al., 1995; Mohrman & Cummings, 1989).

While "pre-packaged" organization designs are available, self-designing techniques are recommended to achieve the innovation and tailoring needed in such large scale change efforts (Lawler, 1989). Research has shown that the complexity of the change strategy must match the level of complexity present in the organization (Ledford et al., 1989).

Self-design strategies offer the organization a conceptual box within which they can tailor their own design, using the required level of complexity. In this method, the organization is provided with broad questions, the answers to which create a customized organization design. Typically, self-design work involves the use of an executive level steering committee that oversees the work of design teams. Such an approach promotes the commitment, organization-wide buy-in, and innovation needed to move traditional systems through change (Mohrman et al., 1989; Lawler, 1989; Ledford & Mohrman, 1993)

Think-Assess-Design: A Model of Self-Design

Many authors offer their own views on guiding organizations through such self-designing endeavors. (Hanna, 1988; Hitchcock, 1994; Ledford & Mohrman, 1993; Lytle, 1991, 1995; Mohrman & Cummings, 1989; Orsburn et al, 1990; Pasmore, 1988,
1994). Though each has their own twist, most of these contemporary organizational redesign strategies broadly encompass three steps: 1) Think, 2) Assess, and, 3) Design.

"Thinking steps" involve the preliminary action steps that are needed to provide the foundation for organizational change. As suggested by its name, this phase engages a small group of organization members in the thinking, planning, and decision making needed to get the change effort off the ground. Usually this involves a steering committee, whose primary task is to oversee the strategic aspects of the redesign.

"Assessment steps" involve diagnosing the organization's condition relative to the changes planned. This usually entails a determination of the organization's readiness for change, the roadblocks that may prohibit success, and the general organizational culture and climate. Data from the assessment is fed back to the organization, and is used to guide the direction of change.

And finally, "design steps" involve the activities of those organizational members who are actually conducting the micro-level analysis needed to make recommendations about the ideal post-redesign structure. Usually, this is done by a series of design teams whose work is guided by steering committee oversight.

Like a triple helix, these three broad steps -- think, assess, design -- intricately intertwine to transform the organization into an empowered, team-based structure. A closer examination of each of these will further illuminate the process involved.
**Thinking Steps: The Preliminary Actions of the Steering Committee**

Before the actual work of redesign can get underway, the organization must engage in a series of "thinking steps" to lay the groundwork for change. Redesign efforts that get underway without the requisite amount of thinking, planning and decision making are doomed to fail (Kotter, 1995; Mohrman & Cummings, 1989). Decisions made haphazardly or not at all can be costly in terms of time, money, and momentum for change (Miles et al., 1995).

These "thinking steps" are usually completed by a steering committee -- an executive level group who is responsible for the strategic level planning of the organizational change. In completing their work, the steering committee must address seven broad areas: 1) learn about redesign, 2) develop as a team, 3) design an implementation plan, 4) design a communication plan, 5) design a commitment plan, 6) design a support plan, and, 7) design a plan/philosophy for managers/supervisors. While presented in a linear fashion, in practice these seven steps occur in a non-sequential fashion. Obviously, it is probably sensible to at least begin accomplishing the first two steps prior to addressing the five that remain.

**Learn about redesign.** Early on, it is important that the organization take responsibility for learning as much as it can about the basic principles of redesign, empowerment, organizational structures and alternative strategies for organizational change. By gaining knowledge, informed choices can be made (Hanna, 1988; Lawler, 1989) and dependency on outside consultants can be reduced. Such knowledge also
allows one to ask a deeper level of questions when considering design choices (Mohrman & Cummings, 1989).

Learning is usually accomplished by reading, in-house group discussions, attending workshops, and making benchmarking visits to organizations that are using self-designing techniques. While a good deal of learning should happen as an early step of redesign, the ongoing learning should occur throughout the redesign (Mohrman & Cummings, 1989). Of course, forward thinking organizations build learning mechanisms into the redesign, so that the organization has the continued capacity to learn from itself (Senge, 1990).

Learning about redesign also helps the organization understand why it is engaging in the painful steps required to accomplish redesign goals. In turn, this can be critical in helping prevent failure. Done correctly, organizational redesign involves a series of intricate and time-consuming steps (Galbraith, 1987; Hanna, 1988; Ledford & Mohrman, 1993; Mohrman & Cummings, 1989; Mohrman et al, 1989; Pasmore, 1988, 1994). Even among those approaches deemed as "fast paced," a minimum of three to six months of full-time work is required (Axelrod, 1992; Pasmore, 1995). By learning about the commitment of time and resources that are involved in redesign, the organization can make informed choices about the method that is best for them, and their ability to provide required support.

Develop as a team. The steering committee is typically a group of 10 - 12 individuals—a team—that is responsible for overseeing an organizational change effort, or a "redesign." (Orsburn et al., 1990; Wellins et al., 1991) As such, one of the first
tasks this group must undertake is to build themselves as a team. This means taking on the logistical tasks of deciding on meeting protocol, a code of conduct, the decision making processes to be used, and how they intend to keep track of decisions and issues (Lytle, 1991). Teams that do not have clear rules and guidelines for operating cannot function effectively (Larson & LaFasto, 1989).

This step also entails decision making at a more philosophical level. The steering committee must come to consensus about their mission as team, their vision of the organization post-change, and their overall goals for engaging in the redesign effort (Miles et al, 1995; Orsburn et al, 1990). Mohrman & Cummings (1989) call this endeavor "valuing." Steering committee members must openly dialogue about the real reasons that are driving the organization toward change, and what they hope to gain by engaging in a redesign. Happier employees? Fewer managers on the payroll? A more flexible company?

Without a clear vision of what they want and where they are going, the organization cannot create a direction for their redesign efforts. Without direction, alignment and consistency are impossible, and the redesign is likely to fail (Galbraith, 1987; Ledford et al, 1989; Nadler & Gerstien, 1992).

In differentiating between organizations who have been successful at redesign, and those who have not, Miles et al (1995) note the importance of three success factors: 1) a commitment to total redesign, not mere problem solving and patchwork fixes, 2) a clear strategic vision that encompasses changes in strategy and structure, and, 3) a managerial philosophy on utilizing human assets which is aligned with the
chosen strategy and structure. None of these are possible without some knowledge about organizations and redesign, coupled with the kind of unified philosophical direction that a well-developed steering team can offer.

**Design an implementation plan.** Early on, decisions must be made about the formal structure that will be used to implement the intended changes -- in this case, an empowered, team-based organization. Typically, when conducting a traditional work redesign, this structure involves an executive steering committee which oversees multiple design teams (Orsburn et al., 1990; Pasmore, 1988; Wellins et al., 1991).

However, within this broader design structure are more narrow choices. For instance, if the organization is particularly large and traditional, several contingency variables can intervene to affect design choices (Ledford et al., 1989). First, is the extent of organizational complexity. "Huge" organizations typically have more complex internal systems to effectively manage coordination and control mechanisms. Such systems can often take on certain inertial qualities, such that they gain a momentum of their own. An effective implementation strategy thus means two things: 1) creating a change strategy that is as complex as the organizational structure, and 2) having the change strategy specifically address the power of organizational inertia (Ledford et al., 1989; Ledford & Mohrman, 1993).

A second contingency variable that affects implementation strategy, involves the organization's age. Older organizations typically have developed more standardization, formalization, and "habits" of responding, which gives rise to a strong, almost ossified culture (Ledford et al., 1989). To account for this, redesign strategies
must be powerful enough to call into question the way things have traditionally been
done, and invite members to entertain new ways of thinking and learning.

A third contingency variable affecting implementation strategy, is the extent to
which the organization has the power to alter the environment (Ledford et al., 1989).
In many instances, huge organizations have the power to alter their environment by
funding lobbying activities, swallowing up smaller companies on the value chain, and
making significant contributions to political campaigns. In terms of creating redesign
strategies, this means one should keep in mind that organizations who have significant
power may choose to try to alter their environment instead of opting to make changes in
their fundamental character. Organizations without such power may be more amenable
to change (Ledford et al., 1989).

Finally, is the issue of loose versus tight coupling. As Weick (1982) argues,
the degree of "coupling" or interconnectedness of system elements has critical
implications for system change. Large organizations tend to be more loosely coupled
than small ones, by virtue of the geographic separation, specialized functions, diverse
markets, and number of hierarchical levels. As such, Weick suggests that change
efforts will be different in loose vs. tightly coupled organizations.

In creating redesign strategies, it's thus useful to differentiate between the two.
Specifically, loosely coupled organizations offer local flexibility, experimentation, and
rapid incremental adjustment to change. However, system-wide change will not spread
as quickly. Tightly coupled organizations will foster system-wide changes, but the
tightly linked connections may be more resistant to change (Ledford et al., 1989).
Even having considered the contingency variables that impact decisions about the basic redesign structure, there is much yet to flesh out in an implementation plan. Decisions must be made about the roles and boundaries of the steering committee and design teams, the process the design teams will use to complete their work, channels for formal communication with design teams, and the "guardrails" or topics that are off-limits for design team consideration. Thought must go into considering the decision making power of design teams versus management versus the steering committee--who has veto power? What if there is disagreement? (Hitchcock, 1994; Lytle, 1991, 1995; Mohrman & Cummings, 1989; Moran, 1994; Raab, 1991).

Implementation planning also involves multiple decisions about the scope of change and the use of pilot sites. If a full-scale approach is used, (changing the whole organization at once), plans must be made to minimize the complications that can arise (Lawler, 1989). Alternatively, if the steering committee decides they want to start the redesign effort with pilot or "test" sites, they must then decide how these sites will be selected, and how best to use their learnings (Orsburn et al., 1990; Wellins, 1991).

Plans must also be made about implementation efforts after the pilots have completed their work. The organization must consider how new design sites will be chosen, and the ways in which change will be cascaded throughout the organization (Lytle, 1991, 1995; Orsburn et al., 1990; Raab, 1991; Weisbord, 1987).

Design a commitment plan. Organizational change efforts will fail without a critical mass of supporters (Hanna, 1988; Mohrman & Cummings, 1989; Orsburn et al., 1990; Wellins et al., 1991). Early on, the steering committee must begin devising
ways to build commitment for the change effort throughout the organization. The larger the organization, the greater the need for a powerful constituency of supporters (Kotter, 1995).

Several authors have noted that the kinds of deep changes created in shifting an organization from traditional to team based invite more resistance from organizational members (Ledford & Mohrman, 1993; Ledford et al., 1989; Mohrman & Cummings, 1989; Mohrman et al., 1989a). After all, the redesign effort disrupts the organization's previous sense of what was "normal and acceptable."

Contemporary wisdom says that twenty percent of an organization is usually for change, and twenty percent is vehemently against it, with the rest of the organization acting as "fence sitters," waiting to see which direction things go. Building momentum towards change -- and against the status quo -- can be done in several ways. For instance, by considering the specific concerns of different levels of the organization, by locating and building strategic champions, and/or by considering ways to involve managers and other organizational leaders.

Another part of building commitment means being proactive in considering political friction points, perceived threats, and personal agendas that might interfere with progress toward redesign goals. In other words, predicting problems and devising solutions before things get out of control. This is where the value of a good assessment comes in: weak points where commitment must be built become apparent. (Mohrman & Cummings, 1989).
Finally, a commitment plan should include some discussion about the organization's stance toward "resistors" -- those that cannot or will not go along with the direction the organization is choosing to go. This issue is related to the organization's choice between taking a top-down and/or bottom-up design approach. Argyris (1970) promotes using the same process to install change as one will use to operate the change. That is, use authoritarian strategies to implement more traditional designs and participative strategies to implement participative designs. Certainly, popular wisdom endorses the use of highly participative design teams which are "bottom-up" oriented.

However, as Lawler (1989) points out, it may be impossible to participatively install teams in a traditional organization. This is due in part to the fact that all systems and structures in traditional organizations are tuned toward top-down strategies. Members of traditional organizations (particularly those in powerful positions) have a long history of being rewarded and gaining power through traditional top-down directives -- they have learned that the changes which matter come from the top, not the bottom, of the organization. Considering this, Lawler suggests that in traditional organizations, very strong top-down directives need to be issued in addition to bottom-up strategies. For top levels of the organization, this means sending strong messages about intolerance of resistors, in addition to providing resources, funding, support and rewards which shape the organization in the desired direction of change.
Design a communication plan. In the absence of information, people tend to invent their own. For this reason, it is critical that the steering committee take the time to develop a communication plan. While in its early development, the steering committee devises ways to communicate with itself and with design teams. It is equally important that they create ways to communicate with the rest of the organization, throughout the duration of the redesign effort.

Good communication works two ways — listening and providing information. For this reason, a good communication plan includes methods to listen to the concerns voiced by rest of the organization, along with a means to distribute information (Mohrman & Cummings, 1989; Orsburn et al, 1990).

Part of disseminating information involves simply informing organizational members about "the latest news" on the organizational change effort, in an effort to control rumors. This can be done in written reports or articles, informal round-table discussions, or through more formal procedures (Hitchcock, 1994; Lytle, 1991; Pasmore, 1995).

Another part of communicating involves educating the organization about the intended direction of change. It is important that organization members are prepared for the upcoming changes, and have a clear understanding of the organization’s emerging philosophies about the direction that change will take (Orsburn et al., 1990; Wellins et al., 1991). This helps minimize the kinds of destructive rumors that can occur when members misunderstand the meanings of basic terms, such as "self-management" and "team leaders."
Design a support plan. A support plan involves thinking through and addressing several key questions related to the short and long term support that will be needed to implement and sustain organizational change. While "support" certainly involves allocation of financial resources, it also includes the emotional and political buffering needed to protect burgeoning teams from the rest of the organization.

Perhaps one of the most devastating blunders in organizational change efforts, is to prematurely run out of resources before any real changes have been noticed (Kotter, 1995). This fuels organizational beliefs about "teams failing," "management never really supporting this," and "things never changing" (Weisbord, 1987). To go back and garner resources after an initial "failure" is difficult, for two reasons. First, it is hard to justify receiving additional organizational resources for an effort that "failed." Second, even if resources are given, organizational members have a hard time trusting that their hopes won't be dashed by another premature termination of the change effort.

The steering committee needs to address several questions as they plan for organizational change. They must consider what resources are needed -- financial, material, emotional, and political--and whether they can provide those resources. If not, who can? How can they be developed? (Oubsurn, 1990). If the steering committee feels that it has the resources to allocate, they must then think about ways to identify resource recipients--how will they identify who needs what and when? Finally, they must decide how they will monitor ongoing organizational needs, and who might be responsible for doing so.
Decide on plan/philosophy for managers and supervisors. To be effective in the future, organizations must rid themselves of managerial hierarchies based on status, power, and positional authority. Such structures can be barriers to much needed information flow, decision making processes, cooperation, and organizational learning (Galbraith & Lawler, 1993). Yet, squarely facing the issue of the future of managers and supervisors has been noted as perhaps one of the most difficult steps that steering committees must face (Moran, 1994).

Even among the most mature steering teams, there will be tough dialogue about the general philosophy regarding management, what their future work roles will be, and what a career path might look like in the new, empowered organization (Pasmore, 1994; Mohrman & Cummings, 1989). Tough discussions must take place to decide whether the organization intends to "fire" all first line supervisors, phase them out of the organization over time, or allocate resources for their training and development into new roles. Parameters must be laid to provide structure for deciding who goes and who stays, what will be done with those who "can't/won't change, and how resources will be allocated for development. (Ledford, 1993; Tjosvold, 1991; Zenger et al., 1994).

"Assessment Steps": A Critical Guide for Change

The second step in the "think-assess-design" sequence is assessment—measuring where one is, compared to where one wants to be. This is a critical element in organizational redesign efforts (Campion, 1993, 1994; Hanna, 1988). This is particularly true when transitioning an organization from traditional to team based
Assessment data create a road map that can plot the direction that change must take, by highlighting the unique hurdles which stand in the way of the desired goal, and identifying organizational strengths that might propel the change effort forward.

In a redesign effort, "assessment steps" should be tailored to meet the needs of the organization (Hanna, 1988; Mohrman & Cummings, 1989). This means conducting as many or as few assessment endeavors as are needed to guide implementation. For some organizations, a simple readiness assessment will provide sufficient data. Other organizations may need to conduct assessments to assist with other key factors, such as pilot site selection, team development appraisals, and leadership development. As Weisbord notes, "What you look at is what you find, and what theory you use determines what you look for" (Hanna 1988, p. 70). Thus, it is important to remember that the assessment is only as useful as it is thorough.

**Critical Assessment Areas.** At the bare minimum, a thorough readiness assessment should occur early on in the redesign effort. While the method used may vary, the content should broadly cover several key areas (Hanna, 1988; Mohrman & Cummings, 1989). They are, 1) business analysis, 2) support structure, 3) barriers, 4) culture, 5) technical processes, and, 6) people processes.

**Business analysis.** In essence, this portion of the assessment examines the financial status of the business to determine if the intended organizational change is a wise business decision. These data are probably best gathered by consultants or internal change agents who know how to use financial information to make business
decisions (Hanna, 1988). Aside from financial data, it is useful to gather information about the organization’s business strategy, and the extent to which it is aligned with structure.

Support structure. As mentioned earlier, support—financial, emotional, resource based, and/or philosophical—is critical in building and maintaining momentum for change. It is important to assess the number and location of change champions, and consider whether they are strategically placed. Identifying "holes" and resources that must be garnered is critical as well (Lytle, 1991).

Barriers. Organization specific barriers and roadblocks to change provide information that is particularly important in guiding redesign strategies (Mohrman & Cummings, 1989). It is critical to ask organization members what might cause the effort to fail, and what problems must be overcome in order for it to succeed (Levinson, 1972; Moran, 1994).

Culture. Here, the general culture and climate of the organization are examined. Specifically, the assessment uncovers which parts of the company’s norms and values are consistent with empowered work, and which are not (Hanna, 1988; Mohrman & Cummings, 1989; Moran, 1994).

Technical processes. It does little good to redesign an organization to a team-based structure, when the work is not well suited for teams. A thorough assessment discerns where interdependencies lie between departments and work groups, and whether there are technical barriers or interdependencies that might effect "teamability" (Campion, 1994; Campion et al., 1993; Mohrman & Cummings, 1989; Moran, 1994).
People processes. As Cummings (1978) notes, ideally, people must have high growth needs and high social needs to function well in an empowered team environment. Prior to engaging in a redesign, it is important to determine if employees in fact want to be empowered, and work in teams. Obviously, not all people do. Other useful data to gather, is the extent to which employees currently feel empowered, and whether they have the skills (or capacity to gain the skills) needed for empowered work (Campion, 1994; Campion et al., 1993; Mohrman & Cummings, 1989; Moran, 1994).

Conducting a thorough readiness assessment is not enough to ensure redesign success. The results must be thoughtfully used to guide redesign strategy. After looking at the data, steering committee members must ask themselves whether it still makes sense to move forward with redesign plans. Are the barriers insurmountable? Does a plan to redesign make sense? Even if the data indicates that they should move forward, committee members must still consider what the results suggest in terms of implementation. Do the data suggest the need for additional structures that need to be put in place to make this work? What must happen to make the project succeed?

Pilot Site Selection: Another Assessment Opportunity

Pilot sites serve an important role in organizational change efforts. First, they serve as "test areas" for organizational change, so that change methods can be fine-tuned before a full scale implementation occurs. As such, it is important that they be sturdy enough to handle the bumps and bruises inherent in the role. Second, pilots signal the rest of the organization about the changes that lie ahead. Pilot success is
critical, because a failed pilot sends an extremely negative message about the likelihood of ongoing change (Lawler, 1989).

Conducting a formal assessment is a good way to select viable pilot locations (Campion, 1994; Moran, 1994). The broad purpose of such an assessment might be twofold: 1) determine whether the work processes in potential pilot areas are appropriate for the intended redesign strategy, and, 2) examine the extent to which other structural and/or cultural features of the potential pilot might impact the ease with which change might be implemented.

Pilot Assessment: Suggested Dimensions

Seven dimensions might be used to assist in the decision making about the pilot status of each area. These dimensions were chosen more from contemporary wisdom than from pure empiricism, because studies on ideal pilot site characteristics are few and far between (Campion, 1994; Moran, 1994).

The selection of these dimensions was approached by first unearthing dimensions that indicate the "teamability" of work, such as work structure, complexity, interdependence, coordinating mechanisms and uncertainty (Cummings, 1978; Mohrman & Cummings, 1989). Second, those dimensions whose absence was thought to undermine effective teaming were identified. These included common goals and favorable team member perceptions. (Larson & LaFasto, 1989). Finally, the special demands placed on pilot sites were considered and discussed with various subject matter experts (Campion, 1994; Moran, 1994). The following were identified as "ideal" pilot site characteristics.
Work structure/boundaries. In areas that are ideal for teaming, work is organized around product(s), customer(s), and/or service(s) that are inside and/or outside the organization. Workers are able to complete "a whole piece of work," which means following a process through from beginning to end (Cherns, 1976; Pasmore, 1988).

In an ideal pilot situation, the current arrangement of the work area should not be terribly complex. That is, there ought to be few specialists, few job categories, and a stable workforce. Core, support, and strategic work functions should be within the same boundaries, and ideally ought to be able to be re-divided if necessary. While the ability to cross-train work is ideal, it is not a critical element in teaming.

Department/area structural complexity. As with the work structure, the departmental or area management structure should be as simple as possible (Cherns, 1976). This means there are not multiple layers of managers/supervisors or complex reporting relationships with which pilot design teams must contend.

Interdependence. In order for people to be on a team together, their work processes must be interdependent (Cummings, 1978; Pasmore, 1988). That is, the work that they do is connected in a meaningful way, so that what one person does affects others. Without interdependence, you simply have a group of people who are working independently or alone on tasks that are not related to each other.

There can also be interdependence between a work group and external forces, such as other departments. While interdependence with external functions is expected to some extent, the ideal pilot sight should not be too intricately entwined with
external processes. Specifically, when the work team cannot alter its' processes without significantly impacting external groups, too much interdependence with external units is present. A pilot site that cannot alter its' processes without forcing others to change theirs' is set up for an endless array of struggles during redesign.

**Uncertainty.** The issue of uncertainty was explored in order to help differentiate routine, predictable work processes from non-routine, or "knowledge work" processes (Pasmore, 1994; Pava, 1983). This information is also helpful to design teams as they select tools for technical analysis.

Environmental uncertainty is also important. Highly complex, uncertain, and dynamic external forces are not ideal in pilot sites, particularly if there are weak feedback mechanisms to the team (Cummings, 1978; Moran, 1994).

**Coordinating mechanisms.** Work areas that require a high amount of complex coordinating mechanisms may not be ideal for pilot sites. This issue relates to both managerial structure and work complexity. While work areas with complicated tasks that must be carefully coordinated can be teamed, such qualities are not ideal in a pilot area. Generally, it is good to have pilot sites where there is a sense of control over work processes, without being encumbered by complex procedures that are external to the team (Moran, 1994).

**Common goals.** Team members with common goals are a hallmark of effective team structures (Larson & LaFasto, 1989). When the nature of the work creates team goals that are in conflict, teaming is difficult.
Team member perceptions. In general, good pilot sites are made up of individuals who express two things; 1) a strong desire to work in a team-based structure, and, 2) a willingness to expand their job beyond their current duties (Cummings, 1978). Negative perceptions of teamwork, empowerment, and the work areas ability to make the transition are critical red flags (Campion et al., 1993).

Design Steps: The Heart of Organizational Change

Finally, the third step in the "think-assess-design" sequence of organizational change involves the actual design work. Usually, the "nitty gritty" work of redesigning organizational systems is done at a site specific level by a series of design teams (Orsburn et al., 1990; Raab, 1991; Wellins, 1991). These design teams, with the steering committee as an overseer, drive the micro level changes needed to redesign the organization into a more empowered structure. Their work involves a systematic examination of every aspect of the organization. Commonly, the work of design teams takes 12 - 18 months to complete (Pasmore, 1988, 1994). Even in "fast paced" redesign methods, design work requires at least 3 - 6 months (Axelrod, 1992; Pasmore, 1995).

The Scope of Design Team Work

Design team work takes a long time because it involves very intricate, detailed, system-wide changes. Hanna (1988), Lawler (1986), and Walton (1985) all similarly describe the system wide changes required to transition an organization away from a traditional structure. With empowered work teams as the building block, there must be a shift in organizational information/decision making structures, rewards, values,
norms, human resource practices, job design principles, performance expectations, labor-management relations, and the structure, systems, and style of management. Clearly, this means a shift from a mechanistic to an organic structure (Tushman and Nadler, 1978).

This kind of thorough, systematic change is most often accomplished using sociotechnical redesign methods (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Hanna, 1988; Moran, 1994; Pava, 1986; Pasmore, 1988, 1994, 1995; Weisbord, 1987). That is, engaging in an analysis of the environmental, technical and social systems of the organization, then redesigning them using sociotechnical design principles (Cherns, 1976).

Environmental analysis. As the first of three pillars of sociotechnical redesign, the environmental analysis involves a scan of the environmental context in which the organization exists (Pasmore, 1988). This work includes a future search (Weisbord, 1987), and an identification of the wants and needs of key stakeholders (Axelrod, 1992; Lytle, 1991; Hitchcock, 1994; Pasmore, 1988, 1994, 1995).

A future search is designed to uncover the future environmental forces and trends that will impact the organization's survival (Weisbord, 1987; Weisbord & Janoff 1995). Such forces and trends might include rapidly changing laws, specific technological changes, and/or changes in consumer behavior. For example, if a typewriter manufacturer had done a future search in the 80's, they would have seen the advent of personal computers as a trend that suggested a genuine threat to their business. By identifying important forces and trends, design teams can create redesign
plans to circumvent organizational crises. The future search is completed by engaging in brainstorming techniques within the design team meeting.

A second important element of an environmental analysis involves identifying the wants and needs of key customers or stakeholders (Axelrod, 1992; Lytle, 1991; Hitchcock, 1994; Pasmore, 1988, 1994, 1995). By understanding the customer’s expectations, design teams can make specific redesign recommendations that improve customer service. For many design teams, improving customer service isn’t enough—they strive to surprise and delight those who come in contact with their segment of the organization.

To gain this important information, stakeholders can be surveyed by design teams, sent questionnaires, interviewed, or brought into design meetings (Lytle, 1991; Hitchcock, 1994; Pasmore, 1988, 1994, 1995). There are no limits on the creativity design teams can use to gain access to customer opinions.

Technical analysis. The second pillar of sociotechnical redesign involves a detailed analysis of the organization’s technical system. Through a complex series of analyses, design teams identify the common technical process that interfere with quality, efficiency, and customer satisfaction (Axelrod, 1992; Hitchcock, 1994; Lytle, 1991; Pasmore, 1988, 1994, 1995). After identifying problems, design teams use sociotechnical design principles (Cherns, 1976) to guide their redesign recommendations. These include the following principles: (from Nadler et al., 1992)
1. Although rules and work processes critical to overall success should be identified, no more rules should be specified than are absolutely essential.

2. Variances, or deviations from the ideal process, should be controlled at the point of origin.

3. Each member of the system should be skilled in more than one function so that the work system is flexible and adaptive.

4. Roles that are interdependent should be within the same departmental boundaries.

5. Information systems should be designed primarily to provide information to the point of action and problem solving.

As design teams examine their technical processes, they must differentiate between work processes that are routine and linear, and those that made up of more non-routine or "knowledge work." This distinction is important, because different tools are needed to design these different types of work (Lytle, 1991; Pasmore, 1994, 1995; Pava, 1983, 1986; Purser & Pasmore, 1992).

Routine, linear work proceeds in a series of sequential steps. In analyzing linear work, tools such as process maps and detailed variance analyses are used. These help identify specific problems that occur in each step of the linear process (Lytle, 1991; Pasmore, 1988). Work flow analysis (Hitchcock, 1994; Lytle, 1991) is another technique used to analyze linear work. Here, design teams use an actual floor plan of
the work area to draw the flow of workers and/or materials. Inefficiencies in shop layout are quickly evident.

Non-linear, or "knowledge work" unfolds more chaotically, and non-sequentially. In analyzing knowledge work, techniques such as input output analysis (Lytle, 1991) and deliberations analysis are used (Pava, 1983, 1986; Pasmore, 1994, 1995; Purser & Pasmore, 1992). These techniques help design teams redesign knowledge work systems so that they can create better ways to make use of knowledge and information.

Social analysis. The final pillar of redesign, social analysis, examines the human needs and preferences of workers. Through several different brainstorming techniques, design teams learn how organization members feel about their jobs (Hitchcock, 1994; Lytle, 1991; Pasmore, 1988, 1994, 1995). Specifically, design teams identify what motivates and demotivates people, so that a positive, motivating job environment can be designed. In addition, design teams identify existing organizational rules, policies, and cultural norms that are inconsistent with the principles of empowerment (Lytle, 1991). This is particularly useful when redesigning traditional organizations.

While sociotechnical redesign traditionally encompasses these three "pillars" of analyses—environmental, technical, and social—thorough design team work should include the design of a series of support systems. These include defining unit boundaries, designing jobs within the unit, designing information flow/decision making structures, measurement systems, training systems, a plan for transitioning managerial
responsibilities, a renewal plan, and a plan to implement all of the design team’s recommended changes (Hanna, 1988; Hitchcock, 1994; Lytle, 1991; Mohrman & Cummings, 1989; Raab, 1991).

Conclusion

Traditional organizations are ill-equipped for today’s turbulent business environment. In order to survive, many traditional organizations are choosing to engage in redesign activities that will transform them into an empowered, team-based structure. Such a transformation is an enormously involved process.

This Chapter described a model for organization redesign which encompasses three broad steps: think, assess, design. "Thinking steps" involve the preliminary planning and decision making needed to launch a large scale redesign effort. Typically, this work is done by an executive level steering committee, over a period of several months. Almost simultaneously to this, the "Assessment steps" unfold. Assessment usually involves an examination of the organization’s readiness for change. These data are then used to guide the direction taken by the redesign endeavor.

Finally, the "design steps" occur--the redesign activities undertaken by design teams. Supervised by the steering committee, these design teams actually conduct the detailed analyses needed to make recommendations about redesigning the structure and processes of the organization.

In the chapters that follow, this model will come to life as it is described in the context of a case study. Chapter two will present a brief background of the organization in which this redesign took place. The application of the Think-Assess-
Design model will be presented in chapters three, four, and five respectively. Chapter three, which encompasses the "think" portion of the model, will highlight the preliminary work done by the steering committee. The "assess" step, which includes a two-phase assessment approach, will be discussed in Chapter four. Finally, the "design" portion of the model will be highlighted in Chapter five, as the work of four design teams is reviewed. An overall review of the project, and summary of learnings, will then be presented in Chapter six.
CHAPTER II

THE ORGANIZATION

The focus of this organizational change effort was a company located in the southwestern United States. Henceforth called, "ABC Corporation," this organization is a Fortune 500 company that has been family owned and operated for three generations.

With a core enterprise of manufacturing, ABC is formally structured as a multiple focus federation of small multinational businesses which are linked by a common corporate parent. The company is involved in the manufacturing and sales of diverse product lines and an assortment of manufacturing services throughout the world. In many ways, ABC's structure resembles that of the dynamic network described by Miles & Snow (1994). It is not uncommon for ABC to spin off a new company that is designed to simultaneously compete in the marketplace and act as an inexpensive internal supplier to another ABC business stream. These companies are expected to offer their products and services at or below cost to other ABC companies, while at the same time showing a profit by engaging the marketplace. An example of such a "dually missioned" ABC company is a metal fabrication shop that was designed to provide "low to no cost" metal containers for other ABC products, while making a profit from customized metal fabrication projects completed for non-ABC companies.
ABC's Division X

Division X, located at ABC corporate headquarters, was the focus of this intervention. The structure of this division mirrors that of ABC as a whole, with a series of departments and small companies that form a complex network. Division X includes research & development, purchasing, manufacturing, packaging, sales/marketing, order processing, and domestic/international distribution functions, which essentially captures the entire value chain. While each of these functions has its own distinct culture and managerial style, to varying degrees they are all traditionally managed and organized. For many departments, there are long histories of turf wars, mistrust, and competition between them.

Management Style

ABC describes itself as a highly patriarchal, "family business." Although the executive committee is made up of three family members who function as a collaborative team, the rest of the organization has been structured into a very rigid hierarchical structure.

Most areas operate as little fiefdoms under the tight controls of traditional managerial practices. Of course, "traditional management" means different things in different departments. For most departments, "traditional" means employees have no autonomy, no flexibility, very little information, and almost no input into decision-making. To question a managerial decision—even if that decision is clearly wrong—is unthinkable.
General Culture/Climate

The traditional structure and managerial style strongly impacts the general culture and climate of the Division X. Managerial hierarchy extends down to a very clear pecking order among hourly and salaried employees. As might be expected, while management is afforded the most perks, salaried employees are given many other special benefits. The "hourlies," on the other hand, are viewed (and treated) as an ignorant working mass who must constantly be monitored and told what to do.

As is typical in highly diversified organizations (Miles & Snow, 1994), the departments within Division X are highly competitive in their quest for corporate resources. This reportedly has created an expectation that departments police each others activities, and "tattle" when perceived wrongdoing is identified. Not surprisingly, there seemed to be a tendency toward finger-pointing, blaming, and excuse-making within the Division X, rather than a focus on learning and self-improvement. In such a climate, innovation and risk taking are unlikely if not impossible.

Generally then, the culture of ABC's Division X revolved around a rigid adherence to traditional bureaucratic principles. In fact, cultural rules and norms were particularly well entrenched because of two factors; 1) extremely low turnover, and, 2) lack of training and/or development.

As might be expected in a traditional patriarchy, turnover within the company is exceptionally low. It is not uncommon to find employees within ABC's Division X who have been with the company nearly all of their adult life, and expect to remain
there until retirement. This is true within all levels of the ABC hierarchy. Like siblings reared together in a large family, these long term employees have found familiar ways of relating to each other and negotiating for resources. This strong history of connectedness is further reinforced by a corporate tradition of nepotism that has created an unusually high number of employees with a spouse, child, or best friend that also works for ABC. In short, while creating many positive cultural outcomes, the long histories and strong bonds between employees fueled a fixed and rigid culture.

This was enhanced by a near total lack of training and/or employee development. ABC has operated for over 75 years without a training or organization development function. Traditionally, the only training offered to ABC employees has been on legally mandated topics, such as safety procedures. With no formal mechanism to introduce new ideas, updated management techniques, or to encourage employee growth, cultural change was an unlikely event.

**Business Reasons Driving the Organizational Change**

Rather gradually over time, ABC executives began to realize the need for vast organizational change. While many organizations wait until the point of financial destitution before entertaining new options, this was not the case with ABC. In fact, they reportedly continue to enjoy a position of financial robustness. It was the combination of several other factors that drove ABC's decision to engage the organization in change.

**A mature market niche.** ABC's Division X exists within a mature, competitive, and slow-growing market niche. While not drastic, ABC noticed a gradual, but
consistent, decline in market share over time. There seemed to be no reason to expect that this trend would reverse itself without some drastic action on ABC's part.

Cost efficient manufacturing. Related to this, was a recognition that competitive pressures called for more cost efficient manufacturing, and the utilization of the brain power of all employee's. In their current structure, manufacturing facilities were facing rising costs because of workers who could not/would not assume responsibility for the quality or quantity of their work. A general sense of malaise and apathy seemed to emerge as a by-product of ABC's traditional managerial structure. The sense that one's supervisor or manager is the only one who is supposed to think led to costly mistakes in production scheduling, manufacturing, and shipping. Such mistakes seemed to have become the norm far more than the exception, which lead to drastic increases in cost-per-unit production. Simultaneously, ABC's competitors were driving down their per-unit-costs because of high tech, efficient manufacturing procedures. Without drastic change, ABC could be priced out of the market.

Flexible customer service. ABC also identified a need for more flexible responsiveness to their customer's demands. Again, their rigid, traditional structure was held in place by a web of bureaucratic policies and procedures that served to slow inter departmental coordination. Customer complaints and requests were often "pin-balled" through a myriad of departments before being resolved.

Increasing customer expectations. This decline in customer service was worsened because it was simultaneously paired with an increase in customer expectations. Again, competitors who strive to exceed customer demands raise
expectations of what "good enough" customer service looks like. For example, now that Federal Express offers its customers free "package tracking" software, customers will soon come to expect such service from all transport companies. ABC recognized that the innovations of their competitors could undermine the loyalty of previously "satisfied" customers.

**Loss of managerial talent.** Finally, ABC recognized that a huge proportion of its upper-level managers were poised for retirement after 30 plus years of service. This represented a tremendous loss of organizational knowledge and expertise that could not be easily remedied. On the other hand, ABC recognized this as an opportunity to naturally decrease managerial layers while increasing empowerment among workers.

**A History of this Organizational Change Effort**

As ABC began to realize the gravity of their business situation, the early phases of their organizational change effort started. In 1991, ABC hired a "big six" consulting firm to give a second opinion on their self-diagnosis, and to recommend a path for change. This firm reportedly altered the boundaries on several departments, changed a few reporting relationships, laid off a small number of workers, and recommended a transition away from ABC’s traditional managerial practices toward a more empowered, team-based structure.

After nine months and nearly a million dollars, ABC terminated its relationship with the external consultants, and set about growing a change initiative from the inside. Recognizing the rigidity of their culture, and the uphill battle that would be
faced if management were threatened, several small change initiatives were put in place under the umbrella of an effort named, "The Omega Program."

The Omega Program. "Omega" was launched by the Vice President of Division X, and was placed in the care of a manager who had been "hand-selected" to oversee the change effort. In general, the goal and mission of Omega was to drive the changes needed to make Division X "world class."

The guiding principles for Omega included the following:

1) To create an open and participative work environment that expects ongoing change, rewards innovation, and provides growth and opportunity to all associates,
2) To recognize customer needs by providing quality products of excellent value,
3) To provide superior service in the key activities that support both our customers and our sales team,
4) To consistently meet our financial expectations through prudent asset management and efficiency in operations,
5) To remain proactive in safety and environmental matters, realizing that we make a positive contribution to the well-being of both our associates and of society at large.

These guiding principles served as the backbone for a series of small change initiatives that were launched beginning in 1992. The focus of these efforts were targeted first at the manufacturing facilities, then at organization-wide management, and finally at broader organizational processes.
The manufacturing facility. Because this facility was the most antiquated and in need of change, a two-pronged effort was directed at Plant A. First, managers and supervisors were subjected to a training effort that was designed to introduce managerial education to the plant. Second, plant employees were confidentially assessed by a Community College to discern their current reading/writing levels. This was done to estimate employee readiness/capability to handle more advanced technology, and as a means to plot individual plans for remedial training, if necessary.

Not surprisingly, management was less than eager to continue involvement in their training program, while the employees eagerly embraced the assessment and educational remediation effort that was directed at them. While the education of plant employees continued to include technical training, the plant management training effort evolved into the next phase.

General management training. In late 1992, Omega expanded its managerial training to include monthly training of all managers within Division X, not just those within Plant A. This served as a way to begin breaking down the rigid barriers between departments, because for the first time managers came together from different areas to receive common training. ABC enlisted the help of university personnel to conduct these training sessions. This effort continued until mid-1994, when it evolved into a more sophisticated and intensive leadership development program.

Problem solving teams. Finally, as a means to begin orienting the organization toward collaboration and teamwork, problem solving teams were launched in 1992 under the direction of a problem solving steering committee. These teams were made
up of cross functional members who self-selected to come together to solve specific operational problems. Once having analyzed the problem using a specified format, the team offered their recommended solutions to a steering committee, and then dissolved.

The push toward a broader effort: Work redesign. Generally, the problem solving teams enjoyed a great deal of success. In fact, by 1994, a total of 36 problem solving projects had been successfully completed. But it was apparent that these teams could not impact the underlying culture or work systems of ABC Corporation or Division X. Team members reported feeling a certain amount of frustration at having limited empowerment to solve problems, with no authority to effect solutions. They also began to complain of the inconsistency between the values espoused by the Omega program, and the "real life" circumstances under which they were working.

Indeed, change seemed to be happening very slowly with few work areas actually "walking the talk." This served as the final prompt for engaging in a broad-based work redesign effort to create an empowered work environment. Together, the Program Manager of Omega and the Vice President of Division X decided to begin transitioning the entire division to teams. As a first step, they made an organization-wide announcement about the intent to transition to a team-based structure. Then, they convened a steering committee meeting, inviting a group of nine managers from within Division X to attend the first meeting. Because of their pre-existing relationship, they enlisted the support of a local university to assist in this effort.
CHAPTER III

"THINK" STEPS: STEERING COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The steering committee serves a critical function in large-scale change initiatives. This is particularly true in work redesign efforts that are designed to transition an organization from traditional to team-based. In this case, the steering committee typically acts as an executive level, strategic planner who sets the parameters of the redesign initiative. They have two main objectives; 1) to oversee the planning process for redesign, and 2) to oversee the implementation of the redesign plans.

Overseeing the redesign process means that they serve as "champions" for the organizational change, by planning the strategy through which change will occur. Typically, the steering committee commissions an organizational assessment to aid in decision making about the strategy and direction that change efforts must take. Such assessments indicate organizational readiness for change, roadblocks that may impede change, and where pilot teams are most likely to flourish. The steering committee then translates all this information into a specific action plan, or road map of how the organization will systematically move towards its desired end state. This represents the organization's implementation plan, which often includes the use of design teams.
that make site-specific redesign recommendations. Acting as an executive overseer, the steering committee ensures that the "pieces" of redesign completed by each design team fit together into a cohesive whole, and are consistent with the overall values and vision of the redesign initiative.

Once the design team's work is done, the steering committee acts as an executive council that oversees the implementation of redesign plans. This means that they make sure teams have the support and resources they need to flourish, and that they are buffered from organizational resistance. In some instances, this means acting as mediators in solving issues that can't be solved at the team level. In highly traditional organizations, such "issues" usually involve management resistance to change. For this reason, it is important to have steering committee membership that represents a legitimate power source within the organization. As a powerful executive voice, they make sure that redesign plans stay on track, and that resistors stay in check, well into the future. In essence, the work of the steering committee is never over.

**ABC's Steering Committee**

In late November 1993, a group of nine leaders assembled for the first steering committee meeting to begin planning ABC Division X's transition from a traditional to an empowered work structure. Together, the Vice President of Division X and the head of the Omega Program had hand-selected the members of this group, and charged them with the broad task of "implementing teams" within Division X. Among its ranks, were managers who either headed their department, were thought to be "heir
apparent" to a department head position, and/or who were known to be forward-thinking "pro-empowerment" leaders. Included in this group was one second generation member of the family owning ABC Corporation, and leaders from the transportation, sales support and purchasing departments, the print shop, metal manufacturing shop, and plant A.

This first steering committee meeting occurred with very little planning or forethought, other than political considerations about the group's membership. By design, managers from certain areas were chosen for steering committee membership, because their department (or facility) had been pre-selected as a pilot site. This early pilot site selection was done without any understanding of the requirements of good pilots, and did not consider the "teamability" of the work. Instead, the early pilot choices were driven by political considerations—specifically, what areas within Division X might be pro-empowerment. Later, through assessment, these early decisions about pilot location would be altered.

Because steering committee members knew very little about the technical steps involved in conducting a large-scale work redesign, they relied heavily upon the expertise of external consultants from the university to guide their decision making. University staff provided the steering committee with an overall framework which described the general structure recommended to transition ABC's Division X to an empowered, team-based organization. This broad plan included the steps described in Chapter One: Think-Assess-Design.
The steering committee's early work comprised the seven general content areas described in the "Think" steps: 1) learn about redesign, 2) develop as a team, 3) design an implementation plan, 4) design a communication plan, 5) design a commitment plan, 6) design a support plan, and, 7) design a plan/philosophy for managers and supervisors. They met four hours, every-other week over a period of more than two years in order to adequately address all of these seven "steps." In that time, they developed as a mature team who appeared comfortable in their role as strategic overseers of ABC's transition to an empowered, team-based organization.

Although theoretically presented as linear "steps," in practice these seven content areas unfolded in a non-linear, often overlapping, fashion. The steering committee tended to focus their attention on whichever of these seven areas that emerged naturally in the organization, rather than adhering to a rigid step-by-step schedule. Thus, if it became apparent that more communication were needed, the steering committee focused attention on further developing their communication plan. At other times, they found themselves simultaneously addressing two or three areas, because they found what was designed to address one "plan," ended up meeting the needs of another. For instance, solutions arrived at in building a communication plan, happened to also feed into the development of commitment and support plans.

In the following sections, the manner in which ABC's steering committee addressed each of these seven areas will be discussed. For the purpose of clarity, each of these seven areas will be described separately, as if they occurred in a linear or
sequential fashion. Where possible, time frames have been included, so that the reader can gain a clearer picture of how the project unfolded.

Learn About Redesign

ABC's steering committee knew virtually nothing about what is required to transition an organization to an empowered, team-based structure when they first convened. At the time of the first steering committee meeting, they were still in the early stages of learning about the general topic of work teams and empowerment. In fact, when first hearing about the scope of steering committee work, several members seemed surprised that the group’s work would require more than one or two meetings. This betrayed the level of knowledge this group had about the task that yawned before them.

Learning about the complexities of redesign and about teams in general, happened in many ways throughout the redesign process. More formal learning experiences came from benchmarking, conference attendance, and reading materials. For instance, in February 1994, the steering committee embarked on a series of benchmarking visits, to begin to get an idea how other companies have applied the principles of work teams and empowerment. The experience of "seeing teams in action" served to ignite the interest of committee members, and reinforced their commitment to changing ABC to a more empowered organization. In addition, all steering committee members attended conferences about work teams twice a year, and spent time discussing and cataloging their learnings. Their conference experiences
prompted them to begin an Omega library in the Spring of 1994, to which they systematically added both books and journal articles.

By June of 1994, they were ready to take charge of their learning on a new level. When realizing that they needed to develop compensation systems that are consistent with the team approach, the steering committee formed a task force to take charge of learning about intricacies involved in implementing reward systems. Rather than rely on outside experts to tell them what to do, this new "compensation committee" set forth on a journey to learn as many truths as possible through reading, conference attendance, gaining the opinions of several consultant's, and engaging in multiple group discussions. In turn, this group brought back its' wisdom to share with the rest of the organization, and to aid in decision making as a compensation plan was created. As testimony to the degree to which this group took its charge seriously, they met--and continue to meet--once a month to increase learning on this topic.

Learning about the steps involved in work redesign was more difficult. Early on, (January 1994) the Steering Committee was given a formal presentation on the broad steps involved in the transition from traditional to team based, which covered the Think-Assess-Design model discussed in Chapter One. While verbalizing an understanding of this model and the role they play in organizational change, committee members appeared to need additional assistance in understanding the "big picture." This was evident from the quality of questions asked during meetings. For this reason, in May 1994 written materials that detailed the model were distributed among
committee members. This seemed to provide needed support for learning and thinking about the model.

The steering committee’s learning about the work of design teams occurred in much the same fashion. In April 1994, they were given a formal presentation about the steps involved in the design team’s work. Specifically, the presentation discussed sociotechnical work design, and proposed the specific content of the Design Team Manual (Appendix A). While the committee indicated understanding of the model, it wasn’t until they were provided with actual chapters from the manual that they seemed to grasp the work involved. Each month, they were given one chapter of the manual for their critique, discussion, and approval. Although not by design, this method was quite efficient in fostering their learning and understanding of the steps the design teams were being asked to follow.

Steering committee learning continued throughout this process. In fact, by the summer of 1995 reflecting upon what they had learned almost appeared to have become a reflex in their thinking. Because they had asked design teams to catalog learnings, committee members felt compelled to do the same. Beginning in September 1995, a formal “list of learnings” was spontaneously created. At regular intervals, members added their personal insights to this list so that the organization might have an archive of the learnings uncovered in this process.

**Develop as a Team**

ABC’s steering committee had no formal training or developmental experiences to prepare them to work together as an effective team. Skills such as listening,
expressing oneself in a non-threatening way, and holding effective meetings were built informally along the way in an "on-the-job" experience. Because the steering committee's development as a team was never formally addressed, they didn't solidify specific meeting roles until May 1994, and failed to create an official code of conduct until extreme conflict forced them to in May 1995.

Developing this group as a team was a difficult endeavor, because they lacked the trust necessary to open up and give each other constructive feedback. In part, trust issues arose from having several layers of traditional hierarchy within the committee, some of whom reported to each other. In the early stages of team development, it was difficult for members to trust that their "boss" had indeed taken off the boss hat. Early meetings were peppered with uncomfortable silence as the group waited to see what their boss might say, while the boss expressed strong opinions in an effort to get the group going. This of course shut down participation.

The lack of trust and openness hindered early progress by clouding the group's thinking, and values. This wishy-washy stance toward their beliefs and convictions was evident as they changed their name three times during the first six months of meeting. They went from being the Self-Managed Teams Steering Committee, to the Self-Directed Teams Steering Committee, to finally, the Empowerment Steering Committee. Each name change reflected the group's changing view of the direction the organization was headed.

Several events seemed to have helped develop the steering committee into a more effective team. First, they were introduced to formal meeting roles in May 1994,
among which included the process observer role. To function effectively in this role, participants were given a checklist of behaviors to observe. By having to consistently critique specific behaviors, such as interpersonal skills, problem solving, and meeting logistics, members learned to think about effective meeting processes, and, over time, tended to police themselves.

Secondly, during the Spring of 1995, the Omega program began an intensive six-day leadership training program, which nearly all steering committee members attended. This training program focused on developing effective communication skills, understanding different interpersonal styles, and developing empowering leadership behaviors. As more committee members completed the training program, the level of trust and team effectiveness appeared to increase proportionately. For instance, during steering committee meetings, members began to use the "in language" taught in the leadership training program to signal understanding of each others' interpersonal style. This appeared to reduce incidents of verbal sparring, while increasing more productive conflict resolution.

Perhaps the most effective exercise to help develop the steering committee into a team occurred as a by-product of their attempts to improve organizational communication. As a committee, they agreed to answer anonymous questions pertaining to any aspect of the organizational change process. As the questions poured in, committee members decided to respond in writing. By having to address difficult questions (particularly in writing), committee members were forced to reach consensus on key issues. The process of having to repeatedly come to consensus on issues,
combined with the belief-defining nature of their answers, helped develop this group into a more effective team.

**Design an Implementation Plan**

It wasn’t until May of 1994---six months after starting their formal work redesign initiative---that the steering committee began to consider issues involved in creating an implementation plan. As mentioned earlier, the steering committee relied heavily on input from university staff in deciding the overall structure that would be used to implement empowered teams. The structure that was recommended included the use of an executive level steering committee, who would oversee the work of pilot design teams as they completed a sociotechnical work redesign process. Driven more by the sense of "having to start sometime," the committee picked an arbitrary design team launch date of August 1994.

Because university staff offered to customize a work redesign manual to be used by all design teams, decisions about design team processes were essentially made for the committee. Yet, in order to effectively write a customized manual, university staff needed the steering committee to address issues about the roles and boundaries of design teams, channels for formal communication with design teams, and "guardrails" or topics considered off limits for the design team’s consideration.

**Philosophical differences.** With an informally announced launch date of August 1, 1994, the steering committee was forced to quickly resolve several important implementation issues, so that the writing of the design team manual could get underway. Tight time limits forced members to set aside their more blatant
philosophical differences, in favor of compromise. Where easy decisions could be made, they were. Committee members responded to the suggestions of university staff about assessment and selection of pilots, quickly agreeing to the assessment plan for pilot teams outlined in Chapter Four. At other decision making junctures, differences in philosophy were finessed. An example of where this tactic was most obvious, was in the work they completed to define design team guardrails.

**Design team guardrails.** The "guardrails" were established rather quickly in early June 1994, using a brainstorming method. In a single meeting, committee members brainstormed a list of boundaries that design teams could not address. In their first iteration of limits, the committee came up with a list of thirteen limits which dictated the boundaries of design team work. Specifically, teams were forbidden from hiring, firing, transferring, disciplining or evaluating personnel. Further, no team member would be allowed to contribute to the personnel record of another, issue a purchase order, or be "self-managed." They stipulated many areas in which managers would need to "sign off" on a team's recommendations. Management approval would be required if a team wanted to maintain and/or repair equipment; change any policy, procedure, or budget item; or alter work processes in any way.

This list portrays the very conservative opinions of some of the steering committee members. On the sidelines, the more forward thinking members wordsmithed a final version of these constraints that was considerably softer. In the Design Team Manual, guardrails are addressed as follows: "Constraints have been drastically minimized in an effort to encourage your creativity and freedom to go 'out
of the box.' So, for the early stages, only avoid planning for 'Human Resource' issues such as firing, firing, discipline, benefits, or compensation packages. Remember that all planning must meet both company and government safety and environmental requirements. Your area of focus in the design process is the area over which you currently have control. If you have need of support or other types of involvement from departments or work groups outside your areas of control, please bring these needs to the Empowerment Steering Committee as soon as you know them. Your recommendations and final design plan will need approval from the Steering Committee prior to implementation" (Richardson & Cox, 1995, p. 9).

Committee members in support of empowerment clearly exerted their influence on the guardrail issue. Those with a more conservative stance would end up influencing in other ways.

Growing internal experts. In September 1994, one month after "kicking off" design teams, the steering committee began to consider the need to grow internal expertise on organizational change. Specifically, they saw a need to train designated employees as "co-facilitators" of the design teams. In the pilot design teams, these co-facilitators were to act as understudies of the external facilitator until they were capable of facilitating the design team on their own. Later, with the help of these specially trained individuals, knowledge about work redesign could be cascaded throughout the organization. More specific consideration of the internal expert role, and the formal procedure that would be used to cascade learning throughout the organization, was put off until early 1996.
Design team reports. It wasn’t until October 1994 that the steering committee was able to agree on final implementation issues, largely due to philosophical differences. Committee members haggled over the role that management should play in the design team’s efforts. Some felt that managers should have final authority over design team recommendations as they proceeded with their work. Others saw this as a means through which traditional managers could continue to exert control. Still others expressed concern about managers later refusing to support design work that they had no input into. Committee members struggled in defining the amount of control that they themselves should have over design team work.

These concerns were finally folded into a broad procedure for design team’s to formally report progress to the steering committee. Each design team was required to make four formal reports to the steering committee at several key points in the re-design process. Formal reports offered a critical communication link between the steering committee and design teams. Specifically, this reporting structure was designed to, 1) prevent design teams from getting too far "off-track" as they work through the Design Team Manual, 2) provide an opportunity for the design teams to get timely feedback as their work progresses, 3) open dialogue between the steering committee and design teams so that there would be no "surprises" when final recommendations were presented, 4) help track the extent to which each design team had involved management in all phases of the re-design process, and, 5) leave a "paper trail" so that the steering committee could capture the activities of all pilot design teams.
Report format. All design teams used the same format for preparing and submitting their progress reports to the steering committee. Design teams were given an outline of the content they were expected to include in each of four reports. They were required to 1) schedule an appointment to present their report to the steering committee, 2) provide a type-written copy of their report to a designated steering committee member one week before their scheduled appointment, so the report could be distributed to the entire committee, and, 3) make an oral presentation to the steering committee highlighting the contents of their written report.

During the oral presentation, steering committee members asked questions to help clarify issues, but were instructed not to critique the design team’s ideas. Formal feedback and critique from the steering committee was provided to design teams later in writing, after all committee members had reached consensus on their appraisal.

Report contents. Each design team was asked to present four formal reports to the steering committee at specific points during the redesign. In their first report, design teams were asked to document the work they had completed in the first three chapters of the design team manual. This included logistical information about their team, such as meeting times, frequency, team membership, code of conduct, and mission statement, along with the results of their environmental analysis.

The second report covered the work they had done in Chapters four, five, six and seven of the design team manual. These chapters covered the second and third pillars of work redesign: technical and social analysis.
The third report included work done in Chapters eight through twelve. These chapters covered the design of unit boundaries, work roles, team leadership roles, decision making systems, and the future training plan for the work area.

The final report made by design teams, included the work they had done in chapters thirteen, fourteen and fifteen of the design team manual. These chapters covered the design of a renewal plan, empowerment plan, and an implementation plan.

In each report, design teams were asked to address three broad issues: 1) learning, 2) interface with management, and 3) anticipated needs that may require steering committee support.

Learning. These pilot teams were seen as learning opportunities for the rest of the organization. To capitalize on pilot learnings, each design team was asked to briefly list the critical things they felt must be passed on to future design teams. They were also asked to describe how well the co-facilitators were being "grown" for future use, and to suggest improvements to enhance their learning.

Interface with management. Teams were asked to describe how they had brought management into the redesign process, informed them about team activities, and utilized their expertise and opinions. Specifically, design teams were required to answer the following four questions:

1) How have you tapped into the expertise of your management?
2) What concerns did they express?
3) How did you address these concerns?
4) Is this acceptable to management? To the design team?
This allowed design teams to open the door to good communication with management, without having to relate to managers in a traditional way. By learning to dialogue with each other about ideas, managers and team members were afforded an opportunity to begin to work toward mentoring relationships--not command and control relationships. While design teams were instructed that they must address concerns expressed by management, managers did not have "approval" or "veto" authority. If necessary, disagreements were to be negotiated through the steering committee.

**Anticipated needs.** Design teams were asked to identify special support or resources they anticipated needing from the steering committee in the near future. This was designed to help teams learn to think ahead, and to prevent the committee from being surprised by sudden requests.

Overall, the details discussed in the design team report procedure satisfied the philosophical whims of all steering committee members. This plan seemed to strike a balance between the need for control, and the need to develop more collaborative relationships with management. Further, the design teams readily accepted the structure this procedure placed on them. As a side benefit, it offered them an opportunity to develop presentation skills, and to build trust and rapport with the steering committee before making final design recommendations.

**Design a Communication Plan**

Rumors tend to flourish when organization members are denied information. By early March 1994, just four months after their first meeting, the steering committee
began to feel the effects of this truism. A sudden onslaught of rumors prompted the committee to begin thinking about ways to provide the organization with accurate information about the redesign plans at hand. The committee also wanted to send a message that even though the change effort was relatively new, it was not going to fold in its early stages.

To accomplish these goals, the steering committee did several things. First, it made sure that information about ABC's transition to a team-based structure appeared in a special section of the company's annual report. Second, it expanded the quarterly Enterprise newsletter to include several special focus articles about the steering committee's activities in each issue. Later this was expanded further to include articles about each of the pilot design team's efforts.

But perhaps the most effective action taken by the steering committee, was to open themselves to answer any anonymous question put forth by organizational members. The official answers were published, and distributed to all organizational members. This of course prompted more questions.

At their first invitation, the steering committee received nineteen questions, ranging from "will managers have a place in the future organization?", to, "what is the difference between a problem solving team and a design team?" Committee members spent four hours discussing the answers to the first few questions, before realizing that they couldn't possibly answer all the questions before the next batch came in. Not wanting to sacrifice thoughtfulness, they split themselves into smaller teams of three, and divided up the remaining questions. Answers arrived at in these smaller sub-
committees were then brought back to the larger group for final agreement. At times, questions were recycled several times until they met the entire committee’s satisfaction. An unexpected by-product of this endeavor, was the continued solidification of the steering committee’s sense of a unified set of values and purpose. As a team, they grew stronger.

The Q&A publications became wildly popular. In fact, after three months there were so many questions and answers that they had to be thematically sorted. Organizational members seemed most concerned about trust (or a lack thereof), leadership issues, problems with communication/information flow, questions about the redesign process, and training issues. In particular, concerns about inequities between hourly and salaried workers occupied a great deal of organizational time and energy. Recognizing a need to come to some philosophical union, the steering committee spent May through August 1994 discussing hourly-salaried issues. The topic finally fizzled out when committee members grew weary of arguing.

By October 1994, the committee noticed that organization members were asking the same (or similar) questions as they had earlier. This prompted the steering committee to publish a compendium of all Q&A’s ever put before the committee. A substantial drop-off in future questions let the committee know that they had achieved their purpose: communicating so thoroughly with the organization that there were no more questions. In January 1995 the active solicitation of questions ceased. Instead, a small form was placed in the corner of the Enterprise newsletter inviting anonymous questions for the steering committee. None came.
Design a Commitment Plan

Whether change is initiated from the top of the organization downward, or from the bottom upward, at some point it must be grown throughout the organization. By achieving a critical mass of support throughout the organization, the effort is more likely to survive.

Early on, the steering committee considered the strategic location of supporters. Because the ABC redesign was a top-down initiative, they began by looking across the top of the organization. They examined their own committee, and asked themselves, "who else should be here?" They looked at peers, bosses, and heads of other divisions. In February 1994 it was decided that three key people had been left out of the loop: the Plant Manager, the Director of Human Resources, and the Director of Corporate Administration. The Plant Manager was immediately incorporated into the steering committee, while the other two were included in the compensation committee, formed in June 1994.

Establishing the clear support of the owner-family of ABC was seen as critical. Three senior family members (in their 70's) and three junior family members (in their late 30's) were very highly regarded by employees. The blessing of junior family members was a particularly important symbol, because they will replace the retiring executive committee and take ABC Corporation into the next century. From the beginning, one junior family member sat on the steering committee, to be joined by another in June 1995. Yet another junior family member was present at the August 1994 kickoff celebration launching the four pilot design teams. At this event, he
delivered a compelling speech about teams being the future direction of ABC
Corporation. Shortly after the design team launch, other key junior family members
visited design team meetings to give an informal speech thanking design team
members (on behalf of the entire family) for their hard work and support. This
gesture was repeated in the Fall of 1995.

The steering committee continually scanned the organization for opportunities
to build commitment. For instance, they targeted one openly negative Vice President,
and offered to send him to a large conference about work teams sponsored by the
university who was helping with their redesign effort. He refused, saying that he
"could not waste company funds" in that manner. Because university staff were
facilitating ABC's steering committee, they were able to offer a free conference seat to
ABC Corporation. Committee members decided to give this ticket to the negative
V.P., stating that the university felt his attendance was so critically important that the
fee would be waived. This V.P. attended the conference, and was quickly
overwhelmed by the number of forward-thinking companies whom he saw as moving
in the same direction as ABC. Soon after his conference experience, this once
negative V.P. began vocalizing support for the redesign initiative that ABC had
undertaken.

Perhaps one of the most clever ways of building organization-wide commitment
emerged as a by-product of their effort to clearly communicate with employees. By
agreeing to give written responses to any question anonymously put to the steering
committee, a tremendous amount of trust was built. In some of their questions,
organization members openly complained about a lack of commitment in certain areas. The steering committee response, published next to the employee's question, made clear that a lack of commitment would not be tolerated from organization members. Yet there was an implicit understanding that those who had trouble making the shift would be handled with patience.

As time went on, the manner in which organizational resistance was received changed. The committee discussed the issue at length, and argued about the approach with which resistors should be handled. Some felt that the organization should patiently wait for them to change their minds. Committee members worried about using a dictatorial approach to preach about empowerment. Others felt resistors should be targeted for education. Still others believed that resistors should be "given a stern talking to" by the V.P. of Operations. Finally, after a year of their efforts, the committee agreed that a more stern approach to resistors was appropriate. Their once benevolent and patient stance turned to intolerance.

By October 1995, some steering committee members began to wonder out loud about individuals who "still don't get it." For the first time, they philosophically entertained the notion of having to terminate such employees. This was a major shift in thinking from their original rehabilitative stance.

**Design a Support Plan**

Because this redesign effort originated as a "top-down" initiative, a great deal of financial support was in place before steering committee activity got underway. Also, because it was nestled within the cost-center of the Omega program, unexpected
expenses could be adjusted into the Omega budget. With strong support from the family owning ABC, the project had built-it assurances of ongoing fiscal support. Therefore, it wasn’t necessary for the steering committee to directly address fiscal needs.

However, the steering committee identified two other support needs. These included the need for widespread training, and the need for emotional buffering for change agents.

Training needs. Beginning in March 1994, the future need for extensive training was identified as a key issue. That is, the need to provide all employees with the skills training they might need to function in a team environment. In steering committee meetings, much time was spent talking about the upcoming training needs of teams. This was of particular concern because ABC Corporation did not have an organization development or training function. Because they were faced with more pressing issues, the committee finally decided to set aside plans to create training packages. As a backup, a chapter in the design team manual required teams to conduct a formal needs assessment of their future training requirements. This site specific information was then fed back to the steering committee for future planning. In September 1995, the steering committee agreed to create an education team within the organization, whose primary responsibility would be to identify needs and coordinate training activities.

Emotional buffering. A plan to offer emotional/political support to internal change agents was devised in October 1994, soon after they began their work.
Regular support meetings were designed to address the stress and political vulnerability that change agents might feel. At first, these meetings were nothing more than "bitch sessions." By August 1995, they developed into plans for a sophisticated mentoring program for future design team facilitators.

Decide on Plan/Philosophy for Managers & Supervisors

Perhaps one of the most difficult steps that any steering committee must face, is decision making about the future of managers and supervisors. Periodically over two years, steering committee conversation would brush this topic. At each encounter, tremendous conflict erupted. Opposing philosophical stances that had surfaced early on when design team guardrails were being set had grown more severe. The manufacturing segment of the committee seemed to hold steadfast to very traditional managerial values, while members from the corporate offices were more open about empowerment. In retrospect, these polar opposite beliefs may have been more age related than anything. The traditional views held by manufacturing may have been a reflection of age related schema's about what it means to be "successful" as a manager--that is, having power, authority, and prestige.

The steering committee finally began addressing manager/supervisor issues in October 1995--almost two years after their first meeting. Even though the committee had matured considerably, they still found themselves unable to philosophically agree on many of the fine points of management's role in the future.

However, there were points upon which they unanimously agreed. First, they all agreed that massive layoffs (or any layoffs) were not the answer they sought.
Members believed that natural attrition through retirement would reduce managerial ranks. Second, they agreed that the role of managers would change in the future, to probably include "expert roles" and "centers of excellence." This supports the view that managers would take domain over knowledge, not people. And finally, they agreed that increased empowerment was required to take ABC's Division X into the future. The depth and breadth of this empowerment was still in question.

This steering committee will probably wrestle with these issues for many months to come. Fortunately, in one of the final chapters of the Design Team Manual, teams were asked to come together with management at their site to decide "what empowerment will look like here." Thus, even if steering committee members were to stay forever in gridlock, individual teams are invited to continue their journey toward a more empowered structure in the future.

Conclusion and Learnings

Two years ago, ABC's Empowerment Steering Committee convened to begin planning the ways in which the company might transition to an empowered, team-based structure. In the many months that followed, they addressed the seven critical "thinking" areas needed to lay the groundwork for organizational redesign. By covering these important content areas, the steering committee was able to create a comprehensive framework that could carry their redesign effort forward.

In retrospect, some things could have been done differently. A preliminary task force should have been convened prior to the first official steering committee meeting, and before any formal organization-wide announcements were made about
"going to teams." This would have given the organization an opportunity to more thoroughly prepare for the steering committee's work, by learning more about redesign and the huge task that lay ahead. In short, the steering committee got started with its work without preparation. There was no training, no written plan, and only a vague notion of where the organization was going.

Steering committee members should have had intensive team-building training before beginning this process. This might have helped them develop the skills they needed to be an effective team far more quickly than they did. A formal manual, like the one prepared for the design teams, would have given them the necessary structure and clear sense of purpose they so desperately needed in the beginning.

Yet, part of the energy that propelled them forward was the pressure that came from doing things the way they did. They decided on a direction that wouldn't allow them to turn back without great embarrassment. This was a high-risk gamble that, quite fortunately, paid off. They focused their energy on what seemed important at the time, which afforded them more stamina and creativity than they may otherwise have had. Fire fighting, although chaotic, brings out more energy and creativity than fire prevention. In other words, they were often forced into problem solving mode, rather than planning mode.

Another way of looking at this, is to see the steering committee not so much as "fire fighting," but as confronting issues only when they felt equipped. For instance, they could not have confronted the manager/supervisor issues any earlier, because they were not mature enough as a team to do so. Aside from needing to build interpersonal
skills, they needed to reach a critical level of education about teaming and
eempowerment. Only after this, could they develop a seasoned personal philosophy,
and then reach consensus on a mutual philosophy.

The key then, is to give steering committee's the tools needed to help them
confront the issues they must confront. This means education, skill building, and
providing the structure needed to help them identify key issues. At the same time, the
facilitator must patiently realize that steering committee's move at their own pace, no
matter how skilled the facilitation.
CHAPTER IV

"ASSESS" STEPS: ABC'S TWO-PHASE ASSESSMENT

Assessment—measuring where one is, compared to where one wants to be—is a critical element in an organizational change effort (Orsburn et al., 1990; Hanna, 1988). This is particularly true when transitioning an organization from traditional to team-based (Mohrman & Cummings, 1989). Assessment data creates a road map that can plot the direction that change must take, by highlighting the unique hurdles which stand in the way of the desired goal, and identifying organizational strengths that might propel the change effort forward.

Assessment was particularly important in guiding the ABC project. As a highly traditional organization with almost no history of organization development efforts, ABC faced special challenges. Moving from a long history of very traditional management to an empowered "team-based" structure represented an enormous philosophical shift for all levels of ABC employees.

The two-phase assessment plan used in this project was designed to answer key questions at different phases of the project. Phase I, "Readiness and Roadblocks," was designed to gather broad culture and climate data from the entire X Division. These data would then be used to guide the steering committee's early planning activities, and shape the steps needed to reach redesign goals.
Phase II, "Pilot Assessment," occurred at a much later stage of the organizational change process. In truth, it occurred as an afterthought when it became apparent that the original pilot sites had been selected rather haphazardly. This assessment offered an opportunity to more closely examine the pilot site choices, and gather data to identify roadblocks that each potential pilot might face. Final pilot locations were then selected based on this data.

**Phase I Assessment: Readiness and Roadblocks**

As implied by its name, this assessment was designed to gain information about ABC Division X's overall readiness to begin a transition to a more empowered, team-based structure, while identifying possible barriers to a successful change effort. The data generated from this endeavor would then be used to guide the early activities of the steering committee, by providing a road map for organizational change.

While ABC had a list of business reasons that drove their quest for change, no one had ever empirically examined the thoughts and opinions of ABC employees on the issue. Did they want to be empowered? Would they take a major organization development effort seriously? What's more, no one was certain whether the organization had the critical ingredients needed to make such a change effort succeed. Was there a critical mass of trust? Risk-taking? What roadblocks stood in the way of a successful change effort? Finally, there were questions about management's willingness (and ability) to alter their traditional style. In essence, steering committee members wondered out loud, "Just how traditional are we?"
This assessment was designed to answer these questions by measuring five broad readiness dimensions. These included: 1) Feelings About Empowerment, 2) Climate for Empowerment, 3) Trust and Relationships, 4) Team Design Considerations, and, 5) Personal Views and Concerns. These five dimensions cover the critical contents for readiness assessments which were discussed in Chapter One.

**Feelings about empowerment.** This dimension was designed to discern how ABC employees feel about their current level of empowerment, and whether they want more authority and responsibility for their work in the future. Participants were asked to consider this question in the context of their own jobs, and how they think those at the lowest level of the organization feel.

**Climate for empowerment.** This dimension broadly searched for cultural norms and values that may be inconsistent with empowerment. Participants were asked to identify cultural factors that might make empowerment harder or easier, and where they thought problems might be encountered. Two questions specifically focused on the extent to which risk-taking and follow-through on new ideas was perceived to be present.

**Trust and relationships.** Trust—especially between supervisors and subordinates—is a major issue during a major organizational change effort. This dimension examined the extent to which there was a climate of openness, trust and constructive conflict between managers and subordinates, and among employees in general.
Team design considerations. Not all work can be done effectively in a team structure. This dimension broadly examined employee opinion on whether they thought their work (or the work they supervise) lends itself to teamwork.

Personal views and concerns. This dimension allowed participants a more open-ended venue to express their personal views about teams and empowerment, and their concerns about the organizational change effort as a whole.

Readiness and Roadblocks Assessment Method

A structured interview format was used to gather data from 60 employees, in either one-on-one interviews, or in focus groups of up to seven participants. Fourteen questions formed the skeleton of the structured interview (Appendix B), which was expanded by using probing questions when appropriate.

The data gathered reflected opinions from nine areas within Division X: ABC Executive Committee, Plant A, Metal Manufacturing Shop, Print Shop, Sales Aid Center, Sales Support, Purchasing, Transportation, and the Order Department. All levels of the organization were included in this process. Specifically, the data reflected the opinions of 30 hourly associates, 15 supervisors, and 15 upper level managers or executives. For clarity, "supervisors" were defined as those managers to whom hourly associates directly report. "Upper level managers" and "executives" included persons who are one (or more) supervisory levels higher—for instance, department heads, upper level administrators, or members of the Executive Committee.

One-on-one interviews were conducted with all three groups. The perspectives of the 15 upper level managers were obtained only through such interviews. Focus
groups, (in addition to interviews) were held separately for groups of supervisors and
groups of associates.

All participants received the same instructions prior to their interview or focus
group (Appendix C). Before beginning each interview or focus group, the assessors
read a standard script to introduce themselves and their intentions. In particular, it was
made clear to all participants that: 1) their opinions would be kept completely
confidential, 2) they had the right to refuse any question, 3) their participation was
entirely voluntary, and, 4) they could end their participation at any time. Each
participant then signed a consent form which indicated that they understood these
points (Appendix C).

Interviews were arranged so that the data might reflect honest, direct, and
diverse opinions from multiple perspectives. Given the comments that were generated,
it appears that this was achieved. The data provided rich ideas and perspectives on
both readiness and potential roadblocks.

The results of this assessment was compiled in a two-part written report, which
was presented to the steering committee. The first section of the report included a
summary of the results of the interview questions, clustered into five general areas; 1)
Feelings About Empowerment, 2) Climate for Empowerment, 3) Trust and
Relationships, 4) Team Design Considerations, and, 5) Personal Views and Concerns.
The results were arranged so that the perspectives of associates, supervisors and upper
level managers could be viewed separately, without betraying the department from
which the data came.
The second section of the report presented a summary of the overall themes and issues which surfaced in the assessment. With each theme, key questions were included for the steering committee to consider as they planned for SDWT implementation. During the oral review of this report, all steering committee members were invited to actively discuss, challenge, and add to these suggestions.

**Readiness and Roadblocks Assessment: Results**

When the interview responses of associates, supervisors, and managers were examined, seven key themes emerged. These themes, based on the five dimensions listed earlier, provided prompts for project planning and design.

**Theme 1.** The basic climate for empowerment, attitudes towards mistakes and experimentation, and the level of trust between associates and managers varied a great deal across the different areas within Division X. Apparently, each department had developed its own "sub-culture," with some being quite open to empowerment, while others exhibited more primitive managerial practices. These latter groups were likely to need many months or years of basic development and trust-building before empowerment could be expected to flourish.

**Theme 2.** The transition to an empowered, team-based organization would require a major change in thinking when compared with past management practices in Division X. People at all levels generally perceived Division X to have a long history of being operated with very traditional management tactics, such as close direction and top-down authority.
Theme 3. There was a great deal of concern about how team-based
departments would interact with departments outside Divisions X who were not part of
the Omega program. In particular, there was grave concern about the cooperation of
Sales Division, and their potential power to shut down empowerment efforts because
of ABC's "sales-driven" culture.

Theme 4. Although associates generally reported a desire for greater
responsibility and authority, some clearly did not. Some ABC employees have chosen
to remain with the company for 30 plus years because they enjoy working under very
traditional conditions. For them, a shift to an empowered culture might be extremely
uncomfortable. Other employees were concerned that empowerment might mean more
work—with no more pay—which they did not find appealing.

Theme 5. Supervisors expressed that they viewed the team transition as risky
on many fronts. They reported concern about being trapped between management and
employees, and were worried about job loss, a lack of support, and the possibility of
this effort being an organizational fad.

Theme 6. At all levels, almost every person felt that there has not been enough
follow-through in past organizational initiatives, which may color the overall
perception of teams. In particular, people expressed concern because ABC has a
history of announcing programs, but then not supporting them when bottom-line costs
are involved.

Theme 7. Peppered throughout all levels of responses were two popular
beliefs: 1) That the whole "empowerment thing" was solely being driven by the
desires of the about-to-retire Vice President of Division X, and, 2) one should never disagree with this V.P., because he will "get you later." In combination, these beliefs were seen as particularly deadly to this organizational change effort. In the worst case, people might sabotage the effort by nodding in agreement with things that could be deadly for the project, all out of fear of disagreeing with the V.P. At best, organization members might feign support of the project until the V.P. retires, then abandon it later.

This finding was viewed as highly critical, yet sensitive. To be sure that the content was well-handled, a private report was prepared for the vice President of Division X in which these perceptions were discussed. He was asked to consider two ways that the negative perceptions might be reversed: 1) Create a plan to gain strategic neutral champions, and, 2) Promote open discussion, disagreement, and communication of ideas, making it "visibly O.K." to disagree. The private report and suggestions were well-received, and ultimately were openly shared with the rest of the steering committee.

Summary

Phase I Assessment, "Readiness and Roadblocks," was completed in February 1994--just two months after the first steering committee meeting. The data generated by this endeavor provided a much-needed foundation for the steering committee’s work throughout the rest of the organizational change effort. By recognizing key issues, roadblocks, and strengths, a plan could be made to move forward with work redesign.
Phase II Assessment: Pilot Site Selection

Pilot sites serve a two-fold purpose in an organizational change effort. First, these sites are used as learning endeavors for the organization, so that redesign plans can be fine tuned before organization wide changes are made. As such, pilots must be sturdy enough to handle the bumps and bruises inherent in serving as a "test area" for a complex organizational change. Second, the pilot sites serve as an inspiration and example of the direction in which the organization has chosen to move. The success of pilot sites is thus critical, because they signal the rest of the organization about the changes that lie ahead. Because ABC Corporation had such a well-entrenched traditional culture, it was critical to select pilot areas that were certain to succeed. As is true when implementing large-scale change efforts in highly traditional organizations, ABC had a few members who fiercely supported the change, and a few members who vehemently opposed it. However, early on, most of the organization was holding its collective breath to see if the change effort would gain momentum, or if it would perish with all the other "button programs" that had been instituted. For this reason, the quality of the pilot experience bore great weight in swaying organizational opinion about the direction of change in general.

As Division X of ABC Corporation began to consider implementing empowered teams, one of the first decisions made was which areas would serve as pilot sites. This was a "behind the scenes" political decision that occurred prior to the first official meeting of the empowerment steering committee. In fact, the members
selected for the steering committee were conveniently made up of the managers of these previously chosen pilot areas.

As discussed earlier, decisions about steering committee membership and the location of pilot sites were made with corporate politics in mind. The original pilot sites were selected because they were perceived as having management that were eager to move to a more empowered work structure, not because they were particularly well-suited for teaming. These "forward thinking managers" were then asked to serve on the empowerment steering committee, even though no-one really had a grasp of the magnitude of work that yawned before the steering committee or the pilot areas.

In truth then, the selection of the original pilot sites was made rather haphazardly. This decision was made without understanding the real purpose of pilot sites, what a "good pilot" might look like, or the implications of making a poor choice. In fact, poor choices were evident in the list of pilots originally selected. The challenge, was to change earlier decisions without marring the egos of those involved, or making it appear as if politics played a hand in the original choices. The best option seemed to be to conduct a second assessment, geared specifically toward choosing ideal pilot sites.

Pilot Site Assessment: Undoing an Earlier Mistake

Rather than publicizing the "mistakes" made in the initial pilot selection, the pilot site assessment was framed as "the next step" in pilot site selection for those "potential pilots" chosen earlier. Assessees were told that a closer examination of each of the previously chosen sites was necessary to identify those areas with the greatest
likelihood for success. The pilot site assessment was broadly geared to examine, 1) whether the work processes in potential pilot areas were amenable to a team-based structure, and, 2) the extent to which other structural features of potential pilot sites might impact the ease with which teams might be implemented.

Thus, the previously chosen pilot sites—print shop, metal manufacturing shop, domestic transportation, and sales support—were scheduled for assessment. Two other sites—Import/Export and Plant A Shipping—were also included in this assessment, even though they were not originally chosen as pilot locals.

The Import/Export area, which was part of the transportation department, completed the pilot assessment because there was a move afoot to include them in the redesign effort of the rest of the transportation department. It was unclear whether this inclusion stemmed from genuine interdependence between the work areas, or if it represented a political move to gain corporate territory. Because the latter was suspected, a separate assessment for the Import/Export area was completed.

On the other hand, the shipping area of Plant A requested permission to be considered for pilot status. The shipping area was headed by a front line supervisor that had come to ABC from a company that utilized the team concept. This supervisor had apparently already begun an empowerment effort in the shipping area, and sought inclusion in the pilot effort as a way to legitimize his stance. He lobbied the empowerment steering committee through letters and telephone calls to members, and even went to the corporate fitness facility where he "bumped into" the Vice President
of Division X to plead his case. Because of their apparent enthusiasm, the Plant A Shipping was included in the assessment for pilot status.

**Pilot Assessment Method**

Within each potential pilot area, a cross section of associates were subjected to a semi-structured interview using a focus group format. The general questions used in this interview appear in Appendix D.

The interview consisted of an informal series of questions which were designed to examine seven key dimensions. They were: 1) work structure/boundaries, 2) department/area structural complexity, 3) interdependence, 4) uncertainty, 5) coordinating mechanisms, 6) common goals, and 7) team member perceptions.

After gathering the data, a written report was prepared for each of the areas assessed. Each member of the steering committee was given a copy of the written reports. The assessors then orally presented the data to the steering committee in a dimension-by-dimension format for each potential pilot assessed. That is, potential pilot areas were discussed one-by-one, one dimension at a time. The positives and negatives of each areas' data was reviewed before deciding on pilot status. Committee members were encouraged to recognize that while it is critical to have pilot sites with work processes that are "teamable," the other dimensions represent features that ought to be considered collectively. That is, they were encouraged to consider the general pattern or configuration of dimensions, rather than how each single dimension was rated. Steering committee members were also reminded that the purpose of this assessment was to review ideal pilot characteristics, not qualities needed to be an
effective team. Thus, while a given work area may not be an ideal pilot, they might still be an appropriate site for teams in the future.

**Pilot Assessment Outcomes: Sites Chosen**

Six pilot assessments were completed in July 1994, one month prior to the design team "kickoff" celebration. This included four areas that were previously chosen—sales support, print shop, domestic transportation, metal manufacturing shop—and two that were later considered—Import/Export, Plant A Shipping. Data from each site were compiled into a written report and an oral presentation, both of which were reviewed with the steering committee. The implications of the extent to which each site "fit" each of the seven dimensions were discussed at length, with negatives and positives highlighted for each area. The committee then made a collective decision about which areas would be pilot sites for work redesign. Four pilot site were chosen: print shop, domestic transportation, metal manufacturing shop, and Plant A Shipping. The other two sites assessed—Sales Support and Import/Export—were not selected.

**The Print Shop.** The empowerment steering committee found it relatively easy to select the print shop as a good pilot site, because it rated highly in nearly all the dimensions on which it was measured. As a self-contained small business unit, it had clear boundaries within which redesign work could be done. The work was simple and linear, without complex coordinating mechanisms or managerial hierarchy. The eight employees in this work area formed a close-knit group that reportedly enjoyed a good relationship with their manager. Everyone in the work area, including the
manager, expressed a strong desire to be a pilot site for empowered teams. The only drawback to selecting this group was the amount of time the design process might steal from regular print shop operations. With only eight employees, all would serve on the design team. This would leave the print shop without workers every time the design team met to complete its work.

Transportation. Likewise, the domestic transportation area was quickly selected as a pilot site, largely because they had reportedly been moving toward empowerment for some time. According to the assessment results, their work processes were well suited for redesign. Their technical processes contained a mixture of linear and non-linear work, which was mostly contained within clear boundaries. Some interdependence with other departments was noted, but none to the degree that would disrupt redesign. Generally, this area was described as flat and simple in terms of coordinating mechanisms, with clear goals, and a fairly stable and certain environment. Some of their work processes were noted to be quite complex, and non-linear. This, along with the number of "specialist" jobs, were seen as drawbacks to pilot desirability.

The Metal Shop. The metal manufacturing shop was another good candidate for pilot status. With work processes that were simple, linear, and routine, this group was seen as the heart of the manufacturing process. The work area was structurally simple, with unremarkable coordinating mechanisms and management structure. The employees presented themselves as being both exceptionally bright and eager. The
only major concerns about his area, involved the uncertain business environment in
which it existed, and the unsteady relationship between managers and workers.

Sales support. Decision making about Sales Support was also fairly easy,
because they had rated so poorly on many "teamability" dimensions. To redesign this
area within its existing boundaries would be a waste of time, because the way the
work was divided within the department rendered it unsuitable for teams. This area
had several clusters of work within its boundaries, that were not interdependent with
each other, but instead were interdependent with areas outside the department. For this
reason, Sales Support was identified as a good candidate for horizontal redesign
around their four business processes, which crossed into several other departments. A
horizontal redesign cutting across several departments was deemed too complex for
this pilot effort.

Import/Export. Similar data emerged from the Import/Export assessment.
While they fall within the departmental boundaries of "Transportation," much of their
work appeared to be aligned with the International stream of the business. It appeared
that the most efficient way to redesign this area might be to cut across business
processes, although more data from the International division was needed to make that
decision. With only six employees in the Import/Export area, there was concern about
their ability to engage in the design team process while covering routine work
assignments. This took on particular significance when the complexity of their work
processes was noted.
Import/Export had expressed a willingness to be included in pilot activities, but stated that they "felt fine about not being included too." Curiously, management within the Transportation department insisted on Import/Export's inclusion in the redesign process, preferably by lumping their work into that of domestic transportation. Apparently, there was a long history of political energy around the issue of whether Import/Export belonged within the transportation department or the international division.

To complicate the decision making picture further, a manager from domestic transportation sat on the steering committee, while there was no committee representation from Import/Export. The domestic transport manager was able to voice his lobby within the steering committee meeting, with strong exhortations that the two areas should be included on one design team. To do so meant an incredibly complex design team process—too complex for pilot activities. In addition, it opened up the potential for domestic transport managers to act out an alleged personal agenda to "overtake" the manager of import/export.

As if in a high stake poker game, the domestic transport manager stated that he refused to have transportation involved in pilot activities without Import/Export. Raising the ante, the assessors flatly refused to be part of a pilot site that included both domestic and import/export, or import/export alone. This was a serious statement because the assessors were supposed to facilitate the pilot design teams. After heated discussion, the transportation manager agreed to be part of a pilot design team for the
domestic transportation processes only, with representatives from Import/Export
serving on the team.

**Plant A Shipping.** The final pilot site assessment to be reviewed by the
steering committee was on the Shipping area of Plant A. At this site, the supervisor
had all but begged committee members to consider his area for pilot status. During
the assessment process, this group impressed the examiners with their determination to
become empowered despite the very traditional plant environment in which they
existed. They offered a very favorable impression of their work processes, and seemed
to have been very successful at the empowerment efforts they had engaged in thus far.
Yet, the assessors were concerned about the maverick status this group enjoyed. With
strong support, they could lead the way for culture change within Plant A. Without
such support however, there was a danger that they would be destroyed by the
"corporate immune system."

Steering committee members agreed: A "win" in the plant would be a
tremendous boost to the empowerment process throughout ABC, while a "failure"
might send an equally strong negative message. More important, committee members
wondered what kind of message would be sent if the eager shipping group were denied
pilot status. Might this send a signal that "empowerment" will never reach the plant?
These two factors—the power of a "plant win" and a desire to reward eager employees
--drove the decision to accept the shipping area as a pilot site.
Summary

Phase II Assessment, "Pilot Site Selection," was completed in July 1994—one month before the official kick-off for pilot design teams. Each of six potential pilot sites were carefully examined to be sure that the final pilots had the best possible chance for success. This assessment also gave valuable information about the strengths and weak spots in each of the four sites chosen.

Conclusion and Learnings

A two-phased assessment plan was used to guide decision making in this organizational change effort. Each phase served a different—but equally critical—function in contributing information that was used in the overall planning and decision making of this project.

The data gathered were useful for several reasons. First, for the most part, they richly represented what was really going on within ABC Corporation. Over time, the predictions made and issues discussed in these reports were proven to have been exactly on target. It was thus a useful tool in planning strategies to implement change. When the steering committee paid attention to the data and used it to shape strategy, their results were generally effective. For example, by attending to the need to grow more strategic champions, perceptions about the effort being "another fad" have all but vanished. Conversely, when the data were ignored, the predicted issues were noted to resurface "like a corpse in a lake."

Good data come from good data gathering procedures. No short cuts were taken in collecting and analyzing responses. Literally hundreds of hours were spent in
interviews and focus groups, with many more in analyzing and contemplating the meaning of the data. Using the more open-ended format for some questions proved to be well worth the time required. Very rich data came when asking, "Can you think of anything else that would be important for me to know?"

Respondents appeared to feel comfortable and assured of their confidentiality, largely because of professional practices such as informed consent forms. Also, the data were gathered by people known to be "ABC outsiders" who are affiliated with a University, not a consulting firm. This afforded an extra level of trust and openness.

Still, there were incidents in which total honesty was missing. This was most evident in the Pilot Assessments, where a few groups were inclined bend the truth to sell themselves as a good pilot site. For instance, in their enthusiasm to be a pilot site, the Shipping area "forgot" to tell the examiners that an impending technological change would all but wipe out their department in the months to come. Had an organizational insider been present when their assessment took place, this fact would have probably come to light.

Yet, "good data" alone isn’t enough—they must be used. Perhaps the most compelling learning from this portion of the project, was the power that denial has over reason. The temptation to override what the data say in order to satisfy political desires can be overwhelming--for both organizational members and external consultants. Particularly when selecting pilot sites, there is an extreme danger that decision makers will "see what they want to see," and will twist the data to conform to their preconceived notions. For instance, political--not technical--criteria were used to
select Plant A Shipping as a pilot site. The idea of a pilot succeeding in the most unempowered and traditional corner of ABC Corporation was seductive enough to cause decision makers to ignore all the red flags which suggested caution. In fact, this pilot was the only one to fail—and it did so for the reasons predicted in the assessment.

In retrospect, several points can be made. First, assessment is a critical part of the organizational change process. Both overall readiness and more specific pilot assessments are useful in offering a unique perspective for sound decision making. Second, one must take the time to collect good data—not just "quick and dirty" questionnaires. Face to face, one-on-one contact is not only a good way to get information, but it also offers an opportunity to build rapport and trust in the intentions of change agents. And finally, one must use the good data that has been collected—and not fall prey to the tendency to ignore and deny what we don’t want to see.
CHAPTR V

"DESIGN" STEPS: THE WORK OF DESIGN TEAMS

Design teams typically drive the micro-level changes that are needed to move an organization through the transformation from traditional to team-based. The work of the design teams is to actually do the nitty-gritty thinking and deciding about how each redesigned work area will be operated. These decisions address staffing, cultural, and operational questions for each work area that is transitioning to teams. With the guidance of the Steering Committee, design teams make recommendations about redesigning their portion of the organization.

Typically, sociotechnical redesign methods are used in such endeavors. This means conducting three broad analyses; 1) environmental analysis, 2) technical analysis, and, 3) social analysis.

**Environmental Analysis**

An environmental analysis involves a scan of the environment, including a review of the history, culture, goals, and structure of the organization, and an identification of the external economic and technical forces that act on the organization. It also involves interface with customers. After identifying key customers or stakeholders, design teams explore their needs, wants, and expectations. Sometimes this represents the first time workers have had the opportunity to hear their customer’s voice.
Technical Analysis

A technical analysis entails multiple steps designed to examine how well the technical processes of a work area operate. This analyses gives design teams the opportunity to identify the common problems that interfere with quality, efficiency, and customer satisfaction, so that better work methods can be designed.

Social Analysis

A social analysis examines human needs in the workplace. That is, finding out what motivates people and makes them feel good about their jobs, so that design work can include ways to create a positive, motivating job environment.

After addressing these three pillars of sociotechnical redesign, design teams must consider putting in place the support mechanisms needed to sustain a healthy, teaming environment. This includes defining work unit boundaries, creating methods to coordinate with those outside unit boundaries, and defining the ways in which work will be divided into jobs within the work unit. It also means designing systems for decision making, training, measurement, renewal, and empowering teams, along with creating a plan to implement the new structure.

ABC’s Design Teams

After pilot assessments were conducted in July 1994, four areas within ABC’s Division X were chosen as sites for pilot design teams. They included three manufacturing areas with mostly linear, routine work (Plant A’s shipping area, the metal manufacturing shop, and the print shop), and one administrative area (domestic transportation) which had a mixture of linear and non-linear work processes.
These design teams were officially launched to do their work during a kickoff luncheon on August 31, 1994. All employees from the newly selected pilot areas were invited to attend the event—not just design team members. Steering committee members were included as well, bringing the number of attendees to over sixty people.

The "kickoff" event was carried out with celebration and fanfare. Speeches were made by the V.P. of Division X and a junior member of the family owning ABC. Photographs were taken, special design team t-shirts were issued, and everyone present was given a copy of the Design Team Manual—the customized workbook that guided employees through the steps involved in sociotechnical redesign.

The week after the kickoff celebration, all four pilot design teams had their first meeting. Two facilitators from a nearby university and the head of the Omega Program attended each team's first meeting, to help orient members to their work, and answer any questions they might have about the redesign process.

Subsequent design team meetings were facilitated by university staff, largely because both the manual and the redesign process being used by ABC Corporation were authored by them. By November 1994 external facilitators were joined by a "facilitator in training" from within ABC Corporation. In each of the four design teams, a different "co-facilitator" acted as an internal agent to learn the redesign process, so that the organization could begin growing internal experts.

In general, design teams met once a week for about four hours, until they had worked their way through the Design Team Manual. This process took approximately
eighteen months. At strategic points in the redesign process, design teams were required to report their progress to the steering committee. This reporting procedure, described thoroughly in Chapter Three, offered the teams a chance to connect with the steering committee at several points along the way of their long journey. This was particularly helpful in keeping communication lines open, maintaining momentum and enthusiasm, and helping team members reduce their fears of making presentations to this executive level committee. Thus, by the time that they had worked their way through the design process outlined in the Design Team Manual, there was a very comfortable level of rapport between design teams and their overseers, the steering committee.

The Design Team Manual

Each design team member was given their own registered copy of a work redesign manual customized for ABC Corporation. With 15 chapters, each with action steps and "hints" from the empowerment steering committee, this manual guided design teams through the intricate steps of sociotechnical work redesign. Appendix A provides a detailed outlined of the steps involved in this manual.

The original version of the manual was itself a "pilot document," designed to be field tested by the four pilot design teams. The general idea was to create step-by-step redesign guide that would enable shop-floor employees to lead themselves through redesign. By first field testing the manual, its contents could be fine-tuned to better suit this purpose. Once revised, it could be used as a template to insure consistency
The Steps Involved in Redesign: An Overview of the Design Team Manual

Chapters One and Two of the Design Team Manual helped prepare design teams for the work lay ahead of them. Chapter One provided a background of the Enterprise program, why ABC Corporation felt a need to change, and how design team activities fit into the company’s future. This chapter also helped teams learn about the Empowerment Steering Committee, and their role as a pilot site for redesign. Chapter Two helped them form their design team by guiding them through steps to decide how they will get their design work done, maintain service levels, function as a team, and communicate with others outside who are not on the design team.

The real work of redesign began in Chapter Three when design teams conducted an environmental analysis. Through this analysis, each design team identified the main work their unit does, the key stakeholders or customers that interface with their work area, and what they need to do to satisfy these customers' needs and expectations. By knowing what customers expect, they were able to identify the critical things they must do well in order for their work area to succeed. These "key success criteria" were then used to generate a mission statement for the work area, which, along with the design team charter, helped set the direction for their redesign efforts.

Chapters Four and Five guided design teams through a technical analysis of their work area. The technical analysis helped them think about the steps they use to
get work done, so that they could plan ways to technically improve their work area. This involved many complicated steps.

In Chapter Four design teams first learned about the differences between linear and non-linear work so that they could categorize their work processes accordingly. Chapter Four helped them analyze their linear work processes by using tools such as 1) work flow analysis, 2) process mapping, and 3) variance analysis. These tools helped them recognize the major inefficiencies in their work area, so that they could then plan ways to improve their work processes.

Chapter Five guided design teams through an analysis of their non-linear work. By completing an input/output analysis and deliberations analyses, they were able to design ways to improve the way their non-linear or "knowledge work" is done. This involved finding ways to use information and knowledge more effectively, so that they could bring together the right people and right information to solve problems at the right time.

Chapter Six guided design teams through the third major part of work redesign: social analysis. In conducting a social analysis, they learned about the human needs and preferences of people in their work area, and what might motivate them toward high performance. Design teams also looked at the current rules, policies, and cultural norms in their work area that are inconsistent with the principles of empowerment. They took all this information into account when coming up with redesign ideas to improve their social system.
In Chapter Seven, design teams brought together all of their redesign ideas by summarizing the results of their environmental, technical, and social analyses, and the redesign ideas generated from each. They checked your redesign plans against the criteria developed in their mission statement, key success criteria, and key business results, and made adjustments as needed. At this juncture, the foundation of their redesign plan was complete. In subsequent chapters, the design teams refined redesign plans by creating necessary support structures.

Chapter Eight helped design teams define the boundaries of their work area by helping them define what goes inside their boundaries, and how they might interface with those outside their boundaries. Each design team identified the work that they, 1) kept the same, 2) added, 3) created/invented, and 4) eliminated from their work area. This specifically defined the work that their work unit plans to do in the future, when redesign plans are implemented. Each design team then identified key people or departments with whom they regularly interact, and considered ways to improve their relationship with them in the future. This involved looking at the ways that their redesign plans impact others, how they might communicate their plans with others, and how they might better coordinate, communicate, and give and receive feedback in the future.

Once design teams defined the work that lies within each of their boundaries, they were able to think about dividing that work into specific jobs. Chapter Nine helped them do this by presenting some ideas about the characteristics of a "good job," and guiding them through steps to create motivating work roles within their area.
When they clustered together related work processes and/or deliberations, they were able to more easily see where work teams may be appropriate, and/or how pieces of work might be brought together into specific jobs. By defining the different kinds of work--core, support and strategic--design teams were able to create jobs with a balance so that boring/bad jobs might be eliminated. This also helped them decide upon the leadership roles they wanted to have within their team in the future.

Chapter Ten guided teams through the design of a decision making system. They learned the importance of pushing decision making down to the lowest possible level, and providing decision makers with good information upon which to base their judgments. Each design team then identified all the critical decisions that need to be made in their work area. By developing "R.A.S.C.I. charts," they were able to clearly specify everyone's involvement in making critical decisions.

Design teams made plans to set up a basic system for measuring their unit's performance in Chapter Eleven. By focusing on bottom-line results, process effectiveness, and social system effectiveness, they were able to decide which specific things must be measured within their work area. Once deciding what to measure, teams were then able to specify how they might go about measuring and tracking these important things.

Chapter Twelve helped them put into place a training plan, so that associates can be equipped with the knowledge they need to assume greater authority and responsibility. After considering the work and leadership roles they had planned for the future, they identified the knowledge, skills, and abilities that people will need to
perform their jobs. Design teams decided whether people might get the learning they need in "on-the-job" training, through coaching, or in a more formal classroom setting. Finally, they set priorities on the order that training must occur, and decided upon ways to be sure that their training is effective.

Chapter Thirteen guided design teams through the design of a renewal plan to help their design stay alive in the future. Each design team created ways to be sure that, 1) their design is doing what they intended it to do, and 2) they are staying in touch with their customer's needs and external business environment. This step was designed to help their design stay alive and flexible, preventing it from becoming tomorrow's "only way to do things."

Chapter 14 helped teams design a management transition plan to be sure that the momentum for empowerment stays steady. Team members and management came together to discuss what empowerment means both now and in the future. They reached consensus on a definition of "empowerment," and then plotted the steps required for individuals within the work unit to get there. This "empowerment plan" included time frames in which team members would get the training and development needed to take on specific points of empowerment.

Finally, in Chapter fifteen design teams created a plan through which all of their redesign ideas might be implemented. This meant dividing recommended changes into short, mid, and long-term priorities. Design teams were also asked to create a plan to communicate their intended changes with the rest of the organization, and develop an implementation structure to see their ideas through to fruition.
Special Challenges: A Look at Each Pilot Site

Each of the four pilot design teams faced special challenges as they worked their way through the redesign process described in the Design Team Manual. Largely, these challenges were an outgrowth of the interpersonal and political climates within each team. In the section that follows, each site’s journey will be briefly examined.

The Print Shop. Because the print shop is operated by a just handful of people, all eight employees in this work area were able to serve on the design team, along with their manager. For many years this group has functioned as a close-knit team, and reportedly has had excellent working relationships with each other and their manager. Throughout the design process, the manager behaved in a manner consistent with the reputation she had achieved within the company -- that of a relaxed and eager to empower leader.

This group was accustomed to asking for what they wanted, and vocalizing their opinions. Thus, they were the only team to request training on team skills during a segment of each of their design team meetings. These team skills--whether inherent in the group, or acquired later through training--appeared to be an important influence on this team’s ability to work through the redesign process with relative ease. Because meetings were so productive and free of conflict, team members were eager to extend the number of hours they met each week. Meeting more than four hours per week of course helped speed up the design process.
Other factors that contributed to this group's success included the simplicity of their work processes, and the very strong guidance they received from the ABC co-facilitator being trained as an internal expert. This very lively and energetic co-facilitator was able to focus the team's attention more easily because they didn't have to wade through analyses of excessively complex, energy-draining technical processes. Instead, they could focus their redesign energies on better meeting customer needs, and updating their technology to compete in the future.

**Plant A Shipping.** As described in Chapter Four, this group practically begged to be considered for pilot site status. The first-line supervisor, hired less than a year earlier, was an active supporter of the notion of teams and empowerment. At the time pilot sites were launched, he had already started to implement a series of changes that were consistent with a teaming structure. For instance, he began a program of cross-training employees, held regular team meetings, provided team building training, and started to empower subordinates by handing off some of his managerial duties. It was this kind of enthusiasm, in the midst of a highly traditional plant environment, that fueled the steering committee's decision to make the Shipping area a pilot site.

No doubt, it was their "us against the world" attitude that bound this group tightly together as a team, and made it possible for them to move ahead with empowerment even though surrounded by disbelievers. Yet, these were the very things that brought about their failure as a pilot site.

Early on, this team seemed to huddle closely together in defense against anyone who was perceived as threatening their freedom. They were quite vocal in their
distrust of plant management, and other departmental supervisors whom they thought were "against empowerment." Rapidly, the team isolated itself from the rest of the plant, and refused to associate with other groups. The supervisor had open altercations with his peers, during which he expressed disdain for their managerial practices.

Aside from isolating themselves within the plant, this team began to shun the web of support offered by the facilitators, co-facilitators, and even the steering committee itself. The team asked that the facilitators from the Center remove themselves from design activities, so that they could discard the Design Team Manual and "do things their own way." They balked at having an assigned co-facilitator from within ABC, and accused that individual of being a "corporate spy." Angry letters were sent to the Steering Committee questioning the redesign process chosen, the integrity of committee members, and the corporation’s willingness to support empowerment.

A final blow to this team’s credibility, was the fact that they had "forgotten" to mention that their work area was scheduled to go "on-line" in January 1995 with a new, computerized shipping system. Had this information come to light in the pilot site assessment process, the team would not have been recommended for pilot status. This technical change not only meant an upheaval in the work area, but promised to completely alter the boundaries and tasks of the shipping department in the months to come. Engaging this group in a redesign before the outcome of these technical changes was known would have been ill-advised. Thus, in November 1994 the Shipping team was given permission to temporarily refrain from design team activities.
Political turbulence that resulted from this group’s ongoing isolation continued to create havoc, even though they had ceased design work. In February 1995, reportedly because of "performance problems unrelated to the empowerment process," the supervisor of the shipping group was fired. The design team never reconvened.

**Metal Manufacturing Shop.** The metal shop was housed within an ABC manufacturing facility 30 miles from corporate headquarters. This facility manufactures, assembles, and paints metal products for other parts of ABC Corporation as a low cost internal supplier. They are also expected to provide these same services to external customers on the open market, at a competitive price.

For some time this facility had been known to be losing money, and was suspected to be in danger of being shut down. A series of layoffs had occurred earlier in the year, and were thought to be likely to occur again. Their highly traditional managers were often blamed for engaging in business practices that led to chaos, waste, and low morale. For the employees, the design team effort within the metal shop was seen as a last ditch effort to save the facility.

The design team got off to a good start, largely due to the high commitment level of its exceptionally bright members. They were able to quickly form as a productive team, and began working through the manual with good progress.

Difficulties began to emerge in November 1994 when the team began to complain of being the target of management harassment. Reportedly, design team members had been pulled aside and scolded for their activities, and were asked probing questions about "what they were up to." Rumors began to circulate about the plant
manager openly stating that he had no intention of allowing the design team to succeed, and that he had repeatedly scoffed at the notion of empowerment. Production schedules, set by the plant manager, made it nearly impossible for the design team to regularly meet. When they did meet, much of their time was spent talking about the most recent managerial misbehavior, and what they might do about it.

Finally, in early January 1995, the design team and plant management were called together in a conflict resolution meeting. This meeting unearthed multiple problems, among which were a lack of trust, frequent miscommunications, and managerial fear that the team was "out of control." Strong accusations were made from both camps. Apparently, the only events that were grounded in reality was the finding that there had been some confusion about the boundaries between design team work, and the work that occurred on the shop floor.

As a result of this meeting, the shaky relationship between management and team members was temporarily patched up, and the design work continued. Yet for many months afterward, "management problems" continued to periodically gnaw at this team's morale, and slow progress toward their goal. These problems arose with such frequency and predictability, that they were affectionately describing as repeatedly "bubbling up like a corpse in a lake." Though grim, the metaphor captured the team's sentiment.

It was only with the support and protection of the steering committee that this team survived. The plant manager, who was also a steering committee member, was
held in check by his peers on the committee. Though sometimes coy or indirect, they let him know that his lack of support would not be tolerated.

The design team was so far behind in its work, that it was still working on Chapter Four of the manual—technical analysis—in September 1995. They had grown tired, cynical, and seemed at the brink of yielding to managerial pressures to give up. In order to bolster morale, the facilitator abandoned the traditional problem-focused redesign methods described in the manual, and instead had the team "dream up" what an ideal facility would look like. This new focus not only energized the team, but provided them with several fast wins with their designs of scheduling, inventory, and product prototyping systems. Back on track, the team continued its efforts to completion.

Transportation. Potential troubles with this team were evident from the time the pilot assessments were completed. At that time, assessors were given very clear signals that this department was a hotbed of political activity. This intensified with speculations about the department heads’ upcoming retirement. Contemporary wisdom within ABC described the transportation department as one with several "MBA types" who were jockeying for territory and position. These three were known to engage in regular attacks on their peers, a manager in the Import/Export area, and a manager over the truck fleet. At the time of the pilot assessments, (described in Chapter Four) there was reportedly a move afoot to take over the Import/Export area by including it in the scope of the redesign of the domestic transportation area. The matter was
solved when the Steering Committee refused to allow Import/Export work to be included in the redesign.

Still, the political jockeying continued throughout this teams' history. This group was the most interpersonally dysfunctional of all four pilot teams, largely due to the make up and apparent agendas of certain team members. Made up of four female secretaries and four male managers, this team struggled to achieve a balance of participation and mutual respect. In many ways, they never did. It didn't take long for the secretaries to lose motivation, and take a less active role in design work. From the facilitators perspective, it was easy to get the impression that most of the managers were on the design team in an effort to protect their jobs and see that design work shaped the department to suit their political aspirations.

At several junctures, the design team facilitator attempted to rectify the teams' dysfunctional behavior. Very direct feedback was given to the entire group in team meetings, and to individual members on the side. At best, such feedback was a band-aid. At worst, it was met with vehement resistance.

The first time direct feedback was given to the team, it was met with obvious resistance from the managerial team members. The secretaries appeared relieved to at last be acknowledged. Soon after the feedback was delivered, "the team" decided that they didn't need/want outside facilitation for their design team meetings.

From January to February 1995, this team facilitated itself through redesign, at a grave cost. Because they were a group that tended to over-analyze, they ended up creating more than forty process maps during their technical analysis, when only a
handful was required. What’s worse, is that they wasted two months on this unnecessary endeavor. Feeling backed into a corner and unsure of what they were doing, they invited their facilitators to return.

This team continued with their redesign effort, producing an end product that lacked real innovation. Each of the managers had apparently quite carefully guarded their territories, so that no real changes in the nature of their work occurred. However, technical improvements were made in the secretarial positions, so that through automation, their jobs might be less boring and routine.

Conclusions and Learnings

Four pilot design teams began the formal sociotechnical work redesign process described in ABC’s customized Design Team Manual. Of those, only three completed the redesign process. Each of the pilot teams faced their own challenges in completing the redesign process. Yet, when comparing the teams, some trends begin to emerge regarding factors that may bog down progress, and those that may influence design team success.

First, design teams that existed within a politically charged context seemed to get more easily bogged down. A "politically charged" environment is one in which destructive conflicts occupy team members attention. These conflicts could be between team members and management, between two departments or work units, or within the design team itself. For instance, the shipping design team had very highly charged conflicts with everyone outside their team, while the transportation design team spent a lot of energy on conflicts within the team. Conversely, as in the case of
the print shop, design teams that have favorable relationships with themselves and others seemed to have more energy to focus on the work of redesign.

Good team skills also appeared to influence design team success. Knowing how to run an effective meeting, handle conflict, communicate effectively, and appreciate diverse interpersonal styles can make the design team process run more smoothly. As the only team to receive such training, the print shop was well equipped to deal with problems when they came up. On the other hand, the teams who had never had the opportunity to build teaming skills prior to their involvement in design teams seemed to suffer from more frustration, wasted energy, and inefficiency.

All of the design teams lacked training in another important area--principles of organizational change and work redesign. Early in the design team process, all of the teams struggled as they tried to understand the broad process that ABC was using to create a more empowered work environment. This lack of understanding bogged down the redesign process, and created confusion where there didn’t need to be any. Had they been given formal training, design teams would have experienced far less early frustration, and may have functioned more effectively overall.

Finally, the amount of time spent each week on design team work directly affected the teams ability to complete the design task. Aside from the amount of work they were able to complete, teams that met in two hour time blocks were less effective than those who met in four hour blocks. In meetings with shorter time frames, it seemed that an optimum momentum was never reached—the meeting would be shutting down just as momentum and energy began to build. This was the case in
the transportation department. In retrospect, the momentum crushing effect of two-hour meetings may have been deliberately engineered by persons trying to control the meetings.

On the other hand, the print shop met quite frequently for four or more hours. In this time frame, they were able to complete a tremendous amount of design work. In turn, their productive meetings seemed to fuel even more positive energy, which further heightened productivity.
ABC Corporation began a formal redesign initiative in November 1993. Two years later, the pilot design process is still unfolding—slowly, but successfully. ABC used the "think-assess-design" model to help them reach their redesign goals. As a very large, culturally ossified, and traditional organization, ABC required a redesign method that could be tailored to meet their needs. "Think-assess-design" has done just that: it has helped them move forward in a slow, systematic fashion, leaving virtually no stone unturned in their quest for thoroughness.

The seven content areas within the "think" steps, the assessment process covered in the "assess" step, and the careful redesign work described within the "design" step all proved to be highly useful and well targeted. By taking this slower strategy, ABC has been able to affect change in a fashion that is more likely to be both significant and enduring. Even so, a retrospective examination of the project reveals several overall learnings.

A Lack of Planning and Preparation

First, the project began without adequate preparation or planning. As is often true in change efforts that unfold in traditional organizations, only a few people were out front trying to pull the organization into a more innovative future. When the
chance to begin an organization redesign presented itself, these few jumped on the idea without recognizing that they lacked a plan. Steering committee meetings started, organization-wide announcements about "going to teams" were made, and pilot sites were selected all before anyone really knew what they were doing. Too late to turn back, ABC had no choice but to move forward toward its redesign goals. This lack of planning was costly in terms of time, and frustration.

Yet, this lack of a plan may have had a strategic advantage. By seizing the redesign opportunity in the way that they did, change agents inside ABC made it difficult for the organization to easily renege its commitment to change. This may not have been true if they had taken the requisite time to put together a more clear plan.

A Lack of Training and Education

Related to this, is a second learning. All aspects of the redesign effort lacked the support of adequate training endeavors. This was true both in terms of training to build teaming skills and training to provide knowledge about organization change and work redesign. The project proceeded for years without anyone getting the training they needed, which probably slowed progress considerably.

It was as if everyone forgot that the steering committee and design teams were in fact, teams. As such, they needed certain teaming skills to operate effectively. In retrospect, it is obvious that they both desperately needed basic skill-building training. Many hours were lost in less-than-effective meetings, and through constant struggles with conflict and misunderstandings. When training began to trickle into the project as a by-product of other efforts, the impact was tremendous. Interpersonal relations
improved, communication became smoother, and people generally were more forgiving of each others' quirks and peculiarities.

Both steering committee and design team members also lacked a consistent view of the change methods chosen by the organization, and lacked an understanding of the mechanics of work redesign. Essentially, the whole effort was launched by giving people a nice lunch and a book to read: the 300 plus page design team manual. Far more intensive learning opportunities are needed if one expects organization members to "get it."

Ideally, both the steering committee and design teams should have been launched with an intensive training, lasting several hours if not several days. This training ought to have had the dual focus of team skill building, and development of knowledge about organizational change and redesign.

Skill building topics such as conflict management, effective communication techniques, meeting management, and understanding diverse personal styles should have been covered. Knowledge building topics on the mechanics of sociotechnical work redesign and using the design team manual should have occurred, along with basic overviews of the logistics of organizational change. In addition, it would have been helpful to have provided some kind of orientation toward characteristics of high performance organizations, and new organizational forms. Looking back, it was absurd to expect people to design "outside the box" without some kind of orientation to futuristic design possibilities.
A Lack of Internal Expertise

The lack of training makes it nearly impossible for ABC to efficiently grow internal expertise. This relates to a third learning. Although not intended, they are still heavily "consultant dependent" because they have not built an adequate web of internal experts to move the redesign effort beyond pilot sites. Although the internal co-facilitator role was created to help develop such expertise, no one has yet taken the time to systematically train the co-facilitators on work redesign and organization change models. Their training has been limited to on-the-job experience using the Design Team Manual.

Recall that ABC has a very weak Human Resource function, with no history of training or organization development anywhere within the company. Ideally, ABC should take this opportunity to create an organization development and training department which houses "experts" on organizational change. Staff expertise might include design team facilitation, team development and training, and perhaps mediation and conflict resolution.

Growing the Effort Forward

A final point involves all of the learnings discussed so far: lack of planning, lack of training, lack of internal experts. By mishandling these three, ABC may miss the opportunity to successfully grow this change effort beyond pilot teams. If this were to happen, all of the careful planning and effort that has gone into this project over the past two years will have been a waste.
Assemble learnings. It is critical then, that ABC begin to plan a strategy to grow the effort forward. As a first step, the steering committee might begin assembling all of the learnings that have occurred at the pilot team level. They must consider what worked, what didn’t, and what that means for future design teams.

Already, they have started such a list. Key learnings about the redesign process include 1) keep design teams to under ten members, 2) make use of neutral outside facilitators, 3) include management in the design team, but not as the facilitator, 4) be sure that the manager has been through the Omega leadership school, 5) provide new design teams with intensive team skills training and an orientation to work redesign, 6) always assess new design sites, and pay attention to the results, 7) design teams must make special efforts to communicate with those around them, 8) teams must set time goals, particularly during challenging parts of redesign, 9) managers must be provided with training on how to interact with teams, and, 10) carefully consider the impact that poor business conditions can have on design team activities. These (and other) learnings must be carefully considered as they make plans to move the effort forward.

Grow internal expertise. Second, they need to consider ways to quickly grow more internal experts. With just four at present, only a limited number of new design teams can begin the process. There simply aren’t enough internal facilitator resources to support a slew of new teams. Fast development of new facilitators could occur by allowing current experts to use a "train the trainer" format. Each current facilitator could be charged to oversee four or so "facilitators in training." This kind of a plan
would need to be supported by the training mechanisms described earlier. That is, develop workshops on organization change, redesign and use of the Design Team Manual, so that true "experts" are systematically developed.

Another way to maximize facilitator resources and more rapidly grow redesign efforts, might be to use the large group change methods described by Axelrod (1992) and Pasmore (1995). Essentially, these methods use groups of fifty to one hundred organizational members to do the work that smaller design teams do in more traditional redesign methods. With a very small number of well trained facilitators, redesign activities can unfold.

Reiterate "Think-Assess-Design" steps. Finally, the steering committee must go back to the "think-assess-design" steps at which they began this process, and work their way through a specific "broad roll out" plan. First, the steering committee must "think"—reconsidering nearly all of the points they covered before, although this time in the context of a broad roll out. Specifically, this means that they must: 1) learn about the structural options they have in more broadly rolling out design teams; 2) develop as a team, if their group membership changes to accommodate the extension beyond pilots; and 3) design an implementation plan for the broader process; 4) design a communication plan, as the roll out proceeds; 5) design a commitment plan, as new, more resistant areas of the organization are touched; 6) design a support plan, in terms of resources needed to roll out the broad plan; and, 7) devise a philosophy/plan regarding managers and supervisors more broadly in the organization.
Next, they must make decisions about the best ways to "assess" while rolling out the broader plan. Assessment guides and tailors the redesign strategy. In the context of their broad roll out plan, they might choose to use assessment to diagnose the training deficits each design team must rectify before they begin, to identify readiness and roadblocks of each potential design area, or to define the pre-design metrics of the work area. As mentioned earlier, assessment should unfold broadly and creatively.

Finally, by engaging in the "think" and "assess" steps in moving forward the plan for a broader roll out, the organization is ready to complete the "design" steps. This of course, encompasses the actual process of rolling the broad redesign plans forward. The organization can do this either by using another series of design teams (like they did in this pilot endeavor), or they might use a "fast paced redesign" approach such as that described by Pasmore (1995) and Axelrod (1992).

A design team approach made sense in this pilot effort, largely because the organization was so large, complex, and so traditional. As mentioned earlier, they needed an approach that moved slowly and systematically enough to impact ABC's rigid culture, and lay the ground work for long lasting change. In the past two years they have accomplished this through their pilot design teams. However, at this point a large scale, fast paced method might be the best design strategy to move the effort forward. Fast paced redesign allows the organization to involve large groups of people (fifty to one hundred) in the redesign of the entire organization in three to six months (Axelrod, 1992; Pasmore, 1994, 1995). These large groups of organization members
complete the same work that would otherwise be done in twelve to eighteen months by several design teams. Such fast paced, large group change methods are lauded for involving more people over a shorter time frame than is typical in traditional methods. This sparks innovation and creativity, while keeping alive the momentum needed for change.

Conclusion

"Think-assess-design" is a powerful iterative tool. It provides a timeless framework of systematic questions that organizations must ask themselves as they move through change endeavors, while allowing each organization to arrive at their own unique answers. By engaging in these three broad steps, organizations can move forward through multiple iterations of redesign, and will be equipped to continually reinvent themselves.
APPENDIX A

THE DESIGN TEAM MANUAL - AN OVERVIEW
I. CHAPTER ONE: Introduction and Overview
   1) Omega Overview
   2) Omega Goal and Mission
   3) Business Reasons for Change through Omega
   4) The Empowerment Steering Committee Responsibilities
   5) Role of Design Teams

II. CHAPTER TWO: Getting Started
   1) Review of Design Team Charter & Expectations
   2) Planning Design Team Structure and Rules for Operation

III. CHAPTER THREE: Environmental Analysis
    1) Define the work of your unit
    2) Conduct Future Search
    3) List key stakeholders
    4) Find out what stakeholders want
    5) Write mission statement
    6) Define Your key success criteria (based on stakeholder needs)

IV. CHAPTER FOUR: Basics of Linear Work Analysis
    1) Look at the kind of work your unit does
    2) Choose your tools for technical analysis
       a. work flow analysis
       b. process mapping (two ways)
       c. variance analysis
    3) Plan process improvements
    4) Perform Cost-Benefit Analysis of redesign options

V. CHAPTER FIVE: Non-linear Technical Analysis
    1) Input/Output Analysis
    2) Deliberations Analysis
    3) Design Ideal Deliberations

VI. CHAPTER SIX: Social System Analysis
    1) Preferences and Needs of people in your Unit
    2) Inconsistent Practices - What policies, norms, procedures don't "fit" with empowerment?
VII. CHAPTER SEVEN: Bringing it All Together
1) Summarize Environmental Analysis
2) Summarize Technical Analysis
3) Summarize Social Analysis
4) Compare against mission statement, key business results, key success criteria

VIII. CHAPTER EIGHT: Defining Your Boundaries
1) Internal boundaries: Note;
   a. work we kept the same
   b. work we added (to our boundaries)
   c. work we created (invented)
   d. work we eliminated?
2) External boundaries: define other places with whom you regularly interact
   a. Identify key issues
   b. create plan to manage

IX. CHAPTER NINE: Defining Internal Boundaries and Work Roles in Your Area
1) What is a "Good" Job
2) Group Together Related Processes & Deliberations
3) Define Core, Support and Strategic Work
4) Define leadership roles you want in team (look across strategic work)
5) Develop Motivating Work Roles for each group of related processes

X. CHAPTER TEN: Designing Information and Decision Making Systems
1) Why design decision making systems?
2) Identifying necessary information
3) Make RASCI Charts for decisions

XI. CHAPTER ELEVEN: Measurement
1) Plan what to measure
2) Decide how to collect information on what you want to measure
3) Set plan to create tools
4) Set up plan to use tools

XII. CHAPTER TWELVE: Training
1) Look at work roles and key decisions, identify KSA’s needed abilities
2) Set plan for developing important training
3) Decide how to provide the training
4) Decide how to check to be sure people are learning what they need to know
XIII. CHAPTER THIRTEEN: Designing a Renewal Plan
1) Look internally: does your design do what you intended?
2) Look externally: are you staying in touch with customers needs and your external business environment?

XIV. CHAPTER FOURTEEN: Creating a Management Transition Plan
1) Momentum for Empowerment: Designing empowerment plans
   a. Agree on important issues
   b. Specify training learning needs involved to reach each point of empowerment
2) Create timeline for empowerment

XV. CHAPTER FIFTEEN: Creating an Implementation Plan
1) Create an Overview of your Redesign Plans:
2) Create an implementation structure: How to guide your implementation
3) Create a Communication Plan: Telling the rest of the organization about your intended changes
APPENDIX B

ABC READINESS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS
ABC Readiness Assessment Questions
Spring 1994

Job Perceptions

1) How do ABC employees feel right now about the authority they have to do their jobs? How about their ability to make decisions that affect their work?

2) If given the chance, would ABC employees take on more responsibility and authority for their work?

Team/Empowerment Climate

3) What are things about this culture that would make it harder or easier to empower employees?

4) If ABC decides to move in the direction of teams and empowerment, where will the friction and problems be?

5) Is risk-taking encouraged at ABC? If you make a mistake, what happens?

6) How has ABC followed through in the past on new ideas like teams?

Trust/Interpersonal Relations

7) Do you think that ABC managers are willing to give associates greater responsibility and authority? How much more?

8) Is it O.K. for a person to disagree with their boss? How is conflict handled?

9) To what extent is it O.K. to openly express ideas, feelings, and concerns at ABC? How much do people trust each other?

Sociotechnical Considerations

10) Does the kind of work you (do/supervise) lend itself to teamwork? Why/why not?

11) Can the work you (do/supervise) be designed so a team of employees can take major responsibility for a whole job from beginning to end?
Personal Views/Concerns

12) What would be your greatest fear if ABC moved to teams?

13) What are your ideas about teams at ABC? How will they help or hurt the company?

14) Can you think of anything else that would be important for me to know?
APPENDIX C

READINESS ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL
Introductory Script

"I am with the Center for the Study of Work Teams at the University of North Texas (UNT). As you know, the mission of ABC is continuous improvement and developing a culture that enables it to compete in the 21st century. For more than a year, UNT has been working with ABC to chart a path for the future.

"As part of our partnership, we want to help ABC explore new ways of working that are best for the company and its employees. This means getting out and talking with ABC people to find out more about what life is like here, how things get done, and how things might be done better in the future. That is the purpose of this interview.

"I and other people from UNT will be taking with lots of people at all levels of ABC. To ensure consistency, we are asking each person exactly the same questions. The results of our interviews will help us write a questionnaire that will be filled out by many people throughout ABC's Division X.

"I am a university employee and must meet ethical guidelines established by UNT, the state legislature, and the American Psychological Association. So I want to emphasize that everything you say today will be absolutely confidential. Your comments will only be seen by me and other researchers at UNT. Only general feedback on the feelings of dozens of people we talk with will be given to ABC management. No individual will ever be identified in any way.

"Since I can't remember everything that is said during the interview, I will be taking notes. These notes are the property of UNT, not ABC. No ABC employee will ever read these notes. At any time, you can take a look at my notes and correct any mistakes you think I have made.

"It is standard UNT policy to request informed consent from all participants in projects involving university employees. Please read and sign the attached consent form before we begin. I'd like to take a moment to highlight the important points made on the form:

  * Participation in this interview is completely voluntary
  * You may end this interview at any time
- You may refuse to answer any question, at any time, for any reason with no explanation required.

"Please take a moment to read and sign the consent form. After you have had a chance to ask any questions you wish, we can get started."
Consent to Interview

I hereby consent to be interviewed by employees of the University of North Texas Center for the Study of Work Teams as part of the Spring, 1994 culture assessment of ABC Corporation.

I understand that the purpose of this interview by the University of North Texas is informational only; no personnel action will be based on this interview.

I understand that my participation in this interview is entirely voluntary.

I understand that this interview is absolutely confidential and that notes taken during this interview are the property only of the University of North Texas, not ABC. My comments will never be identified to ABC.

I understand that I may end this interview at any time any may refuse to answer any question.

_________________________signature

_________________________printed name/date

_________________________interviewer
APPENDIX D

PILOT ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS
I. Work Structure/Boundaries
   1. What is the work?
      - Is it organized around a product, customer, or service?
      - Do they provide ongoing services or products to internal or external customers?
      - Are tasks self-contained?
      - Whole task or process??
   2. How is work currently organized? (complexity issues)
      - What are the jobs? (categories)
      - Core/support/strategic work: how divided?
      - Are there "specialists?"
      - Is cross training possible?
      - Stability? (same people, same tasks?)
      - Do people share "3 T’s?" (time, territory, technology?)

II. Department/Area Structure Complexity
   1. Current management structure (map it)
   2. Levels of management/supervisor/hierarchy among workers (map it)

III. Interdependence
   1. How does your work link up with others both inside and outside the department? (How bounded are they?)
   2. With whom do you interact for critical processes? (inside and outside your area)
   3. Do you do the jobs alone, as individuals? Or in work groups?
   4. Can you alter how you work without significantly impacting others? (inside and outside your unit)

IV. Uncertainty
   1. Is work routine and predictable? Can it be pre-programmed? (e.g., is it analyzable, are cause-effects understood?)
   2. What is impact of environment? (uncertain? dynamic?)
   3. How connected are you to feedback systems from environment?
4. Do you know the costs/impact of your decision errors? (especially if environment is dynamic, unpredictable)

V. Coordinating Mechanisms
1. To what extent are there multiple activities which need coordination?

VI. Control
1. What are your variances? (what are the main things that go wrong to screw up your work?)
2. Are there routes to influence all key decisions inside your work unit boundaries?
3. Control of work?

VII. Common goals
1. Working toward same goals? (across the whole process)
2. Reward culture—are people rewarded for what they do as individuals or how they help others? Give some examples.

VIII. Team Member Perceptions/Desires
1. What do workers see as the biggest hurdles to teaming?
2. Want to work on teams?
3. Want to expand current duties?
REFERENCES


