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| **Paradoxes and Leadership Roles: Assessing and Developing Managerial Competence****Alan T. Belasen, Ph.D.** |

The importance of managing paradoxes increases with the complexity of organizational environments. Organizational environments are more dynamic and uncertain due to increased globalization, shorter product cycle time, intense competition, and high levels of interdependence across the value chain of organizations. To successfully manage paradoxes organizational leaders must learn to deal with contradictions and embrace incompatible forces, rather than choose between them. The article addresses these issues and suggests the Competing Values Framework as a theoretical construct that can be used to map out the set of leadership roles performed by managers across levels. The utility of the Competing Values Framework as a competency assessment and development tool is further illustrated with two examples: development of an assessment tool aimed at facilitating understanding across vertical lines, and design of diagnostic-based interventions to enhance corporate managerial competence.

**Introduction**

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| A woman talking before a crowd. | Today's successful business leaders will be those who are most flexible of mind. An ability to embrace new ideas, routinely challenge old ones, and live with paradox will be the effective leader's premier trait. Further, the challenge is for a lifetime. New truths will not emerge easily. Leaders will have to guide the ship while simultaneously putting everything up for grabs, which is in itself a fundamental paradox (Tom Peters, *Thriving on Chaos*, 1987, p. 391). |

Leading and managing complex organizations is a challenge that transcends rational management and that requires paradoxical capabilities and behavioral complexity and competencies that distinguish great organizational leaders from others. Paradoxes are conflicting choices or conditions that demand equal attention. For example, managers want their organizations to be flexible and adaptive, yet integrated and stable. They want higher internal efficiency and profitability and also higher employee commitment and morale. The art of managing and leading organizations today lies in embracing incompatible forces, rather than choosing between them. Organizational leaders must learn to deal with ambiguity and paradoxes through a new mindset; one that combines and optimizes rather than splits apart and differentiates. Despite the prevalence of paradox in organizational life, however, the part of our mind that seeks certainty and precision rebels against the very notion of contradiction. In addition, corporate cultures traditionally value such abilities as "making hard choices," "setting priorities," and "biting the bullet," behaviors that eliminate certain alternatives in favor of others (Stroh & Miller, 1994, p.30).

People tend to think in a dichotomous way, develop discriminatory attitudes and behaviors, and maintain a linear, "either-or" orientation. Meeting the challenge of managing paradoxes requires a dialectical approach that synthesizes and balances between opposite forces. Effective managers often consciously create opposition and subsequent opportunities for new alternatives: From thesis and antithesis, a more powerful synthesis could emerge. This is where a learning organization can reap the benefits of inquisitive managers who challenge existing myths and truths and who are both factual and idealistic, i.e., asking questions about what is known and asking questions about what should be done, respectively. These managers are not driven by the need to preserve the status quo or their personal legacy, but by the opportunities created via a multidimensional, simultaneous orientation that encompasses the whole rather than the part. Effective managers face the challenge of a paradox rather than avoid it, and they know how to harness the synergistic tension contained in seemingly incompatible options to optimize problem solving.

Stroh & Miller (1994) outlined four ways of facing paradoxes:

**Both/and thinking** -- Managers must continuously brainstorm the question: "How can two incompatible values be true?" For example, increasing quality in the long run requires a short-term investment, therefore, improving quality costs money while it saves money.

**Best of both thinking** -- Managers must strive to create conditions that allow simultaneously for the emergence of contradictions through creative tension. Examples are loosely coupled structures, controlled entrepreneurship, and conservative innovation. The idea is to make personal values explicit by inquiring into both the positive and negative qualities of two seemingly contradictory paradigms and to develop a synergistic solution or a synthesis.

**Expanding the construct space and time of a paradox** -- When profits are down, managers tighten controls, and when sales are up and profits are soaring, managers increase responsiveness to customers. Thus, current market conditions require that managers simultaneously use belt-tightening and creative responses. Similarly, expanding the time frame should help managers optimize the management of paradoxes by concentrating on aligning short term with long term goals. Spatial and temporal constraints often lead to creative solutions (synthesis) using a systems approach. Stroh & Miller (1994) provide an example in which a company has a strategic dilemma involving redeployment of the manufacturing or marketing function. While manufacturing claims that only through development of high quality products can market share be increased, it can also provide competitors with an incentive to increase the quality of their products. Thus, it can potentially lead to lower industry margins and an increase in the company's overall profitability. Marketing has polarized its position by claiming that it is through customization that the company can maintain its leadership and, therefore, its dominance in the market. These seemingly paradoxical claims can be reconciled to reflect adjustments in manufacturing processes and quality standards in the short run while increasing the company's competitiveness and overall profitability in the long run.

**Neither/nor thinking** or choosing a third option. Paradoxically, this way of thinking replaces "both/and" by focusing on the outcome instead of the choice. Should management base its product development decisions on existing organizational technologies or on customer needs? Sometimes companies understand what will best serve customers before the customers know it themselves. In these cases, technology pushes the company. At other times, companies recognize that the customers know what they need most clearly. It is these times they let the customers lead the way. The road taken is the one that leads to making the world a better place. The paradoxical forces of both "technology push" and "market pull" help drive the company along the road (Stroh & Miller, 1994, p. 37).

Gareth Morgan's (1993) discussion of metaphorical analysis and applied imagination as cognitive tools that can help prospective leaders develop the conceptual skills and critical thinking needed to deal with paradoxes is relevant. By employing metaphors, leaders expand their views about the social construction of reality. They create a richer prism through which they can reshape interactional patterns and social processes. Applying metaphors diagnostically is also a learning tool; i.e., a reflective process of reevaluating the meanings inherent in organizational sagas, rituals, and norms of behaviors. The paradoxical nature of organizations is such that contradictory themes and patterns of interaction are often simultaneously exhibited, requiring leaders to constantly use different metaphors for diagnosing decision situations effectively. One such metaphor is presented through the Competing Values Framework.

**Competing Values Framework**

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| A coach yelling and a referee. | A key point of the Competing Values Framework (CVF) is that organizations are inherently contradictory entities, and therefore, organizational effectiveness criteria are fundamentally opposing, contradictory, and may be mutually exclusive. While we expect organizations to maintain stability and integration by paying strong attention to their internal workings and procedures, we also expect organizations to be responsive and adaptive by responding to pressures coming from the external environment. This approach, then, highlights the fact that organizations operate under the burden of contradictory, competing, and conflicting expectations. Responding to these expectations is vital for the success (effectiveness) of the organization.  |

Obviously, this burden is not borne by organizations per se, but by the managerial leaders in these organizations. These individuals function within a context of complex and contradictory expectations. In this way, the CVF reflects on the contradictory criteria of effectiveness that describe managerial leadership.

The Competing Values Framework (CVF) portrays the inherent contradictions facing organizations and managers on two axes or dimensions. The horizontal axis is one of focus: internal versus external. This axis reflects the expectation managers have that organizations should be concerned with both what goes on inside the organization, as well as with producing for and servicing an external environment. Specifically, while organizations must be able to manipulate, monitor, and measure internal tasks, technology, and personnel, they must also be responsive to the environment, including demographic changes, global economic events, market forces, government regulations, and competitors' behaviors and actions. The vertical axis of the CVF portrays the opposing expectations of flexibility and control. We expect organizations to be controlling systems. In this way, they provide a predictable and stable work world. At the same time, we expect organizations to be flexible and able to respond to the myriad of human needs and situations, to adapt to changes in their external environments, and to be a dynamic force in society.

The juxtaposition of these two axes forms four quadrants, each of which reflects a different model of organizational effectiveness criteria. The external horizontal axis and the control vertical axis appear in the lower right quadrant and define the *rational goal model*. This model reflects the view that organizations are effective if they meet their goals. Fundamental to this model is the need for structure and direction. The two managerial leadership roles associated with this quadrant are Producer and Director. Managers in the Producer role are task and work focused with high energy and motivation. They are self-motivated, motivate others, and pursue productivity. Managers in the Director role are decisive, provide direction for others, clarify expectations, and pursue goal clarity.

The internal horizontal axis and the control vertical axis appear in the lower left quadrant and define the *internal processes model*. This model reflects the view that organizations are effective if they are stable and keep track of activities within the organization. Fundamental to this model is the need for stability and control. The two managerial leadership roles associated with this quadrant are Coordinator and Monitor. Managers in the Coordinator role maintain work flow, analyze task requirements, and organize staff efforts. They pursue stability and control. Managers in the Monitor role are concerned about facts, details, reports, paperwork, rules, and regulations. They pursue documentation and information management.

The internal horizontal axis and the flexibility vertical axis appear in the upper left quadrant and define the *human relations model*. This model reflects the view that organizations are effective if they are able to tap the talents and thinking of their employees. Fundamental to this model is the concern for attention to human needs. The two managerial leadership roles associated with this quadrant are Mentor and Facilitator. Managers in the Mentor role are sensitive to the needs of employees and help employees plan their career growth and development. They pursue high morale and commitment. Managers in the Facilitator role build cohesion and teamwork among employees, use group problem solving and conflict management. They pursue participation and openness.

The external horizontal axis and the flexibility vertical axis in the upper right quadrant define the *open system model*. This model reflects the view that organizations are effective when they are able to anticipate changes in the economic-socio-political environment and even thrive when such changes occur. Fundamental to this model is the need to survive in a turbulent arena. The two managerial leadership roles associated with this quadrant are Innovator and Broker. Briefly, managers in the Innovator role are creative, deal with risk and uncertainty, envision needed changes, and help others to adapt to change. They pursue innovation and adaptation, external support and resource acquisition. Managers in the Broker role are politically astute and represent the work unit to people inside and outside the organization. Brokers link the organization externally and focus on networking and establishing strategic alliances and partnerships with other organizations.

The CVF represents a universal image of the repertoire of roles manifested in the behaviors of effective managers. For each role, Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, and McGrath (1996) have identified a set of three competencies essential for effective task performance. The CVF leadership roles and their associated competencies are depicted in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Competing Values Framework**



Quinn, R. E., Faerman, S. R., Thompson, M. P., & McGrath, M. R. (1996). *Becoming a master manager: A competency framework*. New York: Wiley. Reprinted with permission.

The CVF roles can be viewed as both mutually exclusive (i.e., differentiated) and collectively exhaustive (i.e., integrated). Alone and together, each role subscribes to the need to balance its "time in use" or emphasis against the range of requirements coming from the other roles. For example, despite the fact that in playing the role of the Director, the manager is assumed to have a task orientation, some aspects of facilitation or even mentoring (involving the two roles at the polar opposite in the CVF) must also be manifested in the behavior of the manager to achieve effective managerial leadership. Similarly, while the Mentor is engaged in developing the leadership capabilities of employees to meet new organizational needs and goals, he or she must also balance coaching and counseling skills with the need to achieve synergy across functions, thus entering the domain or "turf" of the Coordinator. The value of this framework is in allowing managers to pursue a systematic journey of self-directed learning and self-development by helping them identify relative weaknesses and strengths and enhance their competence level.

**Assessing Managerial Roles Across Levels**

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| The CVF can be used to strengthen the vertical linkage within the chain of command by clarifying the roles and the expectations that managers have vis-à-vis the other levels. DiPadova and Faerman (1993) observed that by "examining the transition from one managerial level to the next, managers can better understand how their expected behaviors differ across levels...they can see how the roles [are enabled] in different ways in the different [administrative] contexts" (p.162). An important advantage of using the CVF, then, lies in the creation and maintenance of effective management communication. Problems involving information underload or overload, distortions, and negative filtering can be anticipated and overcome. Clarifying managerial roles and expectations can help minimize role ambiguity and offset the costs associated with dysfunctional role conflicts. Likewise, interpersonal conflicts involving turf issues, status, and power can be avoided in favor of developing a constructive dialogue and having positive learning. As DiPadova and Faerman (1993) concluded:  | Men sitting on chairs talking.  |

Often the levels are experienced as so discrete and stratified that members see themselves as separate constituencies in the same organization, rather than as members of the same team. The common language offered by the CVF ameliorates the separateness because it is essentially an organizational language that identifies performance criteria which are common across the hierarchy (p.168).

Lower management levels devote more time to direct supervision and monitoring subordinates to meet the operating goals of higher management. Top managers spend more time formulating plans, setting goals, determining priorities, clarifying constraints, and establishing the parameters (i.e., time, objectives, budget, etc.) to guide and control lower level activities and outputs. While managers at all levels perform the four fundamental functions of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling, their managerial responsibilities tend to vary in important aspects as illustrated in the results of the field studies reported above. This variation typically transpires along the lines of time horizon (e.g., long-term planning versus short-term operational goals), span of attention toward different domains (e.g., market positioning, internal processes, managing professional intellect, organizational productivity, etc.), and range or scope of activities (e.g., micro versus macro issues, external versus internal focus, etc.). Top managers' time horizon and span of attention, for example, are strategic with a focus on the competitive advantages of the firm and its overall strength and positioning within the market. Lower levels, on the other hand, pay more attention to individuals and groups working together to accomplish the unit's goals.

While all managers require a blend of conceptual, technical, and human relations skills to perform their jobs effectively, top managers are expected to have greater conceptual skills than middle or first-level managers. This is because the depth of top managers' responsibilities is much greater and requires mental, analytical, and diagnostic abilities to acquire and interpret information from multiple sources in order to make complex decisions that affect the organization as a whole. Technical skills, including job skills and functional expertise, are more important for first-level managers. Middle managers, who function as communication links between higher and lower management, must have strong human relations skills. Their proximity to the top may also trigger the need to develop strong conceptual skills. These skills, however, must be balanced against the functional skills essential for middle management decision making at the unit or division level. These differences reflect variations in skills that are important to support the distinct responsibilities of the managers. It is important for managers at all levels, however, to ensure that the eight universal leadership roles described above are manifested in their behaviors.

For example, managers at all levels perform the Monitor role. First-level managers use short range scheduling, expense budgets, operations management, and measurement tools to oversee the activities of subordinates and meet performance targets specified by upper-level management. Top managers are engaged more in reading and evaluating financial statements and reports, and are concerned with strategic planning and control systems to meet performance and profit targets at the organization level. Mid-level managers, on the other hand, are involved more in functional deployment and intermediate planning, and frequently use output control systems to monitor the activities of lower levels. Thus, managers at all levels perform the role of a Monitor, but with different nuances and range of objectives. Their scope of activities, again, is also different, with top managers focusing more on broader issues and concerns as well as shaping and controlling business and financial performance and responding to stakeholders' concerns. Mid-level managers pay more attention to internal processes, functional interfaces, and how first-level managers handle the details of subordinates' performance. As managers move up the chain of command, and as they become removed from the points of impact at which the specific information about customers, performance, etc. exists, they typically rely more on interpretation of the details rather than keeping track of the details themselves (DiPadova & Faerman, 1993). These differences are crucial for the functioning of the organization, since they provide the foundation for effective organizational integration. The three levels appear as part of a means-ends chain of objectives: Accomplishing the goals of lower levels serves as a means to achieve the goals of higher levels.

How similar or different is the perceived importance of the eight CVF roles performed by managers across levels? To answer this question, Belasen (1998) studied the perceptions of managers across vertical lines of four different organizations. The results from one of these organizations are reported below.

The studies used a survey-based methodology, Managerial Leadership and Hierarchy Study, which was developed by Drs. Sue Faerman and Laurie DiPadova (1995) to explore differences in role expectations at each of the three managerial levels: upper, middle, and first-level. The survey, designed around the Competing Values Framework of Managerial Leadership, demonstrates the efficacy of the Competing Values Framework as a common language for managers across hierarchical levels. The study included samples of managers from organizations in different industries: banking, telecommunications, power lab, and dining services. After acceptance of the study by either the human resource director or vice president of the sampled company was achieved, a packet with a personal cover letter was sent to each participant in the study explaining the request for participation.

The survey was divided into three parts. Part I requested information regarding demographics: gender, highest educational level completed, office title, and years of service with the organization. Part II, Section A, asked each manager to answer ten questions focusing upon how managers view themselves in the context of the organization. Section B contained four questions asking each manager to rate how their peers are different from their direct reports. The areas of focus for these questions were education, income, and commitment to one's job and to the organization. Part III focused on the similarities and differences of managerial tasks and responsibilities in managerial work across the three organizational hierarchy levels. Section A contained measures associated with the eight roles portrayed in the Competing Values Framework: Producer, Director, Coordinator, Monitor, Mentor, Facilitator, Innovator, and Broker. First, managers were asked to consider the importance of the various tasks and responsibilities at their level of the hierarchy, using a scale of 0 (Not Applicable) to 5 (Absolutely Essential). Then, each participant was asked, using the same scale, to rate the other two managerial levels by responding to the same items. Section B provided definitions of the eight roles of the Competing Values Framework. Each manager was asked to indicate the overall perception of the importance of each role as applied to each of the three levels of management, again using the same scale.

In total, thirty surveys were distributed to managers across the hierarchical levels within the bank's sales division in a large metropolitan area. Of the 30 distributed surveys, 21 surveys were returned, representing a 70% response rate. Average scores and standard deviations for each role at each management level were calculated and t-tests (not reported here) were conducted to verify whether the differences between the samples' means were statistically significant. Tables 2 through 5 display a summary of top characteristics associated with the enactment of the various roles across hierarchical levels. Top characteristics were determined by ranking least standard deviations with the top five averages for each characteristic for each role. One central finding of these surveys is that there are many striking similarities in the importance of the roles played by managers at different levels. While we have assumed the applicability of the Competing Values Framework across levels of the hierarchy, this study supports the findings of DiPadova (1995) and presents empirical evidence of parallels in perceptual views of leadership roles across levels. Overall, the evidence suggests that at each level managers were able to identify with all eight roles of the Competing Values Framework.

**Table 1. Rational Goal Model: Similarities and Differences in Motivating Others and Goal Setting**

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| ***PRODUCER*** | ***DIRECTOR*** |
| ***All Managerial Levels*** |  |
| Maintains a high level of energy, motivation and effort | Makes important work decisions  |
| Motivates others |  |

Sets goals

Motivates others Sets objectives for accomplishing goals

Defines roles and expectations for employees

***First-Level***

Focuses on results and accomplishments Assigns priorities among multiple goals

Gets others to excel in their work

Uses time and stress management strategies

to handle delays and interruptions

***Middle-Level***

Creates high performance expectations Garners support for goals from

in others managers at lower levels

Focuses on results and accomplishments

In motivating employees, considers

their individual differences

***Upper-Level***

Creates high performance expectations Establishes context for decision making

in others at lower levels

In motivating employees, considers

their individual differences

Gets others to excel in their work

**Table 2. Internal Process Model: Similarities and Differences in Controlling the Work and Tracking Details**

***COORDINATOR*** ***MONITOR***

***All Managerial Levels***

Ensures that work is going according Disseminates information regarding

to schedule policies and procedures

Reallocates resources to accommodate Relies on reports from others

Coordinates tasks and people Assures flow of information among

necessary personnel and units

Sets up and maintains necessary

communication channels

***First-Level***

Anticipates workflow problems Oversees compliance with procedures

Plans workload adjustments as needed

***Middle-Level***

Anticipates workflow problems Interprets financial and statistical

Schedules workflow of tasks and projects reports

***Upper-Level***

Determines subordinate's assignments Carefully reviews the work of others

based on individual skills and abilities

Coordinates units as well as individual employees

**Table 3. Human Relations Model: Similarities and Differences in Dealing with Employees' Problems and Enhancing Employee Participation**

***MENTOR FACILITATOR***

***All Managerial Levels***

Gives credit to subordinates for their work Works to enhance employee

and ideas participation

Maintains an open, approachable and Creates a cohesive work climate in

understanding attitude towards subordinates the organization

Takes a personal interest in employees Creates a sense of belonging to the

organization

***First-Level***

Helps employees work toward and prepare Fosters a sense of team work among

for promotion employees

Does on-the-job training Facilitates and leads meetings

***Middle-Level***

Does on-the-job training Fosters a sense of team work among

Creates opportunities for lower level managers employees

to challenge themselves Involves subordinates in discussion

over work matters

***Upper-Level***

Advises lower level managers on how to Involves subordinates in discussions

handle difficult employee situations over work matters

Creates opportunities for lower level managers Facilitates and leads meetings

to challenge themselves

**Table 4. Open Systems Model: Similarities and Differences in Managing Change and Negotiation Skills**

***INNOVATOR*** ***BROKER***

***All Managerial Levels***

Supports changes imposed on organization Nurtures contacts with people external

even when disagreeing with the changes to the organization

Builds coalitions and networks among

peers

Represents the unit to clients and

customers

***First-Level***

Turns problems into opportunities Interacts with people outside the

Encourages creativity among employees organization

Helps employees deal with ambiguity and delay Presents ideas to managers at higher

Helps subordinates see the positive aspects of evels

new changes

***Middle-Level***

Turns problems into opportunities Represents the unit to others in the

Helps employees deal with ambiguity and delay organization

Assesses the potential impact of proposed changes

Comes up with ideas for improving the organization

***Upper-Level***

Assesses the potential impact of proposed changes Represents the unit to others in the

Encourages creativity among employees organization

Personally helps individual employees adjust to Exerts lateral and upward influence in

changes in the organization the organization

Helps subordinates see the positive aspects of

new changes

Managers at all levels appear to share similar concerns and have similar understandings of the importance of all managerial leadership roles, with the exception of the Coordinator and Monitor roles, which appeared to be less important for upper-level management. The Rational Goal Model shows a greater alignment with characteristics that make up the Director role, such as making important decisions and setting goals. Within the Internal Processes Model, there appears to be greater consistency among all hierarchical levels regarding the responsibilities manifested in the behaviors of managers performing the Monitor role (i.e., disseminating information and assuring flow of information across the business unit). Consistent views are apparent regarding the characteristics of the Mentor and Facilitator roles in the Human Relations Model (i.e., give credit to subordinates for work and ideas, and work to enhance employee participation). Similarly, in the Open Systems Model, the Broker and the Innovator roles appeared to be quite important for the performance of managers across all management levels.

**Developing Managerial Competence: The Corporate Experience**

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| Line of men looking at something and laughing. | Sendelbach (1993) described a variety of management training and development activities based on the Competing Values Framework used by Ford Motor Company. First, the framework has been used to map out an aggregate profile of Ford's culture at significant points in time. For example, in the early days of Ford Motor Company, there was much focus on the rational goal quadrant with its emphasis on maximizing operating efficiency and outputs through mass production. The open systems quadrant was equally important due to the need to innovate and increase market share. Since the financial controls and measures were less important, the documentation and management information systems were minimal. Likewise, the premium placed on the values of the human relations quadrant was relatively low.  |

Ford was geared in its early stage of development toward production, and management primarily used scientific principles and economic incentives to increase productivity. Later, and especially during the 1950s, the company's profile shifted to reflect a predominant emphasis on control, monitoring, information systems, and measurement associated with the internal processes quadrant. This analysis provided participants in the training program with an opportunity to explore leadership styles and decision making processes within the historical context of evolution and change.

Since the 1970s Ford has experienced tremendous change and competition both domestically and internationally. The old bureaucratic structure with its emphasis on stability and control was no longer suited to deal with the volatility of the environment. The need was for a more responsive and involved workforce and greater innovation and creativity. The learning aspects of profiling the emergence of different cultures within the company, with different weights given to different values, involved developing a full understanding of organizational needs and the strategies required for improvement. An analysis of the overall profile, for example, concluded that while improvements in the internal processes quadrant may be possible, the necessary shift is a reduction in emphasis placed on elements within that quadrant and a relative increase in emphasis on the open systems quadrant. Thus, managers can use the model to map out their current needs and match them against the existing organizational capabilities to determine the direction of change.

Another area for applying the Competing Values Framework at Ford involved the impact of cross-functional relations on the overall operation of the company. The profile of the perceived functional stereotype completed by managers of that function provided them with the opportunity to test their assumptions as to how others perceive them. Managers of functional units were also asked to use the framework to depict the gap between how they currently view themselves versus how they should be operating. Sendelbach (1993) summarized the significance of that learning: "Functional groups do not always have a good understanding as to how they are perceived by the organization. Their 'now' profile may be seen as too optimistic by other functions. They may be told that they have not made as much progress as they think they have. They may also hear that they do not have as clear a conception of what the rest of the company needs from their function as they report in their 'should' profile" (pp. 86-87).

Moving from the organizational and unit level, the third level of training and learning activities at Ford was applied to the managerial leadership level. The method permitted managers to conduct assessments of their own managerial profiles against the managerial practices and personal values embedded in the CVF. Participants were asked to respond to behavioral statements ranging on a scale of one to seven, from totally uncharacteristic to totally characteristic in relation to how they perceive their actual behaviors and in relation to how they think they should behave. The underlying assumption of this intervention was that via the process of self-assessment, managers will be able to identify essential managerial skills and competencies required for effective job performance. Still, another objective was to help them discover values and attitudes, determine professional goals and needs, and guide themselves through a process of self-directed learning. Ultimately, the objective of this program was to help managers build confidence in their ability to learn a method for assessing management related knowledge and abilities, diagnose their own strengths and weaknesses, and formulate plans for skills development.

As Sendelbach (1993) pointed out, the real key to this learning process was to have the participants examine the difference between the score they gave themselves in the "is now" section and their score in the "should be" section. Participants then calculated the "gap scores" -- the difference between the now and should be scores. Two types of gaps are common: one describes an increase from the current level of behavior, while in the other the desired behavior is seen as a reduction of the current behavior. The information from the self-assessment has been valuable in helping participants maintain an overall perspective or "optimal" balance, rather than focusing only on one single dimension to improve their managerial competence.

The assessment tool described above is typically used to diagnose the alignment between a person's skills level and his or her perceptions of the roles and responsibilities that are manifested in his or her managerial leadership behavior. At Ford, participants were also asked to compare the ratings of their self-assessment against the aggregate profile of the work unit to have a sense of the "degree of fit" or compatibility between the individual profile and the aggregate. Although useful in "measuring the gap" between the personal and work unit profiles, this measurement is not without limitations. First, the ratings are based on perceptions that could be influenced by self-serving biases and, therefore, could skew the results. A radar assessment, such as the one described below, as well as measurements conducted at multiple points in time, which also include concurrent ratings of "now" versus "then" as a post-assessment, can respond quite effectively to this challenge. Second, any assessment should take into account work and job (specialization) characteristics. As Sendelbach (1993) pointed out: "The results from a participant engaged in advanced scientific research should probably look different in profile than the results from a participant in manufacturing" (p.88).

Differences in ratings between people with different work experiences may be a result of the length of time spent in managing people. Naturally, a person who begins to work in a managerial capacity for the first time may have different values and a different level of intensity than a person who has been managing the same work unit for over two decades. Finally, people may have different understandings about the future direction of the organization and the work unit. Such understandings may lead to different perceptions about the current and future needs and goals of the organization, and consequently, to the adoption of different leadership styles and managerial practices. Nevertheless, according to Sendelbach (1993), the idea was to provide participants with important clues about how they see themselves as "measured" against the profile of the work unit as seen by the compiled assessment of everyone participating in the program. This also provided participants with a fuller scope of the evolution of their work unit and an understanding of emergent structural and social dynamics processes at different points in time.

By understanding the process of organization life cycles and the shifting criteria of organizational effectiveness (Quinn & Cameron, 1984), as well as the need for differing managerial profiles for different situations, participants were able to compare their assessment of what they believe their work unit profile should be and make subsequent adjustments to their managerial styles and behaviors. Often managers may find that a misfit exists between what they think they should become and what the work unit needs. This gap may trigger a chain of events aimed at modifying the work unit needs or readjusting the existing managerial practices in order to reduce the gap. Creating the dual profiles of both a personal behavior set and the work unit that is the context for the behaviors provides a rich database from which to consider action planning (Sendelbach, 1993). One example of such action planning is illustrated through the methodology developed by Faerman and Belasen (Belasen, 1998) for senior level managers.

Assessment of managerial competencies can help improve organizational communication, support corporate vision, and enhance corporate overall performance. The intervention program described above is particularly useful in stimulating organizational learning and self-improvement. Interventions such as those described above help managers develop ways to communicate more effectively within and across divisions, allowing for increased sharing of best practices. Personal and corporate self-evaluation can help managers diagnose their roles and skills, identify strengths and weaknesses, and develop action plans for improvement breakthroughs. At the personal level, assessments enable managers to experience an increase in personal productivity, and improvement in interpersonal communication, decision making, and problem solving practices. It is expected that managers will have higher confidence in their communication abilities and skills, and greater proficiency in dealing with employees, customers, and executives. Managers who use the CVF assessment procedures reportedly develop better understanding across managerial and functional lines and work together as a management team. At the corporate level managers are able to develop a shared understanding of the core leadership competencies required to support organizational capabilities and business growth strategies.

**Conclusions**

The inherently contradictory nature of organizations is addressed by the Competing Values Framework (CVF) and by the different role behaviors expected from managers. Some of the roles seem to be opposing in that they reflect the conflicting and, at times, mutually exclusive organizational effectiveness criteria. Since managers and leaders presumably are effective within an organizational context, it is particularly important to look at organizational effectiveness criteria when assessing the performance of managerial leadership. But perhaps one of the most important benefits of using the CVF lies in enabling managers to increase their self-awareness about the strengths and weaknesses associated with playing the eight universal roles. Thus, the utility of the framework as an effective medium aimed at aligning managers' values and roles within and outside the chain of command is immeasurable.

While organizational leaders are expected to stabilize the system, they are also challenged to adjust the existing structural arrangements and patterned behaviors and to ask frame-breaking questions. Managers must send consistent messages and align strategy with structure, but must never allow the organization to settle into complacency. As soon as "balance" is achieved, it must be destroyed. Managers must have the cognitive complexity and behavioral flexibility that will allow them to shift from one paradigm to another and thus to effectively manage paradoxes and optimize performance.

The Competing Values Framework is a powerful integrative model that is rooted in the contradictory criteria of effectiveness that describe managerial leadership. Hence, mapping out the repertoire of leadership roles essential to dealing with paradoxes, and assessing and developing requisite managerial competencies are important strategic human resource goals. Assessing current managerial competencies and future organizational needs is an important strategic staffing function that can enable top managers to align organizational capabilities with business strategy. The CVF, as a powerful theoretical construct with applications that feature supervisory roles and competencies (Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, & McGrath, 1996), corporate downsizing and middle management (Belasen, Benke, DiPadova, & Fortunato, 1996), business performance and top executives (Hart & Quinn, 1993), empowered organizations and self-managed teams (Belasen, 1997), is useful in identifying a cluster of competencies around strategic business goals and organizing organizational capabilities to meet future organizational needs. The difference between low performance organizations and high performance organizations could rest in the quality of managerial leadership and its ability to respond quickly to external changes and internal organizational dynamics.

Enhancing the quality of managerial leadership is essential for building, transferring, and leveraging organizational learning and intellectual capital. Identifying, developing, and integrating critical competencies to support learning and designing human resource systems that promote and reward competency-based management education is a strategy that can advance the competitive advantage of the organization. The CVF provides human resource officers with a logical and consistent assessment model to identify weaknesses and strengths of managers and groups and design programs to close potential gaps. Through a combination of assessing and developing managerial competency, human resource officers can create more opportunities to build a winning organization.

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