



Chapter II

Creative Thinking and Problem Finding Underlie Optimal Decision Making

Issues

- To explore rethinking creative thinking in terms of what needs to be done organizationally over time
- To look at the various creative techniques that are useful to decision makers
- To explore the use of problem finding from the standpoint of turning problems into opportunities
- To examine how problem finding can assist in expanding the wisdom of decision makers

Introduction

In this 21st Century, there is an even great need for decision makers to ask the right questions to take advantage of future opportunities and solve upcoming problems. Within this framework, the chapter focuses on creative thinking and problem finding. An organization that encourages an acceptable tolerance for

failure that come from experimentation of new opportunities and resolving future problems is on the right track for undertaking the development and implementation of optimal KM/WM systems. This new mind set is required to meet the challenges facing typical decision makers of today. A fundamental shift in thinking, especially from a creative thinking and problem-finding viewpoint, is needed to beat or, at least, meet global competition today and in the future. As such, this new orientation means that creative thinking and problem finding need to be an integral part of an organization's corporate philosophy for optimal decision making.

Rethinking Creative Thinking in Terms of “What Needs to be Done”

At the core of creative thinking — as found in optimal KM/WM systems - is the need to take a second look at creative thinking, that is, rethinking creative thinking. The focus is on “what needs to be done” versus “what do you think,” as noted in the opening part of Chapter I. By doing so, decision makers then have the capability to reinvent the organization. It is not enough to create new products and services, but also there is a need to create a continuously innovating organization. By the same token, it is never enough to tell organization personnel about some new directions in creative thinking and problem finding. It is necessary to have them experience it in a way that gets them involved in a positive manner. Organizations need to encourage multiple points of view since interdisciplinary approaches can bring enormous value to problem finding and problem solving. In maximizing the differences in backgrounds, cultures, age, and like items, there is the increased likelihood that the result will not be what was originally imagined. From a different view, virtual reality experiences can be used to change people's mindset about viewing a certain area of a company's operations. Essentially, rethinking creative thinking helps company personnel put on a “new set of eyeglasses” so that they can see the world in a new and a different way from the past.

To assist company personnel in terms of what needs to be done can be facilitated by getting them to employ creative techniques online. According to a study by PricewaterhouseCoopers, almost half (45%) of creative ideas — whether they be breakthrough products or services, new ones to replace old ones, or ways to cut costs — come from company employees. By contrast, customers, suppliers, and competitors contribute approximately the other half. A growing number of companies, like Georgia-Pacific, W. R. Grace, and ChevronTexaco are taking advantage of the Internet plus specially designed software to run brainstorming

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