

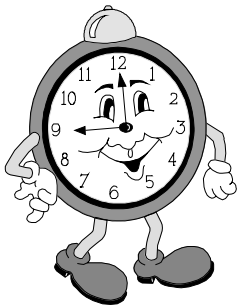
# Messenger

Vol. 4 No. 9

September, 2006

## What Makes Your Organization Tick?

Organizational behavior can be defined as the study of organizational culture, values, and theory that impacts performance. It includes every area of management theory as well as group and individual orientations. Everything from race, age, and gender to whether the organization is run by traditional bureaucracy, teams or a mixture of both is a part of the organization's behavior.



There are three main approaches for studying an organization: the historical view, the experiential view, and the science view. In the historical view, strategies are gleaned from past history and past leadership. Organizations use approaches that worked in the past with the expectation that they will work in the future. The experiential view uses strategies gleaned from the experiences of working for one or two organizations for a long period of time. This approach is based on what one has experienced over time and can have past baggage. Finally, the science view strategy examines organizational structure, processes, performance and behavior. This approach uses data collection and analysis to purposely drive the organization in a new direction.

The values of an organization will determine the way that it is run. According to Steven Robbins, there are seven levels of values:

*Our real values are expressed in our actions, in what we do and how we do it.*  
Robert Rabbin  
Business consultant and writer

Level #1 - Reactive - They react to basic physiological needs. Most descriptive of newborn babies.

Level #2 - Tribalistic - They have high dependence on tradition and power from authority figures.

Level #3 - Egocentric - They believe in rugged individualism. They are aggressive and selfish. They respond primarily to power.

Level #4 - Conforming - They have low tolerance for ambiguity and have difficulty in accepting people whose values differ from their own.

Level #5 - Manipulative - They strive to achieve their goals by manipulating things and people. They are very materialistic and actively seek higher status and recognition.

Level #6 - Sociocentric - They consider it more important to be liked and to get along with others than to get ahead. They are repulsed by materialism, manipulation and conformity.

Level #7 - Existential - They have a high tolerance for ambiguity and people with differing values. They are outspoken against inflexible systems, restrictive policies, status symbols, and arbitrary use of authority.

(Robbins, Stephen, Essentials of Organization Behavior, 1992, pp. 25-26)

**(continued on page 2 What Makes Your Organization Tick?)**

# The Mathis Group's

# Messenger

(continued from page 1 *What Makes Your Organization Tick?*)

## St. Louis Fall Conference on Project Management

September 18-22

- ⇒ Project Communication Management
- ⇒ Project Cost Management
- ⇒ Project Time Management

There is still space available. Please give us a call or visit our website at [www.themathisgroup.com](http://www.themathisgroup.com) for complete course outlines. We hope to see you there!

Knowing which level of values your organization falls under will enable you to determine how to approach any given situation. If your boss falls under level #4, he or she will have a hard time taking suggestions that are different than what they have done in the past. It will take time, and several conversations, for them to change the way they operate.

Communication is another essential element in understanding your organization. Communication can be defined as the sending and receiving of a message by means of words, tone, or body language. Surprisingly enough, what we say is the least effective part of communication. According to Stephen Haines, how we say something is more important than our actual words. Words only make up 7% of what is being delivered. Our vocal tone makes up 38% and our body language is 55% of what is being communicated. For example, if you are giving an employee praise over a project, but are doing so with a sarcastic tone, have your arms crossed, and without eye contact, the employee will feel that you are not being sincere. No matter what you say to that person, he or she will go away from the conversation with a negative impression. If your organization is terrible about communication, it is

impossible to have any type of cohesiveness throughout various departments.

Communication does not simply involve relaying a message--receiving the message is just as important. Become an active listener. In order to do this, you must:

- Make eye contact
- Give body language that reinforces your interest
- Discourage distractions
- Analyze what is said and ask questions
- Rephrase for clarity
- Don't interrupt the speaker in a thought
- Don't dominate with your own ideas

In the coming issues, we will look at how motivation, power, decision making, conflict, and types of learning are important factors comprehend in order to have a thorough understanding of your organization.



Check out our exciting  
courses at

[www.themathisgroup.com](http://www.themathisgroup.com)!!

- What Makes Your Organization Tick?*
- Project Communication Management*

Contact The Mathis Group today to receive their catalog of complete course listings or to discuss your customized onsite seminar.

The Mathis Group, Inc.  
Dr. Keith Mathis  
106 Lakeview Woods  
Eureka, MO 63025  
1-800-224-3731  
636/938-5292 voice/fax  
keith@themathisgroup.com  
[www.themathisgroup.com](http://www.themathisgroup.com)  
GSA Contractor- GS10F0383M  
Project Management Institute R.E.P.