

effective feedback mechanisms along with the network relationships required to acquire sufficient feedback.

10. The addition of new cells to the organisation, and the (involuntary) removal of existing cells from the organisation, is conditional upon the agreement of the existing cells that are or will be interdependent with the cell being added or removed; involvement of a cell in the organisation is conditional upon its agreement to serve the organisation's purpose and contribute to the well-being of the organisation and its cells.

11. Cells should benefit from their involvement in the system, just as their involvement should benefit the system as a whole; this commitment to mutual benefit provides the basis for the collaborative relationships needed for the organisation to survive and thrive, and precludes the legitimacy of self-serving behavior that creates competitive dynamics that undermine the organisation's well-being.

12. The benefits and returns accrued as a result of the collective efforts of the organisation's cells should be distributed fairly and equity among the cells; hoarding of these returns, and of resources more generally, undermines the organisation's dynamic equilibrium and impedes its fluidity and flexibility.

13. The "consciousness" of an organisation, reflecting the collective consciousness of its component cells, is critical to its functioning, performance, and survival; success depends on having necessary cognitive skills, the ability to deal with emotional issues, and even a "higher self" (i.e., conscience, superego, or soul) that provides a moral foundation guiding the organisation's definition of its purpose, mission, vision, and principles.

14. "Programs" (e.g., policies, standard operating procedures, etc.) that guide organisational activities, especially those of a more routine nature, are valuable, but it is also imperative to continually assess the value and efficacy of such programs and update them as necessary; likewise, reliance on such programs should not preclude the use of discretion on the part of any cells involved in an activity to innovate as needed in light of real-time circumstances.

15. These organisations operate at "the edge of chaos," where there is just enough order and stability to hold the system together while simultaneously enough chaos and unpredictability to produce the needed creativity and innovation; memory and continuity (i.e., "this is how we do things") must be balanced with learning and experimentation, which means that (prudent) risks should be rewarded and "failure" recognised as an important learning opportunity.

16. The complexity of an organisation is (largely) a function of the diversity of its



The complexity of an organisation is (largely) a function of the diversity of its cells

cells, and the effectiveness of a complex organisation is (in part) a function of the extent to which this diversity is integrated into a coherent unity; unity achieved through commitment to purpose and principles must be balanced by practices that capitalize on differences in information, orientation, skills, perspectives, attitudes, values, etc.

The Spirit of the New Workplace

Many organisations throughout the past half-century have been proactive in their efforts to improve the climate and/or culture of their organisations, based on the belief that it is the right thing to do and/or that

it is a win-win situation since employees as well as the organisation benefit in the long-run. In other cases, organisations are adopting features more compatible with a living systems approach because they are driven by market forces, the search for competitive advantage, social pressure, and other strategic necessities. Regardless of the impetus, one problem is that these changes are typically implemented in piecemeal fashion, not coordinated by any guiding vision of where the ultimate transformation is leading. Yet a key lesson from those involved in implementing systemic change is that meaningful improvement requires holistic attention to the structures, technologies, processes, and settings which create the work environment for the members of the organisation (Porras & Robertson, 1992).

Thus, progressive organisations awakening to the new living systems perspective recognise that the likelihood of success depends on the extent to which they take a systemic approach to transformation. Comprehensive, congruent changes must be implemented that support the birthing of the organisational spirit. Many leaders and consultants engaged in deep organisational transformation recognise that it is fundamentally a spiritual process, involving the very souls of its participants (Bolman & Deal, 1995; Egri & Frost, 1991). From this perspective, the transformation in which many organisations are involved can be understood as an awakening, the development of conscious awareness as a living entity. As this animating process takes hold, there likely will be some uncomfortable change, adaptation, and uncertainty ahead. But the ultimate result of this transformation will benefit all of humanity and the planet as a whole.

In the end, an organisation's ability to become a thriving living organisation is intrinsically tied to the extent to which it releases, rather than constrains, the spirit of its members. In pursuit of rationality, control, and predictability, many organisations disregard the value or legitimacy of employees' emotions, intuitions, and deeper spiritual needs (Mumby & Putnam, 1992) – denying, basically, the "heart and soul" of their humanity. How different an