

Cultural Learning Organizations: A Model

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V. Cultural organizations and the 'learning organization'

These organizations usually have a strong 'artistic/cultural' top leadership that is even more intense in art organizations, which usually have artistic directors. In these organizations activities and content are directly prescribed by the director and to a great extent their success depends on expert leaders. This introduces a top-dependence that is, to a certain extent, incompatible with LO. However, this incompatibility could be overcome if there is a deep leader's commitment to share and engage people in his vision and if LO concept is understood as a simple management tool that does not have to disturb activity content.

Moreover, a ground-breaking art/cultural organization is expected and strives to present an innovative program. So, innovation, a key goal of LO concept, is already integrated in the organization spirit. This expectation is even stronger in organizations, such as interdisciplinary art/science research-centered institutions, where experimentation and research are key points for its formation and mark its culture, values and operation.¹ Thus, this kind of organizations fosters a culture which supports collaborative projects and contact and communication among artists themselves, between artists and scientists, and between these professionals and administrative staff, taking advantage of reciprocal interdisciplinary interactions. This atmosphere introduces values and habits in the organization like flexibility, innovation support, a collaboration project-based spirit and strong work engagement. This atmosphere can be influenced, however, by a shift to an exhibition-focused organization with an emphasis in museum activities and events, which can create some culture values disturbances and a certain

¹ Artists' and scientist's way of working is based on project-based research and very commonly is an introspective and solitary activity during long hours of concentrated and innovative effort. But at the same time both kinds of professionals need interaction with other colleagues in order to enrich and analyze its own work.

organization stress. This passion for supporting experimentation and innovation is an excellent ground on which to build the LO spirit. However, it should be noticed that usually employees in art/cultural organizations feel that the search of new ideas and extracting relevant information from the environment is a task of the top management and external curators and artists. New ideas are always something coming from the top or from outside. Internal innovation is, then, perceived as reactive, always responding to external and top innovation.