

WhitePaper: The Solution Concept

Make the Purpose Operational



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Status: in work
Version: 1.1.0 (build 104)
Date: 2024-05-14
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Breaking the Mold: From Henry Ford to Modern Work Innovations

Imagine stepping back into the early 20th century, where industrial giants like Henry Ford are redefining the very fabric of work. Ford introduces the 40-hour work week, a radical idea aimed at improving worker well-being and productivity. This bold move positions him as a surprising advocate for worker rights, echoing Marxist ideals of protecting labor. Ford's initiative marks the first major shift away from the grueling conditions reminiscent of industrial slavery, setting a new standard for the corporate world.

Fast forward to today, and it feels like we're stuck. Despite advances in technology and productivity, the standard working hours remain unchanged, frozen in a bygone era. We cling to time tracking and rigid schedules, even though research spanning over six decades shows they hinder the creative and knowledge-driven work that dominates today's economies.

Why the resistance to change? There's a palpable fear that new methods might fail, driving organizations to stick with the "devil they know," even if it's ineffective. This conservative approach perpetuates outdated management styles that reflect a feudal mindset, where control and hierarchy are valued over innovation and flexibility.

The crux of the issue is the mindset we perpetuate through our organizational structures. Nearly all of humanity operates under these unspoken rules, where power dynamics and strict controls mirror an almost feudal system. We are deeply accustomed to this setup, sensitized to its norms, yet unaware of its profound impact on our work culture and personal well-being.

The time is ripe for a renaissance in how we approach work. Just as Ford once revolutionized industrial labor practices, we need a new wave of innovation that aligns with the realities of modern work. We must embrace flexibility, prioritize mental health, and foster environments that encourage creativity and autonomy. Let's shift our focus from hours worked to value created, breaking free from the century-old shackles that still bind our potential.

As we stand at this crossroads, the challenge is clear. We must dare to reimagine our workspaces, question the status quo, and implement practices that truly reflect the needs of today's dynamic workforce. By doing so, we can transform our workplaces into hubs of creativity and innovation, ensuring that our work culture promotes not only productivity but also the well-being and fulfillment of every individual.

This journey requires courage, vision, and a relentless commitment to change. Are we ready to take the next step and redefine the future of work? Let's draw inspiration from Ford's legacy and build a work environment that truly reflects the values of the 21st century.

My Journey to Rethinking Leadership: The Birth of OrgIQ

This is my story, and it is also the story of OrgIQ. Everything I have criticized about organizations and management, I have experienced firsthand. I never approach from a place of judgment, but rather from a shared perspective of “me too.” My past actions in management were no more or less misguided than many others today. Like many, I was taught outdated theories in university—principles that sadly persist in curriculums to this day.

Armed with this traditional mindset of superiority, I stepped into management roles early in my career, eager to make my mark. It felt rewarding to report to C-level executives and manage large, impactful projects. I developed the global organization for my area using all the conventional methods I had learned. And while it seemed to work on the surface, I felt increasingly lost. I was important and felt good about my achievements, yet something didn’t quite align with my deeper beliefs.

Did I do a great job? Most likely, but for the wrong reasons. And talking about organizational intelligence, we human react so much more to the reason why we are doing things. Our 99,999% subconscious are subconscious (which means they pass by our consciousness, our “user interface”), but oh so real.

The concept of superiority that propelled my early career soon became a glaring issue. It set me apart, but it also clashed with my fundamental values. And “setting apart” creates distance. This conflict became particularly evident when dealing with the issue of accountability—a concept that invokes fear and avoidance in many. Often, we choose to remove people rather than confronting deep-rooted issues, because delving into the emotional layers of problems feels too unsafe.

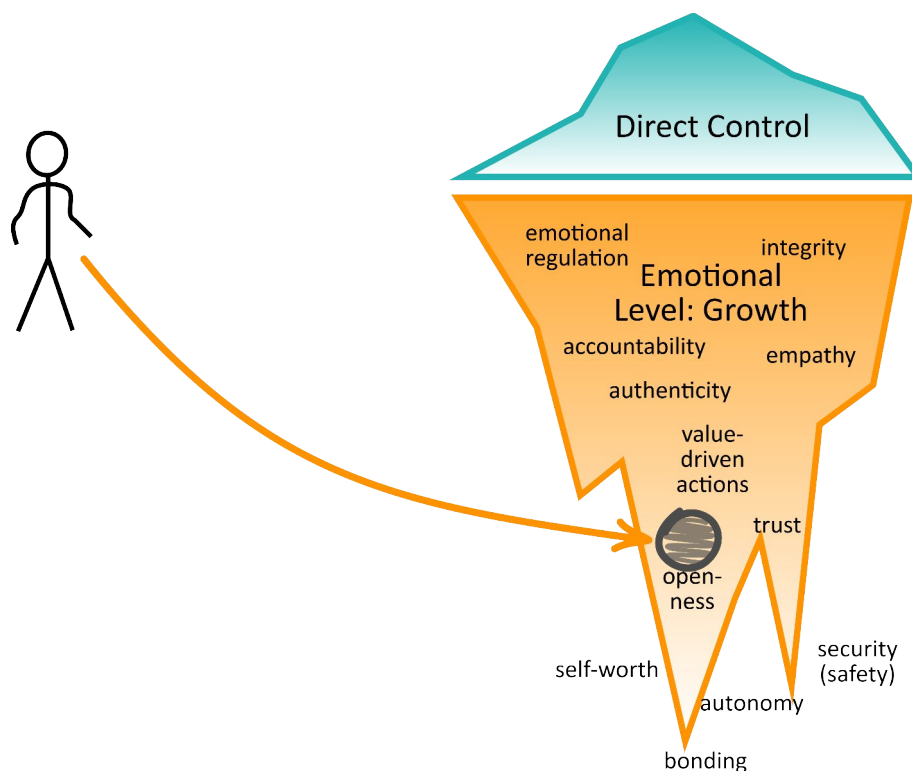


Figure 1: The story of missed accountability. We need to be able to see and address emotional issues directly. But this is not what is done. Details of the iceberg model in [Model](#)

In most cases, we wait until problems manifest on a technical level, where they seem safer and more manageable. Addressing issues directly at the emotional level feels vague and unsupported by data.

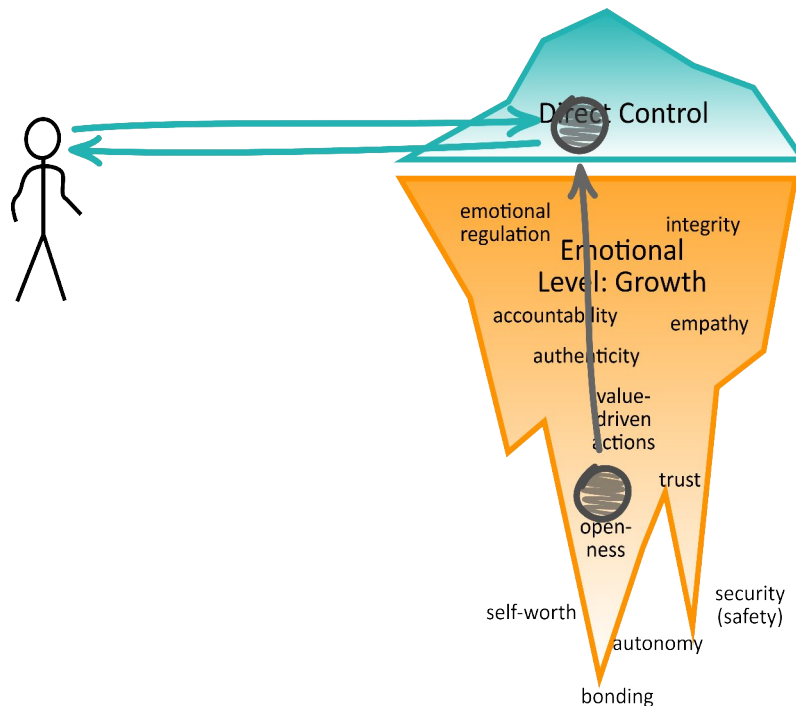


Figure 2: Then we wait until these problems surface on the technical level. Because we are used to address technical issues, this talk is easy.

However, if we treat trust and openness with the same precision we apply to heart surgery or programming, addressing them becomes less daunting and more systematic.

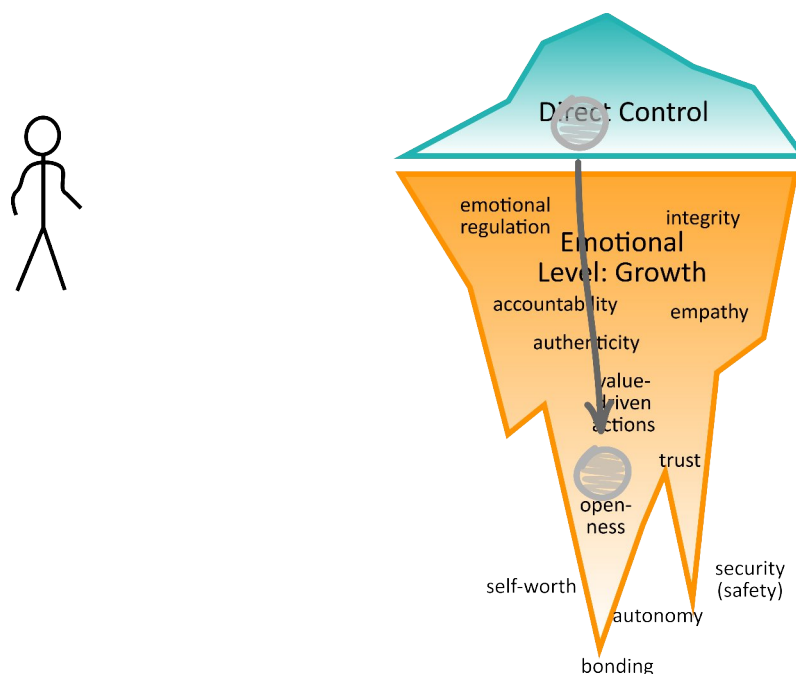


Figure 3: We expect that our interaction on the technical level will solve both issues ... they just disappear.

Yet, we often don't take this approach until it's too late, allowing the damage to maximize before we intervene with technical solutions and demands for new behaviors. This approach tends to worsen the situation. The iceberg analogy fits well here: the bulk of issues lie beneath the surface, influencing everything above, yet we only deal with the visible tip.

Understanding what I was doing wrong—despite my best intentions—drove me to seek alternatives, some of which have been known for over 60 years. I was fortunate to have mentors who showed me different approaches, teaching me with patience. I admit I was slow to learn at first. Changing my perspective on the world was one of the most challenging and ultimately most rewarding changes I have made.

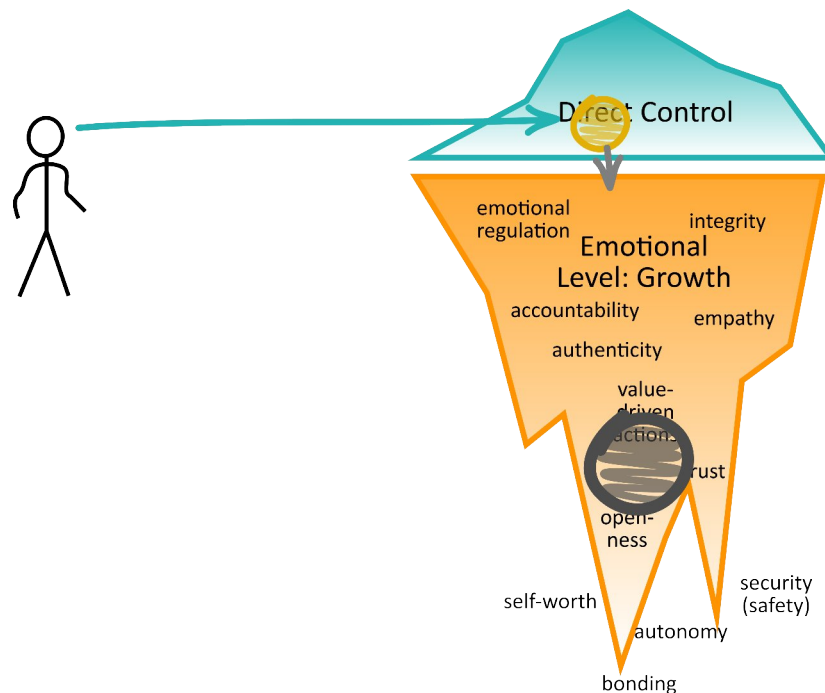


Figure 4: What really happens is that we fake the wished behavior on the outside, but the original “pain” in the inside will grow. And it will show somewhere else sooner or later.

I delved into human neurology and psychology, which helped me understand why we behave as we do. This new perspective allowed me to understand others and myself better, highlighting how powerful a change in perspective can be. It’s more potent than simply changing the environment. This understanding became the core philosophy of OrgIQ, leading to a redefined purpose of leadership and the development of solutions tailored to modern organizational needs.

Reflecting on my experiences and those within my network, I recognize that our conventional approach to managing and structuring organizations is flawed, often doing more harm than good. Of the approximately 300 managers I have encountered, only about three truly met the mark of doing more good than harm—that’s just 1%. The rest, at best, did not positively impact their teams or organizations.

And it’s not the fault of the 297 managers. These are also wonderful people. But the expectation we have towards managers is so high that nearly nobody can fulfill it. And you have to do the emotional work, before you get this role. And I have seen no company that truly works on the Deep Soft Skills. We just assume that everything is there and will work out.

We drive those people into a stubborn arrogance, because they have no other options. They are a symptom of a flawed system. This is really important to understand. Blaming or bashing of experts or managers won’t help us to solve the issue.

This realization underscores our need for a stable, systematic approach to leadership that is robust against human diversity and the emotional challenges that come with it. We need to better distribute demands and focus on the unique value each person brings to a leadership or management role. Emphasizing purpose can make traditional structures like the Clockwork model more relevant and focused.

If my data seems unbelievable, consider your own experiences. Think about how many people have been a truly empowering and inspirational force in your life. Chances are, that number is small. This isn’t just a challenge; it’s a call to rethink how we lead and manage, ensuring we enhance rather than hinder the growth and effectiveness of our organizations.

Solutions as a New Perspective to Structure the Network

A 'Solution' is the perfect structure to capture the personal reality of every individual in an organization. Complexity is not complex concerning the individual elements. In complex systems, the individual elements follow simple rules. The mechanisms themselves are easy to understand. Complexity arises because many of these simple systems interact with each other across various levels, each with its own timing and hidden dependencies. The single element is easy, the overlay and interference of 1000nds of those simple elements is complex.

The challenge is to create a system where every single element is working great and is getting better day by day. Therefore, the focus needs always to be the system, and the check is the personal experience of each and everyone.

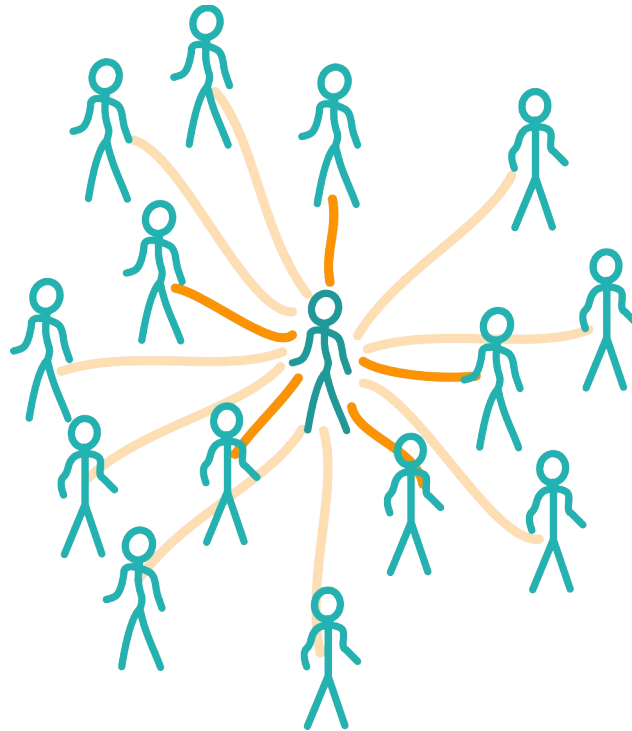


Figure 5: Everyone has a personal reality based on the close (dark orange) or lose (light orange) relationships. We see only a part of the system, which is stable. The complexity arises, when I would to build a model of all realities.

And while our Network addresses the relationships and emotional and social context, we need also a similar powerful tool (perspective) to structure the work. It needs to be purpose focused, relationship based, result oriented, and simple as possible. The perspective of Solutions is a good approach for this.

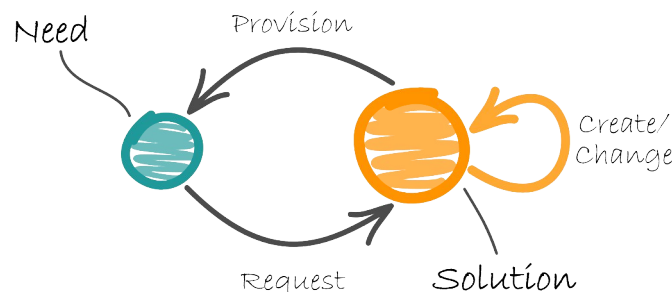


Figure 6: A Solution is the Answer to an external or internal need. It's just a systematic perspective on what we do anyways. Every project is the application or provision of the Solution or a change to it. We work in the system or we work at the system.

To simplify: a Solution is a system that provides an answer to a need, which can be either external or internal, and manifest as a product or service. When we start an organization, the first 'answers' we provide are directly tied to our purpose. As generalists, we have one big Solution that provides the answer. With growth, we gain more specialization,

and our Solutions also become more specialized and interdependent. For instance, if you start with a simple app to fulfill some need, you develop and sell this app. If you are successful, your organization will grow, and one of the first specializations will likely be in Development and Sales.

Describing the role and responsibility of an individual within a Solution is simple: it's easy to understand where I bring my value. However, understanding all values in all Solutions and all the dependencies is complex. But we don't need to model this; we just need to understand what we do right now.

The desire to have a full model is completely understandable, but it will lead to incorrect answers in a complex environment. The question itself is our resistance to accepting complexity. Most of the destructive actions and pain we cause and experience come from this kind of resistance.

The solutions I am involved in build my own small world within the system, and this is true for everyone. Whether expert or manager, we all contribute something to the system and depend on each other. It's a natural way to balance, level, and interweave the elements of the system.

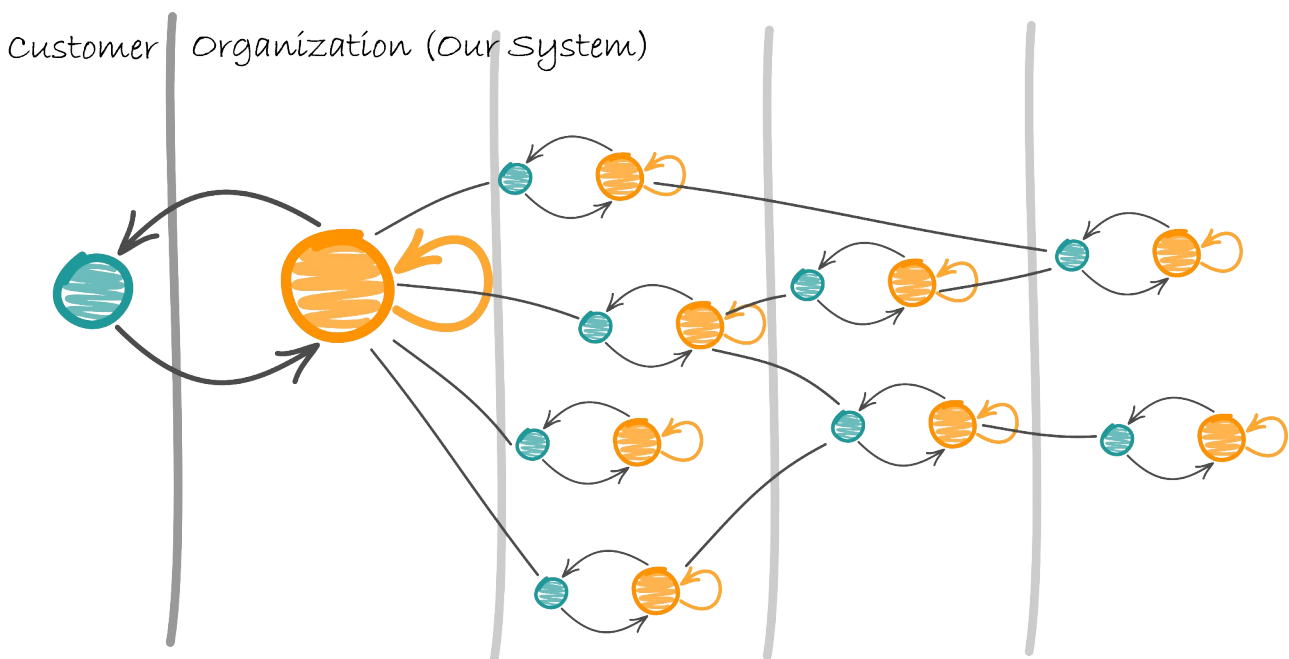


Figure 7: We can build a network of Solutions, but this will look different from wherever we start. Therefore, in complexity it's enough to see and check if my local view is valid and useful.

The reality for every individual in an organization can be captured by the solutions and the relationship network. The solutions are also interwoven with each other, creating a solution network.

It is important to understand that the solution approach is just a shift in perspective. It does not mean you need to change anything immediately, but you will see the world differently. It's a simple approach that aligns well with the Clockwork perspective and the Network perspective.

An amazing effect of the Solution approach is the “no more meetings” effect. We will discuss this in depth at another place, but Solutions have a tremendous effect on meeting culture. Solutions focus on getting things done together. Therefore, I don't come together to talk about what we should do, but we just do it. If it's coding, writing, making decisions doesn't matter. Whatever the purpose and result of our Solution is, can be done in this way. From C-level across development and sales, to customer service and reception.

With the solution perspective, we can more easily spot gaps and inconsistencies. We will see more clearly how we depend on each other—everyone in their personal network—and there is a tight coupling to the purpose. Because every solution should provide value to the overall purpose, I suggest that every solution have its own defined purpose.

A solution is a response to a pull. We start with the need. The customer needs something; the world needs something. Then we have an idea to create a solution for this need, usually based on things that are already there, but always adapting, learning, and improving. The core idea of a solution is the definition of intelligence: to learn and adapt with the intention to survive. But we aim not just for survival, but for a thriving existence within the system.

The needs I address must match the purpose. You can imagine the purpose as a corridor. There is a certain amount of needs that fit within it, but some are also opposite.

Take OrgIQ: If someone like Wolfgang Grupp senior—the former CEO of Trigema—were to come to me, I would be honored, but could not offer him something. His belief system is so far outside our purpose that I would thank him and refer him to people better suited for his needs. He presents himself as the type of CEO where every decision went over his desk. He sounds like the only grown-up in the company, and without him, nothing would work. He was very successful and obviously met all these requirements. But it will be hard to find someone else like him. Therefore, for the future of Trigema, I assume we will see a change in the leadership style.

When companies fail, it's often because they miss chances to adapt. It's rare that big companies fail because they lose someone at the top. People reverse engineer the purpose from what and how they do things and will stick to this purpose.

But when this purpose is wrong or too unclear, then we are heading for disaster, with or without installed leaders.

Building solutions applies the same principles as any form of architecture. We might use meta levels, but there are no fixed rules about the granularity.

So, just leave everything as it is, at least in the beginning. And after understanding the solution concept in practice, everyone will spot places where we can improve. Then you just do it. Always stay aligned with the purpose and the constraints. Otherwise, change becomes easy. Use the consent approach or resistance-based decision models, and set rules for the diversity of people involved in the decision-making. Understanding Clockwork, Network, and Solutions, we accept that complex systems can't have centralized control. Complexity needs safe mechanisms for local control.

For the Network, the Solution perspective provides a simple model for daily reality and a good connection to the Clockwork via the purpose. For the Clockwork, it is a perfect tool to provide purpose close to the operative reality. The purpose-results-steering-cycle is the approach of choice.

However, the Clockwork must resist the urge to use the solutions as a means to get a complete model of the complex system. Because the definition of complexity is that it is not reducible.

To use its benefits, we need to accept its existence.