

CHAPTER 5

Rx FOR MONDAY MORNING: TURNING PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Asea Brown Boveri (ABB) is an excellent example of a sets-within-sets-within-sets corporate organization: it has 1,300 separate companies employing 250,000 people in 100 countries who generate \$30 billion in annual revenues.

At ABB Network Control AB, one of 100 ABB firms in Sweden that comprise ABB CEWE, Thommy Haglund had the task of implementing a “learning organization” pilot in the 300-person, white-collar software company, where half of the employees have college degrees. In the rapidly changing world of software, ongoing learning is critical. The company already had decentralized its functions and flattened its hierarchy (from six levels to three and from 40 managers to 20), and it was ready to move forward.

The first thing they did was to throw out the term “learning organization” and replace it with what became known as “3L,” standing for “Life-Long Learning.” “This is very personal,” Haglund explained, pointing to the need for each person in the organization to be a lifelong learner.

Many ABB employees were not learners, much less life-long ones, when they began. They typified the problem by poking fun at themselves and inventing a mythical employee with low self-esteem.

Sigurd's uncommon Swedish name implied that he was somewhat "Out of it." His dejected, slightly disheveled cartoon image matched his character: he thought he couldn't influence his situation; he didn't understand how his organization worked; he had no plan for developing his competencies; and he thought (when he did so) that his manager was responsible for his education.

"We were running beside the bike," Haglund explained, "and there were lots of excuses going around. As one person said, 'When you point your finger, there are three fingers pointing back at you.'"

So they set up 20 "Idea Groups" of 15 people each, whose task was to have creative conversations. The Idea Groups, selected for a maximum mix of cross-functional men and women, younger and older people who were strangers to one another in the organization, involved no management. Getting new people acquainted with one another was an implicit goal.

"We gave them some easy questions that had very hard answers," Haglund said:

- ? What is competence?
- ? What is competence development?
- ? What needs exist?
- ? Who is responsible?
- ? What can I do immediately?
- ? What have we learned from this?

Everyone kept a diary and was asked to write two or three sentences each day for a week in answer to the question "What have I learned?"

It was, Haglund says, "six months of storming. We had to keep reminding ourselves that it has to look bad before it looks better. But you can't shortcut that period."

It also was not free. Each Idea Group received \$5,000 (for an overall investment of \$100,000 for the 20 groups), but with strings attached. "They couldn't spend it on training, they couldn't split it up,

that is, they had to spend it together, and they had to spend it in three months.”

The program was a resounding success. The “Idea” Groups came up with all sorts of new concepts. Creativity ran rampant, turning traditional approaches into home-grown, innovative ones. A course in presentation skills became an amateur theater presentation. Survival expeditions replaced courses in teamwork. Instead of setting up a huge administrative system to book everything, they used a bulletin board.

Today internal seminars take place regularly, with such titles as “Lateral Thinking” and “Technical Training for Nontechies.” At the same time:

- ? Mentors have become common, including 26 internal people who took on mentees, while 40 others (about 15 percent of the employees) gained mentors in other ABB companies.
- ? Interns now cross internal boundaries by spending a week in another department.
- ? Intercompany visits are common and encouraged.
- ? Development people regularly visit customers, a practice previously unheard of.

Eighteen months into the three-year pilot program, they like their results. Company revenues have grown. We asked Haglund what will happen when the program ends. “I want to try something else,” he replied smiling.

TAKING THE FIRST STEPS

You do not have to scrap your whole organization and begin anew to shift your business into the Age of the Network. Starting small, as ABB Network Control did with groups of 15, you can develop your teamnet over time.

Choose a project with a clear mission that involves people from more than one organization. In ABB's case, the mission—to become a learning organization—was quite grand. They introduced it modestly as a pilot program. To qualify for this approach, the project must cross at least a few traditional boundaries—organizational, corporate, or geographic.

Hold a briefing for the people involved in the project on the five principles described in the previous chapter—purpose, members, links, leaders, and levels. Then follow through with these two steps:

? *Startup*: Do an initial teamnet assessment.

? *Launch*: Hold a planning session when the teamnet is ready to take off.

With planning launched, you must implement. (In chapter 4, we laid out the warning signs that impede successful implementation.) Maintain a steady course throughout the project's life by keeping close watch on the dynamic extremes of each of the five principles. We focus particular attention on the startup and launch phases here because, without a successful start, the teamnet will never get to implementation.

Every project, every organization, grows over time; it is a process with a beginning, middle, and end. In each phase, use the Five Team-net Principles to tune up your process.

STARTUP: ASSESSING THE SITUATION

This is your first quick pass at applying the principles, which you will plumb further in the launch phase.

Use the principles as a mental checklist for a set of conversations or a simple start. Ask people:

? Does everyone have a *common view* of the project?

? Do you consider yourselves *colleagues*?

- ? Do you have rich *connections* among you?
- ? Can you hear many *voices* within the group?
- ? Are you *inclusive* of the levels of organization?

This checklist provides a quick summary of how far along a group is on the teamnet path.

Common View?

Does everyone share a common view of the work? There is an easy way to test this. Separately, ask three members what the group's purpose is. Three quite different answers indicate that the focus is fuzzy at best. You are not necessarily home free, however if everyone repeats the same mantra. This may suggest groupthink, the uncritical acceptance of a group ideology.

The answers you are looking for show strong common themes with unique twists and special applications. In healthy teamnets, people share deeper levels of vision, values, trust, and core beliefs while holding diverse viewpoints and arguing over individual issues.

Teamnets never really jell and cannot succeed without a shared purpose. A teamnet faces the clearest danger if it once had a purpose that is no longer clear. Rarely will it succeed by maintaining the organization in its current form. A purposeful organization that completes its work, delivers its results, and goes out of business is a graceful and natural course of a useful but transient teamnet.

To come to life, teams and networks need a purpose that everyone understands.

Colleagues?

Who is involved? Practically, this means "get names." Whether recorded on the back of an envelope or published in a directory, names of people and organizations that need representation indicate membership in the teamnet.

You gain early clues to the potential size and multiple levels of the teamnet by understanding who the members are and what talents they bring. These are the participants, the components, the most tangible elements of the basic network.

Listen to how the participants talk about one another and the organizations they represent. Do they refer to and treat one another with respect, communicate as peers, and possess elements of independence? These are all nuances of the word “colleagues.”

Quickly assess how independent, dependent, and interdependent the members are. Dependent members are a drag on the whole group; totally independent members rip it apart. Interdependence is a necessary balance.

Look for the obvious. Can participants stand on their own if the group as a whole fails?

Will companies remain independent in an alliance? Do individuals on a cross-functional team have a home organization and other responsibilities? Do physically distributed sites have control over their budgets? Does a line-of-business profit center also have personnel authority?

Connections?

Just because people regard one another as colleagues and share a vision does not mean they have a teamnet. The third *sine qua non* is links. There are no relationships without communication around joint activity, and without relationships among participants, there is no network.

Look for the “1—2—3” of the links. The channels (1) allow people to interact (2), which is how they form relationships (3).

- 1. Look for the physical channels.*
- 2. Identify the tangible interactions.*
- 3. Recognize the relationships among people.*

First, in what ways does your group link now? People create links with all kinds of media—frequent face-to-face meetings, conferences, conventions, off-sites, phone calls, faxes, newsletters, video, e-mail, and a rapidly growing list of exotic electronic technologies. Only preferences, time, and money limit this cornucopia of connections.

Groups that work together across separate locations or in the same location but at different times, such as shifts of nurses, need to be explicit about communication. How do people communicate with one another? Are they clear and intentional, or vague or inconsistent about the channels they use?

Second, look for the interactions, the actual use people make of the group's communication systems. Get a feel for the levels of activity. A simple survey can yield dramatic findings. Do higher-ups respond to lower-downs, or do they ignore them? Do people talk only to others at their own level? Are the actions and reactions of senders and receivers sparse and distant? Or is there a buzzing, booming confusion, which is the profuse, immediate, and spontaneous stuff of real communication?

Third, rise up to the 30,000-foot view (see chapter 1), where you can see the whole communication pattern. Can you see the basic relationships, the standing waves of interaction over time? Are there broad streams of communication that indicate a history and a culture together? On a fast-moving team, bonds form quickly through intense interaction within a quickly clicking culture. If there are voids here, brainstorm ways to increase meaningful interactions.

Relationships can become real in an instant, or they may emerge slowly as a pattern of interaction establishes itself in response to change. This is true for people and for organizations. Regardless of time, relationships form the bonds that build trust. The teamnet goes nowhere without trust.

Voices?

Do you hear one or many voices when you listen to the group? Heard from the outside, one voice might sound like a coherent teamnet with a spokesperson. Now look inside. It's likely to be a hierarchy at heart if the same one voice drowns out the rest.

Ask a few people in the group who the leaders are. Listen for a plural response if you ask the question in the singular. Better yet, stand corrected as people talk about how important everyone's role is.

All groups, including teams and networks, have leaders. Teamnets, however, have more leaders than hierarchy and bureaucracy. Where a hierarchy insists on one leader, a network has several. Where a bureaucracy seeks terms of office for single leaders and appoints subordinate bosses, a network sees a number of leaders rotate through diverse responsibilities.

Is this healthy? The answer is no if fluid leadership indicates a fragmented, out-of-control group. The answer is yes if it indicates a dynamic capacity to self-organize continuously to meet changing conditions.

Whether many voices indicate useless babble or deep bonds depends on the purpose that unites them. Are the shifting leaders also keeping the group focused on the overall purpose? Are people stepping up to responsibilities as needed, then stepping aside as new expertise is required? In the end, is the purpose being accomplished?

Inclusive?

Finally, to put all this information together, you need to sort out the levels. What parts of the organization does the teamnet include and what is it included within? What is the overall context, the greater environment? What are its major internal components? What makes them up?

Inclusion works both ways, internally and externally. You include the participants when you take the point of view of the teamnet. When

you take the point of view of the participants, the teamnet includes you.

It is essential to adopt various points of reference in the 21st-century organization. At minimum, people need to be able to understand the point of view of the organization as a whole, as well as the reference point of their part of it.

*Though multiple points of view are free, they
are like mountain tops, requiring effort to attain.*

Once you see the levels, look for the relationships across them. Crossing boundaries often involves traversing levels from someone's point of view. In a world of wholes and parts, there is no other way.

Practically, this means people from diverse ranks working together. Are there ongoing connections with the hierarchy that your teamnet sits within? Are there links to the operating lower-archy? If your teamnet spans two companies, is the alliance simply a relationship at the top or the middle, or are there interactions at many levels among the allied organizations?

LAUNCH: PLANNING THE WORK

Teamnets need to be self-organizing to some extent to be successful. The more rapid the change and the more fluid the organization, the greater the need for this capacity.

The recipe for self-organization begins with people:

? *People create the shared purpose.* Whether a team working together at a white board, an omnipotent ruler issuing an edict, or a lawmaker writing a preamble, people are the ultimate source of an organization's *raison d'être*.

- ? *Purpose generates the work.* “Why” leads to “what.” This is essential in networks because purpose is the source of legitimacy for activities undertaken and results achieved.
- ? *Cross-boundary work becomes explicit through planning.* People need maps to help guide work through unfamiliar geographic locations. Teams that work at a distance need to be more explicit than those in one location.
- ? *“Those who do, plan.”* Participatory planning provides the energy for the self-organizing process. Openness and inclusion lead to trust. To maximize everyone’s sense of involvement, invite everyone, expect some to show up, and profusely thank the few who stay to do the work.

Planning is a continuous process of thinking both about the long-range future and about what to do next. One pass at planning is never enough. A plan is never finished but is often “good enough for now.”

All five Teamnet Principles interrelate. Change in one principle area effects the others. Use a draft purpose statement to broaden the circle of stakeholders, who in turn reshape the focus. Actual relationships will differ from those proposed and will lead to different leaders. More work leads to more internal units and more external alliances.

Set up a planning process that makes the work real, gains commitments, and kick-starts the internal leadership. Make the process as participatory as possible. In words attributed to General Dwight D. Eisenhower:

The plan is nothing. Planning is everything.’

Call a planning meeting and include these agenda items:

- ? Clarify purpose.
- ? Identify members.

- ? Establish links.
- ? Multiply leaders.
- ? Integrate levels.

These action statements also can guide a longer planning agenda stretching over days or months. For example, take the first item, “Clarify purpose.” In some situations, a few minutes of discussion will reaffirm a common understanding; in others, extensive programs will be set in motion to discover a new vision and mission. Just getting to “Go” in a teamnet is often a considerable accomplishment.

Clarify Purpose

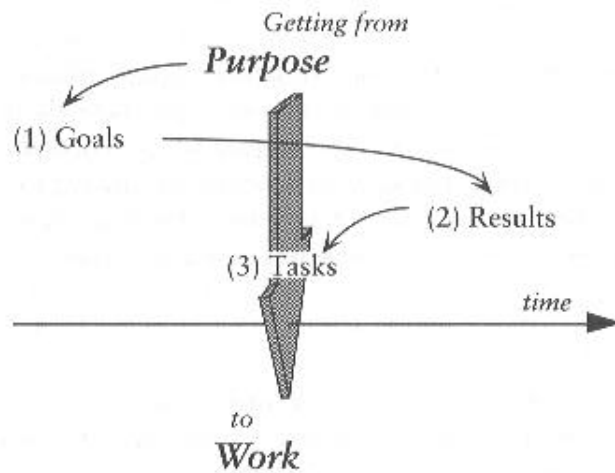
Purpose is the essential resource available to a teamnet. To make purpose useful, you need to “unpack it,” that is, to translate values, vision, and mission into goals, tasks, and results.

When people are physically distributed, their purpose needs to go beyond the unspoken and tacit behavior that works for those who are near one another. People need to generate and interpret the purpose so that they understand it well enough to bring it back to their diverse locations and communicate it to other people. Internal direction cannot replace external command unless people participate in the process of defining their work. People can then carry the explicit purpose across boundaries.

If you have already gone through a period of searching and struggling to reach a new vision and *mission*, now is the time to translate the abstractions into concrete terms. Set your *goals* for the future—only a handful, please! Brainstorm many goals, but select only a few. The “rule of seven,” the number of things people can comfortably keep in mind at once, is strongly applicable here.

Next, pick a time horizon—a week, a month, a year—and place yourself at this future point and look back. Ask what *results* you want to achieve within that time for each goal. Results are the output, the deliverables, the products of a group’s activities. Finally, identify the *tasks* that connect the goals to the results.

CONVERTING PURPOSE INTO WORK



When you arrive at tasks this way, you have made the purpose concrete. People understand the legitimacy of the tasks since they can relate them directly to the overall shared purpose. And if the purpose changes, they know that the tasks need reevaluation.

Identify Members

Now that you know what the work is, who needs to participate in what? Here is one of the secrets of successful networking:

Everyone does not have to participate in everything.

Each task, driven by a goal, has at least one result and represents a chunk of work carried out by a subgroup, a part of the teamnet. Only some members need to be involved in most tasks, perhaps as few as one or two. For certain tasks, such as a milestone review, everyone

may need to participate. Members sign up by sharing the work through one or more of the group's activities. "Members" are the arms and legs and torso and senses of an organization. In teamnets, "they" becomes "we."

Membership goes beyond names on a list to flesh-and-blood commitments as the planning phase unfolds and the work is clarified. These groups define their boundaries by identifying their members.

A core group expands its network view to include stakeholders and constituencies beyond itself that need representation in the plans. Customers, for example, may participate as full, temporary, or *ex officio* members of a network.

Some teams and networks may have distinct boundaries, but often they are bounded from the center. Core members, perhaps identified directly as a set of individuals, sit at the center of intersecting relationships. Further out, organizational names or positional titles identify participants and stakeholders. Furthest out, people refer to constituencies by general categories, such as "customers," "media," and "government."

Don't be afraid to name members of a network at all these levels of abstraction at once. Networks include individuals and organizations. People may act for themselves, stand for a group, or represent a constituency—all at the same time.

Establish Links

We need to take our thinking up a level for a moment as the focus comes back to the links again. This is where the 21st-century organization is going to look especially different from its predecessors.

The convergence of digital technologies drives inescapable organizational change as the interconnected global network grows, along with individual information mobility. A few years from now, connectivity will explode dramatically. We put our bet on 2001 as the year when large-scale "digital convergence" snaps into place and an order-of-magnitude new jolt of change hits.

We are in the midst of epochal change in our ability to link. This is not only a technology revolution but a social one as well. The plummeting cost of connectivity itself challenges the vertical channels of hierarchical information flow. Distributed, plentiful information enables distributed power.

Think about links at two levels: first, for the group as a whole, and second, for specific tasks and subgroups. Indeed, you need to move through these perspectives several times to find a good mix of media.

You need to establish a communications environment for the group that supports its work and is conducive to growing relationships. Consider multiple means for the physical links. Different people prefer different media; some personal preferences are extremely strong. The nature of the work and the location of the people greatly influence the choice and mix of media. In particular, cross-boundary work virtually guarantees the need for more than one mode of communication.

The answers are not always obvious. While it might appear that fax is a preferable mode of communication because of its simplicity, in some places e-mail is preferable. "Fax is very hard for us," says Olya Marakova, a scientist in Frank Starmer's lab without walls doing basic research on cardiac cells, in an e-mail message from Pushchino, Russia. "We have only one fax machine for several buildings, and it's very expensive. But everyone has modems, and it takes no time to send? e-mail."

Harry Brown's EBC Industries' teamnet, by contrast, depends heavily on fax because e-mail cannot easily transport the complex manufacturing drawings that the companies exchange. Not everyone has Marakova's fax deficiency or Brown's need, but they make the point that the communication mode depends on the situation.

Next, lay the groundwork for specific relationships to develop in planning a teamnet. You know that you want marketing people to work with their counterparts in finance. Here you work to relate (soft) relationships to (hard) technology in reverse of what you do in the assessment phase, where you begin with the technology and work to the relationships.

- ? The purpose is the source of a desire or need to establish relationships.
- ? By translating the purpose into concrete work activities, you describe the interactions that need to be supported.
- ? Choose and set up the physical channels of communication required by the interactions.

In short, work drives the technology, rather than the reverse.

Multiply Leaders

This is a teamnet commandment. It's also where some people have the most trouble with the teamnet idea—fearing either powerlessness or anarchy. “If you tell people they’re going to have to give up power, they’ll tell you to stuff it,” says former Xerox CEO David Kearns.² “The risk of democracy” is how one besieged airline executive put it.

We never said it is easy, only that this is the way things are going to be. Potentially, this is the most personally powerful aspect of team-nets. There is more room and more need for people to take responsibility and exercise leadership because the group is working on many complex issues concurrently.

Most groups include both appointed and natural leaders. Cross-boundary groups need to include people with positional power. A teamnet is no different from a bureaucratic committee that studies and recommends if it has no power to act. Groups develop their own leaders, regardless of the official structure. In networks, people use this ability to great advantage.

Natural leadership in a group springs up around its activities. People take responsibility for particular tasks and in this way are selforganizing. You can use the work to define leadership within the group, rather than the other way around.

When people generate their own tasks, they see why they need to be

involved in specific activities. They are able to add unique contributions, exercising leadership as they do, since they know their own expertise, experience, or perspective. Each person in the teamnet is a leader at some time in some activities.

Each cross-boundary task and set of activities offers an opportunity for leadership within the teamnet. Task leadership emerges as people take on responsibility for results. Linking specific results with specific people anchors responsibility for work.

Many tasks naturally lend themselves to coleaders, which further expands the possibilities for leaders. These leadership roles also naturally end as the work is completed and the process moves on.

What you *don't* want to do is what bureaucracy does—chunk all the work down to the level of individual tasks. This suppresses multiple leadership, proves more costly, and does not work in complex situations.

Integrate Levels

Purpose, members, links, and leaders all involve multiple levels of consideration. Teamnets are at least three levels deep: the members of the teams, the teams themselves, and the network of teams (or individuals in task groups in teams).

Don't be afraid to connect across the levels or even to confuse them. Levels *are* often confusing. Just keep moving your thinking up and down the scales of size and scope, looking internally and externally from the boundaries, from global to local perspectives and back again.

The planning process itself is one of the best means of integrating the levels and keeping everyone informed. Indeed, early plans are often most valuable as tools for communicating with the hierarchy. They are also great recruitment devices for potential participants not involved in the initial planning.

Can you fit your plan on a page? If so, you have a grasp of the whole that you can communicate to others. Can you break down the one-page plan to a greater level of detail, complete with places and dates? This indicates that your plan has depth. Can you fit your plan into a

broader strategy and overall purpose? This indicates that your plan has a context, another way of integrating levels.

Use precious meeting resources to develop a clear, high-level picture that people can go away and fill in. Each person needs to understand the whole, and each leader needs to balance global issues with local concerns.

By ending the launch phase with a high-level picture, you have brought your original fuzzy, 30,000-foot view down to a sufficient level of detail to do some real work. This degree of clarity in the work convinces others that the plan makes sense, simplifying the “marketing” of the idea. Having taken the time to go to this level of detail, you now can:

- ? describe the project in a sentence or two;
- ? understand the sequence of work;
- ? keep a mental checklist of your specific responsibilities; and
- ? know who to network with outside the team.

THE FIVE PHASES OF FLIGHT

THE FLIGHT

You are going to Washington, D.C., next week. You made reservations, set up meetings, and otherwise prepare in the midst of other activities.

A few hours before the flight, you begin a new phase of this journey. Between being home and being airborne lie a number of hurdles: traffic to the airport; an unexpectedly full parking garage; the momentary panic when you think you’ve forgotten your tickets; lines at the reservations counter, lines at the security gate, lines at the boarding gate, where you discover the delay in your flight. An hour later than you expected, you strap yourself in and the plane heads out to the runway. In one breathtaking instant, the takeoff phase is over and you are in flight.

The flight itself is the bulk of the journey. Although it doesn't feel that way, it's where you do the real work of getting from here to there. Information during the flight comes from the crew in the cockpit, where they monitor sensors and adjust controls. The crew adapts to such variables as weather, traffic, and malfunctions by making changes in flight, with the ultimate objective of a safe landing, ideally at the scheduled destination.

"In preparation for landing, please make sure that your seat belts are securely fastened and that your seat backs are in their full upright position with your tray tables stowed." The flight attendant signals the start of the next phase, the process of landing. Landing and takeoff are the most stressful and dangerous events within the flight process. Hitting the ground almost always jars. The actual arrival at the airport presents another set of obstacles—getting to a clear gate, collecting your baggage, and finding a taxi.

Finally, with the flight complete, you arrive at your destination with a new status quo established. Thinking ahead (and remembering the morning's delay), you decide to confirm your flight home and inquire about times for that trip to the islands you have been thinking about. You are at the beginning of the next journey even as you arrive.

THE FIVE PHASES

The five phases of flight are a metaphor for the five phases of teamnets.

? Prepare	? Startup
? Takeoff	? Launch
? Flight	? Perform
? Land	? Test
? Arrive	? Deliver

Two periods of predictable turbulence—takeoff/launch and land! test—fall between the beginning (prepare/startup), middle (flight/perform), and end (arrive/deliver). Teamnets also experience these periods of turbulence in their development, which you can anticipate and use to advantage.

Launch follows a sometimes lengthy startup period, and usually involves a relatively short but intense activity set that produces a plan and defines leadership. Perform is the growth period of activity, where tasks are undertaken and results accumulate. But growth is always limited, and deadlines always loom. Work must be tested, brought in for a sometimes dangerous “landing,” delivered to customers, and rolled out to users. A new status quo comes with the achievement of a destination that the next cycle of change will challenge.

Little journeys are contained within bigger journeys that are part of greater journeys, or “vision quests.” Startup to delivery may happen over a matter of days, or the process may take years to unfold.

? *Startup*: Long or short, in the initial period people assess and gather information. Anomalies accumulate as people speak out and ideas are tested.

? *Launch*: At some point, things jell—or they don’t. Many team-nets require a spark of creativity, a group “Aha” that cements a core belief. Here is where the group feels itself click and people begin to refer to themselves as we.

? *Perform*: If only we could live here permanently. People engage their energy and take huge strides in accomplishing real work as the overall effort achieves its objectives. There are problems and challenges, to be sure, but problem solving is the modus operandi.

? *Test*: Risks converge here. Success may blind us, and we may exceed the carrying capacity of our environment. The innovation undergoes strenuous testing before acceptance. Forces of resistance mount their final assault.

? *Deliver*: The process passes a final milestone. Here the process may end, stabilize at a new status quo, or go into another cycle.

THINKING THROUGH THE PHASES

The art of developing networks comes from combining the five *principles* with the five *phases*. An approach to the startup phase is described in the section “Startup: Assessing the Situation.” “Launch: Planning the Work” outlines using the principles in the launch phase.³

The Five Teamnet Principles operate as a failure detector in the perform phase. Anticipate where the group is likely to get into trouble, where its weaknesses are going to show. We describe these elements as “warnings” in our introduction to the principles in chapter 4.

Network organizations grow in a turbulent sea of change. Maintaining a goal-oriented direction requires constant adjustments of the major elements of the network. Balance the cooperative principles—unifying purpose and voluntary links—with the competitive principles— independent members and multiple leaders. Co-opetition is a dynamic flow, not a steady state.

TEAMNET ACTION MATRIX

PURPOSE: GOALS		TASKS		RESULTS		
		→		→		
<i>Phases</i>		STARTUP	LAUNCH	PERFORM	TEST	DELIVER
<i>5 Principles</i>						
PURPOSE	Common View?	Clarify Purpose	Glueless—Groupthink	Test Results	Deliver Results	
MEMBERS	Col-leagues?	Identify Members	Dependent—Stubborn	Member Reviews	Member Results	
LINKS	Connec-tions?	Establish Links	Isolated—Overload	Feedback Relations	Ongoing Connect	
LEADERS	Voices?	Multiply Leaders	Leaderless—Followerless	Succes-sion	New Leaders	
LEVELS	Inclu-sion?	Integrate Levels	No Uplinks—No Downlinks	Travel Levels	New Level	
<i>Analogy</i>		PREPARE	TAKEOFF	FLIGHT	LAND	ARRIVE

CHECKING IT OUT

People know well the turbulence of the launch phase. Most experienced consultants and managers know the difficulties involved in catalyzing a group to initiate any change process. Less well known is the second anticipatable point of stress, the test phase, which is the transition from the task-oriented perform phase to the results-oriented delivery phase.

The test phase is that downstream place where the upstream planning effort pays off. You can apply criteria for success based on goals established here. If you involve downstream players in the initial planning, you can turn this phase into a cakewalk instead of the nightmare it sometimes becomes when customers (internal or external) see unsatisfactory results coming at them. Typically, the network, in its broadest form, gets involved across the levels in reviews and other examinations of the result. Feedback becomes a conscious activity, not just a loop of communication.

Like the launch phase, this transition tests leaders. Often there is a need for succession, a passing of the baton:

- ? Along the value chain from supplier to customer;
- ? From one generation to another; or
- ? From the managers of a development effort to the owners of a new status quo.

A teamnet is not truly tested until it grows beyond the leaders who initiated it and originally propelled its development.

DELIVERING THE GOODS

Networks are as much processes of organization as they are structures. Because purpose is their source of legitimacy, an essential part of the life cycle of teamnets is the delivery phase. Without results, there is no reason to continue to maintain relationships.

Since a network comprises its members and their relationships, the members themselves must each get whatever they need from the situation. This is true whether it means being able to anticipate future benefit or feeling good about a contribution to the whole. Two sets of measures gauge results in a network: those of the teamnet as a whole and those of each member. How members measure results is an essential part of building (or tearing down) trust and the ability of this network or others to function in the future. Will the connections be ongoing? Will a new steady state retain vitality and a capacity for change?

Networks may be transitory, like a cross-functional team, or effectively immortal, like the medical profession. Delivery for some teamnets means, well, “death” for the organization. The passing of a set of relationships often requires some grieving or celebrating. One cross-company teamnet charged with developing a convergence plan for five competing products held an end-of-project dinner at its successful completion in barely six weeks. Simply acknowledging that a project has died can aid people in the grieving process.⁴

The completion of a life cycle is often the beginning of a new one. New leaders represent new seeds of teamnet growth and new phases of activity.