Designing your role

Over the preceding five chapters, we have begun to develop a picture of the leader's role (your role) in moving the organisation forward, and what that means.

How you use 'yourself' will be the major factor in your success in transforming your organisation through QFD. The extent to which you congruently lead, inspire, expect, resolve, design, challenge and support change will in large part determine how effectively it takes place.
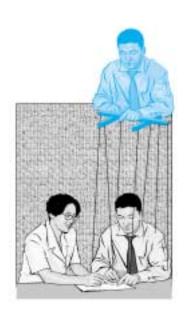
In this, you have a difficult and complex task ahead of you, and a vast range of options as to how it might be undertaken. How do you best configure those options to make the difference you need?

A thought. If QFD works for designing an organisation, can it also be applied to effectively designing the 'role' of the leader? Can it be applied to designing you? That may be an awesome thought, and one that you might find difficult to contemplate. But at one level you are the sum of your actions and behaviours, and your impact on the organisation is determined by those actions and behaviours.

In the past, people have used QFD successfully to gain real insight into their role, to balance their time, and to redesign their activities to maximise their impact on the organisation.

In this chapter we will consider how the process for developing an organisational QFD can be adapted to develop a personal QFD. It is done by:

- developing objectives, measures and targets
- identifying the main activities to deliver them
- exploring the potential of each activity

Chapter 19

Richard felt inspired by his success during the day. In fact, he viewed it as his most successful day ever. He felt energised and released. He felt like the butterfly newly evolved from the caterpillar. He felt great!

Back at home that evening, he felt ready to start on developing a QFD for his new role. He was going to design the new him. The world was his oyster.

He looked long and hard at the Why-How chart he had developed for himself and wondered where to begin. He had only written it two nights ago, and already it seemed out of date. Could he have changed that much in just two days? He began to feel that he would need to rewrite the whole thing. The original chart seemed so wrong, had he just wasted his time?

And then he remembered that it was the original chart that had woken him up to the real issues in his life. Far from being a waste of time, it had probably been the most pivotal exercise in his working life. It was only out of date because of the work that it had done in him.

But, it was still out of date. And frankly, there was something in him that balked at the idea of going through it all again. He felt his energies were pushing him to do the QFD now - that was where his enthusiasm lay.

So be it. He would attempt a QFD, knowing he could always repeat the whole process later. It was almost as though his subconscious was eager to reveal new things, not to consolidate and refine the old.

"After all," he rationalised, "this whole process is about new understanding developing, not about getting stuck in the detail and paperwork."

Content that he had justified his approach, he pulled a new pack of yellow stickies in front of him. His pen poised, he glanced back at the old Why-How chart for inspiration.

He decided that he would initially focus on his work role. He felt that would be easier. He was not fully sure that he could reconcile his role as MD and as family man into one homogenous whole, at least not yet. He felt that he needed to do a lot more thinking on his role with his family, before he was ready to attempt a QFD there.

- calculating the ideal balance of time.

Developing objectives

The objectives of a leader should not be confused with the objectives of the organisation that he or she leads. In many companies this subtlety has been overlooked and it is not uncommon to find that managers have simply had their departmental objectives copied directly, and exclusively, into their personal objectives. This lack of thought is pure laziness on the part of the organisation, and unfortunately tends to focus the manager into the 'bottom box'.[1]

A good organisation should be able to deliver its objectives whether the manager is there or not. The manager's role is therefore to ensure it is a good organisation; and one capable of taking on even more demanding objectives in the future.

So what might the objectives of such a manager be? Typically if the manager's role is about developing the capability and performance of the department, they might include:

- improving the competence of staff
- ensuring the quality of processes
- developing efficient use of information
- sustaining a rate of improvement
- building strategic partnerships for the future
- establishing transformational values.

These are clearly a long way from *'Increase throughput by 10%'* or *'Reduce costs by 5%'*, and yet they are the very things that will deliver that sort of improvement sustainably.

1   See Chapter 3, and the closing pages of Chapter 8.

There were too many unresolved questions in his private life: too many areas that he did not want to explore too closely; too many decisions to make. Somewhere at the back of his mind he knew it was because he was being irresponsible and selfish, but he did not feel ready to let go of his fantasies yet, and he knew in his heart that they would not survive in the light.

Anyway, he had to start somewhere, and what was wrong with starting where he felt most encouraged to do so.

He started by listing all of the differences he wanted to bring about from his time at Cylek. Sticky note, after sticky note, fell onto the pile in front of him, covering topics from rate of growth to management competence, from the influence of the Gloucester facility to the quality of the systems being used.

He scribbled on, occasionally glancing out of his study window into the streetlight outside, until at last his ideas dried up. He checked back onto the original Why-How chart, to see if there was anything he might have missed, and hastily scribbled two more notes. And then he gathered all the notes back in front of him.

As he reviewed the notes, it struck him that what he had written seemed to fall into two camps. In the first camp were all his ideas about what Cylek would achieve: how it would grow; how its role would develop; the control it would exert over its markets; the impact it would have on its customers etc. The second camp contained his ideas about how Cylek would be: the approaches it would take; the quality of its people; the motivation and culture of the place etc.

He was struck by how similar the items in the first camp were to the QFD they had developed for the business itself. Most of them were much more far-reaching than on the existing QFD, but he could easily imagine them on future QFDs.

And the more he thought about it, the more he began to reflect that maybe these things weren't his role at all.

The idea sounded almost heretical at first, and he pushed it away. He could almost imagine Cyrus's face if he told him he did not see it as his job to 'grow the business'. But the more he played with the concept, the more he began to see the truth of it.

In developing your own personal QFD, you might use elements of these as a basis for thinking through your own objectives, and add in any others that are specific to your situation and the point you are starting from. It is useful to reflect on your Why-How chart, if you have developed one, to ensure that you have considered all of your objectives.

It should be remembered that the departmental objectives must be delivered, and the manager is responsible for ensuring that the department achieves them, so they do need to feature as a measure of the manager's performance. But the expectation is that the manager delivers the objectives through the organisation, and not in spite of it.

It is important, also, that the manager develops measures and targets for his or her other objectives as well. This helps to clarify what the objectives mean, and what they do not. Until someone has worked out clearly how they could measure 'growth in direct report competence' they really do not know clearly what they mean by it. Targets further help this clarification. A good question to bear in mind is "What level of performance is the threshold between success and failure, and why?"

Identifying activities

Having developed a clear and comprehensive picture of the objectives, the next step is to think through the mechanisms by which they are achieved.

In the case of the manager, these mechanisms are clearly the activities of their working week.

But in developing the columns of the personal QFD, it is important that they don't simply reflect what the manager is already doing, but also what he or she should be doing, for instance activities which support:

It was not the coach's job to ensure that his football team scored more goals in each successive game. It was the team's job to do that. It was the coach's job to build the vision for that in the team; to grow their confidence in achieving it; and to help them to develop their approach to ensure it was delivered. If the coach leapt onto the pitch to make the crucial scoring pass, all hell would break loose. The coach added value because he made himself dispensable. Each and every match, the team had to deliver on their own.

Perhaps then, the MD's job could be seen in the same way.

Perhaps, thought Richard, his job was to ensure that his management team caught the vision for business growth and made it their own. Perhaps his job was to achieve the items he had listed in the first camp, solely by what he achieved through the items he had listed in the second camp.

He thought for a moment, a puzzled look on his face, and then he hastily flicked through the sticky notes he had in the second group, and added two more: *'Ensure a shared and compelling vision for the future of the business'* and *'Ensure determined objective pursuit of the vision'*.

He sat back. He felt slightly nervous about his conclusion, but the more he thought about it, the more he was sure it was the right one.

Growing the business was his management team's job. And the more he saw it as his, the more inclined he would be to step into the detail, second guess their decisions, and end up doing their job for them. After all, that's what had been happening when you boiled it all down. And while he was doing that, who was doing his job: of ensuring commitment to a common vision; of broadening and deepening his people's perspectives; of improving their game?

He thought back on his day, on how much he had achieved, and he knew he was right to think this way.

After grouping the sticky notes from the second camp into six distinct objectives for his role, Richard then proceeded to list out all of the activities he undertook in his role. He had initially favoured listing out only those activities he felt he should do, but then reasoned that this would be a more objective way of re-evaluating his time. And after all, even if his current activities remained valid, he might get new insights into the objectives he should bear in mind when undertaking them.

- personal growth and development
- staff growth and development
- improving the organisation
- focusing the organisation.

A good way to start the list, is to flick through your diary and your calendar, and copy out separate activities on individual sticky-notes, so that they can be grouped later if appropriate.

The list can be further augmented by looking back over your objectives, and identifying other activities that you need to consider if the objectives are to be met.

It is quite common to end up with 40 or 50 activities and, unlike the organisational QFD, a lot of personal QFDs have over 20 columns. However, where activities clearly do overlap, it is best to group them together, or they will distort the end result. You should aim for between 20 and 30 activities to get sufficient detail in your conclusions.

Finally, you should recheck your activities to ensure you know exactly and specifically what you do in them, to make sure they are not vague and nebulous.[1]

Exploring potential

As in developing an organisational QFD,[2] the grid between the objectives (rows of the grid) and the activities (columns of the grid) provides a tremendous opportunity to explore how each activity can contribute to the objectives, and to discover new and previously unforeseen potential for leveraging current activities to achieve more - the QFD equivalent of 'work smarter not harder'.

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[1] 'Coaching sessions with my people' is clear, while 'Developing staff' could mean anything as an activity.

[2] See Chapter 9.

Amid a multitude of projects, no plan is devised.

Publilius Syrus
Roman writer

By 10.30 he had grouped his activities into a number of management processes, and had drawn out the grid of his QFD. He looked at the clock on his windowsill, and then back at the empty grid of his QFD. He knew if he started it now he would not finish until he early hours, and yet he did not want to delay.

He stood up, and stretched, and decided to make himself a cup of tea while he made up his mind. As he stepped out onto the landing, he heard the muted sounds of sobbing downstairs. Quietly, he stole down into the lounge, and gently sat down beside Laura, a look of concern on his face.

"Whatever's the matter?" he asked. "Come on now. He's okay now. They said we could bring him home tomorrow didn't they?"

Laura turned a tear-streaked, distraught face towards him. He held out his arms, and she collapsed into him. "Oh love!" he said, "what's the matter?"

She shook her head, and pushed tighter into his chest, as if defying him to lift her head up like he always did. He just held her more tightly, and after about a minute he said: "Won't you tell me what's the matter?"

Laura straightened up. "It's okay. I'm okay now," she said wiping her eyes.

Richard took one of her hands. "Please tell me," he pleaded.

Laura looked into her lap. "Oh I don't know. It's just … well it's just I'm so scared of losing you both," she said. And again her face puckered up and the tears came. She looked away.

"Oh Laura! Laura!" said Richard, moving in closer. "It won't happen. Nicky is better now. He was never really in any serious danger. You heard the doctors."

Laura looked back at him slowly and asked: "Yes, I know, but what about you?"

Richard looked down into his lap. He felt Laura's stare upon him as she waited for him to respond.

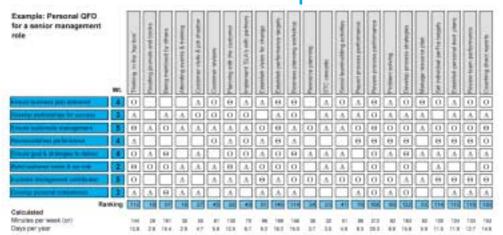He made a decision. He was a man of integrity.

Still gazing at his knees, he began: "I'm sorry Laura. I know I've been working too hard. I know I've asked too much of you. Taken too much

The cells should be considered individually, to identify the potential of that activity to move the objectives forward, using the definitions on the right. The process is likely to be much quicker than for the organisational QFD, because the debate is less. Often people undertake personal QFDs on their own, or with one other person to act as a sounding board. The diagram below shows an example of what your finished personal QFD might look like.[1]

Critical: (9 Points)
Process is fundamental to progressing the objective

Major: (3 Points)
Process is key to achieving the target performance

Significant: (1 Point)
Process will significantly contribute to the result

Blank: (0 Points)
Process will not significantly impact on the result

Example: Personal QFD for a senior management role

When the grid is complete, the scores can be added up in the usual way[2] and used to assess what balance of time should ideally spent on each activity.

Calculating the balance of time

The scores at the bottom of a personal QFD reflect the relative importance of each activity to progress the personal objectives (your personal objectives).

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1   The QFD shown above is a real example from one of my clients. It was developed in Excel™ and so the bulls-eye symbol differs slightly from the standard. The Excel™ template is available from the associated web-site (see Appendix 7).

2   See page 84 on how the QFD is scored. The template described in footnote 1 performs these calculations automatically.

for granted." Here he looked up into her eyes, as if to confirm his words. "But you've got to believe me. I will never leave you. Never."

Laura continued to gaze at him for a while, and eventually, slowly, a contented smile formed in her eyes, and she fell back into his arms.

"Well, that about wrecks the QFD grid for tonight," thought Richard.

During Thursday, Richard managed to get his meetings with Abs and John, each of which proved fairly successful.

And at 5pm he and Laura collected Nicholas from the hospital.

By 7pm Nicholas was in bed, Laura slouched beside him on the beanbag, both fast asleep.

Richard closed the door on this scene of contentment and retired to his study to complete his QFD.

When he had completed the grid at 9pm, he had problems accepting what it told him.

According to the numbers at the bottom of the grid, he needed to spend over half his time coaching, developing, monitoring and inspiring the members of his Management Team, if he was to efficiently pursue his objectives.

His current biggest activity of sitting in at meetings, warranted less than 5% of his time, and even then the focus had shifted - emphasising the use of the meeting to develop the role of his subordinates, rather than get involved in the detail.

To be frank, the result frightened him. The change was too great.

He began looking frantically for where he might have got the weighting or the maths wrong. He tried altering some numbers to bring it into better balance. But each time he did so, he was not happy with the changes he had made.

By 11pm, he had made no further progress, but was becoming resigned to the fact that the QFD was right, and it was tradition that was wrong. Still, it was a very bold step!

One way of looking at this, then, is that the time you spend on each activity should be in proportion to its importance; in other words, in proportion to the scores at the bottom of the grid.

If you calculate what this means in practice, you may be shocked by the extent to which your current time allocation is out of kilter with the relative importance of the tasks to your objectives. If you are shocked, then you are far from alone.

If you wish to calculate what the scores in your personal QFD reflect in terms of time spend, then you can follow this procedure. The total scores at the bottom of each column should be added up into a grand total. This grand total equates to 35[1] hours/week or 220[2] days/year.

The ideal amount of time allocated to each activity should therefore be:

$$\frac{\text{Column total}}{\text{Grand total}} \times 35 \text{ hours (or } \times 220 \text{ days)}$$

This provides a useful guide to what your diary/calendar should look like.

When you have calculated the ideal time for each activity (days/year in terms of calendarised items, hours/week in terms of regular items), work through your diary and list up what you actually spend.

Please be realistic here. If you could have used a meeting for coaching, but did not, do not list it as coaching! Facing up to the facts frees you to make a choice - it is denying the facts that constrains you.

Having listed up ideas and actuals, pragmatically work out what you can change,

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1   Remember we are trying to work toward an ideal rather than perpetuate poor practice.

2   If you are not a full-time manager, you may need to adjust these numbers.

Resignedly, he closed the door, roused Laura from her recumbent vigil, and went to bed.

⋅——————⋖◆⋗——————⋅

Lucy scanned the numbers at the base of Richard's personal QFD.

"I see what you mean," said Lucy, "but actually I suspect it's right. I've long thought that the reason managers end up so busy, is because they don't put enough investment into their subordinates and their systems. I'm afraid this just panders to my prejudices. Sorry!"

"But surely it can't be practical. Can it?" challenged Richard.

Lucy looked at the QFD again. "Well, only this week, you were telling me your theory of dispensability and adding value. You tell me!"

Richard shook his head and moved away. Theory was one thing. Putting it into practice was something different entirely.

Lucy continued to pour over the QFD.

"You know, this is really something!" she said. "It really is a terrific tool. There are enough insights in this little grid to fill about fifty management textbooks. Have you tried to develop one for your life?" she asked as she turned to look at Richard.

Richard turned back. "Almost," he said, "but I came up with objectives of integrity, fidelity, responsibility, and worried that it might cramp my playboy style." He laughed, but it was a forced laugh. Lucy went quiet.

Richard eventually broke the silence. "I will do a QFD for my life," he said quietly, "and I know it will tell me things I don't want to hear right now. I know I've not been as good as I could be. In fact," he paused and he looked down, "I think I've been pretty crummy. But all that is going to stop. I know the sort of person I want to be, and I'm going all out to be that person. It's just that it's a big pill to swallow. You know?"

He looked back up at Lucy, his mouth creased in a sad but determined expression, his eyes appearing to hold a new depth of understanding.

They stood quietly staring at each other for but a moment. Each confident that something deep and meaningful had passed between them. Each reaching out to the other, their eyes affirming that special, shared experience. Each holding some small sense of regret. And in that look, their

and plan them back into your diary and calendar as clearly defined activities.

Please remember, however, not to be driven by the numbers. If you are really unhappy with them, look back into your QFD and reconsider your assumptions. If all of your assumptions are right, and yet you are still unhappy with the conclusion, it does not mean have to revise your diary. Although you might consider making a few minor adjustments in line with what you feel is practical.

When men are rightly occupied, their amusement grows out of their work, as the colour petals out of a fruitful flower.

John Ruskin
English essayist

relationship changed, and they felt a different, deeper closeness to each other.

At that moment, they truly became friends.

"Anyway," said Lucy, breaking the moment, "I thought you had a meeting with Daniel now?"

Richard looked hurriedly at his watch "Gosh, yes, gotta fly!" and with that he grabbed his file and rushed out.