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Evaluating Organisational Learning

Organisational Learning

- The traditional HR model of individuals learning through acquisition, in apolitical situations, is being replaced by concepts of collectives learning in complex, contradictory contexts textured by intricate power relations.
- At the same time, organizational learning is said be located at the very fold between order and chaos, between predictability and novelty, a place in 'tension'.

Organisational Learning

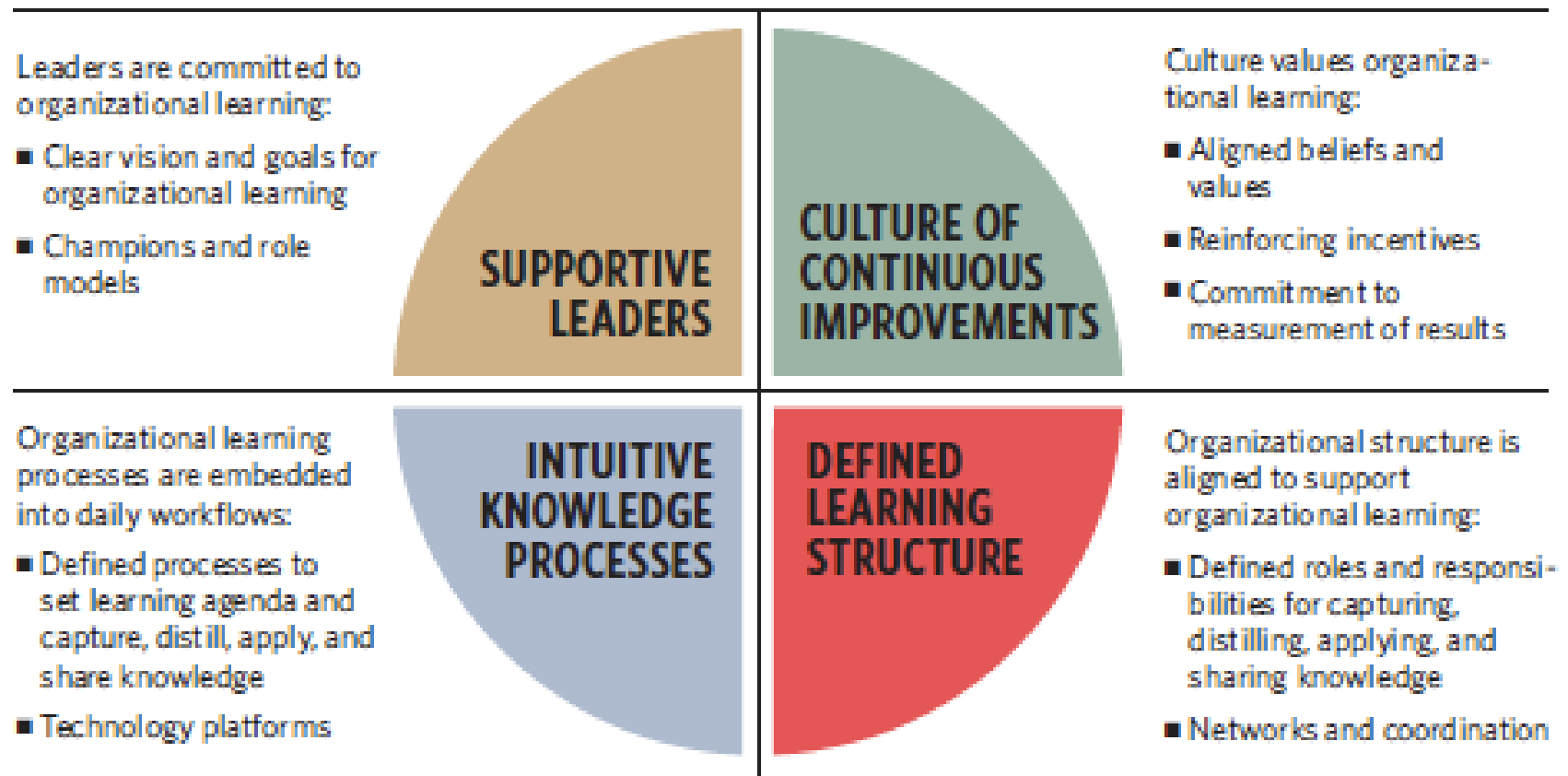
- One of the problems with evaluating organisational learning is that the definition of what organisational learning actually consists of is contested.
- There are two main categories:
 - Technical
 - Social

Technical Perspective

- The *technical perspective* assumes that organizational learning is about the effective processing, interpretation of, and response to, information both inside and outside the organization.
- This information may be quantitative or qualitative, but is generally explicit and in the public domain....

The technical perspective

FOUR ELEMENTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING



Social Perspective

- The *social perspective* on organization learning focuses on the way people make sense of their experiences at work. These experiences may derive from explicit sources such as financial information, or they may be derived from tacit sources, such as the 'feel' that a skilled practitioner has, or the intuition possessed by a skilled strategist or analyst.
- From this view, learning is something that can emerge from social interactions, normally in the natural work setting. In the case of explicit information it involves a joint process of making sense of data... The more tacit and 'embodied' forms of learning involve situated practices, observation and emulation of skilled practitioners and socialization into a community of practice

Evaluation from the Technical Perspective

- Much easier to evaluate than the social perspective
- Can look at the following:
 - Leadership support of learning (formal and informal) – eg funding, learning structures, attendance at learning related events, position of learning in organisational structure
 - Knowledge sharing eg how is it captured and shared (formally and informally). What are the knowledge systems? How effective are they?

Evaluation from the Technical Perspective

- Culture of continuous improvement
 - Is there one in place?
 - What evidence for improvement is there in terms of processes, procedures and knowledge management?
 - What results are measured and what actions are taken as a result
 - What are the trends over a period of 1-5 years?

Evaluation from the Technical Perspective

- Defined learning structure
 - Is there one in place?
 - What learning does it measure?
 - Does it act on the findings?
 - Does it show continuous improvement?
 - Where does it sit on the organisational ladder?
 - How is learning transferred to the workplace?

Evaluation from the social perspective

- This is much harder to collect evidence for.
- Generally qualitative and anecdotal evidence
 - What is the culture of the organisation?
 - How do staff interact formally and more importantly informally?
 - Are there mentoring programs in place (formal or informal)?
 - What communities of practice are there?
 - What are the opportunities for sharing knowledge?
 - How does knowledge manifest itself into actual practice?
 - What is the level of morale and staff turnover?