

The Logical Level 7S Matrix

By Joe Cheal

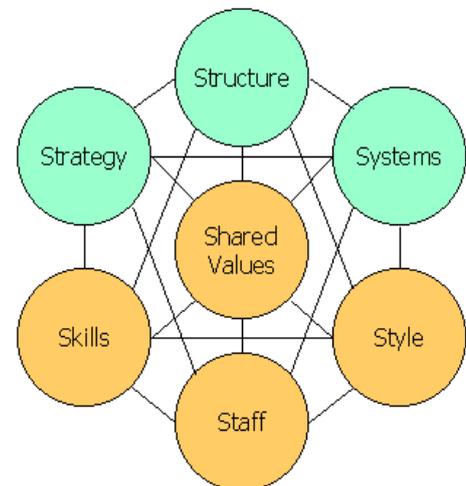
Introduction

This article proposes a new development in combining both Dilts' Logical Level framework and the 7S model. This Logical Level 7S matrix (LL7S) is applied specifically to organisations and organisational change.

The McKinsey 7S Model

The McKinsey 7S model was developed by Tom Peters and Robert Waterman in response to the lack of a cohesive and useful definition of organisations. In their 1980 article (p14), they stated that "techniques of the behavioural sciences were not providing useful alternatives to structural design." Structure is not the organisation and yet change management was often focussed on restructure. Other definitions of organisations were about collections of people which appeared to create a dichotomy between organisation=people vs organisation=structure.

In "Search for Excellence" they thoroughly explored the research literature up to that time on organisational development and from this created the 7S Model. The model works by breaking an organisation or department/region down into its component parts by covering the elements that make up an organisation: Structure, Strategy, Systems, Skills, Style, Staff and Superordinate Goals (later to become 'Shared Values' in Peters et al 1990). Perhaps then a fuller working definition of an organisation might be 'an organisation is the manifestation of the systemic relationships between the 7Ss'.



The beauty of the model is its simplicity and immediacy, and then in the complexity that follows by understanding that these components do not stand alone, but work in relationship to one another. The model is systemic in that a change in one component will likely lead to changes in other components.

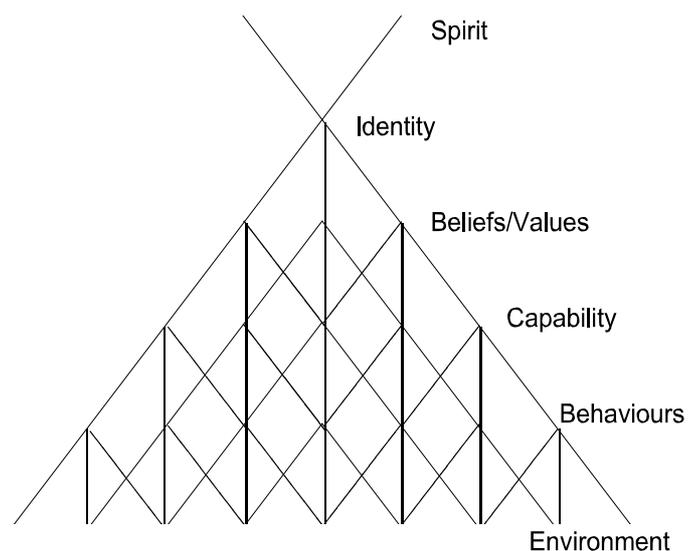
The 7S model is very useful tool for analysing and diagnosing organisational issues, and then for the planning of interventions and change. Table 1 (below) gives an example of questions to ask to establish the components of the organisation. The model is also explored by Pascale & Athos (1986).

TABLE 1: 7S Questions

Structure	How is the business organised/divided up?
Strategy	What plans does the business have in response to the external environment?
Systems	What formal and informal procedures does the business have in place?
Shared Values	What is most important to us?
Skills	What does the business do best?
Style	How does management come across and what is true of the culture?
Staff	Who are the people and how are they treated?

Organisational Logical Levels 7S Matrix

It needs to be remembered however that as well as an organisation having elements, it also has levels. Combining the 7S model with Dilts' Logical Levels model (1990 & 1996) gives us perhaps an even clearer picture of what an organisation is about. This would involve looking at the logical levels of each of the seven Ss (creating a matrix as shown in Table 2 below). The Logical Levels model comprises of the levels of Spirit which is supported by Identity supported by Beliefs and Values supported by Capability supported by Behaviour supported by Environment.



Perhaps it would be useful to first identify the fundamental difference between the two models. Logical levels is a hierarchy, ie. different levels of the same thing. The 7S model is an interlinking set of relationships (as pictured by Waterman et al as seven overlapping circles). Dilts (1996) notes that leadership has its own set of logical levels and it is therefore feasible that each of the 7S's also has a set of logical levels.

Table 2 (below) represents an idea where the examples given in the matrix are generic and for illustrative purposes only. Where the model becomes useful is in a specific situation where the matrix becomes a framework that can be explored on a case by case basis.

TABLE 2: Organisational Logical Levels 7S Matrix (LL7S)

	Structure	Strategy	Systems	Shared Values	Skills	Style	Staff
Identity	What the organisation looks like.	Overall mission.	Bureaucratic vs streamline.	Published statements about who we are: eg. an employer of choice.	Identifiable role within the marketplace, eg. baker.	How the organisation comes across. eg. reliable, competitive, high quality.	Organisation defined as a collection of people.
Values/ Beliefs	Reasons for current structure.	Motivation for strategy. Beliefs about the strategy. Policies.	Rules and regulations. Disciplinary, capability procedures.	Set of values & aspirations that go beyond objectives.	What skills are most important/ valued?	What is important to management? Reflects culture. Will to make it work.	Morale, attitude, Motivation.
Capability	Division of tasks and co-ordination.	Plans of actions to respond to environment.	Procedures.	How values are captured, remembered and reinforced.	Attributes, capabilities, skills, power	How power, authority, time is used.	Pool of resources to be nurtured, developed, guarded and allocated.
Behaviour	Centralisation, decentralisation, Dividing, combining, adding and subtracting.	Action plans carried out.	How the procedures are carried out.	Actions demonstrating values.	What the organisation does best.	Management behaviour: what they do.	How people behave.
Environment	What is located where?	When is strategy applied? Under what conditions?	Where and when the procedures are carried out.	Atmosphere eg. friendly, respectful, encouraging.	Where and when the skills are used/learnt.	Where and when management do what they do.	Who else is around, population density, noise.

Conclusion

The LL7S Matrix, although perhaps ‘overkill’ in some instances is a useful way of establishing a full picture before embarking on an organisational change intervention. It would be useful to establish the current situation throughout the matrix and then the desired state throughout the matrix. This will also give more specificity as to where the change is taking place... what is changing and what is staying the same?

The matrix is also a useful platform for establishing the ecology of a decision, change or action. If we make this change, what impact will it have on each of the 7Ss at each level? Also, what impact will the 7Ss at each level have on the change?

About the Author

Joe Cheal has been working with NLP since 1993. As well as being a licensed trainer of NLP, he holds an MSc in Organisational Development and NLT, a degree in Philosophy and Psychology, diplomas in Coaching and in Ericksonian Hypnotherapy, Psychotherapy and NLP.

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