



# The Journey Program

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*Effective leaders have safe workplaces.*

Preventing injuries is a major challenge for all organisations, whether the organisation is already having incidents, feels like they are about to have one, or, has not had one but are not sure why!

The way we sort out a big problem is to divide it into small ones, and then divide them again and again. By doing this we involve lots of people, we create a team who are working towards a common outcome, we can develop our leaders to manage their teams performance and how the work is done.

Preventing injuries is not a task that you add onto an organisation, after an event. Preventing injuries is the outcome of effective leadership. Effective leaders have safe workplaces.

The Organisational Characters are a simple way to reflect on some of the attributes that go towards an effective organisation and leadership team. The questions you were asked are not the only answer to preventing injuries or the answer to being an effective leader, but they are indicators of these. They are designed for you to have a think about the organisation, and, maybe think about what you should do to make sure that the risk in your business is effectively managed.

## **Here is some help for you to plan your next initiative.**

At its simplest level, organisations need to consider three elements when designing their management system.

We need to think about the people that will be working for us, the equipment and systems they will be using and the people that will be leading them.

Then we need to define the meaning of these:

**Systems** need to be: Specific to the expectations, Capable of doing what is required and maintained to consistently operate

**People** need to be: Competent to do their work, willing to do the work required, and able to manage the risk of the work causing harm

**Leadership** needs to; guide, motivate and provide feedback to individuals, teams and the organisation on their performance.

The Organisational Characters questions you answered were indicators of the proactive measures in each of these nine aspects. Each questions were inter related, which is what the triangle shows. We cannot get stability until each of the elements are understood and defined, and the sides of the triangle established and in place: we need a partnership between each of the sides of the triangle.

The questions you answered are similar. Each question contributed to each of the three sides of the triangle, and, then each of the three definitions of the element.

Let's start with the organisational character we should aim for;

### **The President**

We all want to be President, or, at least we want to know that it is possible for us to be President.

The President organisation has clear goals, which are a reflection of the needs of the organisation and the people who will make it happen. The organisation understands that to be effective people must work together to achieve buy-in.

The President organisation provides feedback and support to the teams, and ensures their systems are designed for and are fit for purpose.

The President organisation strives to improve, a small step at a time, by looking around for ideas, internally and externally. Internally people know that their ideas and reports will be valued, so they continue to provide them.

If you are a President you need to make sure that you continue to reflect on performance, and provide the continuous improvement resources and opportunities to sustain and improve.

### **The Policeman**

There is a concerted effort to manage risk but the effort is sometimes was in the wrong place, or not consistently implemented. The organisation is like a policeman using a vehicle speed trap; it expects everyone to comply forever because they have been fined once. This type of business generally has started compliance to the legislation, started a safety management plan, started people engagement and so on but these initiatives are not working effectively or consistently yet.

Many people do not like working in a Policeman organisation because they are prescriptive rather

than engaging. Leaders may 'demand', for example demand respect simply because of their role or title, rather than earn it.

Policeman organisations tend to have lots of procedures, which are the result of preventing recurrence rather than being proactive. This tends to lead to bureaucratic and relatively inefficient systems which therefore may not manage as well as they could.

If you are a Policeman organisation have a think about processes to actively engage with employees, and, think about "reforming" your systems rather than "reviewing" them.

### **The Firefighter**

The Firefighter organisation is struggling to make a difference to its performance, including its safety performance. There are always problems and whilst they do get sorted out, another one always turns up. Just when it looks like things are getting better something else happens.

The team feels like it is as good at fighting fires (i.e. solving problems) than its real business. Firefighter organisations are often highly capable, but do not have the capacity to survive. Sometimes the organisation functions well, but other times it is a disaster. This is a symptom of lack of resources and to get ahead, to move towards the President organisation, some choices have to be made, in particular how to address the resource issue, before the fire engulfs the organisation.

Generally good people and good leaders, who are loyal. But poor systems or no systems, so everyone does what they think needs to be done, which means there are lots and lots of things that never get done.

If you are in a Firefighter organisation, you need to stop for a while, develop an improvement plan,

bring everyone together and bit by bit worth through the plan. **Importantly, this needs to be done now.**

### The Gambler

With some unrealistic long terms goals, and short terms goals that have a poor chance of being successful these organisations are on a journey to disaster. Risk is going up and up. The Gambler keeps going without looking for indicators of performance or learning from mistakes.

These organisations may keep going until it's too late and there's nothing left. Despite poor performance these organisations somehow keep going longer than anyone predicted, possibly getting into financial or legal issues. Fuelled by optimism which on the surface appears attractive: keep away!

The Gambler Organisation is often enthusiastic about its future, but operates in a fragmented and inconsistent manner. The market is not responding adequately to its products and services. The Gambler Organisation has fundamental issues in the leadership capacity and ability to control the organisation, which results in a series of poorly managed situations.

The Gambler organisation may have compliance based systems, but, probably poorly developed or not completely implemented. The organisation has or is on the way to a reducing bank balance, systems and equipment failures and a high employee turn over.

The Gambler needs to recognise there is a problem, and, look deeply into its causes, possibly using an external organisation to assist it to reflect. If the Gambler objectively realises the situation, it can fairly quickly make changes.

### The Stuntman

We all love a stuntman; charismatic; skilful and a little bit crazy. They will do things others avoid, so they are expert at managing risk, but Stuntmen rarely die of old age!

Unfortunately, the Stuntman organisation has an Achilles heel: a subtle weakness which is managed most of the time, but when it goes wrong there may be a catastrophe. The Stuntman organisation can become President if the weakness is managed. But if the weakness is not managed, the can slip into being a Gambler.

Often the Stuntman organisation is led by a risk taker or entrepreneur who may be successful, but only after the fourth or fifth time. But there are many Stuntman organisations who fail catastrophically on the first, second or third time!

On the way to success the Stuntman has broken every bone in his body and is a wreck, but smiling. The organisation thinks it is managing injury risk well, but when incidents occur remarks such as "where the hell did that come from?" are made. The real cause is more likely to be poor reporting, complacency, measuring the wrong thing, or ineffective management of change.

Stuntman organisations have great potential, and are well on the way to high performance. People like working for a Stuntman organisation, but clients are wary. The systems are working adequately, but could do with some maintenance. The leadership team are probably all from the same mould; successful risk takers, who know it is worth it until the crash.

Stuntman organisations must ensure they manage their weaknesses, completely. A Stuntman becomes President because the weaknesses are under control, in a sustainable manner. The best thing to do is review. Make sure the organisation has a clear understanding

of the level of risk, and the effectiveness of risk controls.

## Summary

All organisations have elements from all the organisational characters. By dividing a big problem into smaller ones you can work out a process for improvement.

The next edition of the Journey Program risk management process will give you a more objective risk management assessment tool.

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