

How to Be an Effective Analyst is a book that guides the reader through a discussion of the personal approach an analyst should use in any engagement. It focuses on the importance of understanding the need for professional integrity.

How to Be an Effective Analyst

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How to Be an Effective Analyst

Second Edition

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Table of Contents

Introduction: Why do people want to listen to you anyway? ..	ix
Chapter One: Understanding Who You Are.....	1
<i>Analyst, know thyself</i>	7
<i>How do you avoid catastrophe?</i>	13
<i>Barbarian Enterprises</i>	15
<i>Government Bureaucracies</i>	21
<i>Pro bono</i>	25
<i>Advertising</i>	26
<i>Understand the difference between “conflict” and “competition”</i>	28
<i>Power and authority</i>	32
<i>In conclusion</i>	35
Chapter Two: It’s <i>Their</i> Money; don’t be brave Ulysses	37
<i>The Characteristics of successful enterprise</i>	50
<i>Identifying the Issues; defining the problems</i>	52
<i>Study the context</i>	59
<i>Product and information flow</i>	62
<i>A business process is an aggregate of smaller systems</i>	65
<i>Recognizing the levels of management and control</i>	69
The Operational Level	69
The Lower Management Level.....	70
The Middle Management Level.....	70
Top-level Management.....	70
<i>Look for Feedback and Control loops</i>	71
<i>In Summary, here are some important points to remember</i>	73
Chapter Three: Risk Assessment and the Ten Laws of	
Personal Participation	75
<i>Putting the pieces together</i>	78

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

<i>Business is three-dimensional</i>	83
<i>The ten ordinary laws of personal participation</i>	84
<i>A Crisis in Kamavachara</i>	92
<i>The four objectives of analysis</i>	102
<i>Examining strategic issues</i>	105
<i>Understanding the issues</i>	107
Chapter Four: The Analysis Technique	111
<i>The life cycle concept</i>	111
<i>Using the “life cycle” as a structure for thorough Systems</i> <i>Analysis</i>	112
<i>Performance within the life cycle</i>	113
<i>The Management of the life cycle Process</i>	125
<i>The Devil is in the details</i>	127
<i>Comprehending the critical issues</i>	129
<i>Critical Success Factors</i>	135
<i>The impact of technology on the organization</i>	138
<i>That “Vision” thing</i>	139
<i>A life cycle requires Project Management</i>	142
<i>A project schedule is not a project plan!</i>	147
<i>Summary</i>	148
Chapter Five: Mad Men and Great Pretenders	151
<i>It doesn’t make any sense!</i>	151
<i>Size really does matter!</i>	159
<i>It is what it is!</i>	165
<i>The plot thickens!</i>	166
<i>Ah! Hindsight is always 20/20!</i>	179
<i>Chickens really do come home to roost!</i>	180
<i>Nemo malus felix!</i>	183
Chapter Six: Look for some structure	185
<i>My argument is...</i>	190

How To Be An Effective Analyst

Top-down / bottom-up design? 195
The conundrum unfolds 204
The Theory of the fabric of enterprise 205
The need for structure is paramount... 210
Breaking it down, bubba..... 212
A reality check..... 216
The order of the Universe 219

APPENDIX A: Recommended Reading 221

BIBLIOGRAPHY 223

INDEX..... 227

END NOTES 235

List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Types of Systems..... 71
Figure 4.1: The Life cycle of any system 113
Figure 6.1 XYZ Order Processing Flow Chart (*Existing Conditions*)..213
Figure 6.2 XYZ Order Processing Flow Chart (*Re-designed System*)..215

Introduction: Why do people want to listen to you anyway?

I started out as a computing technology professional right at the beginning of the industry's commercial expansion—in the late sixties. Before that time, the only people that were *really* involved in the deployment of information systems technology to any degree were the Military and a few Universities. I was attending college in Kingston, New York in my late teens studying History and Literature with the idea that I would, someday, become a journalist and writer. I loved literature and was fascinated by Western Civilization. In short, I was on the conservative side of the “hippie” movement.

College was an experience to me; it wasn't a job or an adventure. I didn't have the idea that it was even a necessity. I began to attend college because I liked learning. I didn't realize it then but it was this penchant for discovery growing inside my intellectual capacity that would, one day, make me a decent analyst. I had a lot of trouble with math courses and modern language courses bored me to tears but I got through them. English Literature, American Literature, writing, History, Philosophy, these were all the courses that I enjoyed the most and I excelled in them. By the end of my second year, despite the fact that I had to work almost full-time at night and on the weekends, I was maintaining a respectable “C” average and planning on matriculating to New York University in the fall of the following year. But then, in my second year, I had a run-in with my writing teacher who didn't seem to think as highly of my imagination as did my previous professor and, despite the fact that I had completed the course work, attended every class, and took each exam, I received an “F.”

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

The morning after I had learned of my grade, I went to see my previous writing teacher for some help. I was, sort of, dazed because I hadn't seen the failing grade coming. When I told him of my predicament, that I had failed my writing course, he advised me not to joke so early in the morning before he had his first cup of coffee (I had gotten consistent "A's" in *his* class and had a short story published by then). I insisted that I was completely serious and, though somewhat shocked, he agreed to help me. He tried to talk to my writing teacher but she wouldn't have any of it and insisted that I deserved the grade. Then he went to the Dean of Students and convinced her to have a meeting with me. She questioned me at length and felt that, perhaps, my point of view may not have been "liberal" enough for my writing teacher so she put me into another teacher's class for the semester. The new writing teacher was a classicist and very, very disciplined. However, despite the fact that many of my fellow students flunked out of his course, I managed to get a "B+" and pass.

I returned home that summer to help my uncle on his farm satisfied that I was headed for the big city the following fall where, after a semester of "catch-up" courses, I would begin my bachelor's program in earnest. Life has its convoluting pathways and mine would prove to be bizarre. I was on a date, one evening with a young lady friend who worked, part-time, at the local draft board during the summer. She informed me that she had noticed that "The Board" moved my name from the bottom of the list to the third position and that the name of the son of a wealthy family, whom we both knew, now occupied a position toward the bottom (despite the fact that he had flunked out of college). She asked if I had flunked out of school. I told her, no, and explained that I had taken my writing course over again and had gotten a "B+." She suspected that this was the reason for my reassignment and hoped that it wouldn't be a permanent thing. But, this was 1968—at the

How To Be An Effective Analyst

height of the Viet Nam War. The Federal Government was drafting over 50,000 young men into Military Service each month. A week later, I received a notice that I had failed a course in school and that I would be required to report to the induction center as soon as soon as they scheduled me. Typical of bureaucrats; tied to an inequitable selection process dominated by a completely dysfunctional information management system, they had wasted no time in putting my entire life at a disadvantage. It would normally take about four weeks for the paper work to find its way from the college to the draft board notifying them that I had taken the course over and passed. This was a time when the needs of the political machinery outweighed the needs of the private citizen. They drafted me to fill a quota—there—all done! I wager they were glad to get *that* problem solved.

My family was not a very wealthy or influential one and my father was a hopeless romantic whose idea of social responsibility was stuck in the conflict of World War II. There wasn't any way for me to get out of the meat grinder unless I did something that, really no one, even the hacks at the draft board, would have expected me to do. What was happening to me was wholly unfair and, probably, illegal as well but, for some reason, I became intensely philosophical about the whole affair and sat down with a pencil and paper to make an "assessment" of myself.ⁱ I reasoned that I had (1) two years of college and that I had (2) grown up in a working-class family with distinctly middle-class social values that, at 19 years of age, could (3) be applied to the presentation of my portfolio in such a way as to give me an advantage. What that advantage *was* wasn't immediately clear at the time but the key to turning events to my favor was to take the first action. Having decided that, I surveyed each of the different branches of the armed forces and decided that the branch that would offer me the most latitude for personal improvement and the

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

most opportunity through education was the United States Navy. So, without discussing it much with my parents, I enlisted in the Navy.

The Navy Department stopped the draft board from ruining my life dead in its tracks. During my basic training, I passed the initial examination for the Submarine Service and, after completing my basic training, volunteered for submarine duty. I was enrolled in the Naval Guided Missiles School in Dam Neck, Virginia where I was out of my element making a monumental career change. The engineering courses taught there were tough for me to master. But, in the Navy, if you show some dedication and spirit, they'll bend over backwards to train and re-train you until you learn the material. After a lot of hard work and struggle, I completed two years of schooling in computer systems engineering and theory and graduated with a diploma. From there I was sent to the fleet where I was assigned to the U.S.S. Thomas Jefferson (SSBN 618) Gold Crew as a Ballistic Missile Computer System Fire Control Technician and given even more training. Over the next four years I gradually moved up in rank and responsibility until, eventually, I became the Leading Petty Officer for my division and one of the two most senior crew members on the Gold Crew. I was cross-trained as well, learning missile electronics, nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons handling, and I qualified in submarines which is something everyone in the Submarine Service *must* do or you're thrown out of the Submarine Service on your ear! It was a really tough job but a really great one too. I served out my remaining service obligation aboard the Thomas Jefferson and was honorably discharged in 1974.

I was married by then. After leaving active duty, my wife and I packed up and left New London, Connecticut to return to our hometown in New York State where I enrolled in a local college to

How To Be An Effective Analyst

finish my degree. By this time I had decided to study Business Administration. I still wrote a story or two occasionally but the years of technology training and intense experience in the fleet had altered my point of view. I *still* had two years of service obligation to complete so I joined the Army National Guard. They sent me to Officer's Candidate School where, surprisingly, I learned a lot about human resource management and business process administration. After completing my tenure of duty I was honorably discharged from the National Guard and spent the next several years attending college on the G.I. Bill. I kept right on studying Business Management and Administration supplementing my engineering training with computer science courses.

While I was working my way through school, I got a job as a laborer for the New York State Department of Historic Preservation. I enjoyed working with the craftsmen learning traditional woodworking techniques. Because of my military training, I was used to following orders and became a very reliable laborer who listened very carefully to the craftsmen for whom I worked executing their instructions in a straightforward fashion. They were older men, seasoned by years of hard work and experience and they didn't want to put up with an arrogant young hothead who thought he knew it all so they often requested that I be assigned to their projects. They trusted me with important tasks as we worked to restore a number of historic landmarks in preparation for our Nation's 200th Birthday in 1976. Having observed my performance, my supervisor assigned me to a three-year apprenticeship program. I was given college-level training in a number of interesting subjects like, Architectural and Engineering Graphics, Archeology, American Architectural History, and Traditional Woodworking Crafts. I also had the good fortune to be apprenticed to a wonderful master craftsman in traditional woodworking. After completing my apprenticeship, I

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

was then assigned to another master craftsman who was a master metalworker and our “crew chief.” I not only worked in the trades, I also worked as a draftsman for the head of the drafting department who taught me tons about architecture and drafting.

In time I left the Department of Historic Preservation for a job at Sterling-Winthrop Research Institute as a technician in the Biometrics Department. I worked for and with some really great people there for the next three years. When I learned that my mentor was planning to leave, I resigned my position to go to work for Mohawk Data Sciences as a Systems Analyst where, among other assignments, I was made the project manager of an eleven million dollar project and given the task of completing a feasibility study for a motor vehicle bureau of a Midwest state. Mohawk Data Sciences was a really great company that, like Sterling-Winthrop Research Institute, believed in training and continual education. They sent me to project management school where I received a certification in project management. They also subsidized my continuing education in college. Their “claim to fame” was distributed processing and computer networking at a time when both concepts were new to the industry. I learned a lot about information systems and business process analysis working for this company.

In 1983, following the collapse of Mohawk Data Sciences, I went to work for an information company as a Telecommunications Manager and Staff Support Analyst where I had the wonderful experience of designing and building a brand new telecommunications facility and world-wide network. However, the Industry crashed in the spring of 1986 and I was laid off in an internal political struggle. The experience really let the wind out of my sails! I had thought I had a future in technology. Three months after I was laid off, my employer tried to hire me

How To Be An Effective Analyst

back at a lower salary but, because I had a trade, I was making much more restoring houses for rich people. I knew that the trades were an unreliable source of revenue but I really liked what I was doing and didn't even give their ridiculous offer a second thought. About six months after I had been laid off, still working in the trades, I learned that my employer's company had been sold off and was going under.

That fall I moved my family to northern New York State where I worked as a freelance systems consultant and "dabbled" in the trades. We had purchased a small dairy farm in the middle of the "back-to-nature" push that was prevalent with professional people fed up with corporate gamesmanship and the cynical nature of American organizational society. It was a mistake. I was doing well financially but you don't know people until they know money. The mortgage holder felt as though he had sold me his farmstead too cheap. So, when I began to develop the farm using a business plan, he began to spread wild rumors about me to frustrate my business relationships. He also began to dump a horrendous amount of refuse and old cars on my property ruining its commercial value. It took me another two and a half years to get the New York State DEC to stop him but, by then, it was too late. I couldn't get a bank to loan me money to save my life. I spent the next five and a half years in Court where I learned a lot about contract law and court procedure.

It was an absolutely *awful* experience. The constant "Perry Mason" gamesmanship that the opposing attorneys played was ridiculous. I had made a legal submission to the court, in proof of fact, that was over a foot high and it weighed almost 35 pounds! The opposing side didn't have a leg to stand on and had come into court with "soiled hands" meaning, they had neglected to tell the Judge in their foreclosure statement that they had dumped an

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

estimated 2000 tons of waste and old automobiles on my land. The New York State DEC prosecuted them under the criminal code and had signed confessions. That didn't stop the wheels of Justice from backing up all over my civil liberties, in particular, my property rights. I survived over a dozen "motions" defeating each one until the Judge ruled that the opposing side would not be permitted to file any more motions.

It was a miserable and stressful time for me and my family. I found solace in my writing skills where I was able to publish several short stories in a West Coast journal called *Mind in Motion*, as well as publish several poems. If nothing else, the experience helped me sharpen my communications skills. I wrote short stories and poems that explored current social issues from a subtle philosophical point of view. I learned to write surrealistically, partly because my Editor wanted it that way and also because I had a better chance of communicating my feelings to other human beings through the mechanism of imagination.

The mortgage holder settled out of court with me just as I was getting back into the industry as an "employee." I had closed my consulting agency and gone to work for a technology firm as a network engineer. I left the farmstead and the cleanup to the mortgage holder and, with the money from the settlement, moved my family to Utica, New York to take up managing upstate business for my new employer. He soon recognized my potential as an analyst and sales engineer and put me in charge of developing business in the upstate area working with the company's Account Executives. Next to my military service, it was the longest employment period I ever had. I stayed with that employer until he closed his doors six years later. Along the way, I also taught technology courses as an Adjunct Instructor at my local

How To Be An Effective Analyst

community college. I found teaching in a formal setting a new and valuable experience and really loved the work.

When I finally got my new job, I wound up being assigned to the Director of Engineering as a sales engineer and business process analyst. In my new job, I had less of an issue getting customers to listen to me than I did in prior years. I've discovered that the reason for it is because of my age, experience, and command of the subject matter. To an analyst, the subject matter isn't necessarily "engineering" or "accounting" or "security" or anything that you'd expect the "subject matter" to be. From the customer's point of view, the topic of discussion is *always* the business problem while the subject matter is *always* the *solution*. That's how your employer makes money: solving problems with solutions. And that's why I've taken the time to tell you the short version of my professional history.

I've come a long way since those reconstructive years; finding myself dozens of times and questioning Providence through it all. I'm back in the thick of things now working on huge projects again. It's exciting and rewarding as you might expect it would be. But, each new experience carries with it new lessons to learn and new trials to fathom and conclude. Paraphrasing another writer—I can't remember who—life is an enigma wrapped in a puzzle hidden in a riddle.

If you think about it, you can see that I've had lots of *experience* in many different disciplines tempered by formal training. Take my writing experience for example: When my Editor would publish my work, very often, she would provide me with invaluable counsel explaining why she valued the work and why, she felt, people would like it. Those who read the work would respond to it in many different ways but, inevitably, I would

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

always be surprised to learn that an emotion I *assumed* was unique to my peculiar experience was often a feeling that others could relate to from their own unique and intimate perspective. I could never really “shock” someone with my point of view; they would usually display an empathy *with* it. I began to realize that human communications, under normal circumstances, existed as a common point of intellectual reference. Most people understood what you were trying to say *if* their communications barriers (such as bigotry, prejudice, arrogance, or anger) were either subdued or completely absent.

Consider my training in the trades, engineering school, and business school; think about my experience in actually *applying* my acquired knowledge to an analysis process. It requires the effort of combining speculation with the empirical evidence that comes with discovery. Yet, the most important thing that you have to contemplate is the capacity to *communicate* with other people. Beyond the manners, beyond the professional deportment there must be a person that is somewhat of a shaman who will listen intently to what is being said. They must respond to that specific human need with a process of discovery that will address the client’s point of view. Sometimes your work will be simple, straightforward, and obvious. At other times, your work will involve a degree of detail and patience; an analyst should use the scientific method to be sure—in particular Occam’s razor. But, you must always understand that the human element of your calculus is far more complex and abstract an entity than any technology that you could possibly imagine. My teaching experience taught me that in spades! To become a good analyst you must first comprehend how to understand yourself and, *that’s* what I want to focus on in this book. This book isn’t about analysis metrics or the art of constructing the optimum form; it’s not about total cost of ownership or return on investment calculations. There are a

How To Be An Effective Analyst

number of good books, some of which I have listed in Appendix A that discuss these principles and processes in detail.

This book is about the context within which an effective analyst must place himself to do his work and do it well. It's about the completely abstract considerations associated with the human condition. They must be learned to avoid the consequences of having little or no experience. I am going to share valuable information with you. It will save you time and money. This information will be based on a learning process that was costly to me. When I was much younger, there wasn't anyone around to tell me: "Hey! Don't do that!" I had to suffer the consequences of bad judgment born out of ignorance and stupid mistakes. Today, I'm doing much better at my career because I don't make the mistakes that I did when I was a young and ignorant fool. The price of this book doesn't reflect its value in the personal time and money that it will save you by revealing a life experience that, if understood and acknowledged, will help you steer a straighter course toward personal achievement and financial success.

You see, there are all kinds of analysts. There are medical analysts, engineering analysts, financial analysts, structural analysts, process analysts, and even transportation systems analysts to name a few. *Analysis* is the act of examining the articles of your reality in detail to the extent that you understand their *structure*. It is a method of inquiry. When you analyze something you're using *deductive reasoning* breaking down the apparent structure into its constituent elements. When you are working within the confines of a "human engineered" system of information, you must also decipher the subtle human responses to that environment because, like some *kind* of "wild card," the human element can affect, not only the outcome of your analysis, but also the efficacy of its

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

solution.ⁱⁱ To understand the human element you must, first, understand yourself.

To begin, I've learned that, for the most part, people tend to accept an analyst's participation in their discovery at face value. Men and women are actually judged by their fellows for what they *do* and, very seldom, by what they appear to be. This is because "judging" someone involves some kind of *evaluation* of their performance as opposed to an emotional response such as "hating" someone which, most often, involves ideology. Fortunately, you should have the good will of your client to start. If you don't, decline the job.ⁱⁱⁱ You will need to begin your discovery by understanding one of my "rules of engagement."

Rule (1): You have been asked to explore a problem, therefore, listen to your client's request very carefully. He or she may not completely understand their problem but, by the time that you're sitting in front of them for their first interview, rest assured that they know they have one. They're asking you to find their solution or, at the very least, identify their problem. And, basically, that's why people will want to listen to your advice.

Your client's natural tendency is to want to get on with their business and not become embroiled in a "bug hunt" for details of which they are, probably, already aware. They will, most often, think that such effort might actually *distract* them and cause them to lose their focus on the objectives of their business process. It's a Gestalt thing: they can't see the forest because the trees are in the way. *That's* why they've called on you...they just don't have the time to blaze a trail to the top of the mountain and take a good look at the global point of view. If you conduct your discovery properly, constantly meeting their expectations throughout the process, identifying the issues with a mind to providing solutions

How To Be An Effective Analyst

that enhance their productivity and permit them to prosper, they'll *always* listen to what you have to say because *they desperately want to*.

Chapter One

Understanding Who You Are

It was 1984 and my boss, the vice president of Technical Services, had been trying to launch an important project that involved building a brand new three million dollar technical facility. The company was growing fast and corporate headquarters in New York City wanted the job done ASAP! But, he had a real problem: He was trying to design the place by committee.

Yes, you guessed it; the plans were beginning to resemble a camel. The infighting was unbelievable as each manager began sabotaging the other in an attempt to gain territory (office space) for their individual departments. After nearly ten months of planning, the contracting foreman had only managed to dig eighty-five feet of foundation trench when the president of his firm drove up in his pickup truck, jumped out from behind the wheel, and barked an order to stop the work. He then stormed into the main office and demanded to see my boss. The contractor told him that his “fiddling” had cost his company \$250,000 in labor expense and he was going to stop work and sue for relief.

A “conflict” had developed between these “managers” in my company and that had led to a “declaration of war” between their opposing groups. In their attempts to coerce management and thwart each other’s will, they had put their personal and very subjective goals ahead of those of the company. We’ll talk about conflict a bit more in this chapter but, for now, bear in mind that this conflict was directly responsible for the costly delays.

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

Later on that day, the president of *our* company called the vice president and told him that if he couldn't get the facility built, most likely, he would lose his job. That afternoon, having heard the rumors, I approached my boss and offered to help him. He asked me how I thought I could get it done. I explained the "project management" process to him and explained the very rigid authorities that I would need. He thought about it and asked me to wait until he could discuss everything with the company president.

The next morning, he met with me and told me that the president had agreed to provide me with all the authority and backing that I needed if I could just get the job done. I went back to my office and worked out a project plan over the next few days. After my boss and the president reviewed the plan with me, they agreed to give the project to me and put all the people and resources that I needed under my control. Now, before we continue, think about what I had just done. That's right; I volunteered.

My boss made the announcement to the management staff at a meeting and handed out a letter from the president that asked everyone to cooperate with me (with the implied proviso that they would be fired if they didn't). That got everyone's attention and secured their cooperation. Basically, I just wanted them to address the questions that I might ask them in the upcoming analysis of departmental needs, and stay out of my way until I could get the facility built. We had a new deadline of November which was only four and a half months away.

When I took over the project, I examined the "progress" to date and found a number of weird requirements, for instance, I learned that the office space planned for a department run by a very influential director was three times the size of that which was

How To Be An Effective Analyst

planned for the programming department—a department that had four times the number of people in it. The original plans called for putting each programmer in a cube that was about 6'-0" by 4'-0" while the "power manager's" office space had 15'-0" by 20'-0" private offices for each of *her* people and no one had even noticed the obvious inequity and stupidity behind the layout.

The administration department had been given to me as a core staff. The department head was a nice lady who was absolutely stunned by the "take-over" and broke out in tears in my office when I attempted to go over the plan with her. I explained that "project management" was *not* functional management and this "assignment" was only temporary but it had no effect. I had to carefully "manage" her journey back to objectivity. After a week of cultivating my newly acquired authority with my subordinates, discussing the project plan over a business lunch with my entire team, and successfully engaging everyone's interest and excitement, I was ready to deal with the architect, the building owner, and the contractor who was *still* in a foul mood.

We held the project kick-off meeting in the company's conference room. I had been given the authority to hire an engineering firm to provide us with engineering consultants who would work with me and my staff to insure that the technical aspects of the project were managed properly. That day two Practical Engineers were present along with my entire team as well as the architect, the building owner, and the contractor. The room was an early-eighties style room on the second floor with glass walls looking out over the lobby. You could see the vice president working in his glass-walled office directly across the way. I introduced myself and my project leaders but before I could get my plan up on the board and my presentation out of my mouth, the contractor interrupted me by barking: "Who the hell are you? You

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

don't have any management authority! I'm only going to deal with your boss." A "dangerous" silence fell over the room as everyone waited for my response.

I calmly acknowledged him and explained that I was aware of the fact that his company had suffered costly delays but I went on to remind him that the person for whom he was asking had been *in charge* of that debacle. I turned to look through the glass wall at my boss busily dictating to his secretary across the cavernous lobby well. There was a moment of silence as I returned my glance to the contractor who was turning his head from that view as well. He looked down at the table and shook his head saying to the building's owner: "...they're going to ruin me!" I asked him if he wanted to proceed. Realizing that I was his best hope for success, he apologized and we began the meeting in earnest.

I laid out my project plan and confirmed my authority to everyone displaying the appropriate letters of assignment from the president of my company. The building owner was relieved to see that a more direct style of management was replacing the previous one of consensus planning (which seldom works, by the way).

To make a long story short, over the following weeks, we brutally enforced rational planning, reinforced the architect's sensible design suggestions, accommodated the owner's concerns, and cleared the path for the contractor who built the facility in record time. We brought the project in under budget and only 16 days off from its original completion date. Everyone, including those power-crazy managers who had done the most complaining, was happy with the result.

How To Be An Effective Analyst

Five months later, I was included in an April layoff as a reward for saving my boss's job. What I hadn't realized was that my boss was not very well liked by the new corporate management and they had hoped that his incompetence in completing the project would be sufficient reason for them to fire him. I had unwittingly intervened and they hated me for it. The other thing that I hadn't anticipated was that I had impressed our company's president to the degree that he nominated me for a junior vice-presidency which scared the hell out of all of my detractors to the extent that, together, they resolved to get rid of me at any cost.

Hey! That's the way it was in corporate America back then and, recent experience confirms that it still is! Hollywood has churned out tons of film to dramatize it all. But that's *not* why I've told you this story. I want to demonstrate two very important principles that I've learned over the years. These principles govern the development of your career and often interfere with your effectiveness as an analyst. The first principle is: No matter what is happening, people seldom learn from either History *or* their own mistakes. The second principle admonishes us that *no matter what you do, no one with any authority will ever really appreciate the effect that your contribution has had upon the process until you're gone*. Don't listen to the Pollyannas who tell you otherwise.

If you *want* to be an effective analyst you'll have to accept the fact that your clients and their operatives will seldom *know* why it is they are unable to achieve their objectives. They're in the middle of the process. Things and processes around them have become so familiar that they don't stand out. Their view is one of a two-dimensional flat world and they don't have a clue that there might be another dimension to their reality. Your job is to reveal the "mystery" and dazzle them with the obvious. However, you *have* to understand from the beginning that once you've set them

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

on the right path, you and your solution become absorbed into the process and *you* become a two-dimensional figure in a three dimensional world. They'll lose sight of you. They'll move on to the business of whatever business they're in and honestly believe that they and *not* you were the most significant aspect of the entire discovery process.

You're like the weekend janitor. No one ever realizes that you're cleaning the building because they never really see you and can't understand much about what it is that you're doing because they're doing something else. The important thing to understand is that, if this happens to you, if you've successfully completed your assignment and have helped your client back on to the path of productivity, it makes no difference that your client can't recognize your contribution; you've done your job. Collect your check and leave. The mystery of it all is that everyone will remember you the next time they're in trouble; they'll make the connection then. People won't like giving you credit when you do a good job but they *will* like it very much whenever you have the occasion to save their bacon. I'm not being cynical.

To the client, a really effective analyst is nothing more than a blob of human potential and creativity. They're never sure about what it *is* that you do but they *know* that, whatever it is, *they* don't do it. In their environment you are perceived in a way that makes you, at once, an outsider *and* a trusted confidant. You can only imagine the psychological stress your client may be suffering. Their human condition is relieved at the fact that *you'll* be the one who finds the problem because they certainly won't want to be associated with its creation. But, once you've resolved the problem, no one will want you around because your "earned authority" as a problem-solver will seem threatening to them. Remember, you're operating within an *organizational society* with

How To Be An Effective Analyst

hierarchies and patterns of accommodation that have become the status quo.^{iv}

In such an environment, where everyone you meet is likely to be ambivalent toward your mission, you have to possess a great deal of self-confidence. You have to really understand your capacity to function as a change agent...really...and you absolutely *must* know your limitations. If you're the kind of person who is prone to short-tempered tirades, bouts of impatience, or fits of consternation you can't function as an analyst. An *effective* analyst can't be arrogant and condescending.

Analyst, know thyself

I once worked for a Director who was, for all practical intents and purposes, a damned fool. He was a fool because he was arrogant; he thought that he was so intelligent and clever that no one could suspect his true intentions so he never bothered to hide them. I guess you could say that he was obnoxious as well. On one occasion, he teamed up with a high-priced consultant who had a Ph.D. It was during an era in American business where the college-educated were attempting to market their formal training in the guise of "specialty consulting." If you're a college-educated person, you have something very valuable: it isn't your degree. The most valuable asset a college-educated person has is the specialty training that you receive; it teaches you how to *learn*.

But, this consultant had lost this capacity. He was arrogant and petulant to boot! He was completely incapable of understanding that a phenomenal amount of information can come from some of the most mundane sources. So, he switched off his hearing and developed a bad case of tunnel vision as he began his work. He didn't listen to anything that the production workers had

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

to say about the issues their management had raised. He never examined the business process at the lower levels of management. He spent almost all of his time “lunching” with the big boys at the top of the management hierarchy and *they* thought that he was doing his job. Of course, my Director, enamored with this consultant’s behavior, was spending all of his time right up there on top of the heap with his new-found friend. From their point of view *anything* could be improved with an impressive and expensive application of the latest technology; technology was the key to *everything!*

After the consultant had submitted his bill (which, I was told was in the neighborhood of \$90,000) I was called into a private meeting with the Vice President who asked me to read this consultant’s feasibility study and get back to him. I pointed out to my superior that he was going over my Director’s head and that I might suffer some discomfort because of it. He told me to come to him with any complaints and he’d “...sit on him...” if he had to. Well, I read this \$90,000 report. It was an absolute pail of horse hockey. It didn’t describe the existing conditions. It didn’t identify any of the problems or even address the issues. It didn’t suggest a resolution or recommend a course of action. All it talked about were *trends* in the industry. What this consultant had done was to describe what my employer’s *competitors* had done in a “similar” case.

I developed a report that addressed my employer’s issues from our company’s unique perspective using the results of my interviews with our own production workers. I identified the major problems and suggested the corrective action but included the stipulation that I had *not* done a cost-benefit analysis with our financial director. When my vice president had read my response, he called another meeting.

How To Be An Effective Analyst

This time my Director was present as was the financial director. He compared the consultant's bulging submission to my 25-page report. He pointed out that my report included samples of the information gathered from interviews with the production people and how my analysis had, correctly, identified all of the issues. And then he explained to my boss that he never wanted to see that consultant in the building again. But, my boss couldn't analyze the evolving controversy even though it was right in front of him. Secretly, he met with the consultant and assured him that the vice president didn't know what he was doing and not to worry about additional engagements; he would take care of that. Again, a conflict had developed between opposing managers. My boss was engaging in an intentional act of subverting the vice president's direct orders. He was attempting to thwart the vice president's will.

My Director had no authority to make such guarantees and I became completely disgusted with his rebelliousness and stupidity. I started looking for a new job. There were two aspects of my reality in play: one, my Director didn't understand that the vice president actually *did* know what he was doing. As a corporate officer, the vice president was being responsible to the stock holders who expected their investments would be protected by management's thorough understanding of "risk."

The other aspect was that my department was responsible for the continual tactical improvement of the business process to the effect that such improvement increased productivity. Everyone can understand that increased productivity increases the profit margin in some way and *that* reduces the risk of *losing* that profit to your competitor. My Director didn't understand strategic management's objectives or, it seemed, his own job. He associated himself with the consultant's point of view which was arrogantly

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

myopic at best. He broke the first cardinal rule of effective analysis: *Identify the problem and then face it head-on.*

I left the company about three months later. After a short time at my new job, I received an anonymous letter in the mail. It contained an editorial from a well-known Information Industry magazine that, without mentioning any names, described my former employer's predicament in some detail and showed how a failure to address the issues had led to losing their edge to competitors in the marketplace. In particular, it described my old boss' unprofessional behavior and ineffective management. It was a scathing critique that had made an example of the players.

Three years later, I received an invitation to attend a Friday dinner with several of my former coworkers. They wanted to celebrate my old Director's dismissal at a local restaurant. My former employer's strategic management had become fed up with his antics and had finally given him the boot. I chuckled to myself but felt really bad for my friends. They had suffered through an agonizing period of really poor leadership that eventually led to the downfall and breakup of their company.

Today, that company no longer exists but, prior to the onset of the bad management of its business process, it had prospered as an industry innovator for over 100 years! These unfortunate results are among the consequences that must be paid for breaking the first cardinal rule of effective analysis. My point here is that an effective analyst must understand that serious consequences can often be the result of what he or she may *fail* to do. Look at this part of the discussion from that point of view.

You have to have the integrity to identify the issues, discover the problem, and then define that problem to your client

How To Be An Effective Analyst

in a straightforward and coldly intellectual fashion without any “sugar coating” and without worrying about the client’s sensibilities. The greatest service that you can perform for your client is to insure that he thoroughly understands his predicament and the gravity of the repercussions that may be felt for not addressing it.

If you’re not prepared to endure a client’s frustration or irascible behavior in discovering the truth then don’t become an analyst because your tendency will be to soften your presentation and that will get you into trouble. You have to be thick-skinned but *not* condescending. *Never* talk “down” to your client. That type of psychology erects communications barriers even though it may not be obvious to you. You have to present the facts to your client as though you were in front of a Supreme Court Judge—in proof of fact—and you have to address him or her with abject respect—as though they were your lord and master. Trust me; this approach expresses your sincerity and that will permit you to effectively communicate the findings to your client.

You have to be patient and let the truth sink in. You have to discuss the consequences of ignoring the issues in an honest and academic way. Don’t use “techno-speak.” It alienates people. Remember that you’re dealing with a human being that has feelings and can express them emotively. Learn to use analogies to develop a point of reference but don’t use them in a hackneyed way. Be sensitive toward the client’s deportment and respond in kind. Let them know that you’re human too. If they express consternation, you acknowledge it. If they express anger, acknowledge their right to be angry. If they express disappointment then you must show them empathy. The task at hand is to get them down off of their “first response” so that you

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

can get them to listen to you and work with you at finding a solution that fits their organizational goals and objectives.

Once the client has accepted your findings, you must then continue your discovery by developing a resolution, together with the client's participation, that addresses the issues head-on. You will want your client to participate in the solution so that his behavior toward the new approach is co-opted. This is a technique for managing change. If the client believes he or she is part of the solution, then they will guarantee its successful implementation.

Twice in my career, I was engaged by a client who could not face the obvious and refused to accept my findings *or* implement my solution. In each of the two cases, the company suffered exactly the financial devastation that I had predicted and collapsed leaving management with nothing more to do but close the doors and file for unemployment insurance. Curiously, influential people who were involved in the discovery process were absolutely flabbergasted at the fact that the management couldn't either accept the empirical evidence or comprehend the obvious consequences of their taking no action.

I remember the look on the face of the regional vice president of a bank that held the loans for one of my clients when he was told that I had been asked to leave. He explained to the board of directors that he felt that hiring me had been the first good thing that their company had done in all the years that he had done business with them. He warned them that his analysts had arrived at the same conclusions as had I and that it was perilous to ignore the consequences of their decision to dismiss me and reject my recommendations. They didn't listen. Three months after I left, this company collapsed and the residue was absorbed by another organization.

How do you avoid catastrophe?

Always think of “catastrophe” as an element of a time continuum that is completely out of your control. You’re not in control of the business process at your client’s company your client is or, at least, he or she should be. Your job is to observe the business process and detect any aberrations in the productive flow of work. If you find problems, you would, naturally, recommend corrective actions to your client but it is your client who must implement them.

An analogical consequence of such a relationship is that you don’t have your foot on the brake pedal, your client does. Your client is in the driver’s seat; you’re riding in the passenger’s seat. You can only “recommend” he stop at the red light and, if he doesn’t, you’re in the “car” *with* him so; chances are you’re going to get hurt. You’ll get hurt either in the subsequent accident that might be a consequence of running the red light or by hitting the pavement as you attempt to leave the “car” while it’s still in motion. Do you understand what I’m trying to tell you with this analogy? The risk of personal injury is an unavoidable consequence of client relations. Be prepared for it and learn to recognize the tell-tale signs^v of its possibility. Later we’ll discuss what you *do* with risk.

Sometimes your client will reject you. You may not be paid for your effort. This can be a devastating experience. It may bias your thinking and compel you to conclude that a career as an analyst isn’t for you. No one would blame you for avoiding similar situations in the future. Contrary to popular belief and the drivel produced by the self-appointed cheerleaders of industry, stress *isn’t* good for you. It won’t promote your creativity and it can kill you if you suffer too much of it.

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

An analyst has to think things through and his or her observations have to be made in a context that allows one to gradually recognize the hidden patterns of human behavior that can affect the business process so profoundly. So, how can you avoid situations that lead to such a disappointment? Well, there are no “disappointment scales” or “failure projection curves” to use as estimating tools you just have to use your analytical skills to recognize patterns of failure that can evolve within a human engineered system or organizational society. Then, you have to estimate the affect that such activity might have upon your work or, more importantly, your career. That means that you must develop, at least, a layman’s understanding of human psychology and how humans behave in a sociological context.

To do this, you must first understand that humans are creatures that evolved in the wilds of nature and have successfully survived, through all these millennia, because of developmental factors associated with their evolution. We’ve not survived as a species because we possess some kind of significant metaphysical characteristic.^{vi} Humans function within their reality by discerning and responding to visual images, natural forces, and the patterns of acquired behavior of the other living organisms around them. Humans cannot function by reading reams of metrics or by responding to any kind of artificial intelligence.

We make distinctions between a living thing and a device or a synthetic process of some sort. For instance, our ruling elite, our philosophers and theologians, and our academic leaders can accept a diabetic as an unfortunate casualty of nature and advise that unfortunate person to live within his medical regimen. They consider this a moral and ethical point of view. However, they will question the motives of any scientist that attempts to clone human stem cells in an effort to improve the life of that diabetic or cure

How To Be An Effective Analyst

his or her disease. Very often, they will make every attempt to oppose the reasoning that scientists use to promote their research as unethical or immoral or both. What is more, their opposition can take the form of a legal prohibition or criminal allegation that brings with it very serious consequences for the scientist who opposes their point of view.

In other words, it is perfectly moral and ethically acceptable for either “God” or “Nature” to kill a person through a natural process of circumstance but it is immoral and ethically *unacceptable* for anyone to preserve the life of that same person through a means that may seem artificial or alien to their perspective. The most significant point of my argument is that, in the analysis of the conflict of ideas, no one recognizes the fact that either “God” or “Nature,” as we humans often express these notions, are purely artificial conceptualizations of an imaginative human mind and, fundamentally, assumptions of a completely abstract and metaphysical belief system that has no empirical foundation. These are the kinds of people with whom you will be dealing in your work as an analyst. Humans have a proclivity toward engaging in conflict and they’ll do it for some of the most absurd and untenable reasons.

Barbarian Enterprises

Allow me to narrow the focus of our discussion a bit more. Let’s say that you are hired by an organization to help them determine the means to a more productive business process. In your initial telephone conversations, you’re given the impression that they want to become more profitable which makes perfect sense to you. You discuss your fee and advise them that they would have to agree to a letter of engagement that defines the issues that you are required to address. They raise no objections

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

and you make an appointment to meet with the appropriate contact person.

When you arrive at their location, the first thing that you notice is that the driveway could use some paving. You take in a panoramic view of the establishment and see that there are a great many old cars in the parking lot; they're rusty, dented, and have faded paint. You also notice that there are a half dozen or so brand new cars parked close to the main entrance and *these* cars are classy expensive makes and models.

As you approach the building you notice that the paint is fading, the gutters are loose and some are rusted through. You see that the windows don't seem to have been cleaned for years! You walk through the front door and notice a musty odor. You're greeted by a young woman who is dressed in dirty dungarees and hiking boots and is wearing a sweat shirt. Her hair is a mess; her hands seem soiled and her finger nails are grimy. She's sitting behind a dated old industrial grey desk that bears a tag in the corner that reads: "Central School District." Directly in front of her desk you observe a faded and worn grey carpet that has a hole worn through to the cement floor beneath.

The young lady looks up at you and says: "Yeah?" You explain who you are and who you've come to see and she yells through the door at another person that you are here to see the boss. The other person comes in and you are casually introduced to a very old lady who tells you that she'll "...take you back to see the boss."

As you are led down a narrow, dimly lit hallway you notice that the linoleum is old and worn and seems to be from the late 1950's. You're afraid to touch the walls because they're covered in

How To Be An Effective Analyst

soiled pastel yellow paint. There are dead flies in the overhead lamps and grit and dust along the sides of the floor where the side wall meets the floor.

You enter into a busy workshop that is covered with grime and oil residue. People are attending to machines that seem museum pieces. They're dressed in worn clothing and are wearing soiled crumpled hats. Many of the machine operators have long hair sporting pony-tails. Some of the males have grubby beards and cigarettes dangle from their mouths. The noise is deafening and people are shouting through the din to communicate with each other. In the corner of the shop there are a few old tables and chairs and a small bench with a coffee-maker on it. A few people are seated there and seem to be eating their lunch or drinking coffee with their fellows. You look up at the high ceiling and see a three-foot diameter fan lazily evacuating air to the outside. The place is a bit chilly almost to the point of being uncomfortable.

The old woman leads you to another hallway. The hallway is much cleaner and better lighted and at its end are a cluster of private offices decorated in deep colored paneling and hardwood trim. You notice that the offices are clean and the furniture is somewhat more modern. The people working in these offices are casually dressed but neat and clean. She guides you past these offices to the office of the president who rises to greet you and shakes your hand. He's dressed in slacks, shined shoes, and a shirt and tie. As you engage a conversation you find him amiable and he seems intelligent. You sit down on a chair directly in front of his mahogany desk stopping momentarily to inspect it for dirt or grime but notice that it's relatively clean. As you pull your engagement letter from your brief case he jokingly says: "What, contracts already?" You smile and hand the engagement letter to him. He reads it and puts it down on his desk. He looks up at you and opens

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

the discussion by saying: “Say, we don’t want to spend a lot of time and money here.”

You spend the next hour discussing his company’s goals and objectives. The president tells you that he is gradually losing business to his competitors and that he needs to understand where he’s “hemorrhaging,” as he puts it. He explains that he doesn’t have a lot of time and money to spend on “fancy” solutions. He figures that some time and motion studies might help and he wants you to take a look at the inventory flow to see if employees are wasting or, worse, stealing supplies. You explain that you need to talk to everyone involved in the business process but he explains that he doesn’t want you talking to the employees about anything as it might “stir them up.” You have a gut feeling that you shouldn’t commit to anything at this point in time so you tell the president that you’ll get back to him and you rise to shake his hand and bid him “good day.”

As you walk out of the place and into the parking lot to get into your car, you come upon two employees loading a box of toilet paper into their car. You stop to say hello and ask them if they need help. They thank you and decline but quip that it’s their employer who “...needs the help.” And, with that, they break out into sniggering, almost Bevis and Butthead, laughter. You casually inquire what they’re doing with the box of toilet paper and they reply: “...let’s just say it’s part of our pay.” The sniggering laughter returns and you smile, get in your car, start it up and drive away.

Obviously, from the amount of detail that I’ve just given you, you can tell that I’m describing a real business that may have once existed. In my career, I’ve visited dozens of companies who

could fit this description. It's a category of business that I like to call "barbarian enterprises."

In my youth, I tried to complete assignments for a half-dozen of them or so. They might have been organized as small manufacturers, tool shops, not-for-profit companies, or even law firms but they all exhibited the same patterns of behavior so much so that they became a cliché. They wouldn't let me conduct my inquiries properly; I couldn't get them to listen to reason; they wouldn't accept the recommendations; and, in the end, I never got paid. Today, if I go to an account to find such similar circumstances, I explain that their issues are beyond the scope of my ability to help them and I immediately leave the premises. There's no use in trying to engage such an account. They'll complain that you haven't helped them and refuse to pay you. Don't waste your time trying to "drum up" some business with them.

Now, let's try to understand why such organizations can be so predictable. First of all, business people who make a habit of paying poor wages for precision work (in the case of the example, a machine shop requiring skilled machinists) are *not* real capitalists. A precision product or service (such as a social or legal service) should have a certain amount of quality or "intrinsic" value associated with it. If you hire cheap, you won't be getting the kind of people who focus on this aspect of productivity. Your employees will always be "hungry." They will, most likely, need to work second jobs that will interfere with their commitment to *your* firm. Their focus and sense of loyalty will be absent from their relationship with you and that will cost you in that it will reduce an estimable capacity for predictable performance on the job.

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

Second, an employer who mistreats and abuses his employees by compelling them to work in a poorly constructed environment that is not designed to enhance human productivity can never be successful. Human beings working in an artificial environment require a degree of structure and order to their workplace or their sense of responsibility and capacity for productivity will be greatly diminished.

Third, a firm that takes no pride of ownership and represents itself to its clients and vendors as a poorly managed, inadequately maintained establishment is destined for failure and gradual extinction. Eventually, your clients won't take you seriously and your vendors will decline you credit. These businesses exist solely for the quick profit that comes off a comparatively tiny margin between lower production costs and unrealistically low pricing. Their "pattern of evaluation" doesn't reflect the fundamental notion of competitiveness in a modern market and the value of their product or service will, eventually, be compromised by their refusal to understand the fundamental problem they face which is that they are not real business people. They will *never* comprehend the responsibilities associated with managing the business process. Eventually the inconsistencies that characterize their reputation within the business community will catch up with them and ruin them financially.

Becoming a successful business person requires a dedication to the learning process involved in understanding management principles: production management, financial management, human resource management, and Economics. You have to *work* at becoming a good business person. You have to have a "pride of ownership." And your work, as well as your environment, has to display that pride of ownership through its effectiveness, efficiency, and efficacy. Deadbeats who sponge off

How To Be An Effective Analyst

the human condition, making their money at the extreme margins of the marketplace, producing defective products or providing poor and inconsistent services are nothing more than a flash in the pan of capital enterprise and script material for stand-up comics. As an analyst, you have no business promoting their continued existence because you'll be doing it at your own expense!

Government Bureaucracies

A second category of businesses to understand are government bureaucracies. Sometimes you can develop a really good relationship with public officials if they have the necessary insight to be objective in their relationship with you. I had a local government client the leadership of which exhibited extremely objective and professional behavior in all aspects of their work even when they had to deal with inevitable “political” situations. The production workers understood the organization’s goals and objectives and continually worked to achieve them constantly improving their skills and abilities to the extent that it was almost a joy to work with everyone.

On the other hand, I had a number of negative experiences with government agencies whose management was so preoccupied with the *politics* of government that they had little or no interest in promoting their organization’s mission. I found the employees in these institutions to be lackluster and wholly disinterested in their work. They often responded to my inquiries with blank stares of ambivalence. Their management was often unskilled, misinformed, poorly trained, or completely incompetent. On two assignments, I wound up abandoning the project; of course, I never submitted a bill and, curiously, the agencies never even noticed that I was gone.

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

I've learned that State or Federal agencies that provide an actual service *for* the people such as providing information or licensing in exchange for a fixed fee are better run agencies than those that "distribute" grants or "supervise" the distribution of revenue such as unemployment insurance agencies and social services departments. I've learned that this distinction has to do with the relationship between that particular department or agency and its legislative authority.

Agencies that bring in money for the government are, naturally, treated with greater importance and are usually funded much better than those who dole the money out. Those less effectively run agencies that exhibit a classic bureaucratic ineptitude, often humorously dramatized by the motion picture industry, can become an awful conundrum. Their policies can be subjectively enforced, ineffective, and sometimes illogical. The management in these environments tends to be dominated by people who lack the sufficient experience, training, and education required to interface with the public even though their mission might require it. So, you can expect to see a business process that is convoluted if not somewhat mystical and inexplicably designed to thoroughly frustrate the general public and discourage people from using the agency all together.

Often the laws governing these agencies are written with a sufficient amount of ambiguity to allow continuous and unmanageable degrees of irresponsibility. This kind of culture generally violates the civil liberties of the unfortunate citizen that falls beneath their purview. Once, when I was involved with one of these agencies, I pointed out an obvious violation of a citizen's 5th and 14th amendment rights within a particular process to a lawyer friend who had worked within the process himself. He agreed whole-heartedly by referring to the decisions of a higher court

How To Be An Effective Analyst

which were being intentionally ignored by the agency's operatives. I felt as though the citizenry was being raped by this agency. He agreed they were but he advised me to avoid raising the issue all together. He pointed out that, all though it would be very likely a person would win on the merit of the rule of law, it would take that person about three million dollars and a decade of life to hire the lawyers and fight the case through the courts.

When working with government, you have to understand that the old adage: "You can't fight City Hall" is true unless you can find a multi-millionaire who is sufficiently outraged enough to provide the funding. If you're engaged in a project within such an agency where the problem is the actual law under which they are operating or the policies with which they govern their actions, it will be very unlikely that you will be able to convince them that change is necessary. What may seem to be an outrageous abuse of authority to you is *actually* an intentional perversion of the rule of law to accomplish a particular political agenda. The business process is *meant* to be dysfunctional and they will question your professional ability if you raise an issue with it.

I'm not being cynical. Don't attempt to assume the mantle of a "Joan of Arc." You will be destroyed in your effort to right an obvious wrong under which so many people are permitted to earn a living and prosper, albeit dishonestly. Such circumstances are best left to fate and public outrage because experience teaches us that despotic rule when compared to the rule of equity is, very often, short-lived.

Learn to recognize these kinds of government organizations and avoid them. Not only will you run the risk of working for nothing but associating your work with these agencies can ruin your career especially if a consumer watch group or news person

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

gets wind of your activity. It has been my experience that even favorable representation in the press, though it may distinguish your involvement as being honest and forthright, inevitably leads to confrontation and conflict and that will simply destroy your reputation, within the business community, for being a capable, effective, and reliable analyst.

The police and military are in a class all by themselves. I've learned that these organizations often take their missions very seriously. Working with them can be a pleasant experience but you will have to get used to their unique pattern of accommodation; it is extremely inclusive. After a few weeks on the job with a police department, for instance, you might very well begin to feel the tremendous stress under which these people constantly work even though you're not the one making the arrests and standing in front of crazy people with loaded guns.

If your working for the uniformed military and you're a veteran then you, obviously, know that they will not recognize the fact that you have been honorably discharged. Be prepared to recognize rank and interact with the organization according to its customs and chain of command. Be very formal in your communications unless you are *told* to do otherwise. Accepting such formalities makes communicating a more fluid process because your clients won't sense an interruption in the flow of their daily regimen and feel more comfortable around you. This opens up the *information pathways* through, what is often, a complex and hierarchical organizational society. You will need such access to do your job effectively.

Pro bono

An effective analyst does not sit on the board of a not-for-profit organization. Neither will an effective analyst perform “pro bono” or free work in the public interest for *any* organization, in particular, a government organization. Free services have no value associated with them and, therefore, it is unlikely that your findings will be accepted or your recommendations followed.

Life is too short to waste time working for people who expect free handouts. Get serious. It takes years of hard work and a great deal of personal investment in time and money to develop an analyst’s skill set and experience. Don’t give it away; if you get hurt attempting to please the greedy, you deserve the consequences. The Judeo-Christian Bible teaches: “Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do they will trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.”^{vii}

In my career as an analyst, I provided pro bono services to several not-for-profit agencies before I finally learned this bitter lesson. Without exception, each of the agencies “trampled” my sincere effort under foot and then turned on me and ridiculed me to the public. Despite the fact that most of the people who witnessed the outrage sided with me and castigated the agencies for treating me unfairly, my business suffered a great deal and I chafed beneath the unpleasant experience.

You see, after I had finished my work, well, they demanded more free services; when I declined to provide them, they lashed out with the mean-spirited vengeance of a typical “greedy Gus.” It took me years to recover from the sniping and the defamatory remarks that inevitably found their way into the local newspapers

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

and were broadcast in gossip at numerous business luncheons. Don't let your religion or faith begin to cloud your better judgment. Don't work for free; it's stupid, it won't pay your bills, you'll be putting your family's prosperity and comfort at risk (which is irresponsible), and no one will appreciate your effort anyway. And, what's more, you won't pick up any new, good-paying business doing this kind of thing because most people in the business community will consider you an amateur for not being wise enough to refuse pro bono work. There now, you've been warned.

Advertising

The best way to advertise your business is to show up at your client's account in person. All it takes is just one good project at one good account and word will spread like wildfire that you are "on the street," you do good work and charge a reasonable fee. Always leave them with your business card or stationery. A satisfied client will spread your contact information more effectively than you could ever do it by yourself.^{viii} If you work for an employer such as a service bureau or consulting firm, try to convince your boss not to "court catastrophe" (as I have previously discussed) and then follow this rule: *Go to the prospective account in person and present yourself and what you have to offer.* Don't try to be an analyst on "autopilot" through the mail or by "remote-control" over the phone. A business person wants to *know* who you are and you, certainly, want to put yourself in a position to evaluate them according to the principles that I've just outlined. So, person-to-person, on-site contact is essential.

If you're working for a firm that provides such services go to the account *with* the sales person. Don't let the sales person sell you to the client. Sales people inevitably attempt to dress you in a

How To Be An Effective Analyst

blue suit with a red cape and put a great big “S” on your chest. You don’t want to be portrayed that way because it will set the customer’s expectations too high and you won’t be able to discuss “problems” with the client.

An effective analyst *needs* that edge; you need to discuss the issues with your client in an open and frank manner. That involves cultivating trust at the client site and portraying yourself as a normal human being. Effective analysts are *not* flamboyant; they are not pretentious. Effective analysts are surprisingly unassuming. They don’t threaten their client’s self-confidence nor would they *intentionally* disrupt their client’s basic psychological requirements calling for continuity, structure, and predictability.

A professional person who wants to “mix it up” or “brain storm” or “...try something daring” is *not* an analyst; he’s a marketer. Effective analysts are discerning, patient, quiet, and resourceful people who prefer paying attention to detail over promoting statistical risk. They use empirical evidence, scientific observation, and logic in their work. Leave the “sensationalism” to the marketing pros who know how to use it effectively.

The results of *your* work must be presented using a common form of the language and be understood as being sensible and rational at every level of human involvement throughout the organization. When the job is over and the work concluded, you should quietly disappear. If you have done a good job and your recommendations have been well-received, your client will do the advertising for you by referral and *that* is the best advertising your hard work and money can buy.

Remember my warning about a client’s natural tendency for developing a two-dimensional perspective in their evaluation of

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

your impact on the organization. If you have successfully identified the problems and made reasonable but effective recommendations for dealing with them, you would now have an “earned” authority within the organization. Since you don’t work there, this is a situation that has the potential of putting you in conflict with your client because your newly acquired authority will ultimately be perceived as a challenge to the very people you are trying to help. You will then become embroiled in an evolving confrontation with your client’s management and that is something that you *don’t* want to happen. After the job is completed, get the hell out of sight—make yourself scarce and only show up if the client calls you and asks you to pay them a visit. Remember the old adage: “Familiarity breeds contempt.” It certainly does; develop a sense of propriety.

Understand the difference between “conflict” and “competition”

This is the hardest set of concepts to understand because, in the work place, they’re based on the human condition. They’re part of a social process and need to be discussed in this book. Falling prey to them can lead to catastrophe and we’ve already examined that. Let’s discuss “conflict” first.

The dictionary defines the word “conflict” as “...a prolonged battle; a struggle; a clash: A controversy; disagreement; opposition.” This definition conjures up visions of Viking raiders sacking an English village, raping and pillaging their way through a bloody mass of human tissue. In an organizational society, that’s not conflict.

Behavioral Scientists have to turn to psychology and sociology for the definition of conflict that best describes its truly human character. Within the social process of an organizational

society, conflict is defined as being "...the deliberate attempt to oppose, resist, or coerce the will of another human being or group of human beings."^{ix} Within this context, the nature of conflict can range from an extermination or excision of the opposition to the mere mitigation of someone's reputation. Conflict can be overt or it can be latent. Its affect can influence an entire corporate body or just that of an individual. It can take the form of a rational point of view or a completely irrational tirade of human emotion. But, you must understand that it is *destructive*. Conflict can never be applied to the resolution of a problem in a constructive way.

Modern sociologists may agree that conflict is a social aberration; that it is to be avoided at all costs, and that, if unavoidable, it should be resolved as quickly as possible; this is precisely because of its destructive nature. We tend to associate conflict with a violent act but conflict can occur without violence ever having been manifested. Generally speaking, conflict arises out of some sort of contention between differing points of view. It is born out of a state of emotional tension in which two or more cognitive elements of a human's psychological potential exist but seem to be mutually inconsistent. In most cases, long before the conflict erupts in some kind of hostile action; it has existed in a latent form. And, this is the situation to which an effective analyst must always be alert.

The issues that you might be examining may conceal a subdued but still roiling conflict; the dead giveaway is usually an atmosphere of ever increasing anxiety. If nothing is done to alleviate the tension caused by these opposing views, an opposition may be declared and, if hostile is action taken, it may perpetuate the situation and lead to open aggression. Latent conflict, obviously, becomes overt conflict under these circumstances. Your job is to find the latent conflict *before* it becomes overt because

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

overt conflict has the tendency to muddle the fundamental issues involved in the management crisis and make it more difficult to resolve any problems or construct effective solutions.

We've been discussing *rational* conflict but conflict can be irrational as well. Irrational conflict would exhibit very similar characteristics however, according to Green; it tends to involve one of two differing sets of circumstances.^x In the first situation, a large proportion of the people who make up the organization become alienated from the more traditional social patterns of accommodation. In such cases, individuals may band together to form, what can be called, "action groups" (cabals) and begin to reject responsibility. I've seen this in poorly managed bureaucracies where public employees seem to do everything possible to avoid being held accountable for any of their actions. The observant analyst can pick up on this by looking for extensive documentation of each task performed to the extent that its performance becomes irrelevant and the documentation becomes the more important aspect of the job. We often call this kind of administrative behavior CYA or "Cover Your Ass" behavior.

In the *second* situation, the organization as an integrated whole is gradually decaying. The outward economic appearance is one of unprecedented prosperity until a point in time where there occurs so much of a political redistribution of authority and privilege that it engenders a severe scrutiny of the rules and values that bind employees to the corporate culture. The common production worker becomes more preoccupied with a focus on personal objectives (i.e., using the residual corporate infrastructure to position oneself for a courageous foray into independent consulting—most likely with the company's clients). Often, this is an irreversible trend and can have the most devastating effect on

How To Be An Effective Analyst

the goals and objectives of the organization. Learn to recognize these trends.

Don't confuse conflict with *competition*. "Competition" usually stops short of a deliberate attempt to coerce the opposition or thwart another's will. The individuals or groups engaged in competition are rarely aware of the opposing side's activity. Their actions, collectively, are characterized by high-spirited attempts to achieve similar results and aspirations which are often aligned with those of the organization. And, more often than not, if they *do* learn of each other's activity, they may even try to combine the efforts of the opposing groups to build a "synergy" that drives an ever increasing momentum toward the final achievement of the company's goals and objectives. Contrast this behavior with that of "conflict:" the individual or group is patently aware of their adversary and hell-bent on doing something detrimental to stop them or even destroy them.

The effective analyst will always attempt to identify conflict, define its operational characteristics, and *resolve* it rather than eliminate it altogether. You will need management's unconditional authority to act but your presence as an "outsider" will make it easier for you to clarify each group's disposition and broaden their perspectives enhancing their values even as you diminish their hostility toward one another. Always remember that *conflict* must be aggressively managed where ever you find it. Competition, especially when it produces cooperation and synergy between the opposing individuals or groups, can be encouraged to the advancement of the organization's mission.

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

Power and authority

Cultivate an understanding of “power” and “authority.” They aren’t the same thing, you know. The significant difference between these two concepts is that “power” is a component of an individual’s personality profile. It is a function of their character and sheer human will. Often, it is manifested in a penchant for constructive leadership. “Authority,” on the other hand, is normally not associated with an individual but, most often, related to the actual social role that individual occupies. Authority always has two orientations associated with it: one of superior and one of subordinate but it can often degenerate into one of domination and one of subjugation.

Authority forms along the lines of influence and command and control within an organization. Where ever there exists a dominant and subjugate relationship between individuals therein lies a road paved with grievances that ultimately leads to the formation of conflict groups. An effective analyst will recognize these relationships and the problems associated with them. You can constructively re-align the opposing perspectives through a careful, detailed, and impartial examination of the issues and the problems they create.

If the company’s management is committed to improvement, they will make every effort to implement your recommended corrective action. By mitigating the authority of the dominant individual and retraining that person to pursue avenues of compromise, consensus, and cooperation, the individual can deftly assume a more constructive role involving the development of their leadership abilities to compensate for the loss of authority.

How To Be An Effective Analyst

Remember, it is an instinctive act of self-preservation whenever an individual makes an attempt to dominate the control of any particular situation. If you understand this, keep a cool head, and define the unproductive activity from this point of view, you will not cause your client to raise his defensive posture and feel threatened by your presence. Always be objective; always discuss the issues in a coldly intellectual language that divorces you from the interpersonal relationships of the people with whom you are working. Your advantage is that you're an outsider; make every attempt to remain the outsider throughout the period of your engagement.

The occurrence of conflict as an agent of "change" had been on the rise. Social scientists have suggested that within an organizational society, as resources become increasingly scarce, it compels individuals to become more aggressive and adapt to a progressively competitive workplace in which they begin to "fight" for their fair share of the prosperity. The management pundits, predictably, misinterpreted these findings to somehow put a positive spin on the hypothesis. It wasn't very long before everyone began to realize that this led to conflict the destructive nature of which ultimately diminished the organization's ability to respond to outside competitive forces. Chapter Five sites a few examples of its destructive influence. In recent years, corporate leaders have grown tiresome of using conflict to promote "organizational control" by affecting individual and group performance. Its volatile nature and the detrimental affect it has upon completely unrelated groups often leads to unexpected and very negative results.

For example, the employer that had included me in an April layoff because I had come into conflict with the company's darlings never expected the middle managers of three completely

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

unrelated departments to resign their positions. Three months later, they announced that they were leaving the company for new employment opportunities. When asked why they had opted for a career change they explained that watching me get the boot completely demoralized them. They reasoned that, if so productive an organizational “leader” could be savaged for doing a great job, what might become of them as my antagonists continued to build their dominant authorities from successful acts of naked aggression against their opponents. The one thing that everyone neglected to understand was that scarcity, instability, and conflict are completely alien to the traditionally optimistic, “Horatio Alger,” uniquely American point of view.^{xi}

Conflict is a built-in characteristic of the human condition. However, people who work in harmony with one another will find creative ways to overcome any obstacle that prohibits them from achieving their organization’s goals and objectives. Happy, well-adjusted employees have no reason to worry about the politics of their corporate culture and often align their own personal objectives with those of their employer’s.

This creates a synergy within the organization that gives way to increased productivity. Employees don’t come to work to kick someone’s behind and fight for some obscure right to use more oil on their metal lathe. They come to work because they *want* to do the job; very often they will manifest pure enjoyment in their work. When the business process suffers a diminished capacity and the employees’ exhibit contradictory and inconsistent behavior you can bet, dollars to donuts, that conflict lies at the root of the problem.

In conclusion

I've gone into the depths of an analyst's professional discipline to give you an idea of how much reading you're going to have to do. You're not born with this knowledge; you must acquire it through education and experience. But, your commitment to the development of your comprehension and professional skills will ultimately define your success in the field. Your income will not necessarily accommodate your expectations although it's nice to get rich doing something that you like to do. No, the respect that you garner from your clients will define your success and keep you gainfully employed throughout a long and often challenging period of personal development.

Who the hell are you? You're the only person who can define your own complex nature and reckon with the articles of your reality. You're the person who understands just where your center of gravity resides. You can cope with your own shortcomings and manage your own self confidence. But, most of all, you are able to define yourself as an individual with distinctly human characteristics. It will be that humanity that sets you apart from your peers. Armed with these attributes you might one day find that the monumental problems you are loathe to confront are *not* entirely obscure nor is *anything* that is a part of human nature completely unfathomable.

Chapter Two

It's *Their* Money; don't be brave Ulysses

I was very much younger once and, when I was younger, I was very naïve. My parents were the product of “Great Depression” myths and legends and the conflict of World War II. They brought me up to trust in visions that they could never validate. They venerated people of whom they had little or no knowledge and worshipped ideals that were unattainable because most of everything that they believed in didn't even exist in the world outside of their own imagination.

Life got the better of them because they could never fathom the concept of “society” and how it functions. They acted out the role that their social “group” had given them believing every social allegory and folktale as though it was actual history, following every dramatic maxim that the government's propaganda machinery could exploit. They could never seem to understand that they were a part of this gigantic whole that was America.

My parents had a perspective on life that was product of their subjugation to the metaphor of “The American Dream.” In this context, we are made to believe “success” is readily achievable by every citizen if only he or she can apply their personal potential. We are taught that we are “individuals” who live in a great society of free thinkers and innovative personalities. The truth is that we possess no more of a personal distinction than the fellow living next to us and, without counsel, support, and intense training and preparation for some predefined capacity, we will, in most cases, accept the role that is given to us by those around us—the group—the social conclave of self-appointed overseers who form the pecking order directly above us.

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

Our upbringing and our public education would have us believe that, if we fail to attain our dreams, it is, in no small part, a factor of our capacity for achievement and our willingness to work. But, many of us have applied these principles throughout the first decades of our lives with little success. Along with tens of thousands, perhaps millions, of other Americans I have learned that all of the effort to which I could have ever committed myself has brought me little return, higher taxes, discomfort, debt, less respect, and old age. Trying to address the expectations of the group is like trying to fill an ocean with a teacup. You will never succeed in your lifetime and you will, ultimately, earn the disdain of those who form the hierarchy above you.

My later years are much improved. Today, I earn more money than I ever thought possible and have gradually begun the long hard climb out of the pit of despair and into a world filled with promise and hope. The difference between the “me” of my past and the “me” of now is that I have finally learned the truth about my nature and the social infrastructure of which I am a part. I understand that I am an individual trying to live out my life within a roiling, unpredictable, and indiscernible world of human possibilities. The key to my achievement is that I must know myself better than the world around me.

I am a person with limited resources, finite capacity, and many limitations; there is *nothing* that I can't do but very little time in which to do it if I could only determine what it is that I *must* do. Oh, I believe that a solitary human can move mountains with a great deal of faith but that faith *must* include enough wealth to buy the necessary earth-moving equipment, hire a substantial labor force, and pay for the cost of an environmental impact statement that allows you to proceed with your organization's objectives. The

only “miracles” that we will ever witness in *this* Universe are associated with quantum mechanics.

Rule (2): My assertion is that we must know ourselves: who we are. There are heroes among us only because they are capable of a tremendous capacity for achievement. Their outward appearance may effectively disguise their human potential but that potential is innate and there nonetheless. They are born with it and can deploy it at will. Others have little or no stomach for acts of courage or great deeds of self-sacrifice; it doesn't make them any less human. You must understand your biology. Humans are creatures of the planet; we have a creature's way about us. We are territorial, selfish and aggressive. We collect ourselves into organizational societies because it is our nature to do so and we've been doing it for well over five million years. That proclivity toward social interaction has promoted our survival. It's a mechanism of our evolution. We are social beings. Very few of us can function independent of the activities of those around us. That's why hermits are so unique to our comprehension.

All right, I've waxed philosophical on you. Pardon me. But, as an effective analyst, you will simply *have* to discover yourself and your society, and how the two work together to build the articles of a collective reality. Organizational societies are constructed for a purpose. America, as a concept of community, was created to promote a context of social interaction that would permit the collective cultivation of a public welfare intended to engender prosperity.

At the outset, prosperity was a lot of things to a lot of different people and groups of people. Today prosperity has more to do with the accumulation of wealth and power but only because our society's original purpose has degenerated into a consumer-

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

oriented expectation that is quantitatively measured in the number and value of the possessions we own.

In a world of limited resources, rational people can understand that we can't all be rich but we are encouraged to believe otherwise. As the quality of the human condition we know continues to decline, few of us realize that our perception of that decline is due, in large part, to the fact that we have accepted the collective expectations of the group. They measure both our individual *and* collective success in quantitative terms instead of divorcing the value of our lives from the machines and systems that have come to govern them. And here is where I finally learned to make the distinction. An effective analyst understands that life is a real bitch and then you die.

The effective analyst won't make any attempt to filter, through rose-colored glasses, anything that he or she is observing. There is no "politically correct" society neither can there be an *affirmative action program*. When all the ideology is stripped out of the fabric of our culture, we will find that we still have cause and effect. We are the product of our own reality. We will function according to its absolute laws or we will suffer our own extinction (Darwin's "survival of the fittest maybe?").

Save your romantic notions for the intimate moments you spend with your companion, your husband or wife, or your lover. Remember this association: empirical evidence, scientific observation, the determination of a cause for the manifested effect, and the recommended course of action. Let yourself get caught up in the brawl of the human condition and you will lose sight of these associations, make the wrong determinations, advise inappropriate solutions, and suffer the consequences of failure.

How To Be An Effective Analyst

An important aspect of the human condition is that, where ever people come together to form an organizational society, they inevitably engage in the development of social constructs that drive them apart. Humans are “territorial” just like a lot of other animals we know and latent instincts for survival can motivate them to appropriate very emotional and subjective interpretations of what is really happening to them in any given situation. In an abstract and artificial infrastructure, such as a business enterprise, a culture might be established. Its aim may be to control the actions of the individual and encourage people to conform to a specific pattern of behavior.

This is an important principle to understand: a corporate culture is *intended* to influence individual behavior and encourage that individual to *conform* to the authorized and accepted behavior of the group to which he or she belongs. Where that “behavior” is exemplary (as it is compared to the organization’s management standard) leadership characteristics are permitted to blossom and mature. So, in your work, whenever you meet a “leader,” remember that this person might have the support and eager approval of the people within the organization.

I’ve worked in organizations where the person everyone identified as the “leader” was, for all intents and purposes, a real fruitcake! He or she might have won the affections of the management and their coworkers through some exemplary act at one time in the past but, by the time that *I* had been invited into the mix, this person had slipped into a practice of substituting outrageous ideas and questionable behavior for common sense and prudent action. The dead giveaway was always their demeanor towards me. Their management knew something might be wrong with the business process but just couldn’t bear the thought of thinking that their favorite employee might be at the root of the

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

problem. My presence was greeted with a mild hostility and these “special people” were almost always very confrontational—a typical response of someone who doesn’t want to be “examined.”

Over these many years I’ve learned that it is the *group* that seeks leadership. It is the *group* that empowers its management by the very act of conforming to the expectations of the corporate culture and allowing management to subordinate them through the mechanism of command and control. The distinction between a good leader and a bad one is that, usually, a really good leader is very reluctant to seek such influence and, somehow, manages to hold the position only for as long as it is necessary to insure the success of a particular organizational mission. If a recognized “leader” has maintained his or her influence for a period that is *longer* than required to address specific corporate goals and objectives, they are no longer “leaders” but have evolved into “politicians.” Politicians are predatory people given to manipulating those around them to the extent that their social position within the company is continually maintained as one of domination. They are seldom philosophical about their job and tend to be a great deal more practical and somewhat audacious in their deportment. On the surface you will discover the majority following their every word completely subservient to every express and implied desire.

But, as you dig down beneath the surface, you’ll begin to find a population that has become weary of the “politics” and “dogma” identifying them with an underground current of evolving insurrection—the infamous cabal. Through their manipulative behavior, these types of managers begin to alienate their subordinates from the corporate culture by obstructing their participation in the business process and, as we have already

How To Be An Effective Analyst

discussed, such alienation often leads to the workforce abandoning its responsibilities toward the organization and its mission.

As an analyst, you might begin to discover an odious public apathy toward management. People might display an attitude that tells you they are no longer subject to persuasion (implying a willingness to participate). Instead, you may find that they have become cynical to the extent that they respond only to coercion. From the time that we enter primary school we're taught values that encourage a sense of individual freedom and social responsibility. All that ideology flies out the window when we enter the workforce and discover that we can lose our "situation" if we buck the system and act too independently.

We're taught this notion that our national identity is based on the rule of law; that all sounds so noble but I want you to think the concept through. In reality, our legal system is just as dysfunctional as any other country's legal system and often, especially at the grass roots level, it can be very corrupt. The only reason we're not all living in a prison society is because the members of our ruling elite have determined that a small degree of individual freedom promotes a tremendous amount of productivity.

If you look around, you'll begin to notice that our social institutions are constructed to encourage each of us toward group participation. Start telling everyone how much you know about your civil rights and the Federal Constitution and you'll probably wind up in front of a lower court judge who will castigate and punish you for being a nuisance. However, whenever the *group* exercises its collective power to challenge authority, the "big dogs" perk up and listen. This is because we respond to external challenges according to our biology and not according to abstractions (like "the rule of law").

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

Physical threats (e.g., a group of individuals demonstrating a “show of force”) are taken at their face value whereas intellectual confrontations are often considered someone’s speculation. How many times have you witnessed authoritarian abuse of the rule of law? An anecdotal example would be the abusive rhetoric you might suffer from an irate police officer conducting a routine task such as handing out a speeding ticket or a labor department official denying you benefits because he *thinks* you don’t deserve them despite the fact that the rule of law says that you do. They *know* that they’re not supposed to do that but they do it anyway. Most of us don’t have the time or the energy to confront this nonsense by hauling their carcasses through the legal system. We are aware that the momentary inconvenience annoys us but really doesn’t restrict us in any way from achieving our personal goals.

However, at this degree of social coordination, it is very dangerous for any governing body to tolerate a trend toward the open and direct violation of individual civil rights by any component of the governing bureaucracy. Authority is only granted to the governing body for as long as the general population is willing to *think* of it as a necessary construct of their social outlook.^{xiii} If that institution violates the individual’s sense of “self” there will develop, within the minds of the members of the community of followers, a vague inconsistency between the imagined world of the organizational ideal and the world of their immediate reality. Left to chafe beneath the developing exploitation they will, gradually, diminish their willingness to cooperate until they have reached a point of apathy and will no longer convey their approval or grant their keepers the latitude to govern them; they can accomplish this by simply abandoning their previous level of participation. I have seen entire companies collapse beneath this manifestation of collective will. It is a remarkable thing when it happens. There are no confrontations;

there is no violence. No one obstructs the rule of law. People just stop thinking about the regime and, within a short time, it fails leaving the governing élite wondering what just happened to them.

This anecdote further demonstrates the wisdom of our founding forefathers. They were prudent because they recognized the natural role of social administration: this role attempts to reinforce the supremacy of the collective. Since the organizational society is formed to promote the survival of the community then it is natural to assume that it would be detrimental to the welfare of that same population to permit an individual to act alone in matters that concern the commonwealth. One voice *does* make a difference but only if he or she can get their fellows to howl along with them.^{xiii}

The same concept applies to every level of social integration. The effective analyst needs to be completely aware of this concept and the context in which it operates. Because you're an outsider, the group will encourage *you* to take decisive action against an abusive authority when, in reality, only the group can do so. They will attempt this because, as you engage your commission, you will be perceived by the group as an agent of *change*. If your inquiry confirms their apprehensions and you uncover an element of management that has over-stepped its boundaries, that element will manifest itself in the form of a dominating authority.

It might be what social scientists call a "cabal." A cabal is a group of politically motivated managers who, at the outset of any dispute, make every attempt to conceal themselves from strategic management. They have no way of knowing whether their initiatives will be viewed with indulgence or confronted with interdiction. The members of a cabal will only reveal themselves if

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

their hostility is rewarded by either the tacit approval of their superiors or an ambivalent attitude from their intended victims. Once declared, a cabal will engage in open conflict.

Another way a dominating authority may manifest itself is in the guise of a “politically connected” person. These are really dangerous people. They are very predatory and will use anyone or do just about anything to maintain their influence and position in the organization. Within the daily regimen of the company’s business process, you may find them employing coercion in many, if not most, circumstances.

I was once assigned to a company where there worked an administrator who took particular delight in answering a user’s request for specific resources under his control by depriving the user of those very resources until a confrontation materialized. He would then engage the petitioner’s complaint through the office of his immediate superior who consistently sided with him. After few requisite meetings, the players would move into a period of lengthy negotiations that had the affect of completely disrupting the user’s productivity and putting his entire department under scrutiny. As the “sweat pumps” in management began to shift into high speed, the user would relent and agree to an arrangement that obligated him, in some way, to the administrator. This administrator exercised his abusive and dominating authority over an entire community with shameless presumption until one day he decided to use me as a scapegoat in one of his schemes to promote his friend’s business.

He got one of his toadies to write a scathing letter that attempted to link *me* to the failure of a project when, actually, it was the political operative of a very powerful strategic manager who had made all the bad decisions that had resulted in the fiasco

How To Be An Effective Analyst

(because I was an outsider therefore, he reasoned, no one on the *inside* would get hurt, least of all, *him*). My employer instructed me to write a detailed report to the person who had written the complaint. The documentation that I had submitted as supporting evidence detailed the required task management, the implementation costs, and the installation work that had been concluded according to plan until the funding for the project had been stopped.

My report showed that I had actually received my approval from the very people who had lodged the grievance. Reports submitted throughout the period of the engagement established the fact that I had repeatedly warned everyone about the on-going interference. But, what really hurt was that the evidence pointed directly to that political operative who was the favored subordinate of strategic management. They realized that, while I had nothing to do with the project's failure, they didn't want this administrator exposing their little darling to an embarrassing review so they politely dismissed me and completely emasculated the administrator for his poorly-planned foray into a region of management meant only for an elite few.

This is how feudal governance works. And, I'm sure that you can see how self-destructive it can become. The governing elite are seldom disposed to punishing their protégés holding them accountable for their actions. Instead, they will deflect corrective action toward someone they view as "disposable" and then let the chips fall where they may. Given the fact that within an organizational society, competition for materials and resources can become intense, conflict often develops shaking the regime from the inside and causing its inevitable downfall.

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

In my own case, careful documentation and attention to detail protected me from becoming embroiled in the administrator's scheme. His friend never did get the entire account and was restricted to providing limited service and support to a very small portion of the company's business community. The administrator was exiled to a role that kept him isolated from everyone in power and he wound up supporting only a small community of users who, understanding his defeat savagely attacked him and, together with their management, reduced his duties and responsibilities to only those that could be associated directly with his department's narrowly defined mission. Only the *group* can protect itself and only the *group* can conscript those required to engage emancipation. Had I tried to don "the mantle of Joan of Arc" like that unfortunate heroine, I would have been "burned at the stake."

Remember that you are an *analyst*. Never attempt to become a "freedom-fighter." A great liberator can only obtain the salvation of sovereignty if he or she has the complete, unconditional, and unobstructed support of the group. And, that group *must* include the management as well as those involved in production. Organizational societies are *not* democratic; they are feudal. Remember the consequences of failing to understand the difference between the two methods of social management.

There is another aspect to this admonition: suppose you were to empathize with the group and attempt to openly challenge the dysfunctional administrator. And, suppose that because of the lack of group support you failed. You now have a formidable enemy within the organization; he'll look invincible to the group. They'll cower and abandon you and he will now have the ability to frustrate every attempt you make at completing your work and developing a thorough and scientifically substantiated analysis of

the existing conditions. If you can't complete your job to the satisfaction of your client, chances are you won't get any more work from that customer. Moreover, there's a good chance that the "ugly rumor mill" will spread damaging criticism about you throughout the business community dampening your progress and ruining your career.

It's really tough for a moral person to sit back and watch a social injustice in the making. It can make us sick to our stomach to witness infamy. In my younger days as "brave Ulysses," I succumbed to a number of romantic ideals and let down my guard to don the "mantle of Joan of Arc" and single-handedly accept a confrontation with some local despot. I *always* lost and it cost me a great deal of my time completely ruining the progress I had made with my career. An effective analyst doesn't allow the group to "draft" him or her into a relationship that requires solitary accountability.

Remember Rule (3): only the *group* can affect change within an organizational society. In any human conflict, an individual cannot make a difference without the recognition and *sustained* support of the group. The forces at work in human nature are too profound and, when they are aligned against you, they are overwhelming.

If the group appears destined for extinction because they cannot reconcile their predicament with the requirement for self-assertiveness then you must assign them to their fate and avoid becoming entangled in their common suffering. Freedom isn't free and no one can buy it for you or force it down your throat. Leaders can help the group organize against their enemy; they can plan strategies and provide resources but, eventually, the group will *have* to take an active part in their *own* liberation. Your job, as an effective analyst, is to expose the underlying problems revealed

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

within the business process and determine the consequences of avoiding them. That is *all* you should do; it is the sum of everything that you *can* do. It is *always* the responsibility of your client to take on the commitment to implement corrective action.

The Characteristics of successful enterprise

Successful enterprise builds upon its previous history and continually refines and improves its technology. “Industry” as a concept is peculiar to the human species because of this narrowly determined characteristic. There is a certain amount of risk involved in promoting the operational efficiencies required to maintain such steady growth and improvement. Risk is always associated with the loss of some contingent that benefits the organization. The point at which a business optimizes such risk is one that is defined by an equilibrium in which the cost associated with *controlling* the business process is offset by the *impact* of exposing the organization to risk.

This relationship (between the cost of controlling the exposure to risk and the impact of exposing the organization to it) is always inversely proportional. Therefore, as you increase exposure to risk, you are, at the same time, reducing the cost of controlling that very exposure because you are, obviously, consuming fewer resources in the effort to control the company’s direction and subsequent exposure to risk. Risk-taking cannot be done with any degree of certainty. It is an estimate of performance based on assumptions that may or may not have been tested scientifically. This is why the integrity and reliability of your information is so important. As an example: risk-taking may be based on human intuition; it may also be a primitive response to environmental stimuli. Either way, when you engage in risk-taking, you may lose your bearing and forfeit your original

ambitions or, at the very least, suffer the effects of a diminished potential.

Remember Rule (4): *Risk-taking involves a degree of speculation in which you accept the fact that you will lose some or all of your control over the events and articles in your reality.*

When your analysis reveals a business process so speculative in its nature that the division of labor has become ambiguous and the objectives of the organization are subject to the momentum of events rather than the consequence of sound intentions, you have discovered what is known as a “novelty.” A novelty is an “unfamiliar thing.” This implies that no one knows how it works or even *if* it works. The organization’s management is relying on the notion that “things” may *not* happen to interfere with the *delivery* of the product or service to the client. The employees may *not* resign, the raw materials may *not* become scarce or alternatives may *not* need to be considered and so on. This isn’t free-wheeling Capitalism; it is human stupidity. The scale of human effort has never been large enough to rely on chaos as the method for determining any particular outcome. That’s why the proportion of business failures always exceeds business successes.

Successful businesses have a management component that continually struggles with the optimization of *performance*. Failure occurs when management cannot address the fact that commerce requires a continual human effort to manage the elements of the organization’s business process to the degree that risk is kept to a minimum. When you hear a strategic manager say: “Oh, relax; it will all work itself out in the end.” You have identified a level of speculation that is not consistent with the characteristics of a successful, well-managed enterprise. Feudal systems can only

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

survive if they are managed carefully to the effect that the “fear of failure” is much subdued.

Within the hierarchy of feudal management, its participants must be thoroughly educated in the articles of their reality and their organizational objectives. This will help them use the governing processes responsibly. This training must be multimodal. If they are encouraged to govern responsibly, they will eventually develop an intellectual agility for solving problems.^{xiv} It is this abstract skill for problem-solving that helps the regime to avoid the risk of compromising the integrity of its infrastructure. People who are nourished this way develop self-confidence. Once this “qualitative” level of participation is achieved, the strategic managers can concentrate on decision-making at their strategic level. Risk can then be mitigated or eliminated to some degree. As long as the integrity and reliability of the information they use to make those decisions is assured, life will be good.

There is yet another problem that you’ll have to deal with when engaged in the analysis process: like some “Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle,” the very fact that you are observing and analyzing the client’s business process may affect the real-time performance of the employees involved in the process. Human beings tend to behave differently when attention is paid to them. They tend to become more positive in their behavior and more productive in their work.^{xv}

Identifying the Issues; defining the problems

At the root of the business process is its primary objectives and organizational goals. The effective analyst must learn to make the distinction between these two ideas. Although they may appear to be the same thing they are different from the

How To Be An Effective Analyst

point of view of the client. For example: an objective might be to produce a toaster. The organizational goal might be to maximize profits by producing the finest toaster at the lowest possible and most competitive price.

Your analysis must begin by defining these fundamental principles because they form the motivation for your client's management ethic. They are the reasons for the very existence of your client's company. Objectives can be understood to be the components of organizational goals. They are the narrow focus of human activity in the work place. You can best discover and define the *objectives* of the business process by conducting your investigation at the production level of the organizational society and *not* the management level.

At this level, employees are more familiar with the details of the business process. However, the *goals* of the organization are usually best understood by those in management. My recommended approach is to start at the top with strategic management and learn as much about the organizational goals from them. Then, take your investigation to the bottom observing and interviewing the production worker to determine the flow of task administration that, ultimately, defines each objective within the business process. You can then make associations with the declared goals that help you identify and define each business process. Within each business process, you'll discover those narrow objectives. Their placement and support can help you determine how appropriately they are being managed.

The hard part is conducting your investigation without influencing the worker's behavior or, at least, without *too much* intervention. The method I always choose is to focus my initial investigation on the *mechanical* part of the business process while

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

I privately observe the human condition. The human condition is *always* the variable in a business process. For instance, I might ask the lathe operator to help me define the process of turning an armature while I quietly observe his or her working environment, the interaction with other workers, their comments and complaints, their access to raw materials and tools, etc.

If they feed me too much information all at once, I play the ignoramus and ask them to help me better understand the mechanical process by breaking it down into smaller groups of task administration until I am able to develop a flow chart of task management that defines the objective for that particular process. I always review my findings with them asking them to confirm the findings without asking them to identify *with* the findings. I then ask how this objective fits into the next order of task administration as we work our way toward the global objective for the business process.

This technique keeps the worker focused on defining the mechanical process and not on trying to please the analyst. They'll begin to relax and their dialogue will become more fluid. As the human "bonding" occurs, the worker will reveal much about the business process and the psychology of the humans engaged in it. Pay attention. Record each detail. Be as courteous and intimate as the situation allows you to be. Don't use a "recording device." It smacks of an "FBI wire-tap;" it makes people uncomfortable. Too many times, in the press, we've all learned of how much trouble people can get into if their harmless comments wind up on tape. You have to make your subject feel confident and safe. You have to give them the impression that *they're* in charge of the dialogue. An effective analyst *doesn't* put his subject "under a microscope."

How To Be An Effective Analyst

Try to conduct your inquiry in as casual and friendly a manner as the situation permits. If they want to “joke” through the process, let them. If they want to rant like a socialist party worker, let them. If they want you to share a lunch break with them, do it. If they are shy and not quite as forthcoming as you would like them to be, politely move on to the next worker and come back to them later on. By then your presence will have been accepted and your familiarity established in their mind. This is a typical human response to strangers.

Don't wear your best clothes; wear something a college English professor would wear (earth tones, a shirt with a button-down collar, slacks with a belt the color of which should match your shoes, and a nice jacket with patches on the elbows) or, if protocol permits you, dress down to more casual clothes. You *have* to establish some level of intimacy so that the other person will trust you just a bit or, at least, enough to lower their communications barriers.

People-to-people communication is a very personal and, sometimes, intimate act. Each of us has our own way of looking at the world—of discerning our immediate reality. That's because, while we're somewhat similar in appearance, we are very different in our physiology. Every one of us is composed of an arrangement of organic systems that have slightly different features from person to person. Our senses are our only connection between our minds and the environment around us and each of us “sense” the articles of our reality in differing ways that are very subtle—almost imperceptibly so.

One person may respond to any particular incident in a manner that is different from the response of another person to the same incident. For example, if a number of people were to witness

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

an accident in which other people were injured, one person might feel revulsion, another might feel disoriented yet another person might not feel much of anything at all other than the response of his intellect to the incoming information.

When you're verbally communicating with another human being, you have to realize that you are trying to get your thoughts to emerge from your mouth in the form of audible words and travel through the other person's ears into *his* mind. The very process is invasive! It's like throwing a baseball through someone's picture window. They may think you're asking them to play ball with you *or* they may think you're looking for someone to fight with *or* they may think that you're an idiot who is about to be given a bill for the repair of the window.

Whatever the perception of the person with whom you are attempting to communicate, his response will be based, in no small way, on the immediate environment that surrounds him. Again, as an example: There are two soldiers in the heat of a fire fight and one says to the other, "Let's wax these two!" Chances are the other soldier will immediately begin firing on the enemy. Put the same two soldiers in their driveways at home on a nice quiet sunny day and the other soldier will probably unreel his garden hose and begin washing and "waxing" his car.

Within the process of communication, our behavior is affected by a combination of our point of view and the context of our environment.^{xvi} If you're working at an account that has been experiencing a lot of labor problems, you can expect the workers to be somewhat uncooperative. Workers at an account where the relationship with management is amicable are much more likely to be willing to participate in your inquiry.

How To Be An Effective Analyst

This brings us to another aspect of communications. I've learned that "keeping it simple" can sometimes backfire on you. Sometimes people want you to be patient with them and allow them time to open their intellect to your communication. They are undergoing a "validation" process inside their mind. During this process, the individual may *not* always use reason or logic to make all the connections in his or her head.

Remember the fact that we are all different. Your subject or, if they are responding as a group, subjects may be focused on the objectives of *their* individual contribution to the process you are examining. They may not see everything as an integrated whole in the same manner as you do. In similar cases, I've learned to use allegories or anecdotes to motivate the employee to change their perspective, just a bit, so that I could gradually orient their point of view toward a common understanding of the process and the work that I was doing. Whatever method you employ to "coax" the information from the people, understand that your work will ultimately affect the outcome of their combined effort. You are an agent of change.

Analysis is more appropriately applied to the "evaluation" and "decision" stages within a business process^{xvii} but you will *still* have to understand the mechanical features of the process. You must determine if those two important stages are creating obstacles in the effort to reach either the objectives of the business process or the organization's goals. Again the most important first step is to recognize that you have a problem. In most cases, this is a psychological issue at first. The client may know there is something wrong; that's probably the reason you were hired. But, they may not want to admit they actually *have* a problem!

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

The correct approach in this instance would be to engage them in a dialogue that helps define the organizational goals and what objectives of the business process are important to them. You would then ask the client if they believe that they are *achieving* them. If they are not, they have a problem either with the business process or with their view of reality. Something is obstructing their business process and they will understand and accept this fact no matter how uncomfortable it makes them feel.

Your job, as the effective analyst, is to orient them toward a perspective that encourages corrective action. If you find it difficult to do so, disengage. The old adage: “You can lead a horse to water but you can’t make him drink” is a very wise maxim. Don’t squander your personal resources and reputation on a client who can’t think for himself; remember my recommendation about clients who are hesitant to cooperate with their own request. In most cases, they will also be hesitant to pay you when the job is done; they won’t follow your advice and will often maliciously criticize you afterwards.

The next step for you to complete would be to identify alternative ways of reaching the objectives of the business process. But, before you could attempt this you would have to compile a description of existing conditions defining their required criteria. Identify the consistent features of the business process *and* those that are “variable” in nature. Determine the importance and necessity of each feature or component in achieving the objective (or objectives) of the process of which they are a part.

Once you have established these “existing conditions,” you will have created a baseline against which you can compare and evaluate the alternatives. Understand that you can’t possibly know what the *more appropriate* way of doing something *is* until you

have defined and understood the *existing* way that something is being done. Always study the existing conditions first.

Study the context

As we have been discussing, a business process requires some level of supervision and control to achieve its objectives and exist as an integrated element of an organization. The *management* and *administration* of this process are the abstract means for directing and controlling the ultimate outcome. A company can affect “direction and control” by defining responsibility and authority along lines that form an effective division of labor.

This “chain of command and control” is required to disseminate the information that is the underlying set of instructions intended to *produce* the objective or organizational goal. The effective systems analyst must study the client's organization to determine how its management is so constructed. The analysis tool most commonly used for this task is the common organizational chart. You will have to identify each individual manager, determine the level at which they are working, and define what set of responsibilities they have been given and the authorities that they have appropriated to address those responsibilities.

As I've already pointed out, in most cases, the organization of any client business will be “feudal.” That is, the strategic manager will have the responsibility and authority to control a specific domain within the company's organization. That specific area will often be partitioned according to some logical or political focus and the resulting pieces “delegated” to secondary managers working directly beneath the supervision of their strategic manager. These managers break down their responsibilities and

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

authorities into smaller elements that generate some method of direction and control.

You'll have to examine the management characteristics very carefully; sometimes management is constructed as a *participatory* organizational structure rather than an *authoritarian* one. The effective systems analyst must always attempt to make the distinction because failing to determine the structure and operational nature of an organization can affect the success of your effort. For example, organizations that establish departmental goals using *group participation* tend to provide superior motivation for the employees. This approach often guarantees a successful outcome by co-opting the members of the group into believing that it's *their* objective and not so much one of the corporation. In contrast, objectives rigidly set by remotely affiliated upper level managers often fail.

When you work with these differing types of management structures, you'll probably find that responsibility and authority lines are crossed within the management elements of your client's organization. Hierarchical management structures tend to propagate "delegated responsibility trees." Determine the "linkages" between people in an organization. You'll find that they have a lot to do with measurable efficiencies in the production output of the organization. They will undoubtedly affect the efficacy of the business process.

Vertical linkages define *line* relationships. These line relationships conform to the practices of "feudal management". Horizontal linkages define *staff* relationships. Staff would not normally participate in the sharing of *authority*. If you see that a direct management *responsibility* has been passed down through

the management structure to a staff or production worker, chances are you have discovered a problem with your client's management.

A management responsibility (a decision-making responsibility) should never be given to an administrative staff or production worker without appropriate *authority*. This arrangement would reveal more than the fact that the managers aren't doing their job. It's disclosing the fact that they're not assuming any accountability^{xviii} either.

A decision-making process must have an associated accountability hierarchy. Accountability is the management feature that helps set the corporate goals. Accountability promotes *direction* and *momentum*. Decision-making determines the course of events that must occur to achieve some predetermined objective. So, a management structure engaged in a policy of pushing the decision-making down on to the production worker is one that does *not* understand the global mission of the organization. They would have no "vision" for the company.

This would be a very serious problem indeed. Beware of a developing scenario that defines an organizational feature in which the managers are demanding a profound degree of strategic decision-making from the production elements of the company. In very few cases can the production worker be completely aware of their employer's "corporate vision." They wouldn't have access to the required financial information; they wouldn't necessarily understand the perspective of the board of directors. They might not be aware of relationships with other affiliates or with suppliers and subcontractors. Obviously, a person would have to understand these matters thoroughly before he or she could make a decision that affected the success of the entire organization.

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

Construct a graphic representation of the organizational structure. It should include the *position and relationship* of each manager, the *name and title* of each manager, and the *responsibility and authority* of each manager. It should also incorporate a narrative that defines the *scope* of each manager's participation in the organization. Then create a "responsibilities" list. This would be a document that details the task management and administration required by each element shown in the organization chart. For example, it should detail all the specific activities performed by each department.

Key this document to the organizational chart in some way that allows you to distinguish the contribution required from each management element. Thoroughly understanding the organization chart and each department's associated obligation equips you with the necessary understanding that will be required to improve the client's organizational efficiency later on. It can also aid you in your knowledge of the lines of communication and information flow, another set of variables that affect productivity.

Product and information flow

The organization chart is only a single dimension of a client's business. Behind it there is a constant flow of information-oriented and product- or service-oriented activities. All these activities involve individuals with differing levels of responsibility and authority. To examine the information structure of a business you must first learn to distinguish between information flow and product flow.

Information flow consists of the creation and movement of the administrative and operational documentation (institutional knowledge) necessary to produce the product or service flow.

How To Be An Effective Analyst

Information flow is more difficult to conceptualize because you can't "see" it. Its physical manifestation might be a vast network of spinning hard disk drives containing billions of bits of data. *Data is not information.* Information is compiled from data but only after the data has passed through the logical filters of the human intellect. In other words, data is useless until a human being makes use of it. *Product or service flow* is relatively easy to visualize. It is the flow of raw materials and resources toward more complex assemblies or concepts that can be recognized as a "finished product" or "customer service."

The *network* of "data-gathering" and the associated human-engineered information system that provides the formula through which that data is ultimately interpreted is the most significant element of the organization. The effective analyst must comprehend it and determine if its operational integrity is intact. You will have to identify the principal sources of all of the client's information and break each source down according to its requisite function.

One method of doing this is to use a common legal pad and a surface upon which you may paste or tape a definition of each discrete function. You start at the bottom of each page and write down the specific function of a particular subsystem. Neatly tear the piece from the page using a ruler as a straight edge. Paste it on the board in a location that logically shows its relationship to the other components of business process (you can also use "post-its"). Proceed in this fashion until the entire element is constructed as a series of connected nodes that begin with a "start" node (called a "source") and end with a "stop" node (called a "sink"). The resulting representation will help you visualize the flow of activity, information, resources, and decisions required to complete the process and obtain a predetermined objective.

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

If we can associate the activities with their corresponding pathways of information, the relative complexity of the business process will be revealed and understood during the analysis. Do *not oversimplify* this process of “discovery.” There is a tendency, all too human, to *keep it simple*. There is nothing simple about a human-engineered information system and its human/machine dialogue. Effective analysts know attending to minute detail during the study phase will help them avoid embarrassing failure; save efforts to “simplify” a business process for the *design phase* of the analysis process.

A company must develop information systems to meet, not only its own internal requirements, but also the needs of organizations *outside* of the client’s theatre of operation. Complex information generation systems provide the end product for these kinds of requirements. For example, a purchase order isn’t used by the company for much, except to detail required parts, tools, or provisions to the client’s supplier. But the data fed into that information generator can be a tremendously complex set of computed values that correspond to methods used for inventory management, financial administration, and customer relations.

When reviewing these pathways of information, *never* make the attempt to “simplify” their description—that’s the worst thing that you can do. Complete a *detailed* accounting of every aspect of the business process associating every activity with its analogous objective and information pathway so that you thoroughly understand the production objectives and the organizational vista.

A business process is an aggregate of smaller systems

Think deductively. The goal of the effective analyst is to provide the client with a reasonable means for their business to achieve its stated goals. All businesses have goals. The goals of *most* businesses will differ in “kind” and “scope.” The *objectives* of their business processes will, most certainly, differ in specific detail. Before we continue discussing business goals and objectives, it will be necessary to identify some important definitions.

We can define a *business process* as a combination of personnel, materials, facilities, and equipment that, when employed collectively by the personnel engaged in the process, permit these personnel to accomplish specific objectives and achieve predetermined organizational goals. Collectively, the goals defined by management constitute the organization’s *mission*. Each *goal* will often be defined as an approximation of strategic management’s ambitions. So, you might discover your client’s organizational *goals* to be akin to an abstract declaration such as: “...we intend to build the finest automobile available on the market today.” Such a declaration is *intentionally* ambiguous because management cannot be effective if they set goals to specific in nature. This type of goal I call *subjective*. It can function as a motivation for organizational performance if a set of values are associated with it. Let me explain.

Most of us think of a Rolls-Royce when we are asked to define the finest car available on the market today. But, if our inquisitor were to define the parameters of his question in terms of a set of values such as: “In terms of affordability, quality, and reliability, what do you think is the finest automobile available on the market today?” We might reply with an answer that defined a

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

Ford Taurus as the best example. The *subjective* goal loosely stated and defined with an accompanying set of values is a rational goal because it becomes achievable even though it represents a unique and very narrow point of view. This is because the collective effort of the organization need only comply with the values that have been set.

Goals that are set with certain specificity must be set with a degree of scientific certainty or they are unattainable. So, a pharmaceutical company may be able to declare that their product will be “effective” and “safe” because the organization can easily conform to the scientific principles that would dominate the entire business process producing a product efficacy that is *measurable* and *predictable*. This is what I call an *objective* goal. It is rational because the components of its associated business process follow scientific principles that can guarantee a specific and predictable outcome.

If, in your analysis of the organization’s goals, you discover a requirement for *specificity* but find only subjective or loosely declared goals, it is a sign that management does *not* understand its mission. Similarly, if you discover goals that are so specific and detailed that the corresponding business process cannot possibly achieve them at their level of continuity, the goals are unrealistic. This is a sign that the management doesn’t understand the *functionality* of the business process that has been implemented.

Let me provide an anecdotal example: You engage a project at a furniture factory where the company is losing money. Your analysis discovers that management has set the standards for finishing compounds so high the company is required to manufacture their own. Analysis of the management structure

How To Be An Effective Analyst

reveals that the strategic manager for quality assurance is a chemist by formal training. He has institutionalized a set of values for assessing the quality of the finish applied to each product. This set of values is so rigid and specific they have added a great deal of additional expense to the manufacturing process. Compared to an assessment of the minimum standards for quality, a brand-name product could have kept the company competitive.

The analysis of the business process has revealed no identifiable advantages associated with undertaking this level of specificity. The management doesn't understand how its business process *must* function in order to produce a competitively priced product. The goal is inappropriate because it is declaring a narrowly defined and specific test for achievement that doesn't address the company's mission which is to produce a quality product *profitably* (they have complained to you that they were "losing money"). As an effective analyst, you would recommend a careful review of the company's goals and a reassessment of the values important to management to the effect that the organization's mission was modified to address this underlying but overlooked ambition.

You can see how goals are long-term and provide direction and motivation for the entire corporate body. *Objectives* are components of the actual business process and are concrete and very specific results *known* to be necessary in order to achieve a goal. The objectives that must be achieved within an enterprise are normally defined as the expected results of a process in which labor and materials have been organized into a major element of the business process. These major elements are called systems. Remember, the intent of any process is to convert one thing to another thing.

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

An effective systems analyst always tries to understand the client's *generalized system environment*. A system is an engineered process that transforms or converts *input* into some kind of *output* useful to the organization's mission. This "transformation" process may occur at many different levels within the client business process. Such a system produces an observable output. The business organization *integrates* these outputs to accomplish its mission.

This empirical fact is the reason why systems cannot easily be conveyed from one organization to another. For example, the inability to pick up and use someone else's system has been one of the most costly lessons learned by industry in the history of modern computer-based information management. "Packaged" systems are successful only if they can be modified to suit the client's requirements precisely.

You see, the individual characteristics of every business are amplified by the distinguishing attributes of the people who make up the organization. This creates a corporate culture and corporate cultures lend themselves to unique collaboration. These unique features must be addressed by the system applied to the business process. If they are not, the system will *not* function. In your analysis, be on the look-out for "cookie-cutter" solutions implemented by either inexperienced managers or inept vendors whose initial aim was only to sell your client their product.

Always watch for these subtle relationships between the individual components of an organizational society; they will speak volumes about your client's potential for achieving success or suffering failure. Careful analysis is always required to determine if a "canned" system is a more cost-effective application for resolving a business process management and administration

issue. A dynamic enterprise might need to design and develop an engineered application tailored to the organization's needs. Such a determination can only be made after a thorough study of the particular problem which may include an analysis of the business process and an evaluation of any alternative recommendations.

Costly mistakes are often made by trying to make problems "conform" to preconceived notions of what the client *should* be doing. This is why I've always been a proponent of detailed analysis during the discovery process. Save "simplicity" for the *design* process where "keeping it simple" can enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the alternative approach.

Recognizing the levels of management and control

There are four levels of management in any organizational society, *operational management* (used for the supervision of activity), *lower management* (used for the controlled distribution of resources), *middle management* (used for defining the objectives of each element of the business process and motivating the workforce to accomplish them), and *top management* (used to define the goals of the organization and making the strategic decisions that determine the direction the company will take in achieving its organizational mission).

The Operational Level

At the *operational level*, routine production and processing is performed by the labor force. At this level of involvement, the organization has few mechanisms to provide any feedback directly to the employee engaged in its business process. For example: The materials clerk receives a requisition. He fills the requisition and files a report of his action. A supervisor later evaluates his

Marc C. DiGiuseppe

performance. However, records of his transactions constitute data that, when collected, organized, and interpreted, become the basis for action by higher management. The materials clerk never really understands the impact of his contribution upon the business process.

The Lower Management Level

Lower management performs supervisory functions that are short-term relative to the higher levels of management. They deal with the day-to-day job scheduling, checking the results of operations, insuring the quality and quantity of production, and taking actions required to insure continued productivity.

The Middle Management Level

Middle-level management functions are tactical in nature. This level is responsible for allocating and controlling resources necessary to accomplish the objectives of the element of the business process that they support and in which they participate. Planning is performed, tactical decisions are made, and authority is delegated to lower management. The *performance* of these managers is usually measured against predetermined expectations. These expectations often assume there are measurable features of organizational capacity (e.g., a specified production level) universally understood to be premier objectives of the element of the business process for which these managers are responsible (recall the discussion of *accountability*).

Top-level Management

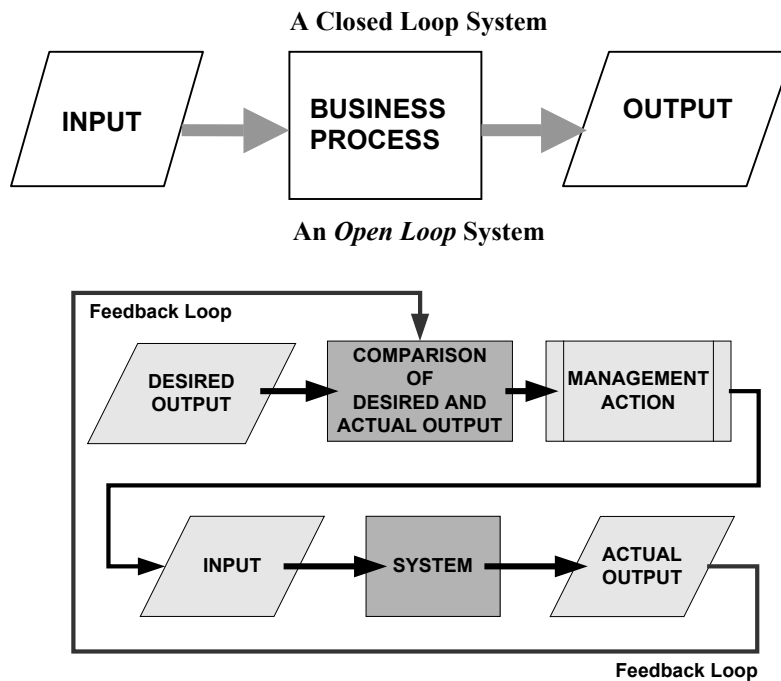
Top-level managers function as *strategic* decision-makers. Their level is responsible for allocating the resources necessary to accomplish objectives that support the strategic “mission” of the organization. Decisions made at this level determine critical goals

such as long-range planning, new market and product or service development, mergers and acquisitions, partnerships, and policy.

Look for Feedback and Control loops

Feedback and control are essential to the continued improvement of any business process. *Feedback* is the process of comparing an actual output with a predetermined output for the purpose of improving the performance of the business process. *Control* is the action taken to reduce the *variance* between the two measurements while minimizing the organization's exposure to the risk associated with such empirical experimentation. There are two methods of control: *the open loop system* and *the closed loop system*. These systems are visually represented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 2.1: Types of Systems



Marc C. DiGiuseppe

The effective analyst will make every attempt to determine if there are features of the business process that are intended to produce a dynamic output the objective of which is to continually improve productivity. This would show you that, at the very least, you're dealing with a management structure focused on the continued improvement of performance associated with the company's collective effort and organizational mission.

For instance, during your discovery, you find that management has institutionalized the use of exception reports or perhaps some other kind of informational report that attempts to detail the observed deviations from the organization's objectives. The managers who complete these reports are trying to assess "why" these deviations may have happened. You also discover that these results are, in some way fed back into the "information generator" so that the appropriate authority can review the information and make decisions that will help the company avoid these deviations in the future.

A *management structure* should display a couple of important characteristics: First, it should have at least one level of vertical integration and second, it should employ some mechanism to enhance "feedback." Of course, at each management level the requirements for information (and hence the complexion of the feedback apparatus) will differ significantly.

Many management systems actually rely on such exception reporting to continually improve production efficiency. Lower-level exception reports are intimately related to day-to-day operations; higher-level exception reporting may only gain significance over extended periods of time and measurement (e.g., Quarterly Sales) where "trends" can be expressed as a visual representation of the data. In either case, a management without

How To Be An Effective Analyst

these characteristics will probably be in trouble. Your “first impression” will, most likely, be that of an “Ivory Tower” syndrome. Your job as an effective analyst is to thoroughly document the organizational context from this point of view so that you can rationally express your reasons for avoiding this kind of management construct. It will make your job as an agent of change much easier because most people *listen* to reason.

In Summary, here are some important points to remember

Remember the fundamentals of our discussion:

- The organizational society is *anything* but egalitarian.
- *Never* allow the ideology of Democracy to superimpose its composition upon the fabric of Capitalism. They’re completely different arrangements for organizing human effort. Democracy is a *political* construct under which people can organize their efforts to promote unencumbered choice. Capitalism is a context under which collective effort is organized to promote productivity and profit.
- Money, as a medium used to measure wealth, is a very delicate instrument of human enterprise. It is the byproduct of business and must be understood to be the most important consideration associated with an organization’s mission. Anyone who tries to tell you that “money isn’t everything” is someone who isn’t paying their bills on time. Money may not be the *only* thing to consider but it will never lose its prominence in the calculation of corporate goals and objectives.

Thus, if we can accept the supposition that a business is a feudal element of social organization, and we can understand that the *purpose* of its formation is to accumulate wealth then we must

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also rationalize the requirement for *managing* the business processes that produce the product or service from which such wealth can be derived. We can now appreciate the reason for management structures and acknowledge their need for comprehensive control over the elements of the business process.

This control, in practice, must have a mechanism for comparing a predetermined estimate for capacity and productivity with the *actual* business process output. If no such mechanism exists, then management has no objective way of measuring achievement. A consequence of this would be the failure to reach collective goals. When a business cannot effectively address its stated goals, it has become dysfunctional and has problems within its business process.

The first action the analyst and the client must take together is the one that identifies these problems and addresses them head-on. I call this action a “reality check.” If your client obstructs your initial effort to define the problem, resign your client to their fate and withdraw. You cannot force anyone to act in their own behalf; you can only convince them of the necessity and provide them with a reasonable approach; beyond that, it’s up to the client to underwrite the initiative. After all, it’s *their* money!

How to Be an Effective Analyst is a book that guides the reader through a discussion of the personal approach an analyst should use in any engagement. It focuses on the importance of understanding the need for professional integrity.

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