

## THE HOURGLASS ORGANIZATION©

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### How RANA views Cultural Change – The HourGlass Organization©

The operational and technical sides of change initiatives are usually clearly laid out. However, it is often the case that the human side of change does not get equivalent attention. Somewhere between an organization's strategic plan and front-line operations lies years of habits, customs, unwritten ground rules, parochialism, operational pressures on both the organization and individuals and vested interests: this is the *culture*.

When change occurs, an organization's culture can stop the change effort in its tracks or propel it to fulfillment. The outcome will depend on management's wisdom in understanding the power of culture and its ability to harness that power to work *for* the change rather than *against* it. It is the human side of change that RANA illustrates with The HourGlass Organization.

### Definition

The HourGlass Organization promotes constant renewal of the organization and empowerment of its people.

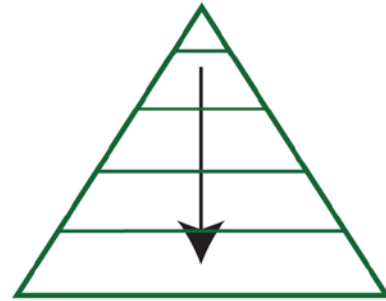
### Description

The HourGlass Organization accepts the obvious: that the functional and hierarchical organization and those in it, change constantly in response to the outside world. In fact, the organization which does not change will mature, harden, and either dies off or suffer a great deal of internal conflict to renew it. The HourGlass Organization integrates all the parts of the structure, from strategy to operational response, from executive to front line delivery. The HourGlass Organization goes through clear phases, as intentional dialogue occurs at and between the various levels of the organization on core and support processes.

## Process

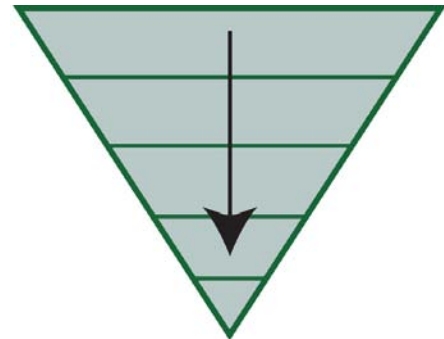
### 1. *Messaging*

In the first phase, the structure conforms to a top-down pyramid, as senior management sends out messages of mission, values and strategic directions. These messages develop from analysis of both internal and external influences, including client and market needs, as well as from a vision of the future of the organization.



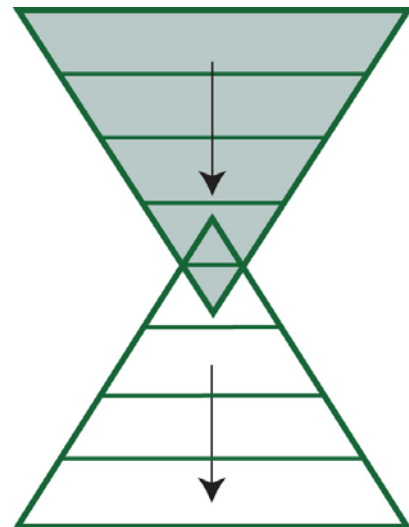
### 2. *Feedback*

After a time, the front line or delivery level of the organization responds to strategic directions and returns information from customers up through the organization and back to senior management. During this process, mid-management acts as the funnel for the information moving to the top of the organization.



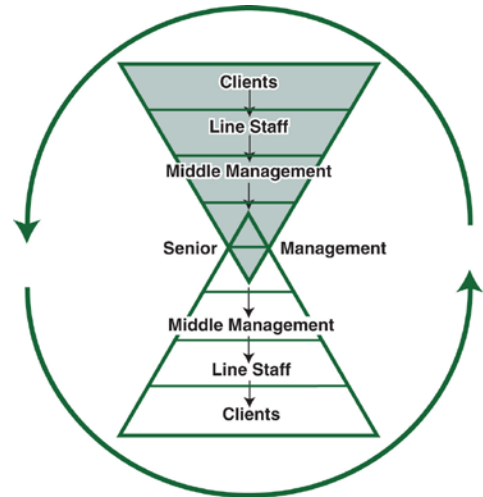
### 3. *Redirection*

In response to new information, senior management redirects the energies of the organization back down through mid-management throughout the structure. The organization changes in response to new demands.



#### 4. Integration

The front line again responds, returning new information back up through the organization's structure. Organizational information, both strategic and operational, loops continually.



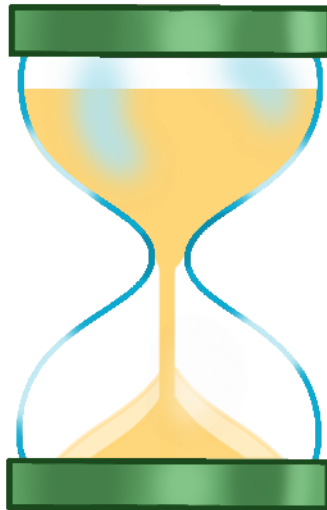
Most organizations function well at the extremities of the pyramid. They vision and plan well and their operations are efficient and productive. It is not unusual, however, for the operations of an organization to drift from or, in the worst case, be completely disconnected from the intent of the vision and plan. Consequently, the role of those in the mid-levels of the organization's structure is critical.

Initially those in mid-management levels must be engaged by Senior Management and become excellent communicators of the Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan especially in identifying and interpreting the implications for the day to day work. (Stage 1 of the HourGlass Organization). Subsequently, these same individuals are the conduit for the organization to learn of the gaps between intention and outcome, as the Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan are implemented. (Stage 2 of the HourGlass Organization). This information is critical and must be actively sought out by management in order to help the organization understand what is happening and identify mid-course corrections to the plan. (Stage 3 of the HourGlass Organization).

These roles suggest that those in the middle are there not so much to do the work as to structure it: in other words, to manage process. In Stage 1, this implies the roles of communicator, trainer and coach.

Stage 2, the stage that is the key feature distinguishing the HourGlass from other more static models, implies the critical role of Process Facilitation. In order to assist an organization in managing any change and in understanding its rapidly changing environment, middle management must either take on the role of Process Facilitator or be a well educated and informed user of this role.

When cultural barriers are well understood and addressed, a much higher degree of effort is given by the people within the organization, leading to greater potential for successful change.



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