

Creating Shared Realities

isb-handbook 2019

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Foreword and Introduction

Foreword

This book is for quite advanced professionals who are experienced in the field of organizations, having had some education in dealing with roles, structures, projects, markets, as well as taking responsibility and delivering services. It offers an overview over almost 40 years of development at the isb and introduces into the isb way of understanding and dealing with professionalism, organizational processes and development as well as questions of consulting and entrepreneurship.

Nevertheless, beginners may still be fascinated by the isb systemic approaches and get inspiring perspectives for further learning. However, they might miss step-by-step explanations of how things can be done and more examples illustrating isb-ideas. Advanced professionals using these framing descriptions will discover a wealth of descriptions bringing their own experience and reasoning to a point. They may also gain surprising insights, which they can immediately relate to situations they experience within their field. Thus, they may feel reassured and eventually re-evaluate their way of developing ideas and start doing things differently. In brief, this book can help professionals reexamine their point of view, their services and their cultural mission.

You are invited to use one or the other isb-approaches for dialogues and studying with colleagues and customers. Due to the isb open source policy all further material is free for use. More than 5,000 professionals are actually sharing the isb alumni-network, including representatives of many major corporations in Germany. These networkers, internal corporate employees (2/3) and self-employed, external professionals (1/3) have usually participated in extra-occupational courses at isb for two years and are now working together in peer groups and on projects in many regions and internationally. They exchange insights, practical proceedings, hints and job opportunities. Many of them call the isb their professional home.

Further material to this handbook and each Chapter is provided free on the isb-campus. An instruction in using this material for your own work can be found at the end of this book.

If you are interested in further studying the isb approaches, you are welcome to visit isb-website <https://www.isb-w.eu/en>, join seminars or organize something like a workshop or sharing session locally yourself. There is a lot of material in English and isb runs an international platform for dialogue and co-developing called "International Network for Organizational Development and Coaching" (INOC) www.inoc-network.org

My thanks go to

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Introduction

Culture comes from culture and examples teach the lesson. (isb-slogan)

An organization is not a defined thing. An organization appears as something different depending on different chosen perspectives. The owner of a company may think of it in terms of legal construction and which shareholders hold which kind of share. The technical director may understand it as buildings and technical equipment, the HR director may understand it as a marketplace for qualification and performances, the training director may see an assembly of competences and needs for more qualification etc.

Isb discusses organizations from a variety of perspectives, important for developing both professional and organizational culture, always related to people and performance. From a systemic perspective, a company may be seen as a network of leadership relationships, as a system of responsibilities or a system where learning takes place.

This illustrates that “systemic” is rather about a way of looking at things than about defining a company as a system, even though this can also be seen as a valid definition. It is based on the principle of taking ideas about reality as real even if they convey only a vague connection to factual reality. From a systemic perspective reality is always the reality of the observer. Isb observes companies from the perspective of relationships between human beings acting in their organizational roles. Culture of performance and satisfaction in working lives is our main perspective, because this is the core of our expertise. Our goal is to engage responsible executives and service providers who are ready to take a look at their work and their businesses from this perspective.

Our major focus on organizations is development through culture. Culture? Do we really have time and resources for cultural development? We should definitely invest it!!

If you think culture is expensive, try ignorance!

Almost everybody has experienced that in a project after a quick start and achieving quick results, after some time problems start to pile up. Achieving good results becomes increasingly difficult and expensive, if you have neglected taking care of essential basics in the first place. If you go for quick wins by neglecting culture, this will backfire through problems in the longer run. However, if you take good care of culture from the beginning, your potential in gaining further results will grow steadily. The more complex the tasks of a team become and the faster conditions change, the more important the cultural foundation of the team tends to be.

*If you want quick results,
start with culturing.*

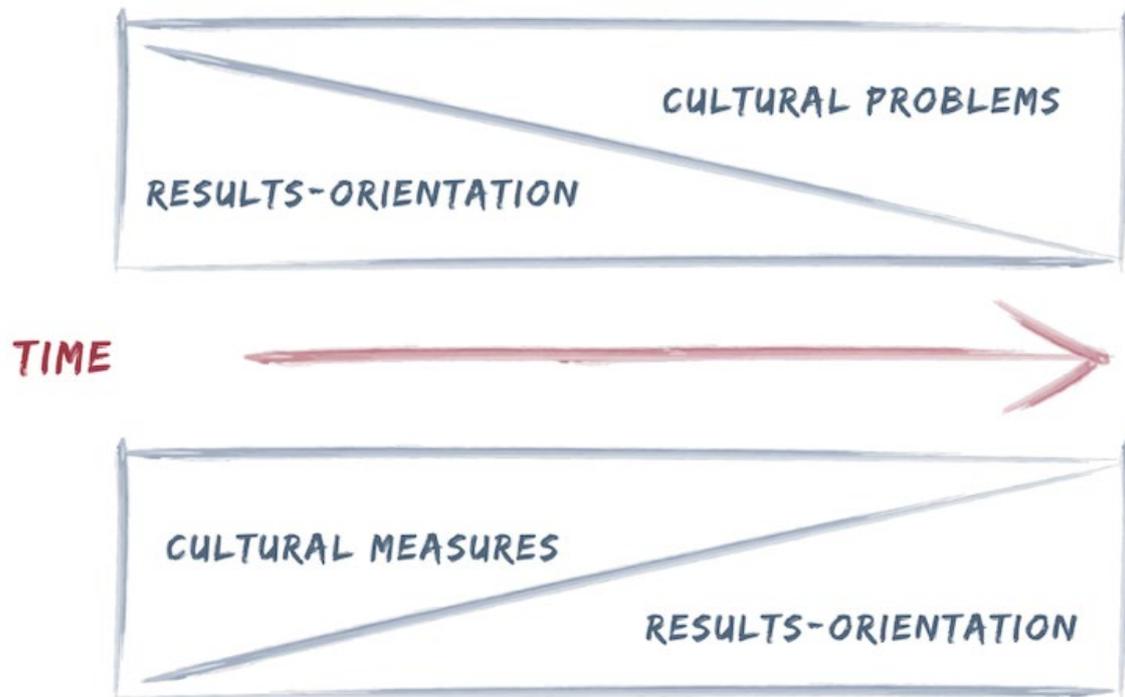


Fig. 1 Relation of result and culture orientation in organizations (Schmid 1996)

There are no limits to the complexity in which an organization can be looked at. We elaborate here on our perspectives and approaches, as this is exactly our expertise. By doing that, we feel responsible for serving the overall responsibility of entrepreneurship. This is crucial at the end of the day.