

Management of Meaning & Uncertainty Reduction

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Weick's Management of Meaning

- Environment = Information

Weick's Work is based on:

- Sociocultural Evolutionary Theory
 - ◆ Adapt through communication
- Information Theory
 - ◆ Uncertainty reduction

Key Concept: Equivocality

- degree of understanding is the key variable

Equivocality is reduced through

- Rules
- Cycles

Relationship Between Rules and Cycles

- Less equivocality means less cycling
- More equivocality means less rules available
- Cycling creates rules



Three Steps in the Management of Meaning

1) Enactment

- creating reality through the assignment of meaning

2) Selection

- decisions about how rules and cycles affect equivocality of the message

3) Retention

- developing a repertoire of rules
 - ◆ organizational intelligence

Model of Feedback Loops

- Positive Feedback Loops
- Negative Feedback Loops

Pitfalls made evident through Weick's model

- Misattribution of communication strategy to result
 - ◆ One must be careful to ensure the result is a direct cause of the strategy
 - ◆ Look for confounding variables

Pitfalls continued

- One must determine the appropriateness of an existing strategy to a new context
 - ◆ A low level of equivocality is important so one knows whether a past strategy will directly relate to the new situation



Krep's Applications of Weick:



1) Supervisors must allow for adequate communication.




2) Organizations must recognize the degree of equivocality in messages.



3) Organizational survival depends of constructing appropriate rules through cycling.



4) Workers should be **ENCOURAGED** to ask questions.



5) Managers should concentrate less on individuals and more on relationships.



6) Training should stress teamwork.