

Comparison of two Management Frameworks: The Twelve Steps of Purposeful Action and The Criteria for Performance Excellence

by

Prem S. Chopra
Professor of Engineering Management
College of Engineering and Computer Science
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
Prem-Chopra@utc.edu
and
Carolyn Marvil
Manager, Thermal and Reliability Support
Fossil Power Group
The Tennessee Valley Authority
Chattanooga, TN
Cbmarvil@tva.gov

Abstract

This paper describes a framework for management that is based upon focused purposeful action. The framework is organized into three phases, containing a total of twelve steps. Ethical guidelines, which accompany the twelve steps, are provided in the form of ten core values - five positive, and five negative. This framework, in its totality, is compared with the Criteria for Performance Excellence, used by the U.S. Department of Commerce for selecting winners of the "Malcolm Baldrige Award."

The comparison shows that the two frameworks are consistent in areas where they overlap, which represent more than two thirds of the areas covered by each. The key differences arise out of the strategic intents with which each was developed.

The underpinning of the Twelve Steps framework is ethical action driven by unswerving commitment to a purpose derived from the core beliefs of the individual or organization. The essence of the Criteria framework is Continuous Improvement and Learning. Each framework serves well, the purpose for which it was designed.

Introduction

In the teaching, as well as in the practice, of management (or leadership or entrepreneurship), it is helpful to have a frame of reference, or a framework, to which all parties involved can readily refer. This not only facilitates communication, but provides a basis for guidance and review.

A framework for management, in its essence, is a framework for action - both by individuals within an organization and by the organization itself, acting as an entity. When we view management through a framework for action, we consider the purpose for performing the action, how best to perform it to achieve the purpose, and how to evaluate the results and redirect the action as needed.

In applying such a framework, one also may wish to consider the value system that should govern the action and the subject individual or organization. This is important because the set of values an individual or organization subscribes to drives the individual's or organization's behaviors in performing action. Thus, action and management must be accompanied by a set of values. These values often are represented by the ethics of the individual or organization, by the prevailing laws, or in most cases, by a combination of these. One can conclude, therefore, that a comprehensive framework for action and/or management should include, or be accompanied by, a value system that permeates the action.

One such comprehensive framework is provided in *The Criteria for Performance Excellence*. *The Criteria* is used by the U.S. Commerce Department and the National Institute of Standards and Technology to select organizations for the U.S. National Quality Award. This award was signed into law in 1987 by President Reagan pursuant to Public Law 100-107, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Act of 1987 [1]. The intent of the award is to complement economic

development initiatives and to raise the performance bar for U.S. companies in the areas of Business, Education, and Healthcare. The stated purposes of the Award are to promote awareness of quality excellence, to recognize quality achievements of U.S. companies, and to publicize successful quality strategies.

The Twelve Steps of Purposeful Action represent another such comprehensive framework for individual as well as organization action or management. The framework was developed by one of the authors over a period of several years of teaching and practice of management, entrepreneurship and leadership [2,3]. Ethical guidelines and standards form an integral part of this framework. These are incorporated in the form of five guiding principles, or values that promote ethical behavior, and five principles or values that lead to unethical behavior or actions. The philosophy centers upon the need to know not only what promotes ethical actions, but also what leads an individual or organization to perform unethical actions. *The Twelve Steps* framework was used initially as an instructional tool for graduate students in engineering management. It subsequently was extended and applied to the management of a Senior Engineering Design Project [4,5].

This paper describes *The Twelve Steps* framework and its accompanying system of *Ten Core Values*. The framework is compared in detail with *The Criteria for Performance Excellence*, and similarities and differences are discussed.

The Twelve Steps of Purposeful Action

The *Twelve Steps* framework is based upon a simple philosophy of life, represented by the flowing brook. Life is viewed as a collection of actions aimed at achieving both success and fulfillment. This general view of life and action is limited, in its applicability, to physically and mentally healthy individuals. However, many aspects of the framework may apply to all individuals and organizations.

The scope of the framework is restricted, further, to actions which are *chosen* by the individual or group, as opposed to actions resulting from unknown and unpredictable acts or others, or accidents and natural calamities which may be referred to loosely as "acts of God." In other words, the framework considers actions that are performed with a specific purpose in mind. Such actions may be referred to generally as purposeful actions. However, in the context of *The Twelve Steps*, purposeful action has a more specific meaning.

Purposeful action is defined as a series of events (that is, elements of action, or "steps") which are triggered, or motivated, by a commitment to a mission. In order to be purposeful, the mission for the action must be derived from an *inner* conviction. Such conviction generally results from introspection, or a process of quiet contemplation, which some refer to as meditation. Thus, the key requirement for purposeful action is commitment to a mission derived from introspection.

The second characteristic of purposeful action is that it unfolds as a series of events, or steps. These steps, generally occur in sequence; however, they may occur almost contemporaneously (as in a "flash"), depending upon the situation. Sometimes, the steps are executed in an iterative manner; i.e. some or all of the steps are repeated until the desired objective is realized. Again, either all or only a portion of the steps may be involved with each iteration.

Mission defines the purpose for action. This mission is derived by the mind or by the central force in the organization. That is to say, a mission in which the individual and organization believes and which comes from *inside* as opposed to *outside*, leads to purposeful or meaningful action. In an individual, the mission is defined and directed by the intuitive guidance of the inner spirit, or soul.

Simply stated, purposeful action represents the focus and directed activities of the mind of and the body, driven by a mission which is derived from an absolute and unwavering commitment by the mind. It applies equally to individual and organizational minds and bodies.

In its most generalized form, purposeful action consists of twelve steps, grouped into three phases, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: the Three Phases of Purposeful Action

Phase I	Forming a Mission for Action	The mind reaches into the soul.
Phase II	Planning and Performing the Action	The "rubber meets the road."
Phase III	Reviewing and Renewing the Action	The mind examines the action.

The steps in each of these phases are listed in Tables 2 though 4.

Table 2: Phase I - Forming the Mission - Defining the Purpose for Action

Step 1:	Searching through Introspection - The inner or intuitive search for the vision.
Step 2:	Realization by "Extrospection" - Refining the vision of the desired "state." Looking outside to conduct a "reality check."
Step 3:	Defining the Mission - The "objective" to which commitment is made - the "driver" for the subsequent steps.

The "action" in purposeful action may appear to occur immediately following Step 9 (in Table 3). However, purposeful action occurs during each step, as in a continuous flow, when individuals and organizations perform activities in accordance with the plan (which provides the guidance for the individual or the organization). Purposeful action occurs through activity throughout the being of the individual or the organization. Such harmonious and coordinated actions are likely to lead to the achievement of goals as well as to the fulfilment represented by the inwardly derived mission.

Table 3: Phase II - Forming the Plan - Performing the Action

Step 4:	Setting a Goal - The specified objective that must be achieved (or attained) in order to accomplish the mission.
Step 5:	Defining the Strategy - The most effective way to get to the goal.
Step 6:	Developing the Plan - What needs to be done, or "acted," to implement the strategy.
Step 7:	Laying out the Organization - Putting people, things and tasks together to implement the plan.
Step 8:	Team-Building or Staffing - Getting people and resources together, assigning responsibilities and authority, etc.
Step 9:	Guidance - Direction, showing how to execute the plan, within the context of the organization.

Table 4: Phase III - Review and Renewal of the Action - Rewards and Reprimands

Step 10:	Assessment - measurement and evaluation of results of the action.
Step 11:	Renewal - revision of plans and goals and re-guidance as needed.
Step 12:	Reinforcement - recognition of performance and consequential rewards or reprimands.

The Ten Core Values

Returning to the metaphor of the brook, the currents that press upon the raft of the traveler represent the dynamic forces of good and evil, which influence our actions and our lives. That is to say morals, ethics and laws, and the interplay of the material and spiritual aspects of our existence, are an integral parts of our being. These are interwoven into each of *The Twelve Steps* through a ten-point value system, or *Ten Core Values*.

The two major opposing forces or currents in life (good and evil, ethical actions and unethical actions), are represented by the two opposing banks of the brook. One side, dominated by the currents of good, is the bank of the Givers, while the other, dominated by the currents of evil, is the bank of the Takers. The vast majority of individuals and organizations are found in the waters of the brook. They give and

take as they transact and navigate their way through the journey of life. These individuals and organizations are the *Navigators* of the brook.

Metaphorically speaking, *The Twelve Steps* provide the "raft" for navigating and "surfing" the brook and for negotiating the inevitable stretches of whitewaters and unpredictable obstacles and events. Five positive core values, or spiritual sentinels, are provided to enable travelers to identify Givers. Five negative core values, or material motivators, are provided to enable travelers to identify Takers. The *Ten Core Values*, or twenty if you consider their antonyms, form the value system of the brook traveler.

The five positive core values lead the individual or the organization to fulfillment or their mission or purpose, when actions culminate in success. Organizations that uphold these values operate within the best interest of all stakeholders and empower employees to take appropriate action. These forces, which direct the individual or organization towards giving, and therefore fulfilling, actions, are listed in Table 5.

Table 5: Five Positive Core Values - Forces of Giving	
● Integrity:	Truth, trustworthiness and dependability.
● Commitment:	Dedication, focus, caring, consideration and love.
● Persistence:	Staying the course, faithfulness and "stick-with-it-ness."
● Teamwork:	Universality and commonality of all individuals and organizations.
● Communication:	Sharing, empathy and being open and forthright.

The five negative core values lead the individual or the organization to emptiness, or disaster, when applied to actions. These forces, which direct the individual or organization towards taking actions, are listed in Table 6.

Table 6: Five Negative Core Values - Forces of Taking	
● Lust:	Intense desire for physical or material gratification.
● Anger:	Rage and uncontrolled urges for revenge and destruction.
● Greed:	Desire to take all one can, with no satisfaction in sight.
● Attachment:	Possessiveness and focus on ownership by "me" and "mine."
● Arrogance:	Feeling self is the "greatest" and all others must serve ones wants.

It may appear, at first, that the ethical system or value system represented by the *Ten Core Values* applies only to individuals. One may argue, for example, that a corporation exists to make the most money that it can. The idea of giving may be considered, in this case, to be contradictory to the pursuit of maximizing shareholder value, through maximizing profits. Corporate profits are often maximized at the expense of violating the rights of other individuals and organizations including, sometimes, the corporation's own employees. In due course, such actions lead to dissatisfaction among some, or all, of the corporation's stakeholders. In other cases, countervailing forces may be brought to bear upon such companies. Examples of such forces are government actions to counter price fixing or other monopolistic and or illegal practices, which may have been "justified" by the corporation in the name of higher profitability.

Overview of the Criteria for Performance Excellence

Similar to the three phases in the *Twelve Steps*, *The Criteria* is organized in two triads. Each triad is composed of three categories. Information and Analysis, as illustrated in Figure 1, supports all these categories [1,6].

The first three categories (Leadership, Strategic Planning, and Customer & Market Focus) are referred to as the "Leadership Triad". These three collectively emphasize the importance of leadership focus on

strategy and customers, in setting organization direction and seeking opportunities. The Criteria points out that if the leadership is not focused on customers (externally driven) that the organization as a whole will lack that focus. These three categories focus on planning for organizational success.

The second three categories (Human Resource, Process Management, and Business Results) are referred to as the “Results Triad”. The integration of the employees and processes the organization utilizes yields the business results. These three categories focus on executing the plan for organizational success in driving business results.

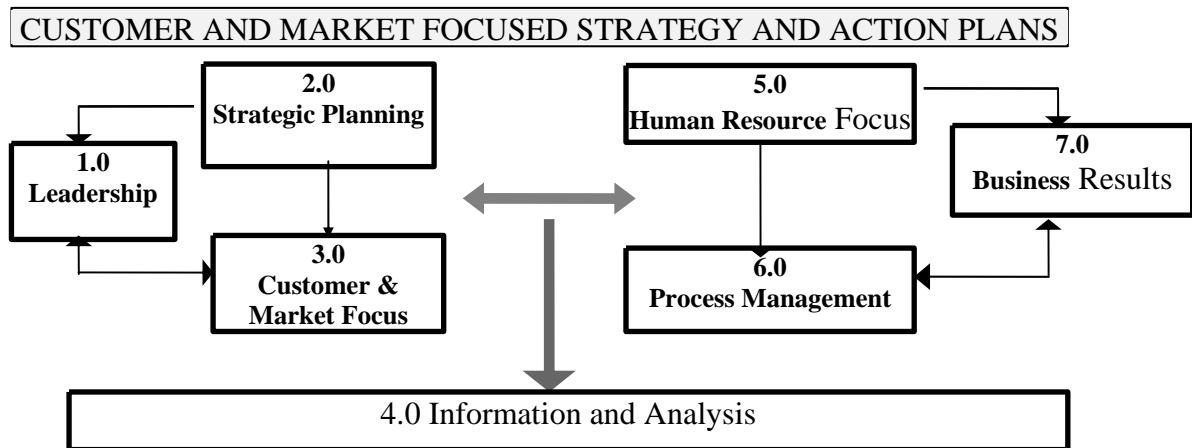


Figure 1: The Criteria Framework: A System for Performance Excellence ^[1]

Information and Analysis (Category 4) is critical to the effective management of the organization and to a fact-based system for improving performance and competitiveness. It examines how the organization selects measures and indicators, compares itself to its competitors to trigger assessment, and how it analyzes its performance to drive continuous improvement, using data and information. Although the *Criteria* outlines *Eleven Core Values and Concepts*, the key core value is continuous improvement through establishment of systematic approaches that are well-deployed with clearly defined indicators.

Comparison of the two Frameworks

How do *The Twelve Steps* relate to *The Criteria*? The following discussion offers comparisons between the two frameworks. For convenience, the results of the comparison are summarized using the three phases of purposeful action from *The Twelve Steps* framework.

Phase I:

Steps 1 and 2, Introspection and Extrospection, involve the process of establishing the vision for the organization. Step 3 (Commitment) establishes the direction or aim of the organization. The output of Phase I - the vision and mission of the organization - is found in the *Criteria's* Category 1.0 (Leadership), Item 1.1a (Senior Leadership Direction). The *Criteria* does not address *how* the organization establishes its vision and mission and does not provide guidance or definitions for these terms. Examiners do assess the level of deployment of the vision and mission throughout the organization.

TWELVE STEPS OF PURPOSEFUL ACTION - Phase I	APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF 1999 CRITERIA
Steps 1,2 and 3	1.1.a.1, 1.1.a.2 (partial), and 1.1.a.3

Phase II:

In the leadership triad, Category 2.0 contains the development of goals and strategies, and deployment through action plans. Therefore, Category 2.0 can be directly mapped to Phase II - Step 4 (Goals), Step 5 (Strategies) and Step 6 (Develop the Plan) - of *The Twelve Steps*.

In the results triad, Category 5.0, contains the organization's efforts to create a work environment, work systems, and support climate that is conducive to continuous improvement and learning. Category 6.0 integrates employees, action steps, and systems through processes and procedures to provide guidance and direction.

TWELVE STEPS OF PURPOSEFUL ACTION - Phase II	APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF THE 1999 CRITERIA
Steps 4,5 and 6	Category 2.0
Steps 7 & 8	Category 5.0
Step 9	Category 6.0 (& other areas throughout the Criteria)

Phase III:

The Phase III steps of Assessment, Adjustment, and Revitalization cut across all categories in *The Criteria*. At the heart of the Criteria is one of its Core Values and Concepts - Continuous Improvement. *The Criteria* examines how the organization evaluates and improves in all seven Categories.

Application of *The Criteria* is, in and of itself, an assessment process. Assessment is required in all Categories, in order for the organization to remain current. Assessment should be triggered as a minimum by adverse trends and performance for key indicators shown in the Business Results, Category 7.0.

Adjustments that may be necessary as a result of assessments would be incorporated into the business relative to the appropriate Criteria Category, or Categories, necessary to achieve continuous improvement. *The Criteria* differs from *The Twelve Steps* in that it explores the design, management, and improvement within each of the first six Categories in driving the Business Results found in Category 7.0. Based on how the organization uses its analysis the Criteria provides the guidance to make appropriate adjustments.

Reinforcement (Step 12) is also found throughout *The Criteria*. This only makes sense that if assessments and improvements (adjustments) are provided throughout *The Criteria*, that the reinforcement would, too. Reinforcement occurs through communicating performance levels achieved and changes required to ensure future success.

Summary of Comparisons and Key Differences

The key difference between the two frameworks stems from their strategic intent. The intent of *The Twelve Steps* of Purposeful Action is to teach and develop, or guide leaders and entrepreneurs in the "art" of leading organizations with vision and motivating employees. The primary focus for leaders is on the Phase I steps - forming the mission for purposeful action through Introspection, Extrospection, and Commitment. Secondary emphasis on the Phase III steps - review and renewal of the action through assessment, adjustment, and reinforcement.

The Criteria is an assessment tool designed to help organizations enhance their performance and competitiveness through delivery of ever-improving value to customers and improvement of overall organizational performance and capabilities. *The Criteria* promotes systems thinking - guiding leaders to view their organizations as an interdependent systems, and to recognize that results stem from well-defined and well-deployed approaches. Organizations are assessed on approach and deployment for the first six Categories and for results achieved in Category 7.0.

The *Ten Core Values* of the *Twelve Steps* framework also were compared in detail with the *Eleven Core Concepts and Values* from *The Criteria*. Due to space limitations, only a summary of the findings are provided.

Two of the five "giver" attributes from the *Ten Core Values* provide the underlying foundation for all *Eleven Core Concepts and Values*. These are Integrity and Commitment. To achieve excellence, an organization also must be persistent in Continuous Improvement and Learning. Teamwork and Communication occurs among all stakeholders - customers, employees, suppliers, and the community. All five positive *Core Values* must be upheld by the senior leaders and must permeate throughout the organization.

The Criteria provides the framework for ensuring that the "taker" attributes are discouraged throughout the organization - with the exception of "anger." By being externally focused on what is good for customers, employees, and the community, organizations will avoid the "taker" behaviors. The primary *Criteria* value that will prevent this (that is, discourage "taker" behavior) is Continuous Improvement and Learning from all stakeholders. Anger is prevented on a limited basis through public responsibility and citizenship.

Conclusions

The Twelve Steps framework focuses its attention on Phase I and Phase III, *what* actions should be performed? *why? Have they achieved their purpose?* The elements in Phase II are not described in detail since these can be found readily in the business literature and in corporate handbooks and training manuals. *The Criteria* is focused on *how* the organization achieves and improves its performance and is more concerned with Phases II and III, with a strong weighting toward Phase III - Continuous Improvement and Learning, a Core Concept and Value.

The underpinning of *The Twelve Steps* framework is ethical action driven by unswerving commitment to a purpose derived from the core beliefs of the individual or organization. The essence of *The Criteria* framework is Continuous Improvement and Learning. Each framework serves well, the central purpose for which it was designed. Both are purposeful and focused on obtaining results.

References

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