

THE INFORMATION DISCIPLINES APPROACH TO ORGANIZATION

An organization can attain a superior level of performance only if it has a logical and manageable *organization structure* consisting of:

1. Rigorous specification of all individual *roles*.
2. Well understood *relationships* among these roles.

For an information-systems service organization such a structure includes not only the functions that directly serve the end users, but also a number of specialized internal *support* roles. Experience in a broad range of organizations shows that an imprecise or incomplete specification of the organization structure and key responsibilities leads inevitably to disappointing performance, as measured by quality, productivity, and user satisfaction.

IDI begins an organization analysis by examining the charter or mission of the organization as a whole, with particular emphasis on the list of services offered to users outside the organization. If this *product line* hasn't already been clearly stated in writing, we help the organization develop it. Before going on we then verify that:

1. The documented list of services does indeed constitute a correct and complete description of what the service organization is expected to do.
2. Each of the services needs to be done and contributes in some way to the performance of the users' organization.

Our subsequent organizational analysis and planning proceed from this list of services logically and systematically. Every role definition has to contribute directly to the delivery of some aspect of the services, and every service has to be addressed by some role definition. Alternative ways of defining roles and relationships can be evaluated and compared on the basis of how well they support this product line.

In defining each *individual role*, IDI relies on the classic RAA (responsibility, accountability, authority) specification, with emphasis on measures of performance or *accountability*. Management can then measure individual and organizational performance by concrete achievements rather than by activities alone. Every key individual must understand exactly how his or her function contributes to the performance of the whole organization. Each individual and his or her manager must share a precise understanding of the basis on which performance is going to be evaluated.

A workable organization structure, of course, is never the end result of an organization analysis, but only a start. It serves as a framework for implementation, which includes:

- . Establishing the channels of information flow needed for everyday manageability.
- . Dealing with human considerations and other environmental factors, in order to assure enthusiastic, smooth team performance.
- . Continuing staff improvement through an appropriate combination of selective recruiting and internal professional development.