

American Society of Veterinary Medical Association Executives

July 26, 2014

Creating an Effective Organization Ecosystem

Implementation Tool Kit

Designed by Gabriel Eckert, CAE



8 Essential Foundations

- Purpose is the reason for an organization's existence and, despite changes to the external environment or profession or issue areas in which the organization operates, purpose represents the one thing that members and stakeholders can never envision changing.
- Principles are beliefs and values that guide organization's behavior, decisions, and actions.
- Potential is a clear articulation of the future the organization wishes to create. Achievement of the organization's full potential is often expressed in its vision, goals, and aspirational statements. As organizations dedicate themselves to reaching their full potential, they can create positive change in the world.
- Processes are repeatable methods of executing work and making decisions. Leaders function best in organizations that have built processes that result in operational efficiencies and quality outcomes.
- Priorities represent a focused set of initiatives chosen in an operational time frame. Successful organizations select these priorities in light of their purpose and principles, while keeping in mind their limited resources of people, time, and money. Priorities are not about rank-ordering a long list; they are about selecting what to do and what not to do.
- People relationships in an organization should be based on mutual respect and trust, a shared understanding of the roles people play in organizational success. In an association, this includes staff, members, volunteers, and stakeholders; in other organizations, it may be employees and customers or clients, as appropriate to the organization's particular business model.
- Praise represents a genuine, expressed appreciation for the people within an organization as well as individuals served by it. Praise is about celebrating success and valuing the role that people play in achieving success.
- Planet is a clear understanding of how fulfilling purpose achieves positive change in the world around the organization. It means different things for different organizations and should not be confused with environmental sustainability. It is a fundamental awareness that what people and organizations do can have a ripple effect in the communities in which they operate and in the world as a whole.

To successfully build these foundations in an organization, leaders need to embrace six emerging leadership competencies, while utilizing the strategy of co-creation:

- **Powerful Questions** – Asking open-ended, non-leading questions, to which the leader does not seek a predetermined answer or outcome, and actively listening and using follow-up questions to fully understand the answer.
- **360 Thinking** – Understanding the fundamental interconnections between systems, structures, processes, culture and ideas, and understanding the impact that changes in one have on another.
- **Understanding Change** – Understanding the underlying drivers and barriers of change in individuals and organizations.
- **Heightened Intuition** – Recognizing and understanding your internal response or sense regarding an issue.
- **Dynamic Decision Making** – Blending and balancing data and intuition when making a decision.
- **Diversity of Thought** – Using both right- and left-brain thinking; recognizing and valuing difference of opinion; and creating work teams that include diverse ways of thinking.

For more information on this model of organizational effectiveness and leadership, see the book **From Insight to Action: Six New Ways to Think, Lead and Achieve**, available from ASAE at www.asaecenter.org/bookstore or by calling 888-950-2723. Bulk-order discounts available. (Save 10% with discount code GE2013) Additional information may also be found at www.gabrieleckert.com

Organizational Diagnostic

based on the book From Insight to Action: Six New Ways to Think, Lead and Achieve (published by ASAE)

This Organizational Diagnostic is designed to create a conversation about the essential foundations of a successful organization. Each section includes five closed-ended questions. However, before scoring each question, it is essential to ask a follow up question and have a conversation about the question by using the following questions:

If answered yes, ask: how?

If answered yes or no: ask: how can we be more effective in this area?

Some organizations discover that some questions to which they initially answered yes are changed to no by asking follow-up questions and engaging in a conversation. Other organizations discover that even though they answer yes to many questions, there are some areas in which they can be more effective. Candid, honest conversation is the key to these discoveries.

To score your organization, write “1” in the box next to each question you answer yes and “0” for each question you answer no. Remember, do not enter a score until you’ve had a full conversation about the question.

In addition to scoring this diagnostic, you will also want to keep track of ideas that emerge through the conversation. The real value of the diagnostic is not so much the score, but the insight that emerge, the shared understanding that is created, and the changes that are implemented as a result.

Additional information and a deeper analysis of each section in the diagnostic can be found in the book From Insight to Action: Six New Ways to Think, Lead and Achieve, published by the American Society of Association Executives.

(www.asaecenter.org/bookstore or www.gabrieleckert.com) The book discusses creating a healthy organizational ecosystem through the adoption of six emerging leadership competencies, the eight foundations included in this Organizational Diagnostic, and the use of the underlying strategy of co-creation.

PURPOSE		SCORE
1	Does our organization have a concise, written core purpose statement?	
2	Do our board, staff and other leaders have a shared understanding of why the organization exists?	
3	Is our core purpose statement visible on board and committee agendas and other documents?	
4	Do we embrace our purpose in such a way that others perceive it in our actions?	
5	Is our core purpose statement used as a litmus test in selecting priorities?	
PRINCIPLES		SCORE
6	Does our organization have a concise, written set of shared values?	
7	Are all our values shared among board members, committee leaders and staff?	
8	Do we use our shared values in deciding what the organization should do and not do?	
9	Do we embrace our shared values in such a way that others perceive them in our actions?	
10	Are the organization's shared values visible in our meeting agendas and website?	

Organizational Diagnostic continued on next page...

POTENTIAL		SCORE
1	Does our organization have a concise, written, vivid description of the future we want to create?	
1	Does our description of the future leverage our purpose?	
1	Is our description of the future consistent with our principles?	
1	Does our description of the future drive our organization toward continual improvement?	
1	Have we created buy-in for our vision of the future beyond the board with committee leaders/staff?	

PRIORITIES		SCORE
1	Does the board select a limited number of written strategic priorities to focus on each year?	
1	Are all of our strategic priorities consistent with our purpose?	
1	Do all of our strategic priorities fit with our association's core competencies and limited resources?	
1	Are our strategic priorities fact-based, and do they also feel right?	
2	Are we flexible in adjusting our strategic priorities if circumstances quickly and unexpectedly change?	

PEOPLE		SCORE
2	Do we have an understanding of the unique skills, experiences and relationships of members/staff?	
2	Does the board provide written charges for each committee, clarifying members and staff roles?	
2	Do we value diversity: inborn characteristics, experiences, organizational dimensions, style/tendencies?	
2	Do we actively seek and create opportunities to increase diversity in our organization's leadership?	
2	Do our volunteer opportunities provide for both personal and professional development?	

PROCESS		SCORE
2	Does our board of directors engage in an annual process of strategic planning or review?	
2	Does the board have a process it uses to select a limited number of strategic priorities annually?	
2	Do we have a written policy manual, updated annually, that catalogs the board's policy decisions?	
2	Does the board maintain big picture, operational oversight through written committee reports?	
3	Does the board maintain big picture, operational oversight by using dashboard reports?	

PRAISE		SCORE
3	1 Do we routinely celebrate success?	
3	2 Do we routinely recognize members and staff for their contributions to the organization?	
3	3 Do we use failures as a way to learn and grow, as individuals and as an organization?	
3	4 Do we seek opportunities for organizational recognition through government proclamations and PR?	
3	5 Do we seek opportunities for organizational recognition through awards programs?	

PLANET		SCORE
3	6 Do we have a shared understanding of how fulfillment of our purpose positively affects others?	
3	7 Do we see how achieving our priorities creates a positive impact beyond our members/stakeholders?	
3	8 Do we look for ways to leverage our programs/services to benefit the larger community?	
3	9 Are we aware of changing dynamics in the world around us that will affect us in the future?	
4	0 Do we have a shared understanding of how we are building something bigger than ourselves?	

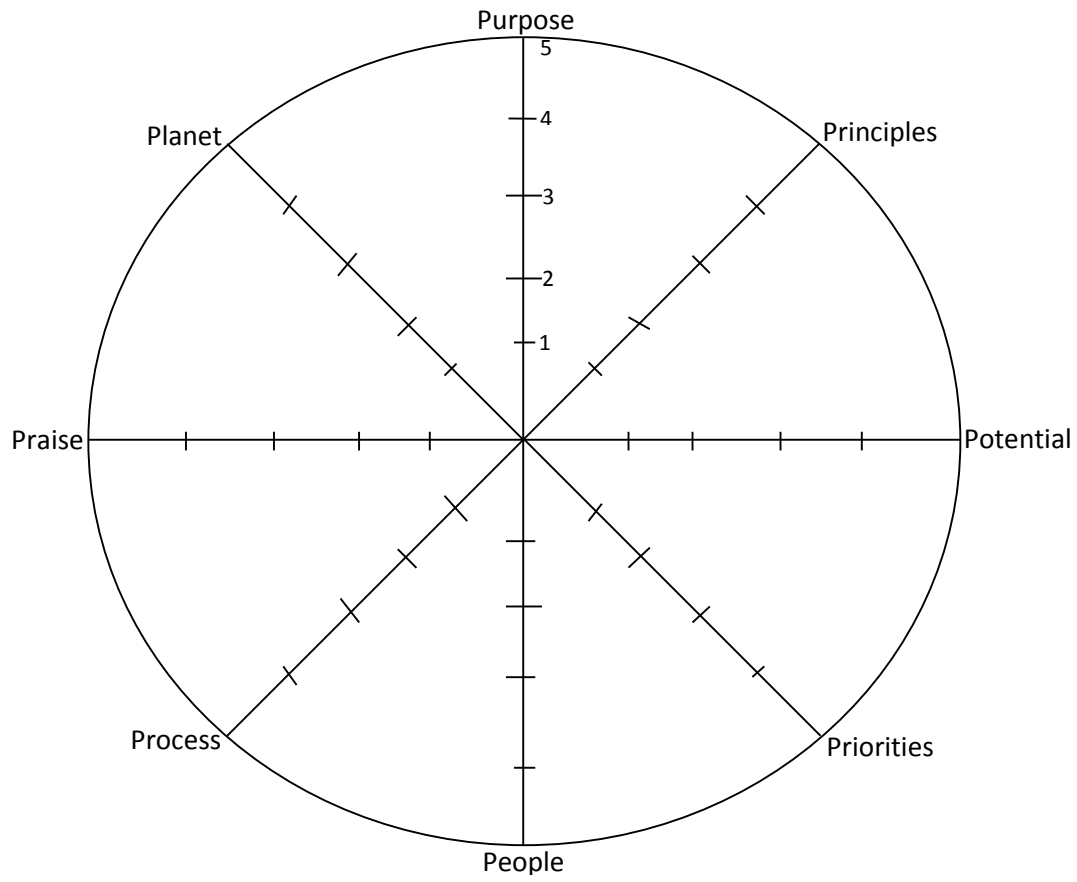
SCORE:

Purpose _____
Principles _____
Potential _____
Priorities _____
People _____
Process _____
Praise _____
Planet _____

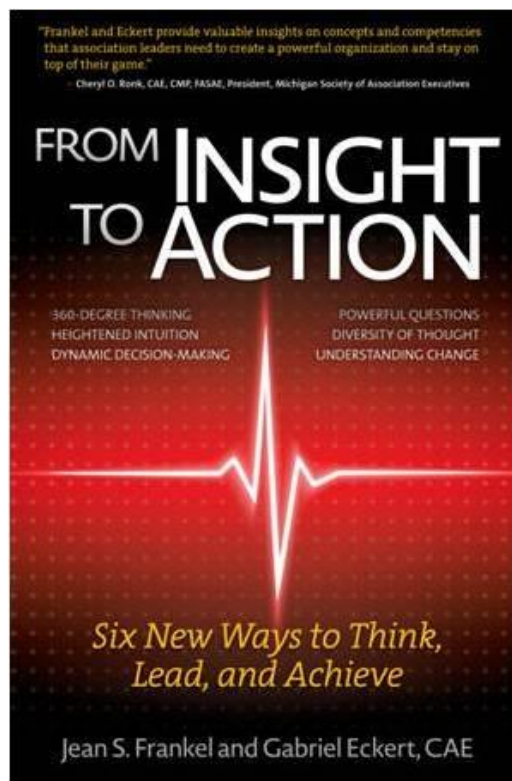
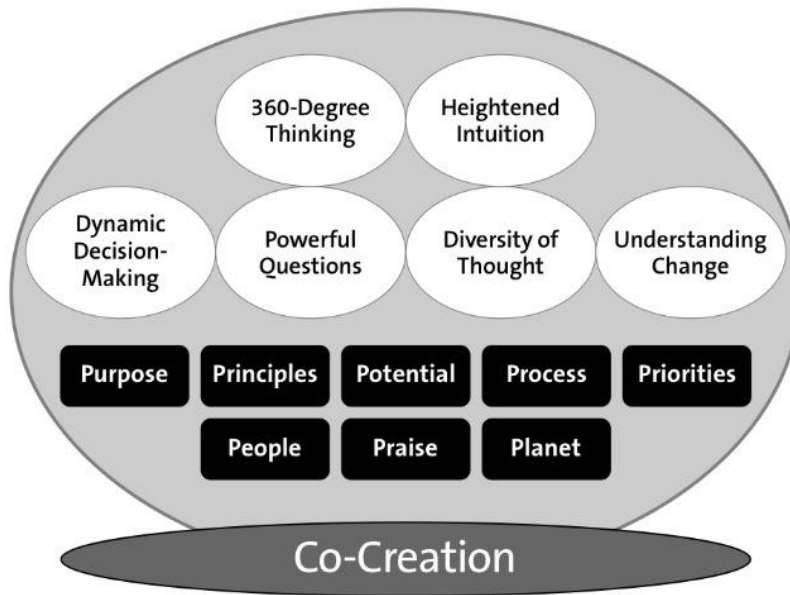
INSIGHT:

On another piece of paper, write down the insight that occurred through the conversation about these organizational foundations. What ideas emerged? How can we be more effective? What changes can be implemented? How can we take these ideas *From Insight to Action*?

How well rounded is our association?



An Organizational Ecosystem



From Insight to Action: Six New Ways to Think, Lead and Achieve, is available from ASAE at www.asaecenter.org/bookstore or by calling 888-950-2723. Bulk-order discounts available.

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Gabriel Eckert, CAE

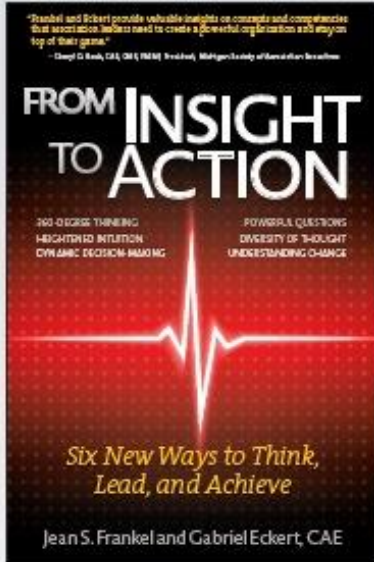
Gabriel serves as executive director of the Building Owners and Managers Association of Georgia (BOMA Georgia). He has previously served as director of communications and marketing for BOMA-Atlanta, and director of communications for the Georgia Cattlemen's Association and Georgia Beef Board.

He earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Kansas State University and also earned a Master of Business Administration degree from Kennesaw State University, where he was recognized as the top student in the Executive MBA class of 2011.

Gabriel is a Certified Association Executive and currently serves as past chair of the Georgia Society of Association Executives Foundation. He was selected as one of the Top 40 Under 40 in Metro Atlanta by the Atlanta Business Chronicle, and has been named by the publication three times as one of Metro Atlanta's Top 100 Who's Who in Commercial Real Estate. And in 2012, he also received the national young professional award from Association Trends.

In addition to his full-time job as an association executive, Gabriel is a consultant, speaker and author of a new book published by the American Society of Association Executives, "From Insight to Action: 6 New Ways to Think, Lead and Achieve."

For additional information, go to www.gabrieleckert.com



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From Insight to Action

Six New Ways to Think, Lead, and Achieve

by Jean S. Frankel and Gabriel Eckert, CAE

Take a fresh look at leadership! *From Insight to Action* offers insights to help you lead and sustain an organizational culture that embraces the opportunities that a dynamic environment—one that demands an equally dynamic skill-set—presents. The cornerstones of *From Insight to Action* are six competencies.

- 360-degree thinking—being cognizant that ideas and insights from anywhere are interconnected.
- A heightened sense of internal intuition—the art of blending knowledge with perception to make better decisions.
- Dynamic decision-making—a framework for determining whether a decision should be made more on intuition, data or processes, or both.
- Using powerful questions—recognizing patterns and creating meaning behind gathered data.
- Understanding change—identifying the factors underlying people's ability to absorb and embrace change.
- Diversity of thought—seeing and valuing stylistic differences in thinking, personal experiences, and inborn human characteristics.

"Frankel and Eckert provide valuable insights on concepts and competencies that association leaders need to create a powerful organization and stay on top of their game."

—Cheryl O. Ronk, CAE, CMP, FASAE, President,
Michigan Society of Association Executives


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