

**A scientific evaluation of an organization and its
leadership and administrative practices:
Report of management**

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Abstract. This article intends provide an evaluation of an organization based on organizational theories, developed largely by W. Edwards Deming, Jerry B. Harvey, and other theorists. Drawing from these theories, the authors apply different methods to conduct an organizational study, evaluating a mid-size organization located in the United States, and make recommendations for improvement to upper management.

Keywords. Organizational study, Abilene paradox, Phrog farms, Feararchy, Deming's diseases, Leadership.

JEL. A10, A13, A14.

1. Introduction

The Dellmerm Incorporation (DI) is a Midwestern organization that works primarily with young people in the juvenile justice system. DI has about 600 people on staff and serves about 200 young people and their families. As a public safety organization DI's funding is rarely cut due to public safety concerns. The Directors of the DI are political appointees by state officials, and most often would change as political administrations change every 3-6 years.

The Dellmerm Incorporation (DI) aims to be trauma informed, and implements Restorative Justice Practices, following the national standards in juvenile justice around the United States. Trauma Informed deals with approaching every person with the idea that they have experienced some type of trauma in their life. Restorative Justice aims to bring a holistic approach to resolving conflict, and repairing the harm caused by crimes.

Dellmerm Incorporation (DI) mission is to partner with families and the public to empower young people in the juvenile justice system and help them take responsibility for their communities. To do this DI aims to provide the best range of care for young people and their families through programs that emphasize individual fortes, skill development, personal responsibility, family empowerment, community engagement, and public safety.

DI has many great attributes, and is constantly looking for ways to improve how they serve young people and develop their employees. In order to evaluate DI, the authors used a series of tests developed by other management thinkers, such as Deming (1992, 1993, 1994), Jaques (1998, 2002), Harvey (1988), Ivanov (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017), and others. The results of the evaluation are below.

One of the great things about The Dellmerm Incorporation (DI) is its mission to serve and care about the young people they serve.

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2. Issues of the Organization

2.1. Lack of Collaboration

The Dellmerm Incorporation (DI) lacks true collaboration across internal departments, and in many instances staff lacks the willingness to give and receive help. Per Jerry Harvey's definition of cheating (1988, 1999), DI does not collaborate, and in fact this lack of collaborate produces a lack of synergy within departments and perpetuates people to work in silos.

2.2. Deming's Diseases

2.2.1. Constancy of Purpose

The Dellmerm Incorporation (DI) suffers from a disease W. Edwards Deming in his book *The New Economics for Industry, Government, Education* calls the Constancy of Purpose (1992, 1993, 1994), which is the lack of innovation and creating and improving on products. Creating and developing new programs and interventions are not consistent at DI, nor do they improve on existing programs. It seems many interventions and programs for young people get introduced to staff and training is ensued, and at times they are even implemented. However, more often than not, they do not last more than a few months. They are discontinued without given time to see if they work for the agency, or be evaluated for effectiveness amongst the young people the agency serves. This is seen in the case of the Functional Systems Therapy (FST) program that DI attempted to develop in its residential institutions. Upon purchasing the licenses, DI trained staff and implemented the program for a few months. Many staff members who were trained did not even practice FST, and the program was not continued long enough to evaluate its effectiveness and usefulness to the young people and the organization.

2.2.2. Focus on Short-term Profits

Another disease that Deming mentioned that applies to The Dellmerm Incorporation (DI) is a focus on short-term profits (1992, 1993, 1994). DI's directors change with political administrations, and so directors try to implement their new ideas within the time they are with the organization, which can be anywhere from 3-6 years normally. Not much emphasis is put on long-term planning 5 to 10 years in the future. The new administration focuses on short-term goals to see changes within the time they are with the agency, and not on ensuring the developing of programs to meet the needs of the young people 5 to 10 years in the future.

2.2.3. Performance Evaluations

Of the diseases that Deming mentioned in *The New Economics for Industry, Government, Education*, The Dellmerm Incorporation (DI) also suffers from Performance Evaluation. Like many Midwestern organizations and even federal government agencies, DI implements performance evaluations of its employees. Performance evaluations occurs about one to two times per year and have pre-determined standards, and an opportunity for employees to create goals in which they would be evaluated on as well. Many employees do not take this process seriously. Because the standards are predetermined, there is not much employees can change. Employees are given orders and predetermined goals by management.

Due to not wanting to have a bad evaluation, many employees in term do not speak up on issues they feel strongly about, and just go along to get along, so to speak. Jerry Harvey's Abilene Paradox (1988, 1999), where individuals in a group agree with a course of action that is against their own preference. At DI, due to not wanting to get a bad performance evaluation and fear of repercussion from management, many individuals do not speak up even when they think a program would not be a good fit for the young people or the organization.

2.2.4. Feararchy / Phrog Farm

Ivanov (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017) identifies the paradigm of fear in many organizations, calling it *feararchy*. The Dellmerm Incorporation (DI) employees fear of speaking up, and just want to get along to not upset the status quo are characteristics of a Phrog Farm (Harvey, 1988, 1999). In Harvey's *Phrog*

Farms, employees are encouraged, and forced to conform to the crowd and follow suite even if they do not agree because they do not want to be viewed as spoilers who disturb the organization. Employees are afraid of retaliation, being fired, they do not believe they can or are able to disagree.

At DI this is seen in the case of many employees not agreeing with a recent program called The Keepers that was introduced to the organization by the recent Director. Employees who work closely with the young people and families know this program does not meet the needs of the population being served and mimics another program offered. However, no one spoke up in meetings about this program in the pre-implementation phase. Now that the program has been rolled out, it is not a surprise the feedback has been underwhelming from young people, their families, and staff.

2.2.5. Additional Obstacles

Divisions lack adequate training, from on the ground training to supervised shadowing until a caseload is fully assigned. Finally, the organization's intervention and programs lack the perspective of the young people they serve; it seems there are many adults making decisions about programs and interventions for young people without the voices and opinions of young people being heard.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that The Dellmerrm Incorporation (DI) conducts more multi-disciplinary/cross-departmental projects and teams. Staff should not work in silos, giving and receiving help should be encouraged from the Director and upper management through policies that encourage collaboration amongst staff.

A process should be put in place to develop new programs, and evaluate every program at different established benchmarks. A multi-disciplinary/cross-departmental team should lead this effort to ensure true collaboration throughout the organization from the onset of every program.

The Director must focus on long-term goals, and start preparing for 5 to 10 years in the future. The director should encourage the multi-disciplinary/cross-departmental team creating programs to think ahead and start developing programs for the long-term future.

DI should do away with performance evaluations since the employees have little to no control over the work they do, upper and middle management controls this. Performance Evaluations minimize work productivity, create silos and lack of collaboration between employees, which feeds many of the issues of the organization.

Creating different multi-departmental/cross-departmental teams across the organization would help staff feel more comfortable to speak up.

Upper management and middle management should take a holistic approach in management by garnering all employees buy-in on the goals for the agency. It is important that upper management collaborates with multi-departmental/cross-departmental staff members on the ground, who are the true experts working with young people, developing long-term goals for the agency. The Director, upper management, and middle management should create the environment that encourages staff to speak up and share their ideas.

To deal with the issue of lack of consistency in interventions and programs, a change in policy around programs occur. Policy should mandate an assessment of current resources for any new program. This would allow the agency to assess its current programs, resources, and staff to ensure any proposed new program is not duplicated and is sustainable given the organizations current resources and infrastructure. It may be beneficial to set up a new program, review committee of sorts, to vet new programs fit for the organization and young people. This committee should be multidisciplinary across the organization and include both young people currently and previously served by the agency.

A process should be put in place to develop and evaluate every program at different established benchmarks. Training for case managers should be a

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formalized process, and should match national standards for case management in juvenile justice across the country.

Practicum training should be at least be one month followed by at least three months of field training shadowing a seasoned case manager before a full case load is assigned. This type of training should be developed in part with veteran case managers and the organizations training department.

To address the issue of lack of youth perspective, the organization should not only survey young people and families, but also systematically and consistently seek out their opinions. This can be done by hosting a series of focus groups with young people currently and previously served. Perhaps, once a quarter the organization should host focus groups with young people and family members separately, and get their opinions in what programs they are interested, current programs, and proposed new programs. It may be useful to host multidisciplinary focus groups of staff members to get their perspectives as well. The knowledge gained from youth, families, and staff combined would be useful for the organization to move forward.

4. Conclusion

The Dellmerrm Incorporation (DI) has great attributes, but many improvements need to be made. The organization is sick, and changes should be made as soon as possible to ensure better future.

To implement recommendations would take much commitment on the part of the DI's leadership. The Director, upper and middle management must make a concerted effort to change the culture.

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