

Activity 3: Comparing Organizations

Type of Organization:

Organization A ____public education school_____

Organization B ____private wholesale / retail business_____

Criteria	Organization A Rating	Organization B Rating
The power in the organization is widely distributed throughout the organization	1	2
The individuals in the organization have a wide range of expertise across many areas of specialization.	3	3
Formal policies and procedures are de-emphasized and somewhat de-valued.	1	1
Communication in the organization flows quickly due to many "inter-laced" interpersonal networks	2	2
Uncommitted resources are common and in good supply.	0	2

Based on the preceding analysis of the two organizations, Organization B has a slight advantage towards implementation of new innovations. Within most of the categories, there were no distinguishable differences. Both A and B have a high complexity, wide range of expertise, that support the implementation of new innovations (Rogers 412). By having a diversity of opinions and exposure to new things, the organization has a greater potential to find an innovation and begin initiation that is suitable to their needs.

Both A and B have a tendency towards higher formalization, emphasis on formal policies and procedures, that leads to a lower chance for individuals to propose innovations, yet a higher chance for innovations to succeed when implemented (Rogers 412). This realization is logical because of the rigidity that restrictions on activity would have to incorporate new methods. However, once an innovation is incorporated

into the standard operating procedures it becomes more likely to be maintained.

Both A and B have a tendency towards higher interconnectedness, communication flow in interpersonal networks, that support implementation of innovations (Rogers 412). The movement of information enables potential users of new ideas into the initiation process. This begins at the information gathering and travels through the implementation phase when the redefining of the innovation to best fit the organization is undertaken. By having open communication channels, trialability and observability are increased.

The first principle difference in the organizations occurs in the level of centralization, distribution of power. Higher centralization tends to be an inhibitor to initiation of new innovations but strength for implementation much like formalization (Rogers 412). The power in Organization A is limited to a few administrators with some minor opportunities for teachers and ed techs to propose new ideas. However, Organization B has a fairly open organizational structure with independent departments that are rewarded for success and initiation of new innovations. The department managers do report to a central management system but are encouraged to remain ahead of the marketing system for their products. This organization actually outperformed in sales much larger business organizations because of this willingness to implement new ideas.

The second principle difference that establishes organization B as more innovative is organizational slack, uncommitted resources. Organization A is a public education system that has a reducing budget with ever tightening restrictions on spending. In contrast, organization B is a private corporation that has suitable resource reserves to enable higher spending for risk, which lends itself to implementation of new innovations (Rogers 412). The ability to have resources in the form of personnel, infrastructure, or money enables a company to have skunkworks type departments (Rogers 149). These separate units within an organization enable risk and innovation development while maintaining the routine functioning. Organization B is not a large enough organization to have a truly distinct skunkworks program, but it does have a mini-scaled operation specifically to pursue innovations.

In conclusion, organization B is able to exploit its increased organizational slack and decreased centralization to increase initiation of new innovations. Its strong interconnectedness helps to offset the challenge to implementation that low centralization can impart, because of the good communication. Overall, this is an expected outcome of the analysis. A public school system is subjected to high formalization and

low resources. A private business is able to overcome its formalization challenges with the unappropriated resources.

Rogers, Everett M. Diffusion of Innovations. 5th ed. New York: Free Press, 2003.

Directions:

1. Think about two organizations you know fairly well (Organization A and Organization B). They could be the same type of organization (e.g., two libraries) or different types of organizations (e.g., a school and a business). Rate the two organizations using the criteria below on a scale of 0 to 3 where:

- 0 = Not at all true
- 1 = Somewhat true
- 2 = Mostly true
- 3 = Very true

2. Respond to the question at the bottom of the page

Question:.

Based on these ratings, is Organization A or Organization B more innovative? Using Roger's terminology, describe why the organization of your choice is more innovative than the other.

Submit the table and your answers to the question via the assignment submission link. Be sure to include your name on the document.