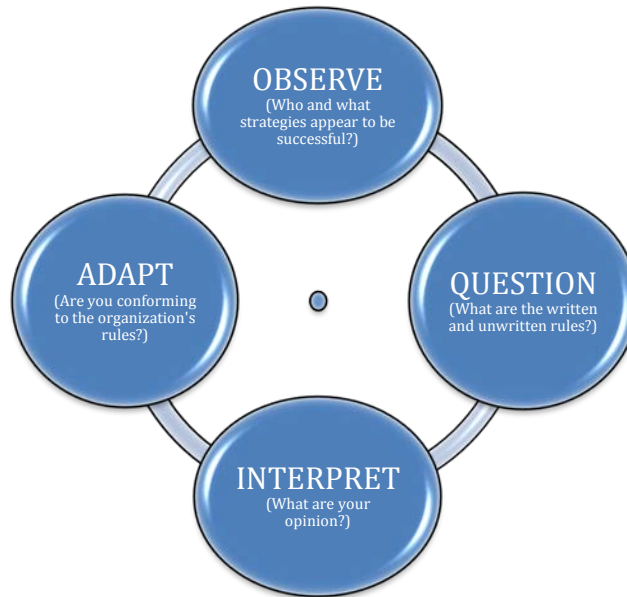


Organizational Assessment



OBSERVE

- What are the official rules?
 - Understand your organization’s official mission, values and goals
 - Evaluate how your company aligns with other companies in your industry or competitive set
- How does management behave?
 - Observe the actions of the leaders in the organization
 - What or who gets attention (both positive/ negative) in the organization?
 - Do their actions coincide with the official values/ mission? If not, what’s the gap? Gaining insight to the “unwritten rules” can typically be found in these gaps
- What behaviors are rewarded?
 - Observe and talk with successful people in the organization. These individuals should be at all levels (i.e. partners, associates, administrative personnel). Be a good listener.
 - What are they doing that seems to be garnering success?
 - What relationships are they prioritizing?
 - How do they get the job done (working alone, working with a team, taking risks, being conservative, communicating data, communicating the ‘Big Picture’, etc.)

QUESTION

- Conduct “informational interviews” or “introductory meetings” with people in your organization. Include your manager, peers, direct reports, customers, business partners, and other leaders.
 - Prepare for your meeting



Organizational Assessment

- Look for information about the person you are interviewing online (e.g. LinkedIn, Google), your company intranet site, etc.
- Review their bios if available
- Prepare your questions!
- The questions below can be appropriately tailored to meet the person you are interviewing:
 - How long have you worked for this company? How would you state the mission and vision of the company?
 - What is your current role? How long have you been in this role? What fascinates you the most about your role?
 - Tell me about your team - What role does your team play in the success of the company?
 - If your role interacts with the person you are interviewing you can ask about their response to specific projects/ objectives:
 - How would you describe the objective of <name of project>?
 - Why is <name of project> important? *Look for the personal as well as the business related answer to this question.*
 - What will success look like to you? *Listen carefully -- and probe if needed -- to ferret out the critical success factors.*
 - What is / is not the scope of <name of project>? *(often called "no fly zones" or "sacred cows")? This is a very important question. If you can get the interviewee to help narrow down the scope, the project may be easier to deliver than world peace. Also pay close attention to the areas that are sensitive from a political perspective.*
 - What else is on your radar screen – where does this fit? *See if there are more important things on the sponsor's radar screen. If this seems small and unimportant by comparison, share your observation with the sponsor. Maybe you should be working on something else instead.*
 - To learn more about their business area/ role:
 - What are the top priorities for your business area/ team?
 - Why are they important?
 - What else is on your radar screen? Why? *Don't assume that the first answer is the only answer – keep probing for more. You may be surprised at the answer you get after asking two or three more times!*
 - What are your top challenges for your business area/ team? *Probe for the broad challenges – not just those that relate to your area. It is easy for us as I.T. people to stop at the answer that leads to a technology solution or is related to a technology issue.*
 - What other challenges or issues are there for your business area / team? Why? *Don't assume that the first answer is the only answer – keep probing for more. You may be surprised at the answer you get after asking two or three more times!*



Organizational Assessment

- What excites you the most about your role?
- What do you think my biggest challenge will be in this new (or current) <role/ company/ team>? *This question will help you understand the biggest challenge you will face from the interviewee's point of view. For those who are conducting these interviews with people they have worked with for some time, the answer may also highlight one of your personal weaknesses. For example, if you are not perceived as being a very good team player, the interviewee may give an answer related to the challenge of building a well functioning team.*
- Who would you recommend that I speak to in the organization as I learn more about this (team/ role/ organization)? *Listen carefully for the key players – they may not have official leadership titles! Ask the interviewee for contact information, and whether they would be willing to support an introduction (either directly or indirectly)*
- Do you have any words of advice, wisdom, suggestions for me or my team? *This is a nice wrap-up question.*

INTERPRET

- As you interview – remember to LISTEN!!!!
 - Probe for clarification
 - Listen for the story
 - Listen for hidden assumptions
 - Listen for what's different, not only for what is familiar.
 - Take it all seriously!
 - Let the person talk to “get it out of his/her system”. This is particularly key when interviewing business partners!
 - Summarize well
 - Keep the person talking (“What else have you considered?”)
 - Ask what they are thinking – this is not the time to jump in with your solution!
 - Look at the person while he/ she speaks
 - Encourage by nodding head or giving a slight smile
 - Be aware of (and control) your body movements that could be distracting (moving around, shaking legs, fiddling with papers, etc.)

ADAPT

Use this information as input to your Career Plan and Professional and Personal Network Plan

References

She Disrupts IT! You Can Too! Four Powerful Strategies of Successful I.T. Women by Dr. Annette Gibbs-Skervin
The Trusted Advisor by David H. Maister, Charles H. Green & Robert M. Galford



Organizational Assessment

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An I.T. professional for more than thirty years, Dr. Annette Gibbs-Skervin is an accomplished I.T. executive, having served in progressively more responsible senior leadership roles at Johnson & Johnson, Procter & Gamble, and Information Services Group (ISG). Dr. Gibbs-Skervin is a certified Professional Coach and a member of the prestigious International Coach Federation (ICF). She is founding partner of Disrupting IT LLC, an I.T. leadership development company.

Dr. Gibbs-Skervin holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science, an MBA in Finance, and a PhD in Applied Management and Decision Sciences with a focus on overcoming leadership challenges faced by female I.T. leaders.

As a woman in I.T. executive management, Dr. Gibbs-Skervin understands the challenges inherent in climbing the I.T. leadership ladder. She is particularly sensitive to and interested in the development and success of women underrepresented at the highest levels of I.T. leadership.



She is the author of the book “**She DISRUPTS IT! You Can Too! Four Powerful Strategies of Successful I.T. Women**” that is available on Amazon.com.

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