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Salt and Leaven

Mission Integration Using Organizational Development Principles

By David C. McCallum, S.J.

When people think of Ignatius of Loyola, the first images that come to mind are the soldier turned saint, the pilgrim on the road, and perhaps the helpful holy man reaching out to someone in need. We know, though, that Ignatius was also an ingenious administrator who understood how organizations worked; he appreciated the importance of a compelling vision, flexible strategies, and the critical role of skillful and supportive management of people; and he knew how to make decisions in such way as to allow the Holy Spirit to be the driver while at the same time attending to earthly details. From his early days as an aspiring courtier, Ignatius had both the education and the instinct for developing organizations and making them work effectively. In fact, the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, which Ignatius authored, might be considered an organizational blueprint that translated the spiritual graces of the Spiritual Exercises into administrative policies and structures and into guiding principles for human resource development. The goal of the Constitutions was not a bureaucracy, however. The Society of Jesus was intended to be an organization inspired throughout every dimension to fulfill a divine mission in loving service to the church and the world and to do so with a spirit of selfless generosity. This mission was to serve as a pervasive and permeating source of purpose and meaning, functioning like the salt or the leaven Jesus describes in the Gospels.

When we think about the contemporary work of mission integration in our institutions of higher education, we have a similar goal, to facilitate the permeation of our mission

throughout our schools and help tether everything we do to that inspiration, purpose, and meaning. While we mission officers do not generally have experience as military leaders or in local government as Ignatius did, we can draw similar mental models and skill sets using the resources of contemporary disciplines such as organizational development (OD) to help think systematically about our work and better achieve our institutional goals. Organizational development is an interdisciplinary field that includes and draws upon the social sciences, adult and organizational learning, systems theory, and a variety of theories related to management science. It is rooted in humanistic values that prioritize the dignity and value of the human person, that seek to develop the potential of individuals while enhancing the effectiveness of the organization in the service of its goals, and that support the vibrancy, meaning, and value of work. In this essay, I will describe some of the relevant features of OD as they have influenced my work as the director of mission and identity at Le Moyne College.

Organizational Development as a Resource for Mission Integration

The first principle of OD is the development of an organization's process, systems, and procedures. Accordingly, while the Office of Mission & Identity at Le Moyne College provides faculty and staff orientations and ongoing development

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and collaborates with campus ministry and service outreach, mission integration extends beyond these programs and functions. Mission integration at Le Moyne (and perhaps most Jesuit schools) also involves the policies related to all the other varied dimensions of the institutions such as hiring, marketing and admissions, student development, the core curriculum, employee performance reviews, faculty rank and tenure, the financial policy's related to tuition pricing, the investment portfolio, facilities, health care plans, etc. Wherever we might identify the function of a particular policy, division, office, or role, mission is hopefully the answer to the question of why that particular function exists and helps describe how that function might work in a way that is distinct from that of another type of institution.

In addition to policies, procedures, and systems, another key focus of organizational development is that of culture. While some might view culture as simply a collection of the way individuals think and behave, OD is enriched by the disciplines of anthropology and social psychology, which provide a more holistic appreciation for the importance and the impact of culture on an organization. Using principles of OD, our mission-inspired administrative and faculty leaders inquire: how is the mission manifest in the patterns of people's interactions and in the care and collegiality we demonstrate for one another; in the degree to which the vision and values are shared across faculty and administration; in the habits of thinking and mental models that guide decision making; and in key symbols, artifacts, rituals, and ceremonies? And perhaps just as critical, leaders explore ways in which aspects of the actual culture are in tension with or even in opposition to the espoused values of the organization, for example in compensation packages, in building and facilities priorities, or in the ways resources are allocated.

The Mission Integration Model at Le Moyne College

Over the past two years, we have been developing a model of mission integration that is informed by OD theories and practices. First and foremost, we constructed a heuristic lens (see Figure 1) to help us to see the organization of the college in the

most comprehensive and inclusive manner in order that mission efforts are both integrative and impactful. We draw on the work of Ken Wilber, whose *Integral Spirituality* (2006) and *The Integral Vision* (2007) offer a means of mapping the personal (1st person), interpersonal (2nd person), and objective (3rd person) elements of the organization.

The mission integration map helps us clarify the scope of our mission education efforts and interventions and discover where there may be gaps, tensions, or misalignments between what we say and what we do. For example, we encourage our students to be committed to the service of social justice, but as institutions we may not provide living wages to certain categories of employee. It helps us to think through the degree to which we are supporting and reinforcing our core organizational values of *cura personalis* (care for the whole person) and *magis* (a commitment to generosity, excellence, and depth of quality) and to ensure that we are translating these values into observable behaviors that can be acknowledged and evaluated, reflecting them in our culture, institutional policies, and systems.

By virtue of seeing the organization of the college in a holistic manner, we are better able to consciously tap into the inspiration and purpose that our mission provides, whether we serve as a faculty member in the liberal arts, a staff person working in facilities management, or an administrator responsible for marketing the college. Just as salt provides flavor and serves as a preservative and leaven activates dough, this holistic approach to mission integration ensures that every dimension of our educational organization is influenced and inspired by this core purpose.

Conclusion

As Ignatius of Loyola drew upon his practical education and experience as a soldier and courtier when he translated the grace of the Exercises into a dynamic, mission driven organizational model in the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, so the discipline of organizational development provides resources that help us pay more comprehensive and systematic attention to the ways our missions might flavor and permeate our institutions even more thoroughly and effectively. ■

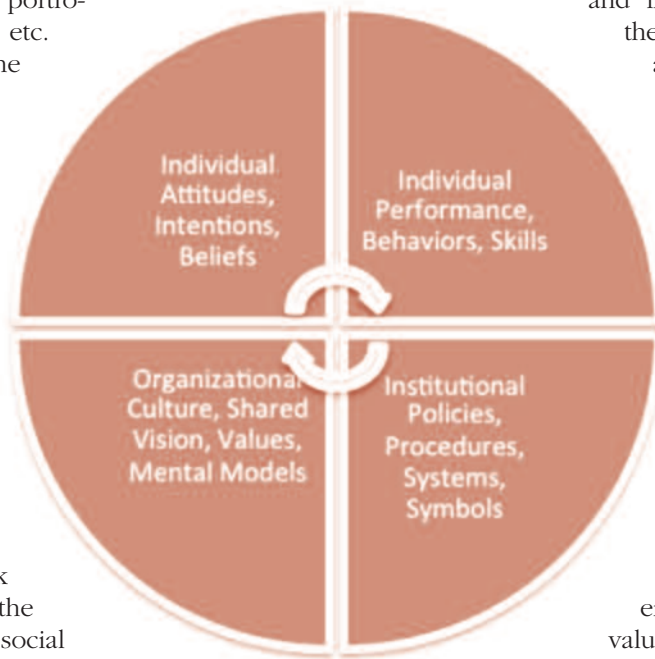


Figure 1: Mission Integration Map