

CREATIVE PERCEPTS

Managing Management: GUIM - A Graphic User Interface

Joseph Manuel

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The Graphic User Interface (GUI) contributed significantly to the pervasive use of computers,

PDA's, mobile phones and various other gadgets transcending barriers to the use of technology and accelerating the emergence of a more connected world. The GUI attenuated the complexity of the black boxes, hardware or applications software and facilitated self-navigation. A similar interface to the discipline of management would go a long way in bridging the even more challenging issues of transcending the divides and barriers to the emergence of global community

Management is a relatively young discipline. It has the potential to emerge as an integral Meta system to bring together various disciplines. However the student is often perplexed by the profusion of jargon resulting in a semantic swamp. The crossover seldom happens. The current context, of business, environment and development raises serious concerns as to the relevance and validity of the practice. General Motors which provided the context to the Concept of the Corporation,

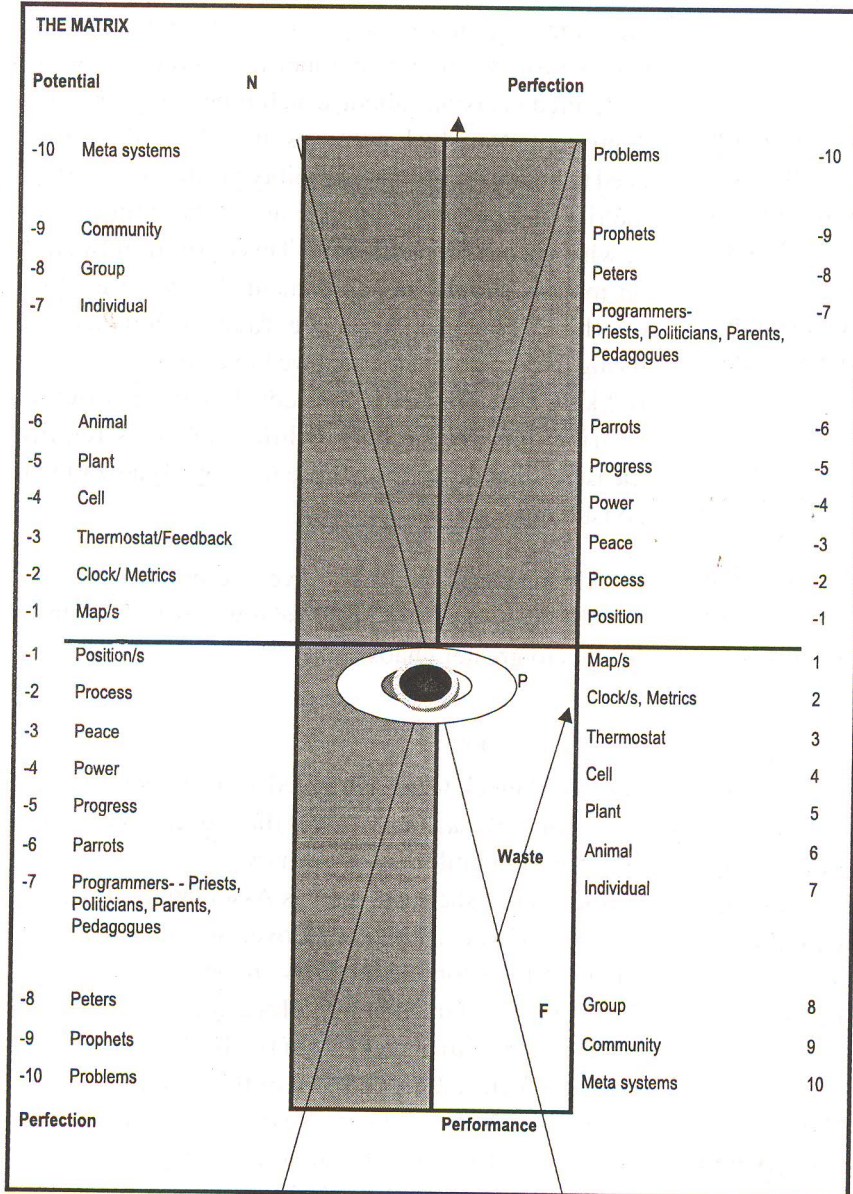
(Drucker) has filed for bankruptcy and GM is not an isolated example.

Major growth stories of the IT era were mostly entrepreneurial and technology driven. This growth has peaked and in scouting for fresh growth the east has become the focus of attention. While China has more or less followed an aggressive path of taking on the competition, the Indian position still remains unclear and out of focus. For the student of developmental management India is unique in its level of complexity. It is what Galapagos was to Darwin in deciphering the story of evolution. Solutions that emerge out of this complexity have universal validity that could meet the challenges of creating a more desirable future both local and global.

The GUIM is a map to make sure that we don't miss the woods for the trees since in the final analysis we are as good as our maps. We don't have direct knowledge of the physical world; we only have knowledge of our ideas of it¹.

¹ Charles Jacobs: *A Mind for Selling: Brain Science Is Turning Management On Its Head*

THE MAP: GUIM



Reading the Map

The observer self is at the centre stage attempting to scan the environment to fix its own position and evolve a map for the journey. The self can be the individual, organisational or community self. The map has four quadrants, directions, as in any other geographical maps. N stands for true north.

The self positions itself for improvement – the invariant position. P is the present position which is variant in time and F, the direction for the journey. Between the three, the space for all metrics is defined specific to each context, practitioner and domain, the gap between potential and performance

Quadrant NW is a map of the ideal, the deep structure, the conceptual,

pure potential, design and the world of ideas. The order, hierarchy, increasing complexity and potential with each level, alignment and connectedness need be recognised to understand the performance issues in the external world mapped in the bottom right Quadrant, SE.

The four quadrants are like the four wheels of a car, a learning engine which continues to improve its performance as it goes forward. The eye at the centre represents self, the observer, the driver of the car. The wheels must be aligned for the car to move on. But there exists a conflict, misalignment, between quadrants NW and SE, ideal and the operational. The same goes for quadrants SW and NE, between internal self and the external social system. It is for us to create the alignment so that the car moves on.

From the Map to the Territory

First step is to see the interconnections and see the whole as one system in process, evolving

What makes the human unique as a class of systems is the potential to improve. There is 'no' gap between potential and performance up to the level of animals (see quadrant SW). The gap begins after the level of animals. The gap can also be seen as the waste in the system, the unrealised potential, the root cause for problems. In terms of potential vs. performance the human is sub animal.

Corresponding to the total potential/performance gap, there exists a gap in every one of us which forms the personal sphere for

improvement which would lead to the question - what is my potential and my performance?

Quadrant NW represents the ideal, perfect, conceptual, pure potential, internal to the self and in perfect alignment at all levels starting from the maps to Meta systems. Quadrant SE represents the physical world, measurement, performance and mirrors NW, till the level of animals. The knowledge gap is the major reason for the gap. There will always be a gap but it is feasible to narrow the gap and bring about sustained and continual improvements.

Quadrant SW is internal to the self and NE represents the external social system. While learning is a pre-requisite to improvement, history and habits encourage conformity. This is both a challenge and an opportunity. Self could be the individual, team, organisational or community self. Complexity increases with levels.

The map facilitates positioning, fixing the direction for the journey, and measurement of progress. It is possible to visualise the nature of the journey as an ongoing process of continual improvement and renewal. The first step is having a map for the journey. "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." - Confucius. To take that first step we need to know where our position is and the direction in which to take that step, to be on course.

All measures need to have a common ground, whether they measure progress towards true north or lead us to greater chaos.

The ideal of an integral and problem focused metrological pluralism suggests that we reflect on the way we use developmental metrics, in order to make principled decisions about which types of metrics are appropriate for which purposes. In order to do this we need to build validity and reliability profiles for existing metrics and begin to dialogue about the implications of what we have to work with. This rigorous reflection on metrics should be supplemented with reflections on the problem-spaces we face. What are we trying to do with the metrics we have? For example, it is likely that clinicians and coaches need different metrics than researchers, while educators require measures that differ from those used by organizational consultants¹.

All measures need to have a common ground, whether they measure progress towards true north or lead us to greater chaos.

About the Author:

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¹ Zachary Stein, Katie Heikkinen, *Models Metrics and Measurement in Developmental Psychology*