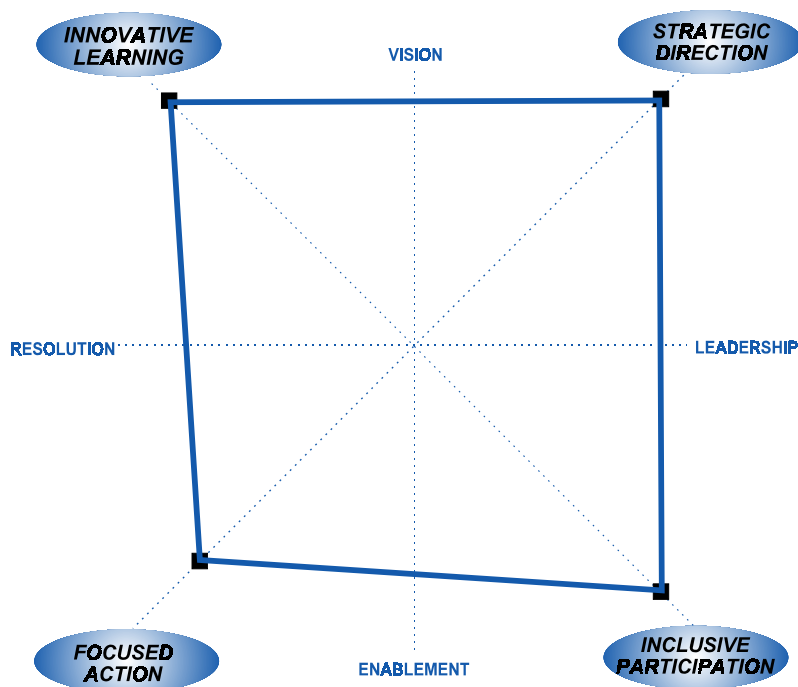


## The DEWY<sup>SM</sup> Profile: a simple case study

This is an extract from the article  
***A New Key Competence: Managing Perceptions for Greater Effectiveness***  
(The full article can be found on [www.vspinc.biz](http://www.vspinc.biz) under 'Grasp your leadership role')

In this section, we will explain how we combine the concepts of perceptions, invisible success factors and strategy to help an organization achieve greater effectiveness. Although I will be demonstrating a specific proprietary tool, it is the best way of conveying the impact to you. The specific proprietary tool was developed in 1990 and is called the DEWY<sup>SM</sup> Profile.<sup>1</sup>

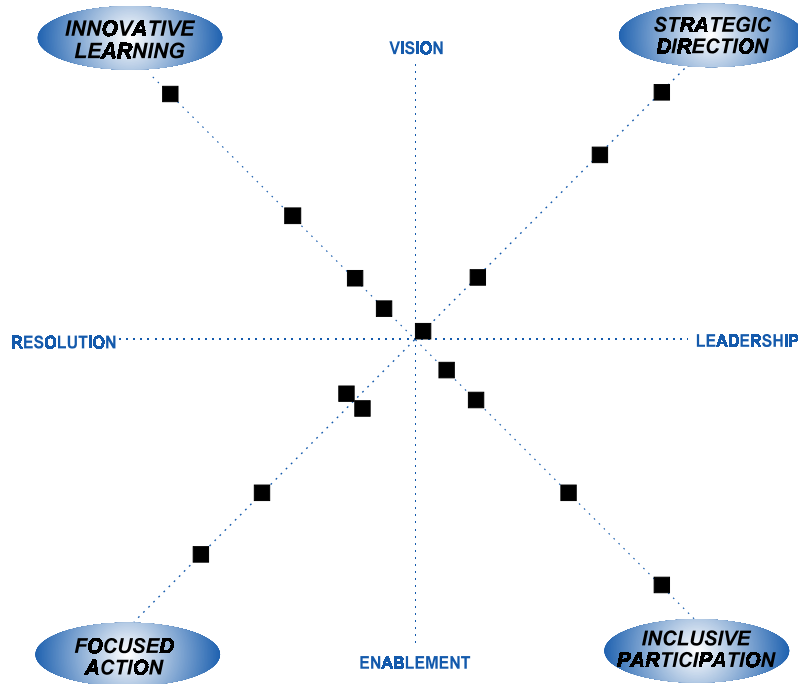
The case study is of an organization with four executives. As part of a strategy validation exercise, each executive was asked to complete the DEWY<sup>SM</sup> Questionnaire from which the DEWY<sup>SM</sup> Profiles were constructed. The first profile shown below is that of the CEO. It is a very positive profile – it is balanced around the quadrants and far away from the center. What this profile tells us is that the CEO does not perceive that his colleagues have any problems with understanding the strategy, committing to the strategy, acting on the strategy, or learning from the strategy:



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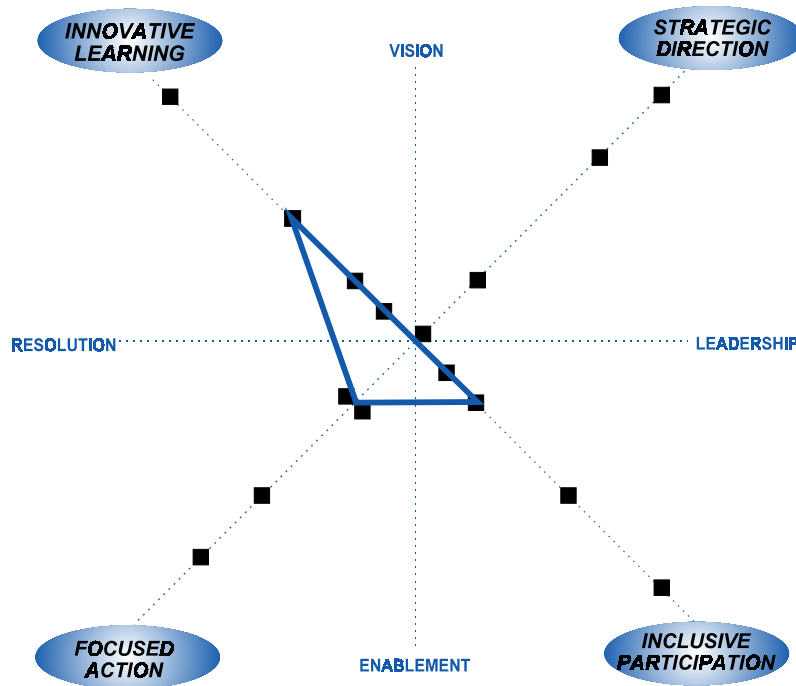
<sup>1</sup> The DEWY<sup>SM</sup> Profile is an executive management tool which promotes organizational effectiveness by validating strategies and securing commitment for the execution of focused action plans. As a perceptual management tool, it profiles the disparity between the formal strategy and the perceived strategy, and between the planned operational activities and the perceived operational activities. DEWY stands for **D**ecline **E**arly **W**arning **Y**ardstick: It means that if certain inappropriate behaviors of an individual or a team continue, then the performance of the individual or of the team can be expected to decline over time.

Our imaginary CEO is likely to reason as follows: *This profile is all very nice, as it is exactly what I would have expected. But what about my colleagues? How do my colleagues perceive the organization?* This is shown below:



The first aspect which catches the eye is the spread of dots, which represent the spread of individual perceptions. This tells us that there is not much congruence within this team concerning understanding of the strategy, commitment to the strategy, action on the strategy and learning from the strategy. These individuals do not seem to be on the same path to greater effectiveness. In fact, this profile should remind you of the story of the Trojan horse. The only problem is, who on this team has the most accurate perception of reality?

To find out more, we must identify each individual's perceptions of the four invisible strategy success factors. Below is the profile of one individual's perceptions:

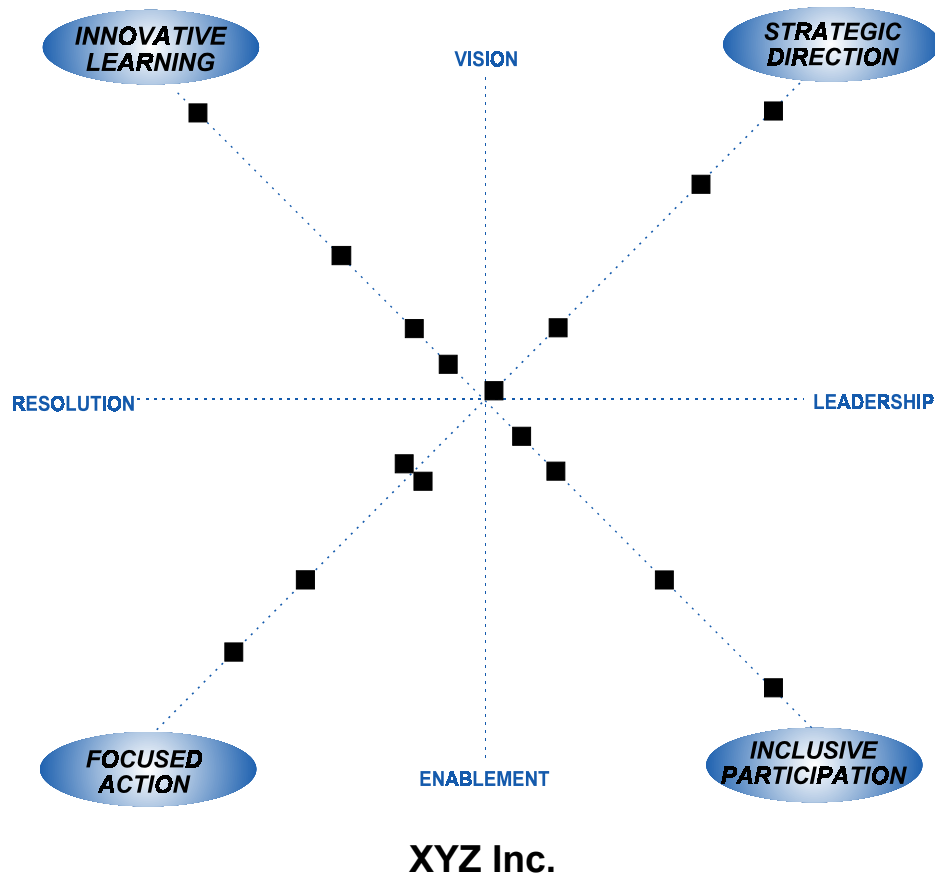


The key question here, of course, is how can one team member differ so radically in opinion from the CEO? Note, for example, that this individual perceives a serious problem with the strategic direction (zero score), whilst the CEO believes it to be fine (maximum score; see first profile above). Given this information, how high would you rate this team's chances of making their organization more effective? That is why we stress that every CEO must understand the power of perceptions in strategy making and in strategy execution, and manage accordingly. And if you were the CEO, would you now know where to focus your energy for maximum effect? Based on only this information, we would suggest that this CEO do the following:

- (a) validates the existing strategy and changes it as appropriate;
- (b) secures commitment to the strategy;
- (c) validates that the operational plans and actions do indeed support the strategy; and
- (d) ensures that his team and the organization learn how to improve the strategy and learn how to maintain operational focus on the strategy.

For additional information and clarity, the following pages show two of the examples with most of the detail which the DEWY<sup>SM</sup> Model analyzes.

# THE DEWY<sup>SM</sup> PROFILE of the Executive Team



XYZ Inc.

**Participants:** X; Y; Z; and W

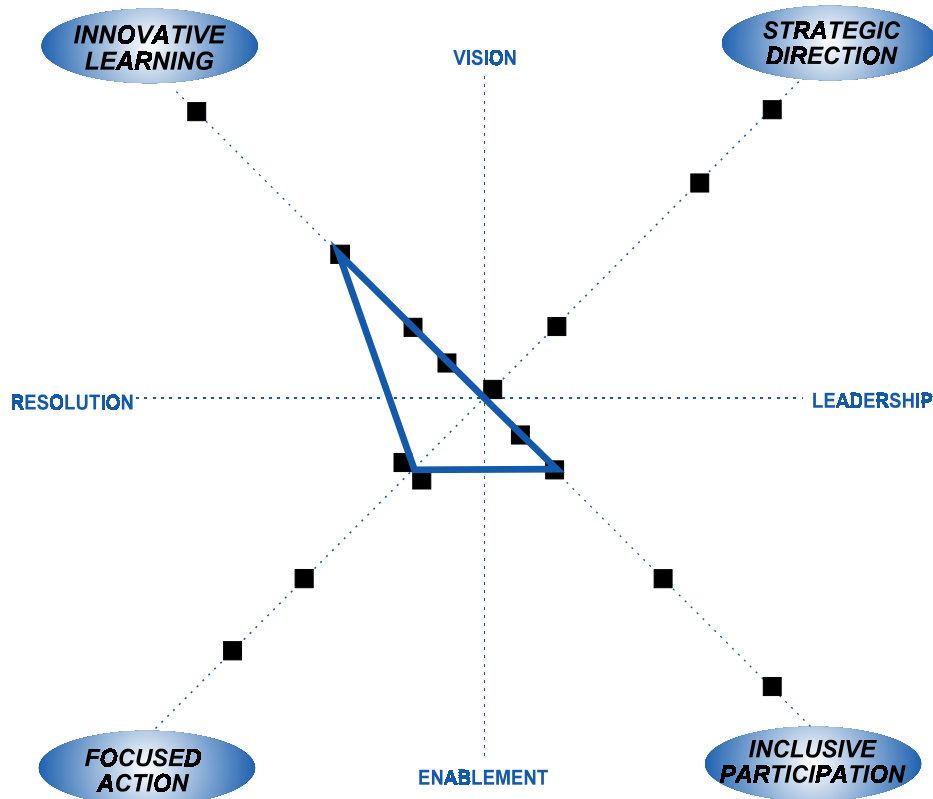
**Date:** July 2002

**Overview:** This group profile shows quite a spread of individual perceptions. In each quadrant, there is at least one individual who perceives the team far more favorably in that quadrant than two of his colleagues. In other words, one person sees favorable characteristics or behaviors where others see weaknesses.

**Specifics:** There are only two specific factors which this team perceive as strengths within the team. Firstly, the team members appear to *buy-in* and, secondly, there is *effective definition of tasks*. However, the following factors stand out as areas of real concern: *inadequate knowledge of the external environment; risk to organizational (or team) continuity; poor team work; little individual empowerment; ineffective allocation of tasks; poor actual performance; ineffective measurement of progress; abuse of power; tendency to group think; and an inadequate follow through on new ideas.*

**Solution:** This is a team analysis; it does not identify individual perceptions, nor why an individual feels strongly about a particular issue. (For example, in the Strategic Direction quadrant, there are two individuals at exact opposite poles of each other: one with an extremely positive view and one with decidedly grave concerns.) It is now critical for the ongoing success of this team that the team members discuss their differences openly and honestly. There are three reasons for this: Firstly, if those individuals with concerns are right and not heeded, then XYZ's long term success could be in jeopardy. Secondly, if those with concerns are wrong and not convinced to change their views, then their motivation and commitment could suffer, making them potential liabilities to the team. Thirdly, now that these disparate perceptions have been highlighted, individuals will not automatically find common ground; instead, the situation could deteriorate rapidly. However, there is a **very positive aspect:** With such a wide range of perceptions, these individuals can learn much from each other, especially if they are given an opportunity to explain their disparate views within a structured and controlled format. Then this team will be able to decide constructively on the most effective action to secure their ongoing success.

# THE DEWY<sup>SM</sup> PROFILE of an Executive Team Member



## XYZ Inc.

Participant: ■ Mr X

Date: July 2002

**Overview:** Your profile shows that XYZ has a serious weakness in the area of setting strategic direction, as well as weaknesses in the areas of getting people to participate in achieving strategic goals and ensuring that actual performance delivers the planned results. A positive is the reasonable strength reflected in corporate learning. This shows that management at XYZ could be willing to learn from experience and to use this input to explore a new strategic direction. However, if these weaknesses are not addressed timeously, the openness to learning without a clear direction could deteriorate into confusion. This will easily be exploited by competitors and so put XYZ's success and continuity at risk.

**Specifics:** The only specific factor which you perceive as a strength within the management team is that they do not appear to *resist change*. However, you perceive the following factors as weaknesses: *unclear corporate purpose; inadequate knowledge of the internal and external environment; risk to organizational continuity; poor team work; little individual empowerment; poor actual performance; ineffective measurement of progress; and an inadequate follow through on new ideas*. The following factors are also potential weaknesses: *ineffective corporate culture; low individual buy-in to XYZ; ineffective definition and allocation of tasks; abuse of power and a tendency to group think*.

**Solution:** You have raised many warning flags. These should be explored for two main reasons. Firstly, if you are right and not heeded, then XYZ's long term success could be in jeopardy. Secondly, if you are wrong and not convinced, your motivation and commitment could suffer, making you a potential liability to the company. Therefore, it is critical that you are given an opportunity to explain your concerns, objectively and honestly. Equally important, your colleagues must be given the same opportunity to express their views in a similar structured format. Only then will you, as a team, be able to decide on the most effective action to secure XYZ's ongoing success.