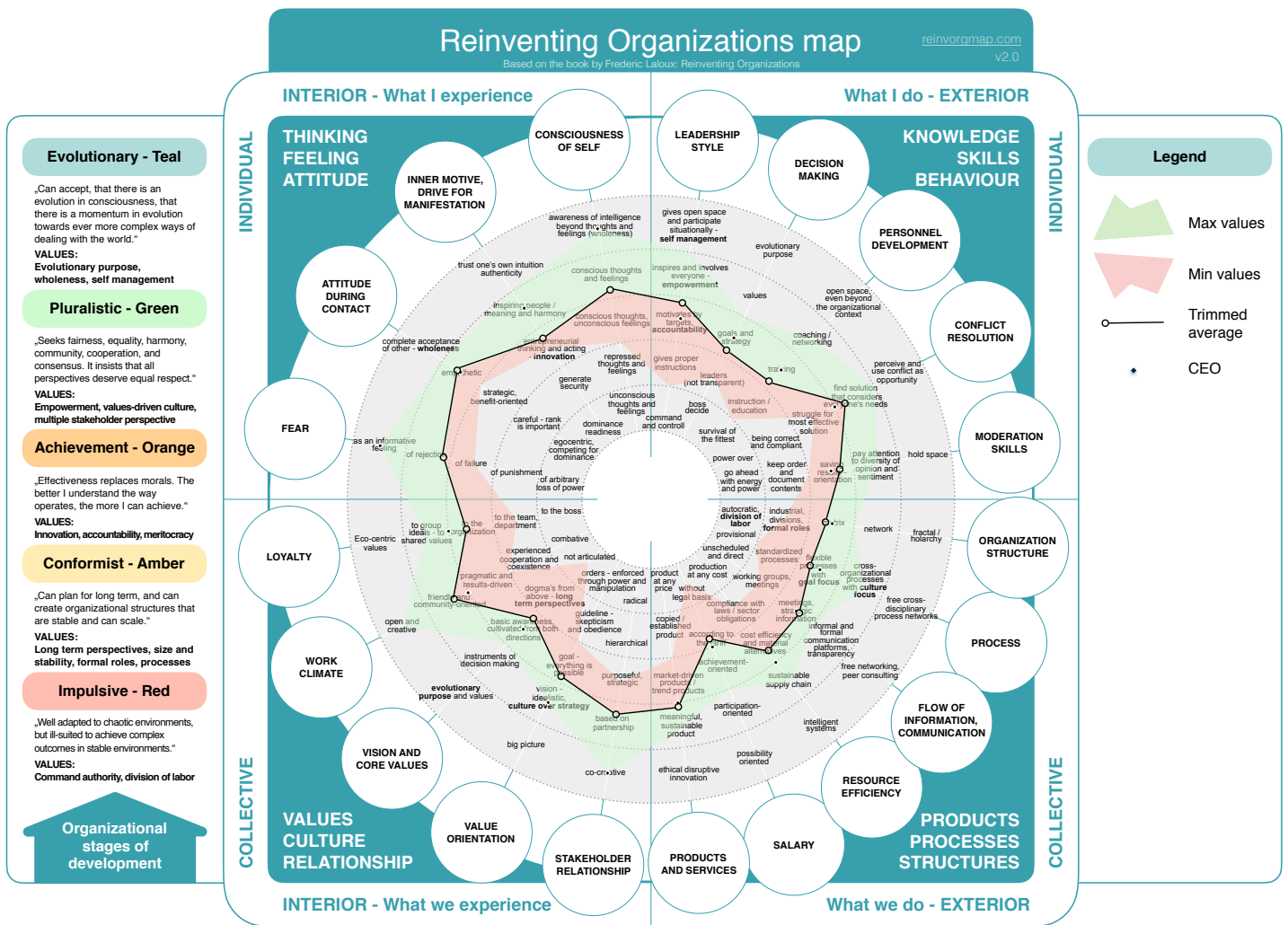


Organization insights

Best Org



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v1.0

Summary

based on Reinventing organizations mapping

It was an amazing opportunity to assess a company that is so diverse and still so warm and employee centric. At the same time talking with people at BestOrg felt like there are different purposes stitched together with a common atmosphere and culture.

BestOrg's number one strength is their employees who are exceptionally mature and have been carrying the organization on their back while the company is lagging behind with putting in place the necessary building blocks to support its growth. This isn't rare, especially in organization that have gone through rapid growth, like BestOrg did during the last years.

Currently the orange paradigm is the strongest in the organization, however it hasn't been completely integrated and several important elements are missing. Both leadership and employees have a strong need and tendency toward green. The leaders would like to involve and empower people which is welcomed by the employees, however the notion is challenged without important breakthroughs on previous levels.

The most oppressed level is Amber. The long term perspective is missing (amber breakthrough) which needs to be evolved in later stages to vision and purpose. There are some concurrent vision streams that leads to doubtfulness in decision making and in alignment of resources. The compensation system is also lacking basic structures and people do not understand how they can get ahead in their career and salary.

The orange level consciousness is missing the factual data about the health of teams, their efficiency and quality of the accountability. Without a well implemented metrics system the often changing feelings and perceptions are leading the way and is hard for people to align with the goals.

If the focus change to evolve these missing breakthroughs, the Green wellbeing will expand its roots and began to flourish.

Interviews

- Chris Goodwill - CEO
- Tom Wen - HR manager
- Carl Sendwey - CTO
- Robert Prosky - PM
- Hugo Bellucy - senior designer
- Paul Denmark - customer service
- Franz Kreutz - engineer
- Milona Holmar - sales

Spiral Dynamics and Reinventing Organizations

„The psychology of the mature human being is an unfolding, emergent, oscillating, spiralling process, marked by progressive subordination of older, lower-order behaviour systems to newer, higher-order systems as man’s existential problems change.”

Dr. Clare W. Graves (1914-1986)

The spiral dynamics merged with integral psychology is a well suited model for analysing organizations.

More details:

<http://spiraldynamics.org/faq-basics/>

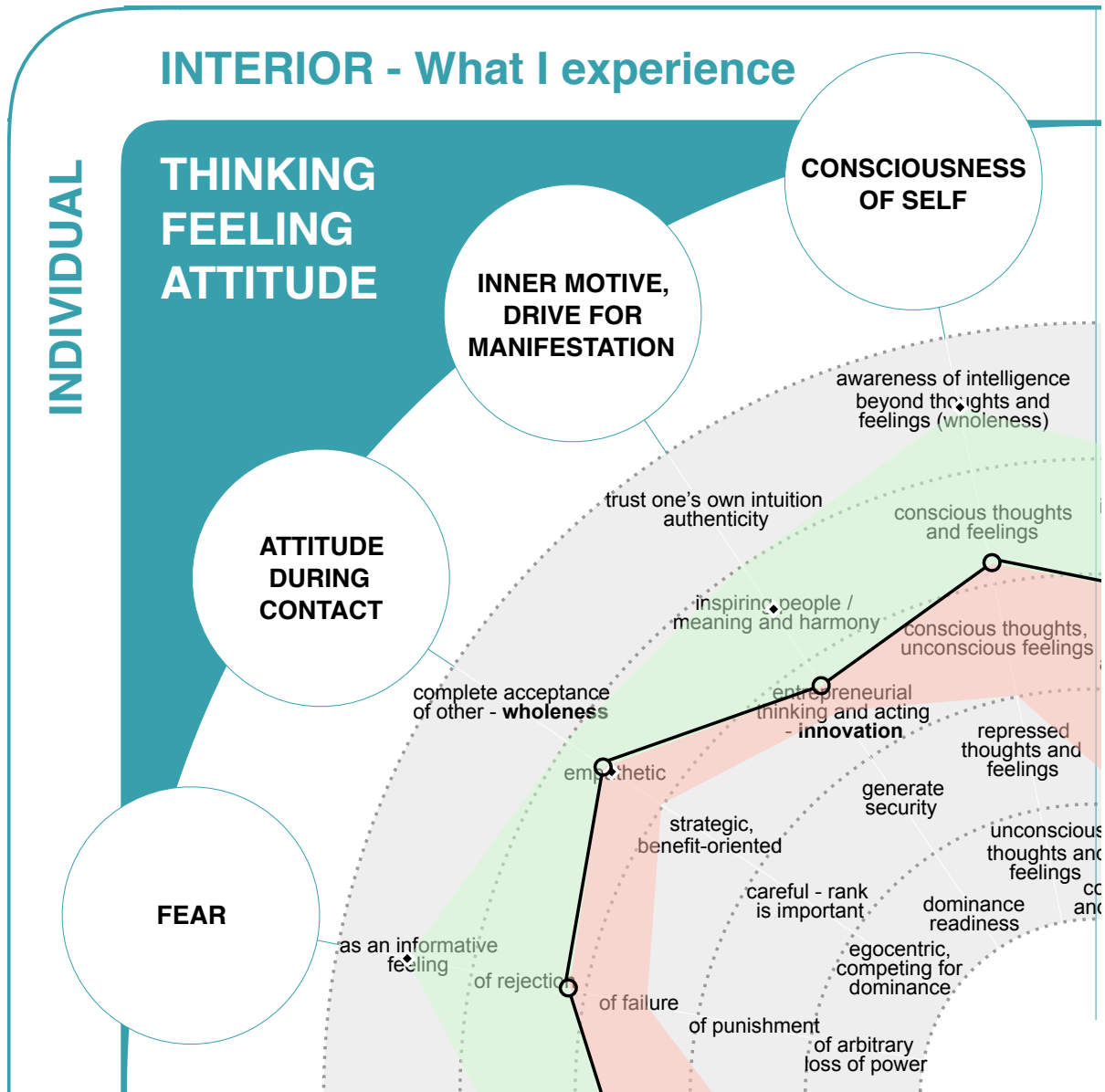
Frederic Laloux: Reinventing Organizations book was used as a reference for creating the map. The book has beautiful examples and a framework for the levels (colors) and development lines.

In a Reinventing Organizations point of view, the BestOrg is in mostly in orange level, but it’s not a well developed orange.

The organisation is built by heterogeneous teams, holding many different worldview. This base is great for a creativity but only when there is enough freedom for everyone to hold their own worldview.

After personal interviews we have the following comments:

Thinking, Feeling, Attitude



Strengths:

This quadrant is BestOrg’s real strength, the maturity of the employees. It can hold together very diverse population yet everyone feels accepted and welcomed in the BestOrg family. This is the manifestation of diversity at its best.

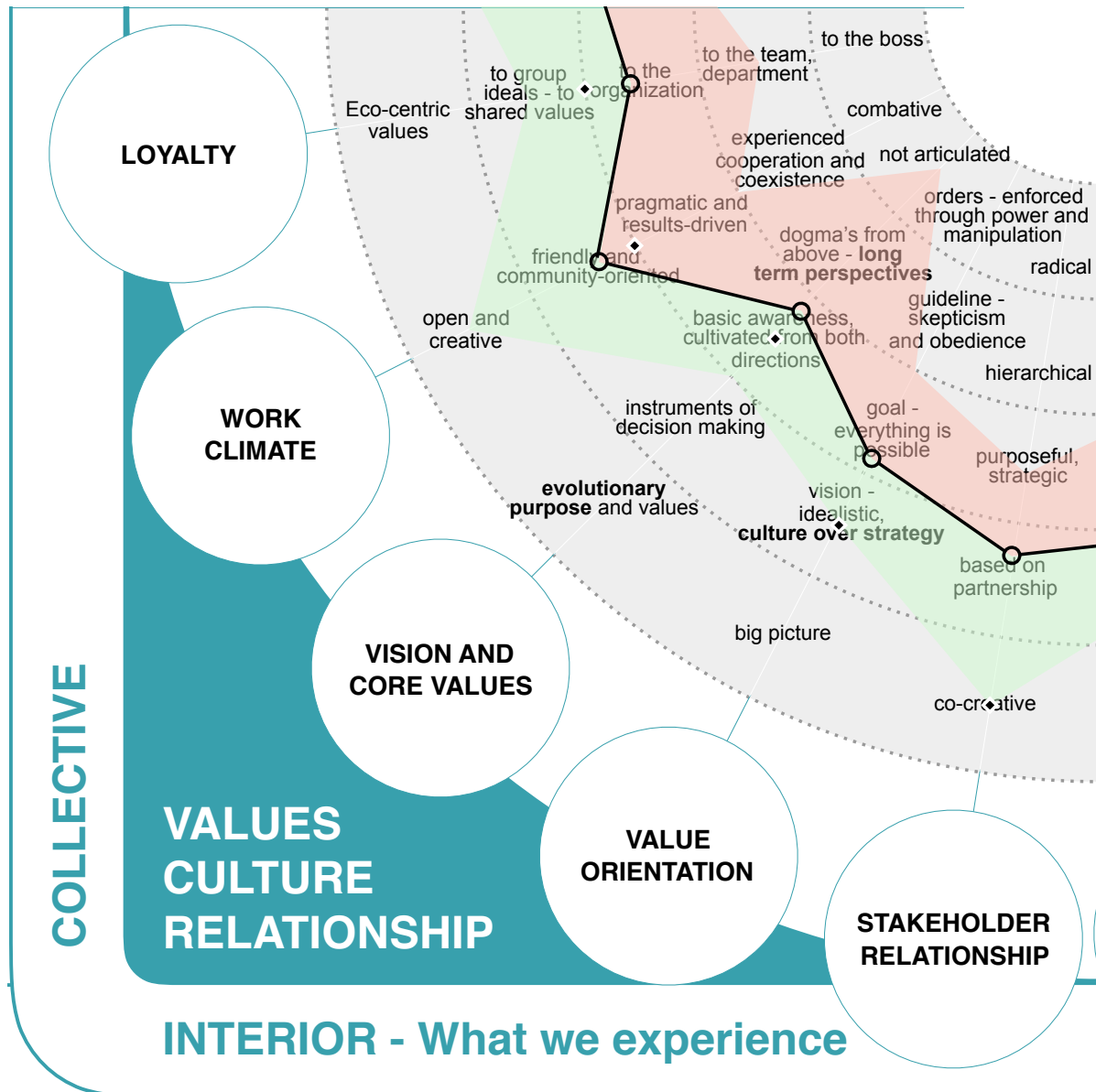
Difficulties:

Not all parts of BestOrg have been able to experience success as a team or success as individual. Due to this people’s engagement is lagging behind ...

Quotes:

- *People are quite articulate, able to talk about feelings as well*
- *I've seen many teams, where there's no fear of rejection, not the others either, however, certain individuals are in red (minority), but it is a worrying trend*
- *Some people aren't mature enough to communicate feelings*
- *People are fearful of that they would lose respect among the team*
- *We are innovating, but I don't feel like making the world a better place*
- *Everyone has a fear of failure, but when there's a mess up people are afraid of that other people will not want to work with them on other projects*

Values, Culture, Relationship



Strengths:

The work climate is very friendly, open and community oriented, people are even keep in touch outside of work. This climate is the cohesion force of the community. The people love to work here.

Difficulties:

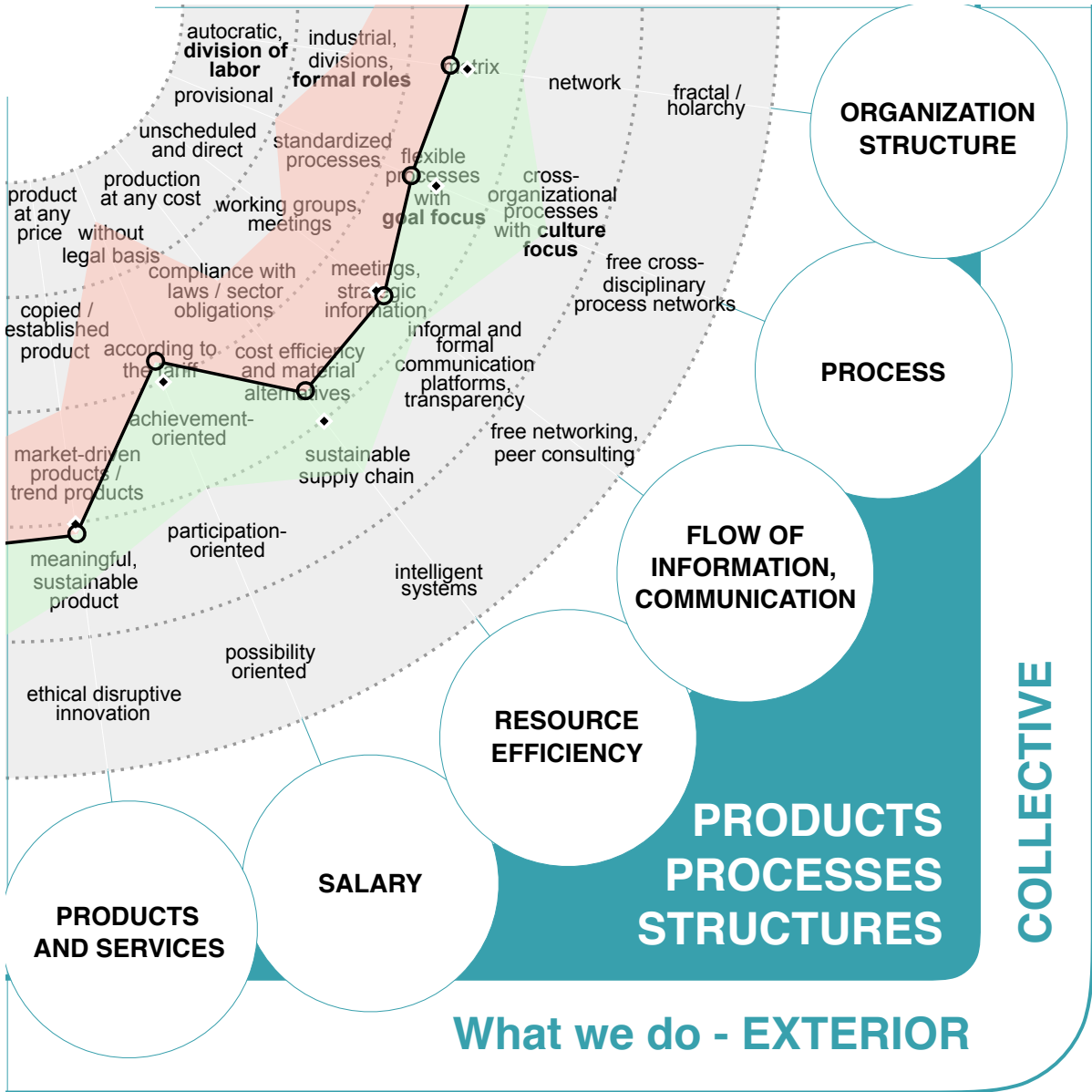
The vision is unclear, even for the C-level leadership and this is the source of many tensions. Core values has been communicated recently, yet no-one knows about them or uses them. This has significant impact on the loyalty level as well.

People are blocked from identifying with the organizations shared values that would unleash another level of passion in people.

Quotes:

- *I have no clue about the vision and values*
- *We are loyal to our own team, not higher, because of the communication problems*
- *The company is organic, the senior management just started to understand the vision or importance of it*
- *People have a strong association with the company, values are not clear yet so they cannot associate with that*
- *I don't think anyone really knows the real company values*
- *Self-manifested culture, there's no cultivation of culture*
- *Until now we have been trying to stay alive, we have not been chasing our vision*

Structures, Processes, Products



Strengths:

This quadrant shows a very strong orange flavor and there are many initiatives touching the green consciousness by running meetups. The share options shows also green touch since everybody in the organization has received it, however they seem to not understand why they received it or on the process that defined the amounts.

Difficulties:

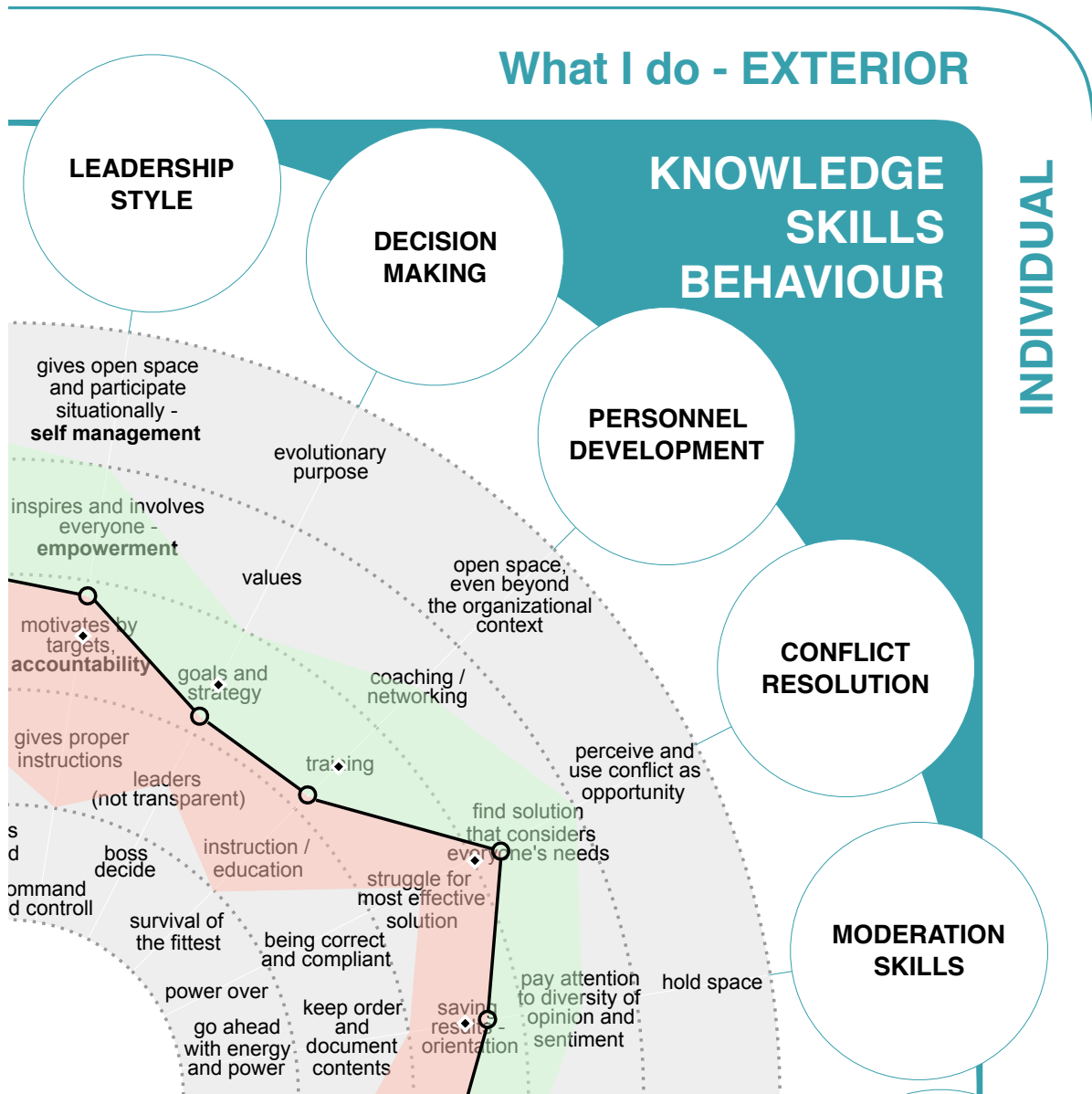
This quadrant overall lagging behind compared to the interior side that influences how people perceive and engage with BestOrg.

The largest tension in this quadrant seems to be around the salary. People are confused about their salary and what they can or need to do to be able to receive a pay raise. They are not even sure if there are pay scales in the organization.

People seems to be frustrated with communication from C-level leadership, however this might not be the real tension. Since vision is not clear, communication cannot be clear and aligned.

Quotes:

- *I don't really know what I could do for a raise (salary increase), its not officially guided*
- *I don't know about the pay scales but we have received some share options, I don't understand the reason for it and how the amounts were decided*
- *Promotion based on hard work, I don't think we do have the salary scale though. Salary is a negotiated with the boss.*
- *We are hiring people who are smarter than us, even so that they can make us feel uncomfortable*
- *When we need people we hunt them down*
- *During the summer we had two interns and one of them turned out so well that he stayed with us in September*
- *There's no strategic information shared with us*
- *You need to fish for information to know what's happening*
- *There are processes, our department is the most organized, the rest is fucking wild west*
- *We create trendy products, that in some cases are meaningful*
- *As a company we are doing great things*



Strengths:

Due to the maturity of the people at BestOrg as human beings the facilitation and the exceptional conflict resolution show strong and healthy orange and green signs.

Difficulties:

There's a wish in both management and in the people for empowerment, however currently the integration of goal oriented leadership and accountability is missing. This shows up in the quotes where people expressed that BestOrg does not measure things.

The above mentioned strengths are not the result of the constant cultivation of these skills in BestOrg's workforce, rather they are skills that were brought in from outside by talent acquisition. Personal development is lagging behind significantly.

Many people expressed that they do not understand the reasons behind decisions that has a significant impact on engagement.

These difficulties are related to the lack of clear vision.

Quotes:

- *We were told that there's a training budget, but we have not been able to get training approved. We learn as we go and help each other out. We also hold internal trainings for the juniors to get them up to speed.*
- *We don't have trainings, we have lunch and learn, learning on the job*
- *We are showing to other teams how something could be done easier, but if they are not receptive we give up the idea*
- *The leaders are making the decisions, sometimes we understand the reasons, sometimes we don't*
- *We know the decisions are based on goals, but we still don't understand the reasons*
- *The overall directions are not set - we really want people to have freedom to bring their ideas, and have flexibility*
- *Transparent decisions, but that is only true for our office*
- *We invite lots of people to meetings so we can be effective*
- *I went to numerous conferences, I personally train my guys, they don't go to trainings*

Insights

Purpose

There is no one in BestOrg who can articulate it's purpose. Not even the senior leaders. It's a major issue since it means that the amber level is not stable - the long term perspective is missing. The leaders are holding different visions. We have identified 4 main ideas which could be developed as a purpose.

Without the clarity of the purpose it's hard to set goals and targets. Without targets, the accountability and alignment of resources is difficult.

Quotes:

- *I don't think that we are working on a meaningful product which brings value in peoples live. Our services and products are good for our business clients, who can ask for more money.*
- *The goal of the company is very different than what my department is working on. The main goal, product or service was the XY platform. Somewhere along the way the new client came in.*
- *There is NO alignment in our purpose and projects:*
 - *There is high revenue and learning but it's not our purpose!*
 - *We would need a different structure to follow the purpose*
 - *The vision changed a lot, we would need to be more strict to it, there aren't enough people*
 - *I don't see divisions with purpose. Here we are only working to fulfill the clients needs no matter how.*
 - *I imagine is to grow the business and sell it for big bucks*
 - *Unspoken vision: Culture of the business where you are working on super interesting stuff with good smart, people*
 - *NASDAQ listing*
 - *We are doing things, without clear understanding without clear direction*
 - *Build great products that make difference in people's life. I haven't heard that though.*
 - *Purpose and vision? Very weird question*
 - *Disconnection between the leadership of the company and what we do*
 - *To be sold*

Identity

BestOrg has no understanding of its own identity yet. There is a growing demand to answer the big questions (and their intersection): What are we deeply passionate about? What drives our economic engine? In what we can be the best in the world?

Quotes:

- We need to focus on how we position our products on the market
- We need to focus on less products
- We need to say more no than yes as we grow
- Become a product company
- Our long term perspective? hahaha, it depends of who you ask.
- The purpose is changing every year
- Until now we were trying to stay alive, we didn't chase our vision

Values

BestOrg's main values are hidden in its culture. There are many great talents, full of potential who likes to work and play together. The organisation is giving a playground and space. Currently it's really hard to find the identity of the organisation, since it's not expressing and cultivating the common values. The hidden common values are not giving a cohesive force and it will be a much bigger issue when the company is going to scale and grow.

The largest division is living near to a strong client culture and if it can't strengthen its boundaries - it could lose its identity completely.

Quotes:

- *Humanity, mastery, sometimes it felt like in high school, really friendly*
- *BestOrg way of looking things, trying to view things from more point of view*
- *Pioneering, not afraid to fail, collaborative, honesty, humble, no egos, have fun - we could be less humble in some situations, sometimes we help them without reward we could be more brave*
- *Focus, Delivering the product, Integrity, Honesty*
- *I've never been in an environment that is so empowering in all roles*
- *Fantastic team spirit, we do operate almost as a family*
- *Very wide lens, underlying pin is finding patterns to data and find value of it and bring it to the customers*
- *Strong company identity, culture, Respect, Valuing people, Friendly*
- *The values? I feel they are not really aligned with the business; technically strong company, contributing to open source community - with strong responsibility to the 3rd world. Its part of our purpose but its not visible. Contribute to communities for a greater good. When I recruiting it's really important.*
- *Diversity (not just people, but talents from many place), cultural innovation*
- *I'm not aware of any core values defined.*
- *I don't think anyone really knows the real company values*
- *Being fair - not just to ourselves but, inclusiveness, quality of work, value a customer and value the people - honesty*
- *Positive and encouraging environment, pushes to be better, everyone can contribute*

Bottlenecks

Without targets and goals it's hard to spot the bottlenecks. The efficiency is simply not an issue, which BTW is The issue. However we spot several perceived

bottlenecks, and that usually means poor communication and the lack of common picture. The plain is flying blindly...

Quotes:

- *Feedbacks, assets (getting designs and approval), whenever there's delay it is mostly because of the client*
- *Development and slow delivery is the major bottleneck*
- *We need more QA, the team lost two projects because the lack of QA resources*
- *Sheer amount of work. Don't have Dev, QA, devops, etc...*
- *The client is not having clear idea what they need, sometimes the teams are not speaking*
- *Sales are done by myself*

Communication

Many leaders were referring that communication is the greatest issue in BestOrg. It might be true but it's sometimes just the tip of the iceberg. The underlying reason could be the lack of clear, common goals. It is very hard to decide what and how to communicate without know the why.

Quotes:

- *We changed to the product company -> Big change, reorg -> Change could have been communicated better (Somebody comes up to you and says I don't know who is in charge of this) Better -> They have been very honest, there should have been an all hands meeting with the announcement of going product company. Emails have gone out, but there should have been an in person presentation*
- *When I joined I sensed the lack of or the not efficient collaboration (communication)*
- *Double work. Ideas don't go overseas*
- *We are separated from the client*
- *Strategic informations are not shared*
- *You need to fish for information to know what's happening*
- *There's a vision, but it has not been filtered down to people*
- *Our team has a lot more buckets of info that does not get shared*
- *There's lack of communication, where the company is heading regarding my division*
- *There's lack of communication between higher management, and the people. Lots of changes and they were not communicated well*
- *Vision and values? We hear about these things, but there's no communication back and forth on it*

- *I would need coherent communication from the company about the vision (it does happen).*

Agile

The Agile mindset is one of the most effective transformative path to develop an organization systematically, if and when it is taken seriously. The rhythms and the retrospectives are the main structures of the organisational learning. The retrospectives need to solve real tensions and the teams needs to be responsible of bearing and solving their tensions. In case of BestOrg there's an affection towards Agile and some Agile technics, but the company is not Agile. In the big client division the excuse is the strong (anti-agile) client. On the other side the Agile is simply not underlined as a course of action.

Quotes:

- *It's not really Agile, but it's a bit different here. Weekly or every two weeks we shows our efforts.*
- *We are trying to be agile and try to run sprints. We need to break down the work better. We should test while development is happening not just at the very end.*
- *It has been developing. There's a need for it. But until we are just doing whatever our big client want only waterfall is possible. We'd ned to change how we work with the client.*
- *Not true agile, it is BestOrg agile*
- *We don't do frequent releases, but we are planning to change this*
- *All projects were chaos and were run differently*
- *We have hybrid group between waterfall and agile*
- *Last week a Scrum Master joined our team so he can do the management*
- *We'd need mid term goals from which we could alter if needed, but the ad-hoc running around is not agile*
- *Quasi agile, and its shifting, we are quite disciplined*
- *There are some part of the business where they use agile, but I'm not sure how much it is the proper process*
- *We are trying to adapt SCRUM, things delivered in sprints, we have scrum masters*
- *I'm impressed with Agile - Boehm spiral agile prototypes, we tried to go agile but we don't know how to*

Leadership

BestOrg is a young company with a strong growth potential. The friendly and creative leadership is not enough on this scale. The leaders are becoming too far from the edges and in this phase they need to do an unpleasant job of bringing their creative energy into building effective structures and processes.

Decision making

The decision making is not transparent and clear. This isn't just a perception of the edges, but it is the feeling on the top as well. The leaders are trying to involve people but its hard without clear goals.

Quotes:

- *There are some forced decisions from above*
- *It's conflicting things, lot of our projects are decided by the leaders, relationship led decisions...*
- *Sometimes we don't have targets, but they are still involving us in decisions*
- *The leaders decide but we don't understand their decision*

Tools and frameworks

The lack of strategy is sensed in choosing tools and frameworks. The fluid and continuous change in every level is hard to follow and is hard to assess.

Quotes:

- *Framework as common sense - we don't have to many rules, everything is common sense*
- *We do have written processes, we try to follow them, but we sometimes go around them. At the beginning I found them useful. I use them less and less*
- *The task or job handovers are risky, we would need a system for this*

Goals, targets, performance, metrics

The are no signs of measuring performance or any aspect of the work. The usage of metrics is an important breakthrough in orange level because it extends

the senses of the organization and give clear vision on tendencies. In healthy orange level the metrics ecosystem is the tool for self assessment too - which can lead to real green empowerment.

Quotes:

- *There is massive delay in assessment and our work*
- *We have quarterly reports from C-level executives*
- *There is no metrics for effectiveness*
- *Processes were not too good, we are very slow in delivery, because we want to deliver something unique*
- *I don't quite understand how we measure things, I haven't seen any kind of metrics*
- *How do we measure effectiveness? Honestly, terribly. We don't measure anything. Terrible at celebrating success. We burn people out. We are so blinded by the next thing that we are blind to see the great things we have achieved*
- *My performance is based on an official customer feedback, but its not fair because the big client feedback is biased*
- *Macro level - purely financial basis – revenue to keep the machine going forward*
- *I don't quite understand how we do that. I haven't seen any kind of metrics*
- *There's no formal process. WE are just passionate*
- *Goals and strategies are communicated, but we are not aware of it. No KPI, Sometimes decision are not transparent*
- *We have clear business plan and revenue plan*
- *Main one is on time delivery, then we can bill on time and we can avoid the shit storm coming*
- *Quality of delivery, we don't have metrics, but we can have a generic feel of how many bugs are coming in*
- *Technically we supposed to have goals set up. We don't review or update them*
- *We don't have any metrics - we just need to hit our deadlines, sometimes we measure the number of bugs*

Learning organization

The people are really talented and learning by themselves, but they don't get too much help from the company.

Quotes:

- *I believe we have a training budget but I don't see this happening yet*
- *We were told that there's a training budget, but we have not been able to get training approved. We learn as we go and help each other out. We also hold internal trainings for the juniors to get them up to speed*
- *We need more knowledge sharing, we are doing work what is already done*
- *You don't get feedback where you need to grow, etc...*
- *There is planned professional training and we are thinking about communication trainings as well*
- *If you make a mistake, nobody is going to shout at you, they will ask how we can improve. But still blaming happens a lot*
- *There are trainings, there's budget for it, you are encouraged to speak up and say that you need training*
- *High acceptance of failure, massive desire to serve the team, we have sometimes retrospectives, constant thrive for improvement*

Planning, requirements, estimation

Quotes:

- *Lack of planning is the source of the issue*
- *Without any kind of planning we just start to implement*
- *Documentation was really strange. Big client wants it upfront but it can be only created once the product is built since it is full of screen shots*
- *We get the work ad-hoc in very small chunks and it is hard to create any kind of sprint plan or team work*
- *Too many small pieces of work and everyone is working on different things*
- *We estimate only on large scale, 1 man 1 week, Estimations are not recorded*

Tensions

Quotes:

- *Client perception: quite agile, pioneering, thinking, frustrated about inconsistency of delivery, too long delivery*
- *Clear strategy which doesn't change, and help - different projects and we need to be more focused*

- *The company does not understand the purpose of testing*
- *QA contractors - lack of technical knowledge, however they are still being supported*
- *Technical competency is not acknowledged. I feel that we are being utilized only because of the low cost. If that's true the gap is going to grow further*
- *People leave because of the compensation. One of our colleagues received a 50% higher offer for the same position in a different company.*
- *Communication where we can avoid conflict. Not to confront, not to tell them that they are wrong, instead communicate around it.*
- *People are available regardless of their title and you don't need to be senior level leader to make a mark. You get noticed for these changes*
- *C level: process, communication flow optimal, there are too many formal meetings, two sides of business tensions*

Organization development top list

1. Work on your purpose, vision, long term perspective. Make it simple. Make it count. And then use it as vehicle of decision making. (medium)
 - 1.1. U.process/Theory U by Otto Scharmer - MIT
 - 1.2. Vision in Action (by Christopher Schaefer)
2. Choose a transformative and integral framework, dig deeper into it and don't let it go for at least 2 years (big)
 - 2.1. Agile, Boehm spiral model, Learning org, Open participatory org, Reinventing Org, Management 3.0, Tribal leadership, Oz principle
3. Implement a goal setting and alignment system (medium)
 - 3.1. OKR (Objectives and Key Results by Google and Intel)
4. Raise your awareness by implementing a metrics ecosystem (big)
 - 4.1. Graphite, Grafana, Kibana...
 - 4.2. Learn from Management 3.0
5. Learn retrospective, accountability facilitation (middle)
 - 5.1. Fun retrospective by Paulo Caroli
6. Revise compensation system, clearly communicate pay scales, schedule and process of promotion
 - 6.1. Management 3.0
7. Establish training policies and allocate the necessary budget and time to cultivate employees