TOOL: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CREATING THE "INITIAL CONCEPT"

USES/APPLICATION AREA

This questionnaire can be used to support the creation of an 'initial concept' for the change. It offers project leaders and change facilitators a wide selection of topics, each of which can be 'queried' in the respective context. These questions can be asked in different settings (in interviews, online surveys, workshops, conversations) and allow diagnoses to be made of certain systems, processes, and conflict situations, etc. with relevant stakeholders, department heads and project leaders either at the beginning of or later on in a project. If an online questionnaire is chosen, where this seems necessary or useful, we recommend using online survey tools such as SurveyMonkey, Menti, or LimeSurvey.

SHORT DESCRIPTION

The project leader or change facilitator can identify the most important associations without much effort by using a good questioning technique. Questionnaires must be used with a defined goal in mind and be adaptable; otherwise, their use can result in irritation and rejection. Some examples of appropriate questions are provided below, but this list does not claim to be exhaustive.

QUESTIONS ABOUT CHANGE:

- What triggered/what were the reasons for the change?
- How will these reasons be communicated to the staff?
- What objectives will be met by making the change?
- Which values are associated with the change?
- Which organisations need to be considered during the change?
- Which topics need to be addressed with respect to the change, and can working groups be formed to discuss these? If so, who might take part in these groups?

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- Who would view the change as positive or neutral, and who would view it as negative? (This information should be used carefully, as it should only be shared with a small group of people.)

- What resources are available (budget, team members, skills, results from other projects, decisions, experiences, etc.) that can help to achieve the objectives?

- What obstacles and problems have been identified that are currently still preventing the objectives from being achieved?

- Can the known obstacles already be described in enough detail?

- Which positive aspects of the current situation must remain the same and may not change under any circumstances?

- Which positive aspects of the current situation are expected to change?

- Once the project has been successfully completed, what will need to happen next, and what will no longer be available?

- What minimum criteria must be fulfilled to achieve the objective so that the project can be deemed a success?

- What budget, deadline, and performance targets are non-negotiable or are there any tolerance limits?

- What are the requirements regarding how the measures should specifically be implemented?

- What other specifications are already known and must be considered in any case?

- What might be the effects on the target group (e.g. work processes, tools, organisational structure, culture and values, other)?

- Who defines additional non-negotiable framework conditions?

- Have similar projects been carried out in the past? If the answer is yes: What worked well/poorly at that time?

- Assuming the project was completed successfully, what exactly did you do to ensure that?

- What position are the stakeholders in today, and how do we approach them? Are they aware of the current pressure to act or do they need to be invested with a "sense of urgency"? What expectations and fears might be expected due to the previous experiences?

- Is there a clear idea of what needs to be achieved? Has the rectorate/steering committee/other committees reached a firm consensus about the objectives? Are these objectives also clear and attractive to the staff and middle management and ideally to the work council?

- Does the project team have the willpower to change something? Do we know who is sceptical?

- How will the management team, work council, and staff be informed and involved?

QUESTIONS ABOUT OBJECTIVES AND RULES

- What are the objectives of the higher education institution? What mission/philosophy supports these objectives? What makes up the CI of the university?

- How are the interactions among the individuals and people on different levels officially regulated? (structure/process organisation)

- What unofficial rules exist?

- How effectively are the official rules actually followed?

- What effects do the unspoken rules have?

- What may not be discussed in the system?

- How and for what are staff rewarded (recognition, career, money, etc.)?

- Why and how are staff punished (criticism, career blocking, etc.)?

- How freely can you talk about what you see, hear, and think?

- What do you do when you disagree with something?

- How are the following action areas regulated: information, communication, cooperation, decision-making, disputes, conflicts, hierarchy?

QUESTIONS ASKED TO CLARIFY STATEMENTS, BEHAVIOUR, AND TRANSACTIONS/BEHAVIOURAL QUESTIONS

- Who are the 'key players'?

- How and in what way do you display this behaviour?

- What distinguishes their behaviour?

- How can you tell that…?

- What role does X play?

- What exactly do you do when...?

- How exactly is this displayed?

- What decision-making processes are followed in the team?

- What characterises the leadership style? Who are the key decision-makers?

- What steps are you taking to...?

- Which tools do you choose to...?

DISTINGUISHING QUESTIONS

- For whom is this a bigger problem?

- Who seems more worried?

- Who would be most pleased if...?

- Who has the greatest influence?

- How do your approaches differ from those of others?

- On a scale of 1 to 100, how strong is your interest?

- What do you consider to be the highest priority?

- How much do they agree?

QUESTIONS ASKED TO ALTER THE POINTS OF VIEW/HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS

- Suppose...?/ Imagine...

- Assuming that...?/ Assuming the case...

- What would happen if...?

- How would it affect...?

CIRCULAR QUESTIONS

- What would your colleague say if you had lunch with your boss?

- How much does... (the outsider but person participating in the process) influence our assumption?

- What do others think about our problems/activities?

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- What does your colleague say? They know them both.

- How does the colleague react when the boss acts like this?

- What does your supervisor think about the conflict between...?

FUTURE ISSUES

- What ideas do you have about developing your future cooperation?

- What tasks do you expect in the future?

- What will guide your actions in the future?

- Who could benefit from this in four years' time?

- How do you imagine the cooperation will have developed?

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