

The  
**Organisational  
Orchestra™**

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A framework to create, and sustain, personal and organisational change

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## Background

This holistic framework for creating, and sustaining personal and organisational change is called **The Organisational Orchestra**. Developed over a number of years of research, intensive global client experience and application and 1 to 1 coaching, it has proven to be invaluable in helping individuals and leaders firstly understand the structure of both their own and their organisation/team's day to day operations, then create the attitudes, behaviours and conditions that enable them to measurably improve their effectiveness, performance, and results.

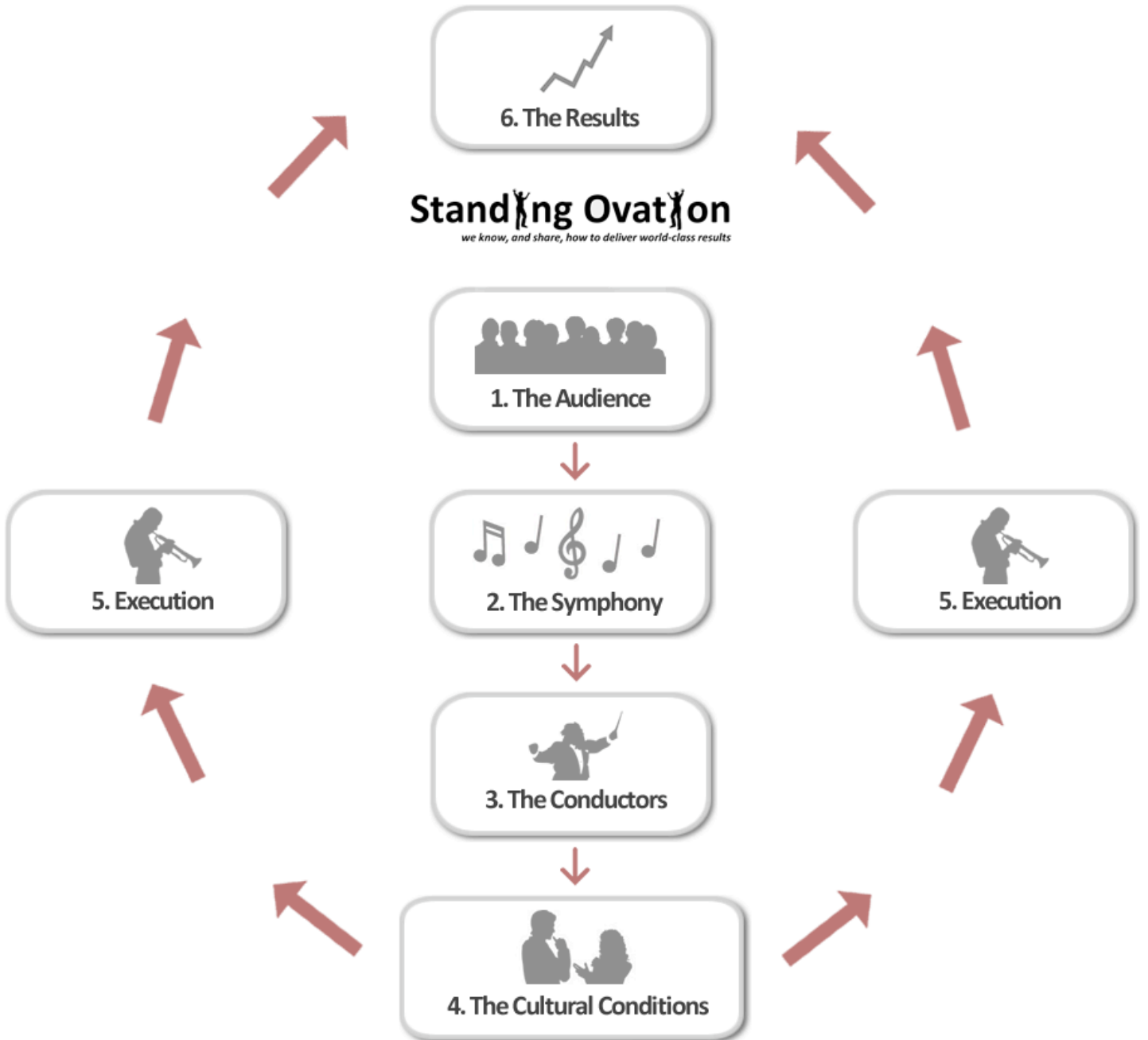
It is also a comprehensive framework representing both a *graphic tool* and a foundational *application process* to assist executives and other change leaders to better understand (a) how their organisations and the individuals and teams of their organisations operate and (b) how to improve overall effectiveness and to better develop total organisational alignment at every level.

## Introduction

To obtain different results as individuals, as a team or as an organisation, we must change, at some level, the way we think and operate. The Organisational Orchestra illustrates the nature of change within organisations, teams and individuals, and how various components must change interdependently to allow the collective behaviour of people to change and for results to make a significant and sustained improvement.

The key to diagnosing and developing personal, team and organisational effectiveness is to be able to see the "big picture", or to think systemically. This requires the understanding of critical day-to-day variables and, like an orchestra, how these variables interact with each other to produce results. Every person, every team, every organisation has ways of balancing the many demands for their time, attention, resources and energy and, depending on this balance, they deliver results. Think of this balancing as "alignment". Aligning is not just structure though. It is not always formal or conscious. This balancing of resources isn't always fixed. You may not do things the same way every time and your results may vary (even drastically) from month to month. The fact that certain results occur (and others don't) is evidence that some alignment or misalignment is at work within your 'orchestra'.

Let's briefly take a look at the Organisational Orchestra as a graphic tool, examining and defining each of it's elements and how they relate to each other. Then we'll overview the process of using **The Organisational Orchestra** as a tool for creating and sustaining effective personal and organisational change.



## Definition of terms used in *The Organisational Orchestra Framework*

**The Audience** - Like an orchestra, an individual, team or organisation exists to meet the needs of their entire 'audience' and to add value as recognised by them. Who are our audience? What are their needs? What is their priority? What do they want us to deliver? We must consistently gather and use 360 feedback data from all sections of our audience to ensure we completely understand them.

**The Results** – These are the 'noises we make'; these are the products, services, reactions, outputs and treatments offered by a person/team/organisation in order to meet the needs and expectations of their entire 'audience'. It is vital to understand that the results we deliver are, ultimately, judged by the reaction of our *Audience* and they will decide whether to give us a 'Standing Ovation'.

**The Gaps** – This is the shortfall between the desires, needs and expectations of our 'audience' - *as seen through their eyes* - and the current results that we are producing for them.

**The Symphony** – This is who we are as a person/a team/an organisation. Our Symphony is our Mission (primary purpose for existing), Vision (future state and direction), and Values (the chosen code of conduct driving fundamental behaviours), and should provide stability and constancy of purpose. These elements capture our aspirations. They answer such questions as: What is my/our unique contribution? What do I/we aspire to be in the future? What is my/our shared code of conduct in pursuing my/our mission and vision'?

**The Conductors** – These are the leaders and managers of our 'orchestra', those who are responsible for 'stepping up to the podium' and bringing to life the critical strategies and action plans required to achieve the desired results. The conductors are also those who's attitudes and behaviours will either release, or restrain, the highest levels of passion, talent, trust and commitment in each of the 'performers' they lead.

**The Cultural Conditions** – These are the dominant collective behaviours, and processes, of most of the people in the team/organisation. The way that people really operate is what produces results, whether they be good results or bad. Sometimes results are critically affected by subcultures within a team, an organisation or a person's daily life, such as the executive subculture, the staff subculture, family subculture or the subculture at the frontline of a business. Cultural conditions supply the processes that enable a person, team or organisation to function, to implement strategies. The conditions are the "glue" that holds the culture in place.

**The Execution** – When all is said and done, the individuals, teams and sections of your 'Orchestra', inspired by the 'conductors', need to consistently execute and deliver world-class performance if they are to produce the results desired by their 'audience'. A great result is worth a thousand theories.

## So, how does *The Organisational Orchestra* work?

The Organisational Orchestra Framework assists individuals, teams and organisations to develop effectiveness and create sustainable change as both a **Diagnostic Tool** and a **Solutions Tool**.

**As a Diagnostic Tool:** To specifically diagnose personal, team and organisational gaps/challenges before prescribing a solution

In this context, The Organisational Orchestra becomes a tool to *help you understand how you/your team/your organisation is performing right now.* It facilitates systemic thinking (i.e., viewing your personal, team or organisational approach as an ecosystem rather than just a collection of pieces). It illustrates the interdependent relationship between key performance and cultural elements, and also the cause-and-effect streams that impact results. Additionally, it assists in identifying key leverage points, those few elements that, when changed, could shift total performance drastically.

"All organisations are perfectly aligned to get the results they get." To make a lasting improvement in results, you must first understand how the key elements of your 'Orchestra' interact to produce the current results, then modify how these elements collaborate in order to positively impact those results. These changes in results are sustained by ensuring the cultural modifications are consistent with delivering the needs of your key 'audience'. The Diagnostic process begins with the 'Audience' and 'Results' and moves in REVERSE through 6 Steps;

**Step 1.** When diagnosing how effective current performance is, we begin by understanding the needs of **THE AUDIENCE**. Like an orchestra, a person/team/organisation can only remain effective so long as it meets the needs of it's key 'audience'. Ideally, these needs would be summarised in a 360-degree profile of how the audience sees that person/team/organisation. Without this, your own individual and/or collective perceptions might incorrectly assume what the audience want you to do for them.

**Step 2.** Here, we define **THE RESULTS** called for by our audience, and measure those results. This is not always easy. Most people, teams and organisations discover that they have overlooked, and haven't been measuring, some of the things that are very important to their audience. This step requires individuals, teams and the organisation to *define and measure exactly what it is the audience are saying they really want from you.*

**Step 3.** Next, we quantify the **GAPS** between (a) what the audience need and (b) the results you are actually executing at present as an individual/team/organisation. A quantitative gap analysis makes a convincing case for the need for change and reshapes your perceptions of how well you are doing. It also helps you understand what has to happen to ensure that everyone is aligned, and committed, towards the **EXECUTION** of 'that which matters most'.

**Step 4.** Now we move down to **THE CULTURAL CONDITIONS**. Culture is like air; it is everywhere we look and touches everything that goes on in the life of a person, a team and an organisation. It is both a cause and an effect of personal and organisational behaviour. The more we learn about people and organisations, the more elements of culture we discover. There are wildly differing behaviours, values, assumptions, perceptions, hidden agendas, rituals, heroes, climates, etc. All are elements of culture. Unfortunately, the definitions of culture that are the most widely used are also the most obscure to many leaders and managers and may cause many to shrug at the prospect of ever understanding or managing culture.

The Organisational Orchestra provides a more pragmatic definition of culture. When focusing on this stage of the framework, think of the cultural conditions as the work habits and practices that explain how the vast majority of the 'performers' of your 'orchestra' really operate every day; the habits and practices which define whether or not your people, both individually and collectively, are willing and able to truly contribute their highest efforts and greatest talents. When viewed this way, culture is not some mystical phenomenon with little relevance to effectiveness. On the contrary, it is a critical factor of organisational performance and something every leader and manager needs to understand. A cultural diagnosis is done by examining each result (good or bad) currently produced and asking a credible sample of people across the spectrum of the organisation the simple question "Why do you think things are the way they are?"

**Step 5.** The next step is to observe **THE CONDUCTORS** of the organisation, because the daily behaviours displayed by the individuals and teams of the organisation are derived as a direct result of the range of daily behaviours modelled by the conductors (leaders and managers) of the organisation. (*e.g., the way that some devote their time only to currently-defined projects; the way that some wait to be told what to do; the way that some talk to customers frequently and others don't, the way that some say, "That's not my job" when asked to help outside their prescribed task etc).*

We also take time to analyse, and understand, the quality of (and fit between) the *systems* and *processes* which the leaders and managers use, as the attitudes and behaviours of individuals and teams is largely determined by the processes of their working environment. And, at this point, a deeper level of culture comes in, because these systems and processes are chosen based on either (a) Organisational Directive/Strategy or (b) The Leader's individual Perceptions of how to lead effectively. To find out which of these is the driver, we first study the pattern of behaviours and processes above, then list the mission or strategies that are the logical drivers behind the pattern. If mission and strategy are not logical drivers, then we examine the perceptions the organisation are actually following. People's perceptions do not always correspond to the published or agreed upon strategy, just as the organisation's culture doesn't always match the formal organisation chart.

**Step 6.** Next, we compare **THE SYMPHONY** (mission, vision, corporate strategy) that the individual/team/organisation has in place with what we now know the needs of the audience to be, and note the areas where the individual/team/organisation are aligned and misaligned. This identifies the key areas in need of change; those elements that, when realigned, will drastically alter performance and results for the better.

**This completes the diagnosis process. Interestingly, we challenge you to check at the end of each step how the evidence uncovered has affected your perceptions. You may be surprised at how many things you find. These shifts in perception will give you a better understanding of why your results either fit or don't fit the audience needs, and you will better understand how the organisational elements interact to help or hinder the achievement of consistent, world-class results.**

**As a Solutions Tool: Turning ‘soft skills’ into ‘hard currency’** by designing, developing and delivering solutions that specifically and measurably narrow these gaps/eradicate these challenges and provide sustained change at personal, team and organisational levels.

In this context, The Organisational Orchestra becomes a tool to **help you plan how your organisation will perform tomorrow.** It builds on diagnosis by taking the leverage points for performance improvement and turning them into actions that will lead to better results.

**Step 1.** The process begins by working with an individual, team or organisation to re-design the **SYMPHONY** (Mission, or ‘unique contribution’, VISION or ‘future aspirations’, VALUES or ‘code of conduct’) to be fully reflective of the true needs and desires of every single member of your **AUDIENCE** and then help you inspirationally communicate the ‘big messages’ of your Symphony back to your key audience. Communicating your Symphony is **CRITICAL**, as it helps each member of your audience to gain a sense of ownership for, and commitment towards, helping you bring your symphony to life. Depending on whether your application of this framework is personal or organisational, your communication to your audience can range from an company-wide keynote speech to a personal family meeting, a big corporate launch to a quiet dinner. For one client, we communicated their Symphony in the form of a song. With another large corporation, we did it by creating their Symphony as a children’s fairytale and produced thousands of copies for every member of staff and their families!) The important thing is to make it memorable.

**Step 2.** Once the Symphony is perfectly aligned with the needs of, and passionately supported by, your audience, the next stage is to work with **THE CONDUCTORS** in your organisation. These are the leaders and managers of your ‘orchestra’, who will either release, or restrain, the highest levels of passion, talent, trust and commitment in each of the ‘performers’ they lead dependent on their attitudes and behaviours. With this in mind, we help design and develop the leadership beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, capabilities and competencies that are congruent with *the values of your Symphony*. The conductors are also responsible for creating and implementing the critical strategies, action plans and projects required to ‘bring your symphony to life’, creating the desired results of your audience. With this in mind, we help design the leadership strategies to be congruent with *delivering the mission of your Symphony*. The individual/team/organisation can then set measurable short-term goals, projects and business plans that lead to the achievement of strategy.

**Step 3.** What use are talent and passion if you can’t tap into them? With this in mind, the next step is to help your Conductors to create **THE CULTURAL CONDITIONS**. These are the systems and processes that will allow every ‘performer’ in every ‘section’ of your Orchestra to willingly, excitedly and ably offer their highest passions and talents towards your Symphony. Though there are many and varied systems and processes (and thousands of consultants who specialise in one or more of these elements), few organisations reach perfect alignment of processes; yet, the closer you come to perfection, the better your results will be. With this in mind, we have extensively researched the processes which, when aligned, create the most leverage towards positive, sustained change and improved results. The 3 critical processes we found (and subsequently specialise in designing and developing) are those of

**Communication:** The ability for individuals to communicate effectively across all areas of the organisation has profound influence in a culture. It eradicates misunderstandings, confusion, silo mentality and 'us and them' attitudes, and creates an environment where there is clarity of meaning, of purpose and of what needs to be done.

**Empowerment (or 'accountable freedom'):** 'You cannot hold people responsible for results if you supervise their methods'. Many cultures profess to 'empower' their people, right up until the moment that the individual gets something wrong, at which point, empowerment comes crashing down and blame culture begins. In other words, their culture has the illusion of empowerment, and people know it (which is why they are more inclined to say 'it's not in my job role' or 'it's not down to me' or 'I just do what I'm told'. A culture of empowerment (or accountable freedom) is a culture where individuals are neither abandoned nor micro-managed, but are given 'freedom within a framework'. They are free to be creative and innovative and, if they get it right, they get the plaudits. If they get it wrong, they take the responsibility and consequence and LEARN from it. The critical thing is that the people in the organisation must know, and believe, that the organisation are not paying it 'lip service'; that it is genuinely practiced.

**Impact:** Achievement leads to achievement. Success leads to success. By measuring the impact of everything you do (behaviourally, financially, emotionally,) people can see the impact they are having on figures, culture, the audience experience, their lives, their contribution. And, the more positive impact they see, feel and hear, the more they will drive to make an impact. Organisationally, measuring impact is critical, but not just on the easy things; a great culture needs to take time to identify and measure the hard things too.

Even with these cultural conditions in place, it is still the perceptions, attitudes, behaviours and capabilities of the 'performers' (individuals) and 'sections' (teams) at the frontline of your orchestra that will ultimately bring the culture to life and determine whether it succeeds. You will likely come up against some serious challenges such as: 'How do you earn trust in the midst of fear and cynicism?' 'How do you shape common direction when self-interests tend to conflict?' 'How do you add value for customers and shareholders in a bureaucratic world?' How do you do more with less so everyone wins?

Such questions remind us that individuals don't easily shift old attitudes and habits. This is why results are often hard to change. With this in mind, we look to work with the mass population of your organisation to overcome these challenges and ensure that their personal principles, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, capabilities and competencies are aligned and congruent with bringing alive your Symphony.

**Step 4.** Even the best personal, team or organisational symphony is nothing but a plan of intentions until you have delivered **THE EXECUTION**. The audience are waiting to hear the notes. Talking has to stop now. The notes **MUST** be played, and need to be played in the right way, at the right time, in the right place, at the right pace, at the right volume, in the right key, by the right instrument, if you are to achieve a 'Standing Ovation'. You, and others, must ensure that understanding, commitment, and action are cultivated from the inside out so your symphony is translated into the work place and delivered on the 'frontline'.

With this in mind, the final stage of applying The Organisational Orchestra is to design, implement and institutionalise a robust, operational process that helps individuals, teams and organisations to execute 'that which matters most', with clarity and excellence, every day and achieve world-class levels of performance.

## What does that look like though? How do I/we bring the above steps to life and create solutions that turn 'soft skills' into 'hard currency'?

The way in which we help individuals, teams and organisations apply The Organisational Orchestra framework differs each time, as it is driven by their individual and /or collective needs, issues and desired results. Some clients require help in most of the steps, some have an acute sense of the issues and engage us to help in a specific step of the framework. Typically though, the above steps would look something like this graphic representation when applied holistically;

