

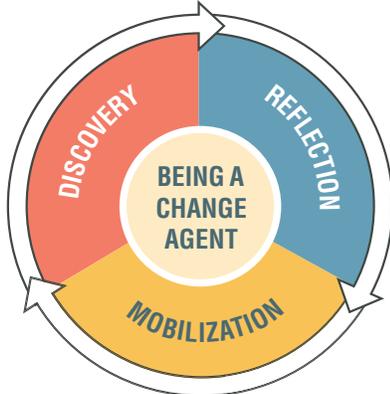


# Organization Effectiveness

Traditional change-management approaches see the organization as a machine: They assume that it operates logically, that change can be planned and executed by a small group of leaders from the top. This model of change is insufficient to the task facing businesses today.

Our approach is very different. We see the organization as a jazz ensemble — unique, complex, continuously adapting, and inherently human. Like jazz musicians, members of the organization must learn to balance control and improvisation, listen and learn from one another, interact with their “audience” and the outside world, and adapt the “music” as they go along.

At Aduro Consulting, we believe that successful organizational change is an iterative flexible process of learning and adaptation. Change agents — those who have achieved greater mindfulness and wisdom about the process of change — are adept at three critical skills: discovery, reflection, and mobilization. Our work centers on building these capabilities in individuals, teams, and entire organizations.



**DISCOVERY:** Change begins when an organization confronts the issues and challenges that stand in the way of its achieving its goals. Discovery is a process of inquiry in which members of an organization ask questions that reveal their current reality: What do we say we want, and what are we actually producing? Are we recognizing and building on our strengths? What are the unwritten rules and unspoken commitments that guide our behavior and form our culture? What issues have we been ignoring or avoiding?

**REFLECTION:** Ultimately change is about action. But without reflection, action is ineffective, even counterproductive. Reflection begins with individuals observing and acknowledging their perspective on an issue. This is the tough inner work necessary to understanding and confronting the values, beliefs, and assumptions that prevent a person or group from effectively tackling a challenge. Reflection produces insight, learning, resilience, creativity, and courage.

**MOBILIZATION:** Effective change demands intentional action focused on a worthy challenge. There are many ways to mobilize people, among them team development, dialogue, coaching, large-group forums, and education. But the most effective approaches share certain qualities: They point to long-term solutions rather than quick fixes; they enable difficult conversations, using discomfort to drive progress; they build and extend networks of relationships; they form more durable and adaptive organizational cultures; and they ultimately produce exceptional results.

## CLIENT SKETCHES

- **Creating a culture of courage**

- *Challenge:* The new CEO of a small health services provider was concerned about a lack of coordination and substandard service delivery at all levels of the company. She decided to introduce a rigorous performance management process, something she felt was sorely needed. Her goal was to create a “culture of courage,” an organization in which people felt comfortable giving feedback to and expecting high performance from one another.
- *What we did:* First, we developed an unconventional performance management process that focused more on coaching and giving (and accepting) feedback than on rating and score keeping. Then we designed and led workshops on coaching and feedback for every manager and supervisor in the organization, from senior team members to frontline team leaders. In addition, all employees attended a workshop on giving and receiving feedback in preparation for their first performance conversation.
- *Payoff:* For the first time in the company’s history, all employees met with their managers to discuss their performance. By equipping people with the language and skills needed to offer and receive feedback and to have open and candid conversations about goals and development needs, we contributed to a dramatic shift in the company’s culture.

- **From merger to synergy**

- *Challenge:* A large media corporation had merged two major staff functions. In addition to some historic animosity between members of the two organizations and a team dispersed across the United States, the new leader was feeling pressure from the combined organizations to decide on a new strategy and structure.
- *What we did:* In consultation with the new leader, we designed a three-day session that combined a new-leader assimilation (to defuse misunderstandings about the leader) with a large-group process that brought conflicts to light and introduced a method to create a shared vision and business plan for the combined organizations.
- *Payoff:* Once it was clear that the leader would not make all the decisions, work teams were formed and empowered to deal with six critical strategic issues that came to light during the session. The outcome was dramatic and sustained. Using teams to address key issues increased overall creativity and productivity. And trust in the function leader grew significantly as team members got acquainted with her collaborative style.

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*Martha Miser is founder and president of Aduro Consulting, LLC. Aduro Consulting, named for the Latin word meaning to “light” or “kindle,” specializes in leadership and change for purpose-driven companies, organizations that want to have an impact beyond the bottom line.*

*By disrupting things in a way that helps people think differently about themselves and their relationships inside their companies, our clients are more awake, more passionate, more human, and more focused — all of which leads to better business results.*

*For more information, please visit our website at [www.aduroconsulting.net](http://www.aduroconsulting.net)*