

Four-Frame Model

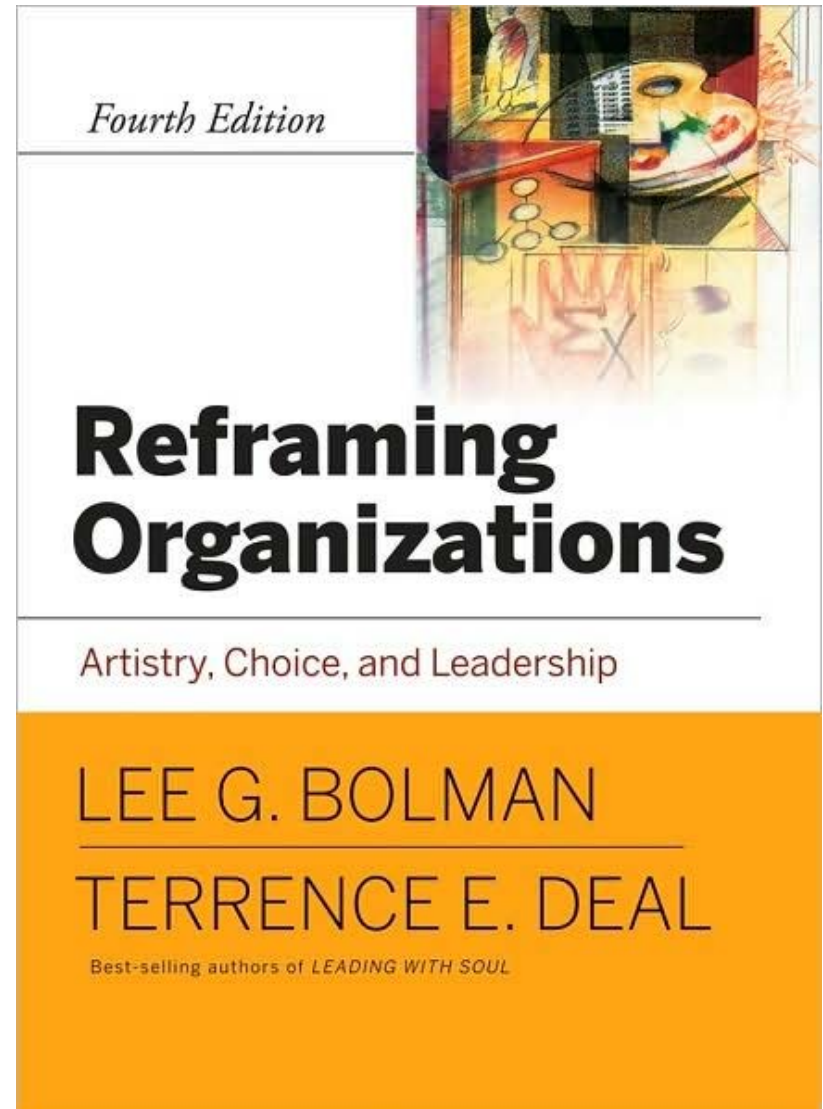


Reframing Organisations

Bolman & Deal identify four distinctive 'frames' from which people view their world - Structural, Human Resources, Political, and Symbolic.

Each frame comes with a range of concepts, metaphors and values which provide the scaffolding for organising raw experience of the world.

No one uses only one frame all the time, although people often show a preference for one or two frames.



Frames

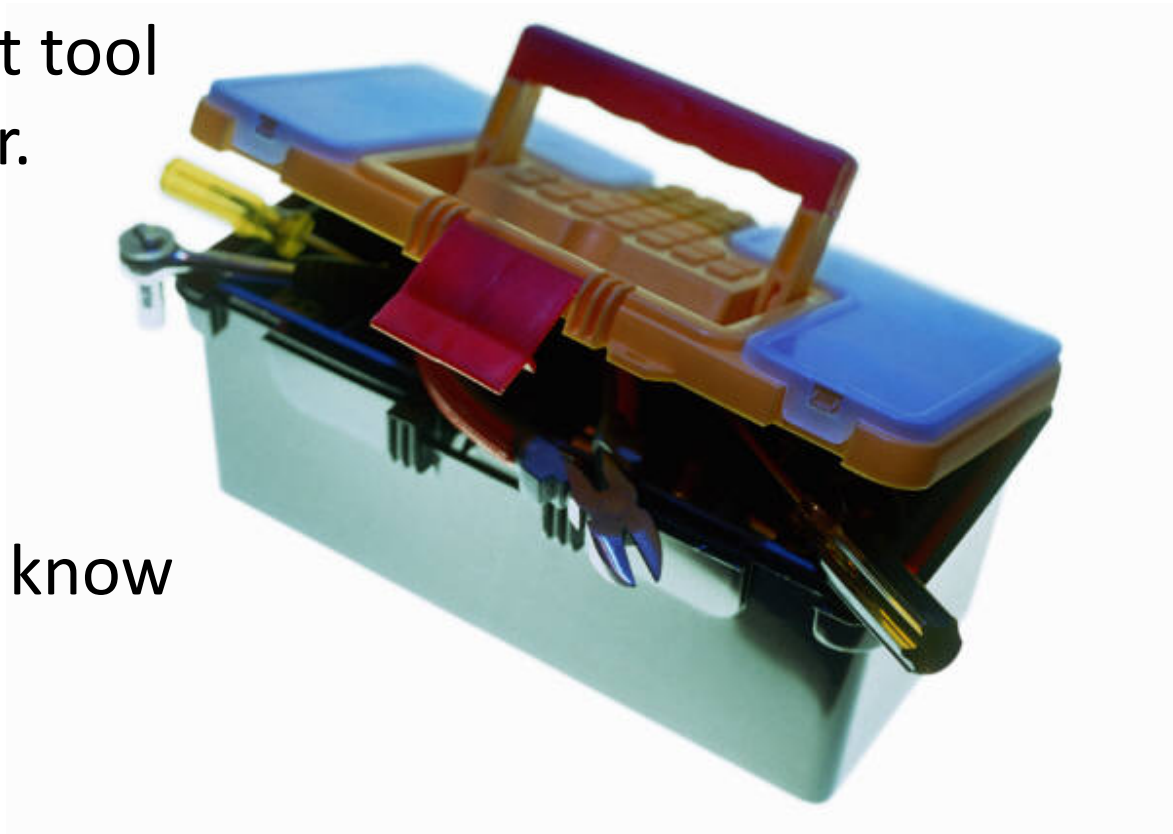
Lenses – focus, filter some things and allow others to pass through, help us order experience.



Frames

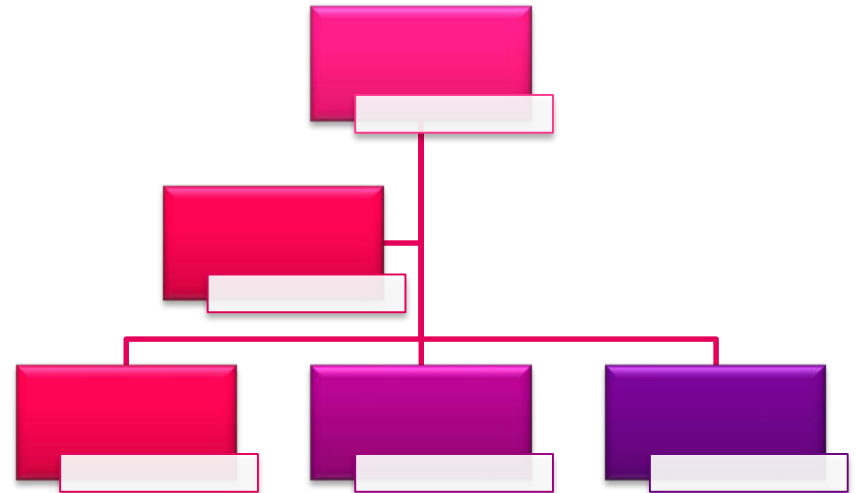
Tools – strengths and limitations. Wrong tool gets in the way, right tool makes the job easier.

Possess a tool – but know how to use it well.



Structural Frame

- Origins - sociology & management science.
- Goals, specialised roles, and formal relationships.
- Structures fit organisations environment and technology.
- Responsibilities, rules, policies, procedures.



Structural Frame

Problem arises when the structure does not fit the situation.



Human Resources Frame

- Organisations as extended family.
- Individuals with needs, feelings, prejudices, skills and limitations.
- Origins - psychology.
- Capacity to learn – and capacity to defend old attitudes and beliefs.



Human Resources Frame

Challenge is to tailor organisation to people – find a way for individuals to get the job done while feeling good about what they are doing.



Political Frame

- Origins - political science.
- Organisations as arenas, contests, or jungles.
- Different interests competing for power and resources.
- Rampant conflict – difference in needs, perspectives, and lifestyles.
- Bargaining, negotiation, coercion, compromise, and coalitions.



Political Frame

Problems arise when power is concentrated in the wrong places or is too broadly dispersed.



Symbolic Frame

- Origins - social and cultural anthropology.
- Organisations as tribes, theatres, or carnivals.
- Culture – rituals, ceremonies, stories, heroes, and myths.
- Organisation is theatre – actors play role while audiences form impressions.



Symbolic Frame



Problems arise when actors play their parts badly, when symbols lose their meaning, when ceremonies and rituals lose their potency.

Overview of the Four-Frame Model

	Structural	Human Resource	Political	Symbolic
Metaphor for Organisation	Factory or Machine	Family	Jungle	Carnival, temple, theatre
Central Concepts	Rules, roles, goals, policies, technology, environment	Needs, skills, relationships	Power, conflict, competition, organisational policies	Culture, meaning, metaphor, ritual, ceremony, stories, heroes
Image of Leadership	Social architecture	Empowerment	Advocacy	Inspiration
Basic Leadership Challenge	Attune structure to task, technology, environment	Align organisational and human needs	Develop agenda and power base	Create faith, beauty, meaning
Organisational Ethic	Excellence	Caring	Justice	Faith
Leadership Contribution	Authorship	Love	Power	Significance

Choosing a Frame

Question	Frame if answer is Yes	Frame if answer is No
Are individual commitment and motivation essential to success?	Human Resource, Symbolic	Structural, Political
Is the technical quality of the decision important?	Structural	Human Resource, Political, Symbolic
Are there high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty?	Political, Symbolic	Structural, Human Resource
Are conflict and scarce resources significant?	Political, Symbolic	Structural, Human Resource
Are you working from the bottom up?	Political	Structural, Human Resource, Symbolic

Reframing Organisational Process

	Structural	Human Resources	Political	Symbolic
Strategic Planning	Strategies to set objectives and coordinate resources	Gatherings to promote participation	Arenas to air conflicts and realign power	Ritual to signal responsibility, produce symbols, negotiate meanings
Decision Making	Rational sequence to produce right decision	Open process to produce commitment	Opportunity to gain or exercise power	Ritual to confirm values and provide opportunities for bonding
Reorganizing	Realign roles and responsibilities to fit tasks and environment	Maintain balance between human needs and formal roles	Redistribute power and form new coalitions	Maintain image of accountability and responsiveness; negotiate new social order
Evaluating	Way to distribute rewards or penalties and control performance	Process for helping individuals grow and improve	Opportunity to exercise power	Occasion to play roles in shared ritual
Approaching Conflict	Maintain organisational goals by having authorities resolve conflict	Develop relationships by having individuals confront conflict	Develop power by bargaining, forcing, or manipulating others to win	Develop shared values and use conflict to negotiate meaning
Goal Setting	Keep organisation headed in right direction	Keep people involved and communication open	Provide opportunity for individuals and groups to make interests known	Develop symbols and shared values
Communication	Transmit facts and information	Exchange information, needs, and feelings	Influence or manipulate others	Tell stories
Meetings	Formal occasions for making decisions	Informal occasions for involvement, sharing feelings	Competitive occasions to win points	Sacred occasions to celebrate and transform the culture
Motivation	Economic incentives	Growth and self-actualisation	Coercion, manipulation, and seduction	Symbols and celebrations

Reframing Leadership

	Structural	Human Resources	Political	Symbolic
Effective Leader	Analyst, architect	Catalyst, servant	Advocate, negotiator	Prophet, poet
Effective Leadership Process	Analysis, design	Support, empowerment	Advocacy, coalition building	Inspiration, framing experience
Ineffective Leader	Petty tyrant	Weakling, pushover	Con artist, thug	Fanatic, fool
Ineffective Leadership Process	Management by detail and fiat	Abdication	Manipulation, fraud	Mirage, smoke & mirrors

Reframing Change

	Structural	Human Resource	Political	Symbolic
Barriers to Change	Loss of clarity and stability, confusion, chaos	Anxiety, uncertainty, feelings of incompetence, neediness	Disempowerment, conflict between winners and losers	Loss of meaning and purpose, clinging to the past
Essential Strategies	Communicating, realigning and renegotiating formal patterns and policies	Training to develop new skills, participation and involvement, psychological support	Creating arenas where issues can be renegotiated and new coalitions formed	Creating transition rituals – mourning the past, celebrating the future

Four-Frame Model

- How do you see the four frames in your organisation/institution?
- What is the problem, and what is the situation in which it is embedded?
- Which frames are in play?
- Which frame(s) is most likely to lead to the desired change?
- How can the concepts, metaphors, and values of that frame be used to reframe the situation to resolve the problem?



Reference

BOLLMAN, Lee G. and DEAL, Terrence E. (2008). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership*. San Francisco, Calif, Jossey-Bass.

