



The Alignment Agenda

Structural communication improvement provides an opportunity to enhance individual, group, and organizational effectiveness.





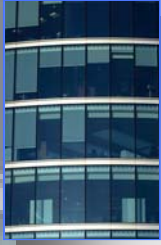
Executives and managers must receive information that is content-rich, well targeted and easily understood.

Francis Walsh's Alignment Agenda provides specific and insightful analysis of customer, client, and organizational communication characteristics.

It establishes appropriate communication standards and develops staff's skills that can be rapidly and effectively deployed.

The foundation of the Alignment Agenda is its use of the unique communication analytical methodology: Infra Language[®].

The Alignment Agenda ensures that information, analysis, and advice are provided in a manner that enhances organizational development.



Introduction

Understanding communication structures provides an analytical methodology that can define the characteristics of staff, teams, and organizations, as well as the effectiveness of their professional behaviours.

Every message that passes through an organization can be defined by its purpose, structure, content, value, and outcome. Individual, group, and organizational success can be enhanced by basing improvements on the appropriate role of the message provider, the form and content of the message and the intrinsic organizational value of the message and the outcomes that arise from it.

As an example, one element of the Alignment Agenda analysis provides a salient illustration of its significance.

Many organizations experience systemic inefficiencies through the failure of staff to perceive the significance of *purpose* as a foundation of communication. That lack of understanding causes message providers to become uncertain about their role, about the appropriate content and structure of their messages, about the value of their messages, and about the outcomes that messages should produce. The inevitable result is the inappropriate evaluation of messages' effectiveness.

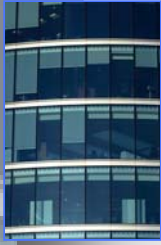


When dysfunctional behaviors persist, they increase the demands on senior staff, often raising the level of communication responsibility to just a few significant managers and executives. Sometimes, these managers must radically re-analyze and re-configure draft and informal messages to ensure they are relevant to and appropriate for senior decision makers, such as executives and board members.

Such top-heavy arrangements lead to less effective deployment of talent as staff members become increasingly detached from organizational aims and objectives. Eventually, this situation can lead to significant disruption of activities, reduction of staff morale, exaggerated workloads for managers and executives, and systemic breakdown of business operations.

Significant as it is, *purpose* is just one of a number of influential elements that comprise the Alignment Agenda analysis of internal communication. This measurement of organizational effectiveness provides a profound yet uncomplicated framework that highlights clear directions toward remedial activities.





The Alignment Agenda's Aim

The Alignment Agenda's aim to enhance the effectiveness of commercial organizations through improving internal communication provided by, overseen by, or directed at senior decision makers.

The Programs' Objectives

The Alignment Agenda's objectives are:

- to analyze the communication characteristics of message providers and receivers;
- to understand the communication roles of individuals, groups and the organization as a whole;
- to develop a set of standards to which each individual, group and the organization as a whole should adhere;
- to provide advice, support and professional development, where appropriate, to staff, managers, and executives; and
- to evaluate changes in the effectiveness of communication in relation to the Agenda's activities.





The Agenda's Implementation

1. Developing Understanding Through Analysis

Some organizations provide written and spoken messages in forms that have developed over years of experimentation, experience, and expectation. However, currently acceptable forms in which messages are provided are not always appropriate or effective. Business organizations sometimes find it difficult to reach ideal outcomes when communication is unmodulated, ill-formed, or inconsistent.

Managers and executives need to harness their staff members' skills, knowledge and experience through coherent and consistent communication. In this way, they will be more confident that commercial information, analysis, and advice are understood at all levels of their organization.

The Alignment Agenda provides a method of analyzing the purpose, structure, content, value, and outcome of communication developed within an organization.

Written, spoken and behavioural messages are defined and assessed within the context of their organizational function. This analysis is conducted with some individuals, with teams and with other formal and informal groups within an organization. Further, an organization's external clients and stakeholders are assessed using the same approach used to assess staff. This analysis is contextualized by reference to the mission, aim, and objectives of the organization, and to the directions dictated by strategic planning requirements.

The Alignment Agenda's analysis provides an insight into the communication character of the organization in relation to its functions. It may become clear that staff are deployed inappropriately in relation to their communication skills or proclivities. Similarly, some communication styles and formats require modification and some role perspectives need re-evaluation.



2. Creating the Framework for Change

To develop an influential alignment of communication within an organization, the most profound solutions often involve simple, low-cost changes to the formats, functions and staff perspectives of messages.

Further, staff members and managers sometimes need to develop a clear understanding of the characteristics of communication, and to work to improve their messages' effectiveness within the context of their usual activities.

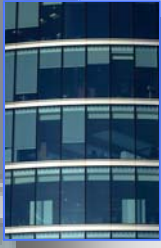
New perspectives on the content of messages, their formats, and methods of delivery, as well as the analysis of feedback responses, create the possibility of developing a set of systemic responses by staff and management. Further, the Alignment Agenda provides a framework through which experiential learning can bring about desired organizational change.

3. Measuring Success

Rigorous evaluation is vital to ensure certainty of outcomes. This is central to the success of the Alignment Agenda.

The Agenda's evaluation methodologies develop a high level of precision because they are based on specific changes to written and spoken communication that can be assessed before, during, and after implementation.

A rigorous, systematic approach to evaluation ensures that the Agenda's recommendations are understood, are being carried out appropriately, and will achieve longer-term organizational benefits.



The Characteristics of Infra Language Analysis

Five fundamental structures in human communication form the basis of Infra Language analysis, the foundation of the Alignment Agenda.

Each of the five structures arises from its related purpose: to provide information, to assess facts, to derive or expound knowledge, to convey emotion or to engender action.

These communication structures and their related purposes are present in all spoken, written, and behavioural forms of communication.

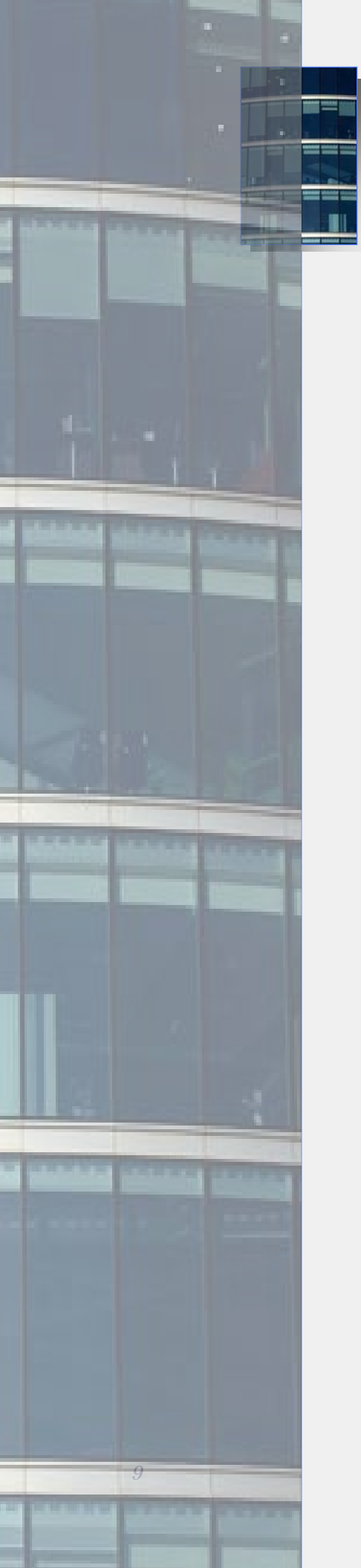
Information

Messages related to providing information are usually brief. They focus on a fact or set of facts, and are sometimes supported by contextual framing. They may be as simple as using a noun to name an object or as complex as a media release that provides a public relations message.

Assessment

When the purpose of a message is to provide assessment, its structure is more complex. Rather than simply providing information and its context, the message consists of sets of facts that are measurable and that lead to a conclusion. Such communication structures typically use inductive or deductive reasoning.





Knowledge

A message whose purpose is to derive or expound knowledge is characterised by the use of abductive reasoning. This form of reasoning is essentially an accumulation of conclusions drawn. The conclusions may not, in themselves, provide a rigorously rational path to a final opinion; however, judged against already received knowledge, they are perceived as most likely from the perspective of the message provider. These messages are sometimes misinterpreted as using deductive or inductive reasoning; however, even though their structures are similar, their reasoning is not.

Emotion

Messages that relate to conveying emotions are often products of an accumulated experience of facts, conclusions and judgements. They may be designed to express or induce emotions that range from positive to negative. Many relate to the resolution of an issue that transitions from frustration to satisfaction, and are structured to reflect this progression.

Action

Lastly, messages that are designed to induce action employ imperative mood to give orders. This is apparent in its simplest form when the message provider has power over the receiver; the message consists of a command. When the message provider does not have sufficient power to cause the action, their message will include information, assessment, knowledge, and/or emotions leading to a call for action.



Structural Communication Sequences

Individuals process communication by following a sequence of communication structures.

They receive information, assess it rationally, judge it against their knowledge, emotionalize it, then act upon it. Their action creates new information that is processed through the same sequence.

Individuals display particular characteristics in the manner in which they follow this sequence. They may be weak in their ability to assess but strong in emotionalizing their conclusions. They may be weak in receiving information but strong in judging it against their knowledge. Similarly, teams and organizations display cumulative characteristics in processing communication.

If an individual's professional function is to engender action, they may not be able to create effective messages if their strength is assessment. Further, a team that is required to judge information based on organizational values may not be successful if the dominating participants are strong in developing action-focused messages.

If the objectives of organizational change require a new focus on different outcomes, the communication and the perspectives of staff must follow. If this does not occur, the organization will not reach its optimal alignment with its new objectives and will, at worst, become systemically dysfunctional.



The Alignment Agenda

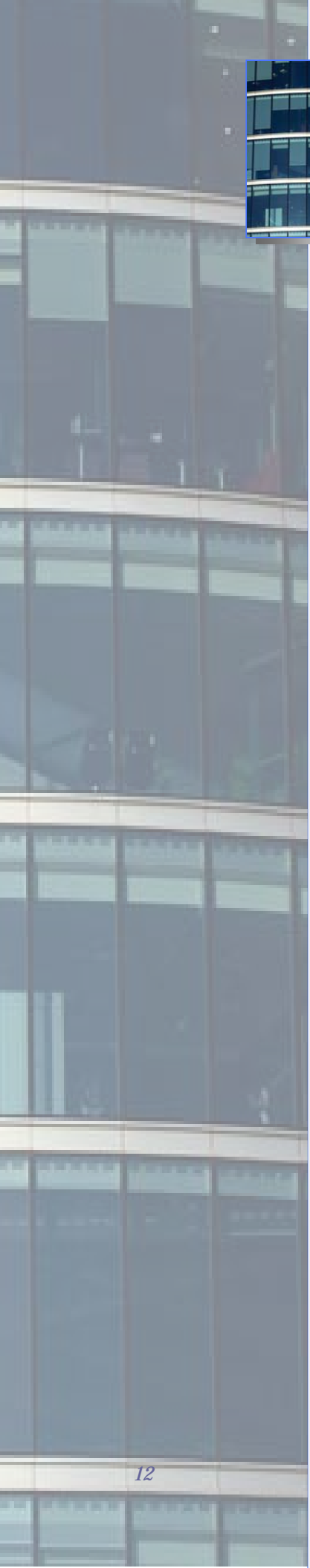
The Alignment Agenda is designed to provide communication analysis and solutions that strive to overcome systemic deficiencies.

The outcomes of the Agenda is organizationally specific; however, the focus on analysis and remedial action provides a clear insight into the character of expected results early in the Agenda's implementation.

The Agenda comprises three programs that are directed at resolving issues faced by executives, managers and staff.

Each program within the Agenda involves appropriately targeted evaluations of the outcomes that are defined during implementation.





Executive Alignment Program

Investigation and measurement of organizational communication characteristics

Consultation and advice on methods of enhancing the effectiveness of all forms of communication provided to the executive and the board

The Executive Alignment Program provides precise, meaningful and practical analysis of communication structures and formats that are used to communicate to and for the executive and the board.

Further, this program develops appropriate standards and formats for all written and spoken communication that will facilitate the effective exchange of information and advice between executive and board levels.

Analysis and standard setting will assist in improving the clarity, precision and quality of the information and advice and will lead to greater effectiveness of organizational activities.

Evaluations are conducted with individual executives to ensure that responses received reflect precisely the perceptions of those taking part in the program.

To learn more about the Executive Alignment Program, please contact Rushworth Consultancy's Business Manager at businessmanager@franciswalsh.com.



Management Alignment Program

Analysis and measurement of current organizational communication characteristics

Development of new communication standards and formats

Professional development supporting managers and executives

Focus on communicating to staff, to executives and to board members

Managers and executives need simple and effective communication methodologies that they can rapidly apply to add greater precision and value to the information and advice they receive and provide. The Management Alignment Program provides that support.

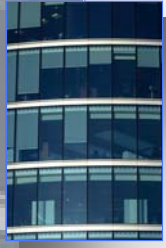
Through analysis, measurement, standard setting, and professional development, this program enables executives and managers to impart more effectively their experience, knowledge, and requirements to staff members.

Further, this program enhances managers' ability to communicate effectively with executives and/or board members.

The Management Alignment Program provides the opportunity to develop and apply similar communication principles through the management group. Consequently, this approach ensures a greater momentum for organizational change and operates more effectively where there is a pressing need to meet particular communication standards.

A detailed evaluation procedure is conducted before and after the program's activities.

To learn more about the Management Alignment Program, please contact Rushworth Consultancy's Business Manager at businessmanager@franciswalsh.com.



Organizational Alignment Program

Analysis and measurement of current communication roles of all relevant staff members, customers, and clients.

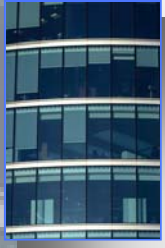
Development of new standards and formats

Professional development that supports all relevant staff members, managers and executives in the provision of written and verbal communication

Focus on training experiences that are carefully customized to ensure all participants acquire the requisite skills to ensure the most precise alignment of their communication

This program provides a detailed analysis and measurement of the communication characteristics and roles of all relevant staff members, managers, executives, and board members. All communication structures and formats are assessed and new standards and formats are provided, with further recommendations and advice.

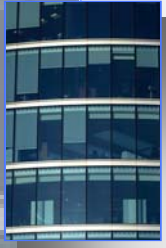
Support and guidance is offered to all staff members, managers and executives. Comprehensive training in the new standards is provided to all staff in a form that is practical, directly relevant and, most importantly, motivating. Individualized professional development is offered, where appropriate, to managers. Advice on strategic perspectives is provided directly to executives.



The Organizational Alignment Program is the most encompassing of the three provided in the Alignment Agenda. The desired outcome is the promotion of organizational change to meet specific strategic requirements. Following the program's introduction, levels of responsibility and accountability for communication should spread more appropriately in line with organizational objectives, and effective communication should become one of the most significant, achievable aims.

During the program's implementation, new levels of efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness are comprehensively assessed through evaluation procedures that are conducted before and after implementation. Further, evaluations are continued regularly over an extended period to ensure consistency and continuity.

To learn more about the Organizational Alignment Program, please contact Rushworth Consultancy's Business Manager at businessmanager@franciswalsh.com.



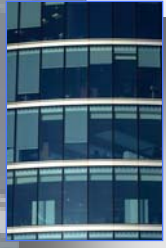
Is the Alignment Agenda Appropriate for Your Circumstance?

Please consider the following six questions.

- 1. Does your organization collect, create, and/or disseminate information, analysis, and knowledge as one of its significant functions?**
- 2. Do staff members have specialist skills and communication characteristics related to the subject matter but not necessarily the function of their current work?**
- 3. Do staff members need continual assistance to ensure they communicate effectively with their supervisors, managers, directors, executives, and/or board members?**
- 4. Would managers, directors, executives, and/or board members prefer to receive better communication that is more appropriately considered and targeted?**
- 5. Do staff members lack confidence in communicating appropriate content to their supervisors, managers, directors, executives, and/or board members?**
- 6. Are your organization's communication requirements changing to meet new requirements?**

If you have answered 'yes' to some or all of these questions, the Alignment Agenda may be appropriate for your organization.

To learn more about the Alignment Agenda, please contact Rushworth Consultancy's Business Manager at businessmanager@franciswalsh.com.



Francis Walsh

Francis Walsh is a trusted and highly experienced communication consultant who provides advice, support, and training to executives, managers, and staff members. He makes available his unique insights and skills in a direct, supportive and accountable manner, as would be expected from someone who has supported major national organizations.

Francis Walsh has had a highly successful career as a consultant for nearly 20 years.

Playing a leadership role in improving and enhancing the linkages between organizations, their clients and customers, Francis Walsh is an advocate of professional, seamless and effective communication within organizations, particularly when dealing with organizational transformation.

As a trainer provider, Francis Walsh has few peers.

For more information, contact Rushworth Consultancy's Business Manager at businessmanager@franciswalsh.com.

