Gareth Morgan

IMAGES OF ORGANIZATION

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Since its first publication over twenty years ago, **Images of Organization** has become a classic in the canon of management literature. The book is based on a very simple premise-that all theories of organization and management are based on implicit

Images of Organization Details

Date   : Published May 9th 2006 by Sage Publications, Inc (first published 1986)
ISBN   : 9781412939799
Author : Gareth Morgan
Format : Paperback 504 pages
Genre   : Business, Management, Nonfiction, Psychology, Sociology

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From Reader Review Images of Organization for online ebook

Anne Lutomia says

Gareth Morgan provides the reader with a unique way of understanding organizations. He applies multiple metaphors to theorize and analyze the nature of organizations. By so doing, organizations are deemed as machines, cultures, organisms or instruments of domination to name a few. This book was a required reading for my organizational behavior. I enjoyed it, the professor was able to initiate interesting discussions by tying our lived experiences to the various images or lenses discussed by Gareth Morgan. A book that hands managers, leader and professionals ...the art of "reading" the situations they are attempting to organize or manage" p.3. A must read book for those who want to understand organization behavior.

Jordan Peacock says

Easily in my top five 'idea' books - essential reading for anyone.

Mark Uberuaga says

In Images of Organizations, Morgan describes how metaphors can be used to describe organizations, which provides a framework for understanding and decision making.

Of the eight metaphors he introduced the machine, organism, and brain were the most useful to me. The machine metaphor reminds me of the main body of the army or an industrial factory. The organization is made up of many parts and people and each has a specific purpose. The disadvantage of an organization that operates like a machine is that its hierarchical structure is rigid and inflexible and creativity and adaptability are not promoted.

The organization as an organism metaphor is useful because it can help explain that organizations are like separate species and that they need to adapt to their environment to survive and thrive.

The Brain metaphor was harder to grasp, because not everyone has the same image of how our brains work. However the idea of learning organizations seems helpful for adaptation and improvement. The Double feedback loop method of questioning assumptions and norms is a valuable tool for any process improvement.

A clear imagine is important when using metaphors and analogies to help make decisions and evaluate behavior, because a picture is worth a thousand words.

Dustin Dye says

Morgan provides compelling metaphors that will change how you see organizations. The book, though, is a

bit rambling and has its share of dry passages. I recommend a careful reading of the opening of each chapter, before skipping to the next.

Britton Bush says

Interesting, provocative, and extremely useful method of analyzing organizations. The commentary, analysis, and examples that Morgan uses in 'Images or Organizations' aid perfectly in the presentation of organizational analysis. Morgan uses metaphor lenses a method of investigating organizations. Each metaphor acts as an aid in which analysts can gain, perhaps previously unseen, insights about any organization in question. Great book for anyone in pursuit of organization and administration theory study!

Helen Palmer says

I loved this book when i read it, many, many years ago. Especially the chapter about organisations as brains. I want to re read butt it costs about a million pounds so I will have to go to the library,

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Michele says

i hate this book. if you are ever required to buy it for school DO NOT

Christine Keegan says

Pretty thick, but the idea is brilliant and if you're looking for organization theory, this is about as good as I've read.

Shahine Ardeshir says

The idea behind this book is terrific: Change the metaphor through which you look at an organization, and you'll discover facets about it that you didn't earlier think of. It struck me as a novel way to look at management, and that's what made me pick it up.

The warning I would give, however, is that this is less a book to read and more one to refer to. It's tonality, structure, and flow (or rather, lack thereof) all reminded me of the textbooks I read in college. It was long winded, often unnecessarily detailed and rather staid in its explanations, which meant that even though the content sometimes had great potential, it fell a little flat.

If you're interested in organizational psychology in general, it may be a worthwhile reference point for something specific you're after and in that sense, might be a useful add on to your book shelf. But from the standpoint of a read, don't expect to be engaged.

Sergej van Middendorp says

Good introduction to metaphor in the context of organizations. Especially helpful if you are practice focused. If you want to understand the deeper backgrounds, refer to Philosophy in the Flesh by Lakoff and Johnson.

Karen says

OK, so I am reading this for school, but I LOVE IT!!!! It's for the Organizational Theory and Change course, and it's been able to give me a framework to explain organizations I have been involved with - how they operate, why and what does / does not make sense. As a disclaimer I fully admit to being a theory nerd.

The book takes a "metaphor lens" approach to looking at organizations to explain how they function and communicate. It looks at the benefits and disadvantages of various approaches, within the context of what an organization does. Through the systems approach, components of an organization can be deconstructed and understood.

Mark Jacobsen says

I like lenses. Graham Allison's classic "Essence of Decision" opened my eyes to the value of multiple lenses in analyzing decision-making, and Gareth Morgan has now done the same for my understanding of organizational structure and behavior. Multiple lenses are powerful analytical tools for observers to study an issue; by illuminating the issue from radically different perspectives, they help observers develop rich, nuanced conclusions. I have never formally studied organizational management, so while the book might cover familiar territory for many MBAs, I found it a helpful survey of competing paradigms in organizational management theory. Despite the book's formidable size, it is clearly written, well-structured, and quite readable.

Nathaniel says

It's ok. Maybe it's just my impression of the class I had to read it for bleeding out into my overall impression of the book itself, but I found it to be a bit dull. Morgan has some good insights into how organizations work - his ideas about organizational culture in particular are particularly good. However, overall this book just seems a bit on the ephemeral side for my tastes. Maybe this is just because, even after about 18 graduate credits' worth of management-related education, I still don't see how management theory relates more than a little to actually *doing* it. If you really like management theory, by all means read Morgan - he's different enough from a lot of the other theorists that you'll probably learn something. I'm just so cynical about the genre of management writing as a whole that I think I learned less from this book as a result.

Jan says

I was first introduced to Gareth Morgen's images of organization in an introduction course in Organization and Manangement at my first term of a bachelor program in Management. In retrospect I imagine my introduction to this work as a gathering of organizational academics happy for their reunion, passionately discussing organizational theory while opening new bottles of red wine:

-the passion for the subject and their lingual capabilities are reflected in that this work is great litterature.
-the reunion of organizational academics reflects that this is s work of inspiration and perspective widening for the ones that is allready quite familiar with the field. There is not that much room for pedagocial structuring and introducing the ones that is not allready familiar with the scholars and theories presented in this book.
-the work has the form of a academic conversation in the sense that it focus on the subjects that is of interest for the ones present there and then, it does not have a need to make sure it has included all that might should be include or argue why a topic is (not) included.
-the opening of new bottles of red wine reflects that the ideas introduced in this work starts for the traditional, down to earth that is part of any textbook and ends in deary, new thought, that does not mind introducing controversial and far less structures ideas as wore wine is consumed.

I can remember that our first term organization and management course where concluded with an exam case asing us to analyze Mac Donalds on background of the 3 most relevant methafores. It took us some time with puzzeling to conclude that the 3 fairly objective right methafores would be machine, organizm and culture. What we did not fully understand back then was that machine and organizm, with an addition of culture, political system and/or possibly brain is the most central methafores in more or less any practical business case. this is simply the bread and butter content of his work - the rest is facinating, but never the less creme fraiche.

In addition to not being a good choice for an intruduction course in organization, I belive that the following critique is in place:

-What Morgan (and several other scholars using this concept) refers to as the organism methaphore, covers a very wide range of topics with limited things in common. The Human relations school as an anthi-thesis to Scientific Management and the Sosio-technics as some kind of synthesis is one thing. The system approach and OD a school of thinking closer related to corporate strategy. Ant evolution theory is something completely else than the human orienting that he starts out with. Not to wonder this chapter is so much longer than the machine methaphore.

-the mentioned Corporate strategy is a keyword for topics that belong in this book. Mintzberg (as in development of strategic resources not as in structuring in 5's, Ansoff's strategic planning and not to mention Total quality management (and may be business process reengenering) does in dead have their place in this book. I especially miss the flavor that TQM could give to the machine metaphore chapter. I good publisher could identified this shortcomings.

-Especially chapter 7 (Psychological prison) and 8 (change logics) obviously needs to be worked more with. The publisher has simply not made a 100% satisfactory job here. They are among the longest chapters in the book. This is because the material needs to be worked most with, not because they are the most important

subjects in the book.

If you have any suspicion that you are interested in Organizational theory - read this book. If you look for a textbook to an introductionary course in Organizational theory - look elsewhere.

Sarah Clement says

I can see why this work has become popular among managers, as it prescribes a sort of ideal organisation in which we'd all like to work. Drawing on chaos and complexity theory, Morgan describes organisations that are dynamic, self-organising and adaptive; very much consistent with the idea of a 'learning organisation' developed by Senge. Like this organisational form, I have my doubts about how much of this has actually been proven empirically, and if you look at the peer-reviewed literature, the evidence is pretty weak. The newest edition acknowledges how idealistic this all sounds (more so than the original version), but holds firm on much of the basics. All in all, this is an interesting work with compelling metaphors and analogies, but I think there are very good reasons why the ideal organisational form he prescribes has very weak and limited evidence in the real world, particularly among the public organisations in which a great deal of organisational activity takes place.