

EXPAND YOUR BOX

POSSIBILITY MANAGEMENT APPLICATIONS
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Possibility Management is a form of leadership that focuses on creating improved results through upgrading Mental Maps. You do not have to change yourself in order to change what is possible. You just start using some new maps. In Possibility Management a leader is defined as the person who goes first. Reading this article makes you a leader.

CHANGING WHAT IS POSSIBLE

"Possibility" is defined as *"the number of real options from which you have to choose"*. The more options you have available, the greater the possibility. Possibility is one of the most precious commodities because one person with possibility can change the world.

In order for you to manage what is possible for your organization you must know what inhibits possibility and also where new possibility comes from. Standing between you and a vast wealth of possibility available in each moment is a normally invisible barrier called the Box. Every person has a Box. Our Box is a mental structure built from assumptions, beliefs, attitudes, expectations, preferences, and so on.

If we asked you about your boss's Box you could describe it precisely. If we asked you about your colleague's Box you could define it in a moment. There is only one person's Box that we cannot see and that is our own Box. Our Box is a survival machine that filters and controls everything we perceive and everything we express. Through its control on us the Box limits our possibilities. Expand the Box and you expand your possibilities.

Boxes come in overlapping layers. Individuals have a Box. Projects have a Box. Companies have Box. And so on. There is only one Box that is unique in the world: the individual Box. It is unique because it is the only Box that can take responsibility. An organization cannot take responsibility. An organization cannot change itself. Only individuals within the organization can take responsibility for managing what is possible. Since the company culture is created by the leaders the company's options are only limited by the Boxes of its leaders.

MENTAL MAPS

The value of Possibility Management is that it can produce better results. Results come directly from actions that we take. We cannot create new results if we keep taking the same actions. The actions we take depend on the decisions we make. The decisions we make depend on what we perceive as possible. And what we

perceive to be possible depends on our Mental Maps. Possibility Management creates new results through upgrading Mental Maps.

For example, if we showed you the drawing of a disk telling you that this was a very old and famous map you would soon recognize the disk as the original map of the world. Our first maps showed the world as flat.

Each sort of map provides us with specific limits and specific possibilities. For example, in a flat world, if you sail away from known territory you will fall off into the void. This is a limit. Limits shape how we think. For hundreds of years the flat map of the world kept most people at home in their cozy little villages for fear of falling off the edge. But having maps gave us the possibility to see beyond, and the flat-world map was a vast improvement over having no maps at all.

Then after awhile a new map was created for the same territory. The new map represented the planet as a globe. The first thing to notice about the new map is that *the new map includes the old map*. Nothing is lost if we place the flat map on a round surface.

Our greatest fear of taking on a new map is that we will lose the old map because it works fine for us and we are comfortable thinking within the limits of the old map. We fear that all of our hard-earned power to get things done will be lost if we take on a new map. This is not so. Just as when you upgrade your computer software, the old features are included in the new software.

We use the new map because it can provide additional features, new possibilities, new power. For example, on a spherical world one of the new features is that you cannot fall off. You can safely sail as far away from known territory as you want. This is the start of a whole new way of thinking. In Possibility Management this is called a new game.

The maps for the new games come from Possibility Management and they allow us to generate new actions so we can create new results. Think of the new map of the world. With the new map we could really sail west and reach India. The map has changed but not the territory.

This means that we do not think according to the territory. We think according to our Mental Maps of the territory. The value of upgrading our Mental Maps is that we can generate better results.

Possibility Management begins when a leader realizes two things:

I have a Box.

I am not my Box.

This perspective creates a new map: My Box's limits and reactions are only *my Box's limits* and reactions. They are not *mine* because I am not my Box.

If I am not my Box, then my boss is not his Box, and my colleague is not her Box.

Their limits and reactions are actually their Boxes' limits and reactions, not theirs.

All of a sudden in this new map we gain a lot more space to move around and relate to other people. This gives us a chance to lead in a new way.

When a new Mental Map redesigns a portion of our Box to include greater perspectives and more possibilities, our Box actually expands. Because our culture does not provide this expansion we need to get it ourselves. Below we offer you four Box Expansions and five New Gameworlds from Possibility Management for you to experiment with. Have fun!

BOX EXPANSION 1: HOLD YOUR CENTER

In order to lead you need to hold your center. You possess two kinds of centers, a physical center that is located and fixed between your hipbones and halfway back in your abdomen. You also have a center of being that is about the size of a grapefruit and that is mobile. In western civilization we typically keep our center of being in our head. You can place your attention on your center of being and relocate it to your physical center. Placing your center of being on your physical center is what martial artists call being centered. Possibility Management is a form that requires practice to keep your center and achieve proficiency like any martial art.

If you give your center away you will exhibit adaptive behavior. If you encourage adaptive behavior in your subordinates then you are collecting other people's centers and you are creating followers. If you refuse to accept other people's centers even when they offer them to you, then you encourage them to take responsibility, make decisions, take intelligent risks, create solutions, i.e. to be leaders themselves. Holding your center helps you to take responsibility, to communicate authentically, and to have the courage to lead your team to generate innovative solutions to impossible problems.

BOX EXPANSION 2: PROFESSIONAL FEELINGS

You have been trained to use your mind, but in many cases the mind is far too slow and linear to produce the kind of results you need. Recent research has shown that 40% to 60% of the cells in your heart are nerve cells such as those found in your brain. The heart has intelligence and can provide you with information. Listening to the mind speak is called thinking. Listening to the heart speak is called feeling. Even though you have feelings every day you have never been educated about feelings. Get ready to expand your Box.

There are only four categories of feelings: anger, sadness, joy and fear. From your childhood you were given a Mental Map that feelings are bad. Anger is bad because if you feel angry you might be impolite, dangerous, get out of control, or look uncivilized. Sadness is bad because if you feel sad you are helpless, weak, not manly, and make other people uncomfortable. Joy is bad because if you feel joyful other people get jealous, it is not professional, and the joy will go away soon anyway. And fear is bad because if you feel afraid you are cowardly, untrustworthy, and could spread panic. Clearly your Mental Map concludes that feelings are bad.

Let us make a new Mental Map of the same territory of feelings. In this Mental Map, feelings are just energy, fuel for archetypal structures that are build into our body. The four feelings are information like the four directions of a compass, neither good nor bad. On this new Mental Map, feelings can serve you professionally. The energy of anger can start and stop things, make boundaries, make decisions, create clarity, and empowers you to ask for what you need. The energy of sadness creates compassion, bonding, honesty, intimacy and trust. The energy of joy opens you to intuition, vision, motivation for others, enthusiasm, abundance and leadership. And the energy of fear provides sensitivity, alertness, wisdom, action, good questions, and the ability to walk into the unknown and bring out new possibilities.

The new Mental Map of the same territory of feelings provides you with an option that you did not have before. By connecting to your own feelings and saying, "I feel (angry, sad, glad or scared) because..." you give other people on your team a chance to connect to their feelings and open the treasure in their chest for the benefit of a more successful future for all.

BOX EXPANSION 3: POSSIBILITY LISTENING

Unless you had a class in listening, you listen using the same level of skill that your parents used listening to you. In short, there are three kinds of listening. All three forms have practical applications so it is important and useful for you to know what kind of listening you are doing when and why. 1) Normal neurotic listening, which is really just listening to yourself. 2) Responsible or Active Listening, invented about forty years ago. Active Listening includes eye contact, mirroring posture, clarifying questions, and a feedback loop for repeating back what was heard to confirm that a communication was received and for making corrections if there were errors. 3) Possibility Listening, a new form of listening that differs from Active Listening. In Possibility Listening you only listen. No speaking, no questions. Questions are the most powerful way to manipulate a conversation, so no questions. Now and then you can say, "Hmmm," so they know you are not dead. Possibility Listening focuses on you becoming a particular SPACE into which the speaker is safe to say anything. This means that in Possibility Listening what you hear is not limited to what you can understand.

BOX EXPANSION 4: POSSIBILITY SPEAKING

As with listening there are three kinds of speaking. 1) *Normal neurotic speaking*, also called babble, chatter, etc. This is speaking to ourselves. Since the purpose of our mind is to create an ongoing stream of meaningless sentences, babble will continue until we start speaking with a conscious purpose. 2) *Responsible information transfer* is mature adult speaking with a conscious purpose. Using information transfer we avoid adding emotional spin to our communications: no assumptions, insinuations, or triangulating. No triangulating means that we speak to whom we are speaking about. 3) *Possibility Speaking*, a new form of speaking that differs from information transfer. With the latter you are speaking as yourself providing information from your own personal bank of knowledge and experience. With Possibility Speaking you are not there. PM gives you instructions how to become a space dedicated to one of your Destiny Principles. Each person has a unique set of Destiny Principles that are aspects of Responsibility and are their True Purpose when living a turned-on and creative life. Examples of Destiny Principles include Clarity, Possibility, Integrity, and so on. Using Possibility Speaking you can be the space through which these Principles can address issues and provide possibilities far greater than your own personal resources would allow.

These instructions will probably make no sense until you start practicing. The basic tactic in Possibility Speaking is to commit first and begin speaking before you know what you are going to say. What speaks is a vast resource called your imagination. In our culture mind has been at war with imagination. Mind has won. With a little courage and a little practice you can get your imagination back. When you reclaim your imagination whole worlds of possibility really gush forth seemingly out of nowhere.

The above Box expansions are internal applications of tools and techniques from Possibility Management. As you bring the new Mental Maps into your Box they create new possibility for yourself. You may also want your team to have these tools. In this case you can create a gameworld for your team that includes regular Box expansion practice.

A game-world is the system created when people agree to play within a certain set of rules. A company is an example of a gameworld. So is a project.

Each game-world has its own particular set of rules. The question is, who controls the set of rules?

If you abnegate responsibility and decide that the limits of possibility for your company have already been decided, then you avoid the chance for a whole lot of creative fun. If, on the other hand, you choose that *you* control what is possible on your team then you are taking radical responsibility like a pirate takes a treasure. You do not ask permission. You simply take the right to set up a new game-world. How do you shift a gameworld? You must start where you are and you need to get your hands on the nuts and bolts that hold the gameworld together. Starting where you are includes an accurate assessment of the physical, financial, skill, time, space and energy resources that you have at hand. But this is only a linear basis. Starting where you are includes nonlinear resources as well.

GAMEWORLD 1: NONLINEARITY

To liberate your team into nonlinearity you need to explicitly change the rules of the game. Although your people are seeing new possibilities all the time they do not share them because of the consequences created by the rules of your current game-world. For example, people who are non-conformist, propose alternative ideas, or question the way things have always been done are often ridiculed, rejected, regarded as adversaries or not promoted. What if you offered your people a gameworld where new possibilities are welcomed with enthusiasm?

You will need to often repeat yourself about the changed rules because we have all been extensively trained in linear thinking. For example, if you are asked to diagram the most efficient and effective way to get from Point A to Point B, you will undoubtedly draw a straight line. The linear solution is mathematically provable. As soon as we conclude that the linear solution is the best solution we stop thinking. Since 1970 nonlinear thinking started and the nonlinear solutions often proved to be far more profitable than the linear.

For example, start at Point A and head towards Point B in a great sweeping curve. Think of the great circle route for airliners taking passengers from Paris to Hong Kong over Moscow at great cost savings. Or start at Point A and Point B simultaneously moving toward each other, saving half the time!

There is only one linear solution but unlimited nonlinear solutions. They come out of an unknown which is unlimited. You can institutionalize nonlinearity by implementing new Meeting Technologies from Possibility Management.

GAMEWORLD 2: WINNING HAPPENING

There are three basic gameworlds to create. 1) I win, you lose. This is the most common gameworld on the planet. Competition. I win, you lose is a zero sum game because in the end summary the wins equal the losses. 2) About forty years ago an upgrade in the human software was invented called I win, you win, or win-win. You might be surprised to learn that in trainings full of experienced, university educated managers, often less than half of the participants have ever heard of win-win. And although it is little recognized, there is a bug in the win-win software. The glitch is the I and the you. Win-win is often played like this: It is okay with me if you win as long as I win just a little bit more... Then we are back to I win, you lose. 3) Possibility Management offers a nonlinear game called Winning Happening. Notice that there is no I and no you. Winning Happening is a responsible Principle, greater than the I or

you. In the bigger picture we are all on the same team. We work beyond the surface differences between our Boxes and create together by serving the Principles that we have in common.

GAMEWORLD 3: RAPID LEARNING

Rapid Learning is a three-step process where individuals commit to the success of the other by acting as highly creative non-adversaries. Our western culture teaches us that competition produces the most efficient use of resources and the most rapid development. However, competition usually produces one winner and many losers.

Rapid Learning is a simple method for unleashing massive creative potential in a team without causing emotional turmoil from fears that one might be a loser. All your resources of intelligence, experience and creativity are dedicated to Winning Happening.

STEP ONE in Rapid Learning is “Go”! This means to try something, take a step, start.

And STEP TWO is getting feedback. There are only two kinds of feedback that we can get. The first kind is “Go”! It says that what you are doing is working fine, keep going! The other kind of feedback that we can get is “Beep”! What you are doing is *not* working! Try something else! In school we were repeatedly trained that getting a “Beep”! is bad, so when we get a “Beep”! we often drop into the “Bad Person” Swamp.

Now you have a Map for the Swamp. If you have any of those thoughts you need to get out of the Swamp. You first must realize that you are in the Swamp. Then you go directly to the person who gave you the Feedback and you say, “Thanks for the feedback.” This instantly brings you out of the Swamp and back into Rapid Learning.

You use the information provided by this person to take STEP THREE in Rapid Learning, which is “Shift”! Try something different “Shift”! and then “Go”! again. “Go”! “Shift”! and “Go”! This is Rapid Learning.

Creating a Winning Happening Rapid Learning culture makes your team flexible, tough and equipped to respond to the rapidly evolving needs of the marketplace.

GAMEWORLD 4: POSSIBILITY LEADERSHIP

Being a leader does not mean to be the best or to be in control. Being a leader simply means you take responsibility for going first into unknown territory. This is requiring you to make friends with your fear that can provide you with wisdom. Real creators know that if you are not afraid you are not creating. Admit to not knowing and then go ahead anyway.

There are powerful and effective team resources that lie dormant. You can tap into these resources by opening a gameworld where sharing mistakes is just as rewarded as sharing successes.

As the leader, this is your team. You are like the sun at the center of a solar system. Planets connect to stars through mass attraction. There are two ways to get mass as a leader. You can expand your ego (like Mohammed Ali the boxer), or you can get mass by representing something that is greater than yourself (like Nelson Mandela the political leader).

Your job as a leader is to make other leaders. Not a bad profession.

GAMEWORLD 5: FEED META-PURPOSE

Your people do usually come to work to accomplish the linear purposes of your organization including such things as getting the job done on time and within budget,

making a profit, keeping your customers satisfied and so on. But what inspires us about our work are the nonlinear or Meta Purposes, consisting of responsible Principles such as Friendship, Teamwork, Family, that feed our soul. As a leader you need to concern yourself about both Linear Purpose and Meta Purpose. If you do not feed your people by speaking about Meta Purpose they will go hungry. Look in people's faces and start to speak into their hearts what they need to hear so that they can do their work at their optimum and with pleasure. Speak about what you love and about what works. Appreciate their work and how important they are for the team. Dare to just go ahead and speak about your vision of what is possible. This feeds your people and makes the working round and complete.