

Organizational Design Instruments: the Cinderella of Management Science

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Abstract

The subject of this article is the use of specific methods, instruments and tools in organizational design. The main selection criterion for those methods is their efficiency in transformation of tacit knowledge into implicit.

The first part describes the intriguing history of what we can call “design instruments”, their interdisciplinary background, and their present use in both engineering and organizational design. We also demonstrate the inherent complicatedness of this field and the confusion in such terms as “design”, “design thinking”, “design science”, “design research”, “design method”, “design strategy”, “service design”, etc.

The second part studies one of the design instruments, namely the Quality Function Deployment (QFD), in more details. We trace its Japanese origins, its roots in the previous knowledge, the rise and fall of popularity, its resurrection under various disguises (like Design for Six Sigma), its use initially in engineering design and then in organizational design, and its various spinoffs like Hoshin Kanri, Strategic QFD, Matrix of Change, and even Balanced Scorecard (BSC). This part also shows multiple connections of QFD with other matrix tools for representation of complex nonlinear information, and its recent transformation into the simplified and much popular instrument, Value Proposition Design Canvas.

The final part of the article gives the overview of design instruments as underestimated but powerful and prospective tools especially for tacit knowledge acquisition, sharing and quantification. In the conclusion we specify the most promising directions for the future research.

Keywords: Organizational design, design instruments, tacit knowledge, QFD