

SIMMA & PARTNER CONSULTING

THE GROUP STRATEGY AND ACTION PROGRAM™ (GSAP)

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Keywords about the program

- Better understanding and communication of the company's strategy
- Goals, roles and expectations
- Make changes in the organization quick and effective
- Change without resistance
- Improve results by leveraging synergies and achieve them faster
- Achieve measurable and observable performance enhancement

TEAMBUILDING AND ACTION

The Group Strategy and Action Program™ (GSAP) is one of the best practices in strategic management of change when it comes to aligning an organization with new or common goals and strategies. The GSAP is a process for activating the "critical mass" of managers and individuals who can have a significant influence on whether strategies can be successfully implemented or not.

The GSAP was developed, tested and perfected by Dr. Irving Borwick over more than 20 years. Numerous companies have used this process with great success, including Daimler Benz, DHL and T-Mobile Austria.

Simma & Partner Consulting uses BORWICK INTERNATIONAL's change management programs in Europe. The Group Strategy and Action Program is one of the best in the field of "Real Time Change" procedures.

About resistance to change

Many brilliant strategies, excellent plans and projects fail because employees do not know, understand and cannot identify with the newly defined company goals.

Successful action in a developing environment requires change: strategically, operationally, organizationally and technically. For the company management, the question arises again and again: How quickly and how well are the people in the

organization prepared - will and skill - to realize these changes and actively tackle them?

The Group Strategy and Action Program (GSAP) brings about change in organizations in a particularly effective and efficient way. It differs from other methods by focusing on the systems within the organization, on the network of roles, rules and behavior that shape an organizational system.

The GSAP does not aim to change the interpersonal abilities of the individual. By combining individual behavior and group performance the entire organization will change and not only individual sub-areas or the leadership.

Change - why right now?

The reason you read this article may be that you are looking for ways to make a difference in your organization. You may be at a point where you are planning changes and thinking about how such a process of change should be designed.

1. **Why are you thinking about change right now?**
2. **Was there an incident that encourages you to put certain findings into action?**
3. **Did a problem unexpectedly arise?**
4. **Why are the changes necessary right now and not early on?**
5. **Why can't a solution wait a bit longer?**

Take a few minutes and try to answer these questions for yourself. The goals you set for this change process depend crucially on your motives.

That is why it is important that you understand these motives as carefully as possible.

Answering these questions pays off as you are already at the beginning of the GSAP process.

What do you want to achieve?

You probably have very clear answers to the questions above. From our experience, however, we know that the actual motives for initiating processes of change are not always apparent at first sight.

Let us first put aside the question of the motives. Let's say you have decided to initiate a process of change and to initiate the targeted changes through a GSAP.

Finally, let's assume that you've already done the GSAP and that this process was the most successful you've ever done and that it exceeded all your expectations.

1. How do you measure and find that this is indeed the case?
2. What measurable and observable changes would have taken place?
3. What results would have been achieved?

If you can answer these questions, you are well on your way to creating the conditions for initiating change.

Results that are reported with the GSAP to be achieved

- Better understanding of the organization
- Clarification of the objectives and contributions of the individual roles
- Fast and effective behavioral changes
- Measurable and /or observable performance enhancement
- Change "without resistance"
- Better financial results

As leaders sometimes have difficulty answering these questions, we help them do so. This is the first step in the preparation of the GSAP process. The starting point for the process is the desired results, not the presumed causes of the problem. When asked what results should be achieved through the process, there are a large number of possible answers. Here are some exemplary possibilities:

1. **Build a powerful management team to achieve the company's goals and reduce/eliminate existing tensions within that team.**
2. **Integration of two different systems as a result of a merger or acquisition.**
3. **Increase overall productivity by at least 25%.**
4. **Developing a business strategy and changing the direction of engagement to increase competitiveness.**
5. **Reducing bureaucracy and creating a corporate culture of entrepreneurial leaders.**

All these different goals have one point in common: change is necessary. Change is used to be mostly synonymous with changing people. In most cases, if not at all - the attempt to change people is doomed to failure and ethically questionable.

The GSAP process does not attempt to change people, but aims to change systems - roles, rules, relationship and behavior patterns.

„Change without Change“

The basic idea of the GSAP is "change without change". This means that the GSAP helps individuals to change their role, but not to themselves as a person.

Each and everyone of us slips into different roles every day: boss, colleague, employee, spouse, father/mother, son/daughter.

The behavior that is expected of us depends on the role we are playing. For example, in the role of spouse, we behave differently than in the role of the manager, the customer or supplier, etc.

And: we are able to adapt our behavior to the situation in fractions of a second, e.g. when a superior person comes to a meeting with employees or when a customer is at the table.

We can do more than just play a role. When an individual learns to redefine a role (e.g. the role of the manager), then there is a rapid and effective change in his behavior without the manager feeling that he has to change himself as a person. This is what we mean by Change without Change.

GSAP helps executives by change of roles to achieve the desired business goals. It is therefore

important to change the roles in the context of the organization's requirements and tasks, not independently of them.

Managing changes means changing work systems.

Summary

The objectives and tasks of the GSAP are:

1. **achieve pre-defined, measurable or observable goals of the organization;**
2. **to change roles in such a way that the tasks of the organization can be fulfilled in the best possible way;**
3. **change of roles and not of persons; systems and not people.**

HOW DOES THE GSAP WORK?

The Group Strategy and Action Program is a process. The goals to be achieved in this process are determined by the organization itself as well as the content to be worked on. Each GSAP is tailor-made, even if the individual process steps are clearly defined.

The GSAP deals with the very specific questions of the respective organization and the participation in this process.

The Group Strategy and Action Program does not provide "ideals" or patents. Each system determines itself how to achieve the greatest possible effectiveness for the organization.

What the GSAP is not

1. The GSAP is not an organizational concept.
2. It is not a pretext to control internal meetings or assess employees.
3. It does not use questionnaires, forms or other management techniques.
4. It is neither confronting in the sense of sensitivity groups or T-Groups nor an opportunity for outing.
5. It is not an analysis of needs and does not use simulations, games or exercises.

What the GSAP is

We cannot anticipate the experience you have within a GSAP process. However, the presentation of the objectives and the description can give you an insight from which you can get an idea of the process.

The GSAP deals with three key points:

- the individual
- of the role and
- of the organization or organizational system.

The organization defines the formal role, and the individual member of an organization defines its role by its behavior. Whenever these two definitions - those of the individual and those of the organization- coincide, the organization works "as lubricated". The more these two definitions differ, the greater the friction allotment and resistance in parts of the organization and in the organization as a whole.

The GSAP takes into account all three key points: the

individual, the role and the system.

- Specially developed interviews are conducted with the individual a few days before the GSAP workshop.
- The role and the system will then be the subject of a 2-1/2-day workshop. The interviews form an integral part of the process.

The individual person

The interview with each participant before the workshop, is used by the interviewee and not the interviewer. In the case of the interviewed employee, it was necessary to reflect on one's own capacity, on one's own perception of the working system in which they work.

- They should individually recognize the many connections and interactions that affect their work on a daily basis - both positively and in a better sense.
- In addition, managers should be able to connect their own roles with those of other managers, employees and other system partners. They raise their awareness about the dependence of the individual roles and their influence on these roles.
- The most important thing, however, is the realization that they themselves are part of the problem they have with others and in which they themselves may be a driving force. They begin to understand the influence of their own role on the behavior of others. Paradoxically, this knowledge draws attention to the organizational system and not to the individual.

A GSAP interview is a systemic interview and is divided into three parts

1. **Defining the task**
2. **Preparation of the interview**
3. **Conducting the interview**

The role and the system

The GSAP is a process lasting two and a half days and focuses on the "role" and the "system". The highlight of his process is the development of action plans on strategic topics (fields of action) to address identified core problems or tasks.

The GSAP consists of several analysis steps.

ROLE ANALYSIS

Roles are analyzed based on specific problems that managers face in their work.

The problems that are examined in the role analysis have the following characteristics:

1. **they are up-to-date and unpopular**
2. **they are significant**
3. **the manager is interested in opening them, but cannot open them alone and**
4. **they affect several people in the organization.**

The result of the role analysis is that managers now have the chance to analyse deeper problems and interactions in the context of their role and thereby to advance to the real basic problem.

This enables managers to redefine their own roles within their problem context. They learn how to manage themselves in the exercise of their role in order to perform the tasks in the organization.

SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

System analysis provides the organization with the opportunity to analyse

1. their work system
2. the network of relationships and
3. the interactions between the roles in the work system

Each of us has a kind of mental map that determines our individual way of perceiving and dealing with problems. This signpost is usually not examined, in part because we tend to assume that one's perception is correct and objective and should not differ from that of other persons.

With every new experience we have, we continue to develop our signpost - with even more diversions, warnings of danger and prohibition, etc. Our own subjective assumptions determine how we see things and it is our own thoughts that determine the radius of our actions.

Organisational learning requires looking at and judging one's point of view from different angles.

The system analysis not only allows analyses at the individual level, but also offers the organizational system the opportunity to examine itself and its own functioning. This is the foundation for organizational learning.

The whole management will not only better understand how things work, but will also see how things can work. The central point is that the new

findings are shared by the participants and included as new elements in their spiritual map. As the maps become more and more similar, increase the likelihood of reaching similar or equal findings and decisions.

This allows the organization to start developing new rules and role relationships, create a coherent, inclusive system that is understood and endorsed by all.

LECTURE

Only one lecture will be given throughout the entire process, on the morning of the second day of the workshop.

The lecture deals with the learning processes and changes taking place, as well as with backgrounds and insights that open up the learning of managers.

CONSULTANT HYPOTHESES

From the first contact with the organization, the consulting team formulates and tests hypotheses. There is an ongoing exchange of working hypotheses between the consultants with the aim of understanding the functioning of the organization.

These hypotheses aim to help the system to verify, correct and adapt its understanding of its own organization before starting to develop action plans on key strategic issues.

STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

The final phase of the GSAP is the development of strategies and action plans. The basis for this is the overarching objective (of the client) and the results of the GSAP process itself.

At this point we would like to stress once again that the GSAP does not use simulations, role-playing games or the like, but deals exclusively with the reality of the organization. This gives managers an opportunity to better understand the management system, their roles, relationships and problems, and to integrate these insights into their strategic planning work and action plan.

The strategy development takes place in groups - so-called "subsystems". The planning work is critically questioned, analyzed and evaluated constructively both in the own group and in the other groups.

This final phase provides the management (the client) with the opportunity to review the results of the strategy and action plan and to determine the fundamental future direction.

The strategy and action plans are adopted on the spot - there is no further approval body for implementation under the GSAP.

Follow Up

About one month after the completion of the GSAP, a follow-up meeting is scheduled, at most 3 - 4 months after this meeting another one.

This follow-up is designed to assess the progress made by the GSAP after one month. The Follow Up

program offers the opportunity to assess the results of the program and to develop a rolling strategy and action plan.

Results

So far, Group Strategy and Action Programs have been implemented in over 200 organizations. Experience shows that in most organizations, measurable and observable processes of change have taken hold within one to two months and - depending on the nature of the problem - have a more or less lasting effect.

Dr. Irving Borwick († 2009)



was Director General for Human Resources Development at Coca Cola in Atlanta and then Director General for Management and Organizational Development at ITT , including in Brussels (Belgium). He also worked as Head of Human Resources Development at Steinbergs Ltd. in Canada and as a consultant at Forth & Strong in Boston (USA).

Irving Borwick was the founder and CEO of Borwick International Inc., a consulting firm with offices in New York and Brussels. He has developed several programs for change management and executive development, including the Group Strategy and Action Program™. Irving Borwick died in 2009. Borwick International's customers included Fortune 500 companies around the world.



Elmar Simma

After studying Business Administration and Management in Innsbruck he worked as a project manager in the venture capital industry and was co-founder of the first Austrian VC company Horizonte Venture Management in Vienna. He then worked as a consultant at McKinsey & Company Inc. in Düsseldorf.

In 1984 he founded Simma & Partner Consulting GmbH in Dornbirn (Austria). He increasingly specialized in management coaching and change management. In addition to numerous medium-sized companies, Simma & Partner Consulting's customers also include international companies in aluminum processing (Norsk Hydro Aluminium), telecommunication (T-Mobile, Deutsche Telecom, France Telecom), energy production and supply (VIW VKW), logistics (AUSTRIAN POST), plant engineering ((BINDER & Co), Automotive (Mercedes Benz) market and social research (Infas) as well as in the healthcare sector (Kliniken Schmieder, Allensbach). He is co-author of „Erfolgreiche Unternehmensführung - 111 Methoden und Konzepte, die sie kennen sollten“ (Successful business management - 111 methods and concepts you should know”).

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THE GSAP® PROCESS

