

A Reflection Journal

from Aga Szóstek

FOLD LINE

“Competent
practitioners
usually know more
than they can say.
They exhibit a kind of
knowing-in-practice,
most of which
is tacit.”

— Donald A. Schön,
The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action



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THE IDEAL CULTURE

What should we keep?

What should we be careful about?

What do we need to change?

A Reflection Journal

Have you noticed how often people in organisations never quite realise why they do what they do? In Poland we have a saying that people are in such a rush running with their wheelbarrows that they don't have the time to load them up. Such behaviour is even stronger at the leadership level. You might find yourself having to make so many decisions and to participate in so many meetings that there is no time or energy left to think — not only about long-term issues but even to consider what should be done next. In this hamster-wheel of urgent decision-making it is easy to forget that your focus determines your reality. It gives you a sense of what your priorities are and therefore what the priorities of your employees need to be.

This reflection journal is an aid to help you reflect on how you see your organisation, your competition, your customers, your choices and your future.

The idea is that you complete it over five days, reflecting on one question per day. This booklet requires you to physically write things down, to clear your thoughts, to identify what you don't know, and to highlight what you believe. Give yourself time to think about each question before you answer it. The best technique is to read the question in the morning, capture your ideas (or conduct the interviews, if required) throughout the day and then write down your thoughts in the evening. But, of course, there is no one right way to do this, so find the way that is most convenient for you.

You can do this exercise on your own but it works best if you do it together either with your leadership team or with the team you are leading. Once you and your team have captured your thoughts, sit down and discuss the results. You will be amazed by the insights you get.

1

WHAT ARE YOUR POTENTIAL DIFFERENTIATORS?

Why these?

WHAT IS YOUR AMBITION AS AN ORGANISATION?

Why?

DAY ONE

Each organisation has strong and weak points that stem from its history.

Where does your organisation come from?

How has its past shaped what it is today?

Talk to three colleagues and inquire about what works and what could work better in your organisation. Based on their answers, prepare a list of your organisation's strong and weak points.

What works well?

Why?

What works well?

Why?

What works well?

Why?

DAY FIVE

What makes your organisation great?

What is the underlying reason for you to get out of bed, go to work and stay excited about it day after day?

What do you dream your organisation could become?

What change could it bring into the world?

What does the long-lasting success of your organisation mean to you?

Write the answers to these questions from your very own perspective, from the perspective of a person who wants to be part of the best organisation or team in the world.

5

What works well?

Why?

What works well?

Why?

What works well?

Why?

What would be worthwhile to improve?

Why?

What would be worthwhile to improve?

Why?

What would be worthwhile to improve?

Why?

YOUR DILEMMAS

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

2

e.g. 1 **Business clients** _____ **Individual clients**
.....

e.g. 2 **Premium** _____ **Affordable**
.....

e.g. 3 **Stationary** _____ **Mobile**
.....

e.g. 4 **Narrow product offering** _____ **Broad product offering**
.....

e.g. 5 **Time to market** _____ **Quality first**
.....

example

DAY DWO

No organisation functions in a void.

Who is your competition?

Why do you see them as such?

What characterises the experience
they offer to their customers?

What are their differentiators?

List three competitors, list the elements that differentiate them from you and those that are similar to you.

1st COMPETITOR

Write down three arguments why this organisation is your competitor?

List 5 differentiators of this competitor

DAY FOUR

As you develop your vision you will face numerous strategic decisions.

Shall we grow quickly or slowly?

Shall we have a premium offering or be affordable?

Shall we be innovators or perhaps smart followers?

There will be plenty more such questions from investors, management, employees and customers. List 10 dilemmas regarding any strategic decision you need to make for your organisation, from marketing decisions, branding, technology, etc.

Then mark on each scale where your organisation should find itself. Finally, write down three things you should be doing to be there.

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1st COMPETITOR

List 3 weaknesses of this competitor

Write down the experience strategy of this competitor
(if you don't know it, give it a guess)

2nd COMPETITOR

Write down three arguments why this organisation is your competitor?

List 5 differentiators of this competitor

3rd PERSON

The initial reflection:

Answer to the first WHY:

Answer to the second WHY:

Answer to the third WHY:

2nd PERSON

The initial reflection:

Answer to the first WHY:

Answer to the second WHY:

Answer to the third WHY:

2nd COMPETITOR

List 3 weaknesses of this competitor

Write down the experience strategy of this competitor
(if you don't know it, give it a guess)

3rd COMPETITOR

Write down three arguments why this organisation is your competitor?

List 5 differentiators of this competitor

1st PERSON

The initial reflection:

Answer to the first WHY:

Answer to the second WHY:

Answer to the third WHY:

customers

3rd COMPETITOR

List 3 weaknesses of this competitor

Write down the experience strategy of this competitor
(if you don't know it, give it a guess)

3

3rd PERSON

The initial reflection:

Answer to the first WHY:

Answer to the second WHY:

Answer to the third WHY:

2nd PERSON

The initial reflection:

Answer to the first WHY:

Answer to the second WHY:

Answer to the third WHY:

DAY THREE

Why do your customers choose you?

Why are your employees happy to work here?

Ask 3 customers and 3 employees why they would recommend your organisation to others using the 'Five Whys' technique that allows you to get to the root cause of a given belief.

For example, if a customer tells that your service offers them convenience, ask again: Why? The person might respond: "Because it gives me the feeling of control". You ask once more: Why? "Because I want to focus on other things". Why? you ask once more. "Because my goal is to be great at what I do." You ask the final why. "Because my job is to contribute to the happiness of others and I want to be solely focused on that." These are the answers you are looking for.

employees

1st PERSON

The initial reflection:

Answer to the first WHY:

Answer to the second WHY:

Answer to the third WHY: