



Systemic Management Audits

Management development from a systemic perspective

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Management audits regularly miss their intended objectives, because they primarily focus on the manager as a person and tend to neglect the overall organisational context. Systemic Management Audits overcome the inherent deficits of conventional management audits by pursuing a systemic approach. The focus lies not anymore on leadership development and leader selection focused on the individual but on the development of the entire management. A systemic management audits could aim at different levels of management development:

- ___ It supports organisations or management team being in a crisis to identify realistic and sustainable option for action.
- ___ It could initiate and establish a reflexive, continuous improvement process in the management.
- ___ It opens up a space that makes conscious self innovation possible

Management development from a systemic perspective means: the manager acts in a complex system that he seldom could influence directly. Therefore, it is not very likely that change solely on an individual level will lead to success. Development is feasible only in and with the entire system und cannot be separated from it. It is a matter of identifying these levers which make organisational change possible. Hence, the possible dimensions of a Systemic Management Audit are addressed both on an individual level and on the level of the entire system:

- ___ The manager as a person: traits, values, behaviour, competencies
- ___ The management team: co-operation model, leadership, composition, goals, roles, tasks, processes, group dynamics
- ___ The management system: vision, goal, and strategy development, management approach and tools, reward and sanctions systems, organisational culture, miro politics, images and principles of leadership
- ___ The management context: common career models, images of family, social values.

Furthermore, audits are more than just pure observation. They always have an impact on the observed. Therefore, Systemic Management Audits explicitly understand themselves as an intervention into the organisation.

Two cases from the consultancy practice will allow a glimpse into SI applications. Concerning the auditors, systemic management audits also lead to a paradigm shift. The audit is not conducted by external consultants anymore, but by the participating managers themselves. The assessment by external consultants, as it is the case at most of the conventional audits, tend to lack acceptance with the managers. It is likely that the external appraisals and recommendations are not agreed on or they are not taken relevant. That is why personal and organisational change after conventional audits keep far behind the expectations. And last but not least: Who could assess the management better, than the management itself?

The systemic management audits is based on self observation and self descriptions of the management which are realised by individual interviews or workshops with the entire management team. The result of this process is an overall systemic picture of the management that is relevant to and agreed by the management. Thus, authentic options for action and realistic opportunities of development open up to the management.

The systemic Management Audit is guided by a process facilitator who designs the overall architecture, conducts individual or group interview and facilitates workshops. However, the topics of the audits are solely came from the management.

The process of a systemic management audit could be outlined as follows:

1. Design: The design of the management audit is very important, because at this stage the conditions for the later success are established. Here expectations, interests and objectives of the management audit are clarified. However, it is also a topic, what should not happen in the audit or what should not be in the focus. Based on these objectives and expectations the dimensions and their criteria are defined and the audit it designed.
2. Realisation: The actual audit is realised by a set of interviews and workshops respectively with the manager involved. Thus, the appraisals, expectations and objectives concerning the agreed dimensions and criteria are gathered. The process consultant conducts the interviews and facilitates the workshops. Beyond, there is no further appraisal.
3. Analysis of the results and set up of a development plan: the aggregated results are given back to the participating managers as a report and are reflected in a workshop in order to plan the required indicated development action. Results and next steps planning on an personal level are discussed in individual interviews.
4. Evaluation: The Evaluation of the audit is a subordinated, but very important element of the audit. It is to evaluate, whether the expectations and objectives were met and what consequences and impacts the audit hat, and whether the action plan has to be adapted.

A systemic management audit opens up space for self observation of the management beyond the personal level. Its first purpose is to assure them of themselves: Where do we stand today? Furthermore or therefore, it is an opportunity to take a look into the future and to explore new possibilities : Who do we want to be tomorrow?

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