

The UNITE Company Board

The Company Board enables all colleagues to contribute to an agile and self-learning organization. The company board thus helps the organization to continuously adapt to the market as quickly and sustainably as possible.

A part of the Digital Leadership Capability Management Reference Content: #DL-MS-OD-COS-CB.
More information on this model is [available here](#).

Proudly shared OpenSource.

This work is shared under the following Creative Commons Licence:

Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0)



You are free to:

Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format

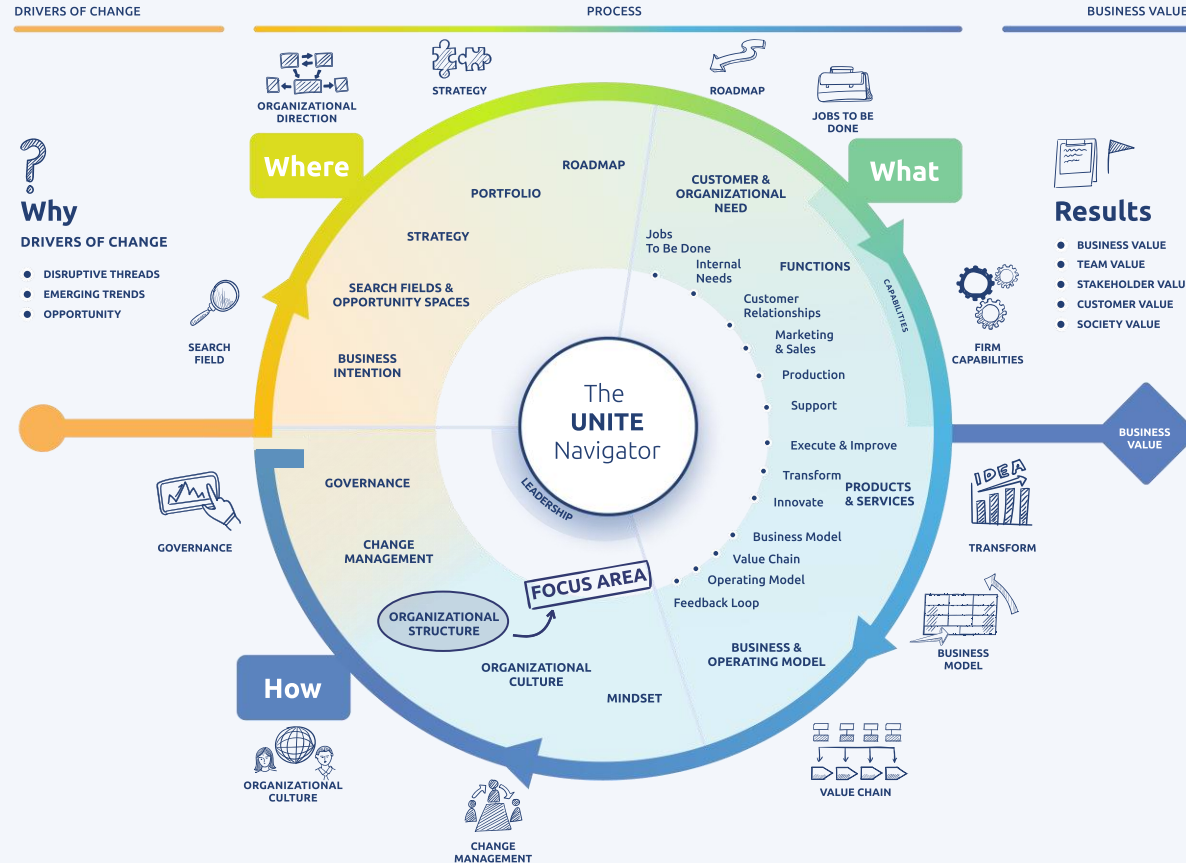
Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material
for any purpose, even commercially.

Under the following terms:

Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made.

ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.

THE UNITE NAVIGATOR – An overview and introduction to all UNITE models



- > The UNITE models are the by far largest library of innovation and transformation models on the Internet. They cover all areas of digital strategy, innovation, transformation as well as any related field.
- > The UNITE Navigator provides an introduction and overview of all digital-related fields.
- > As part of today's presentation, we will focus on *how agile and circular organizations can systematically evolve. The company board is a critical tool to help the organization to continuously adapt to the market as quickly and sustainably as possible.*

Background to the UNITE Company Board

Why we use it

The circles in the business, service and coordination rings need an instrument enabling them to actively and continuously shape the development of the organization and help it evolve.

How it works

A Kanban Board (Company Board) contains concerns, issues and ideas that cannot be solved by existing processes. These can be changes as how the organization operates, escalations or also changes at existing or even new products.

Each circle, each circle segment and each market segment operates its own company board.

If a matter cannot be resolved within the circle because it exceeds their competencies, knowledge, budget or other guardrails, it is passed on to the next inner Company Board. This escalation process continues until the board with the appropriate decision rights has been reached.

Colleagues from the direct value creation circles should be systematically involved and encouraged in this process to constantly shape the organization.

What is the goal

Adapt to the market as quickly and sustainably as possible.

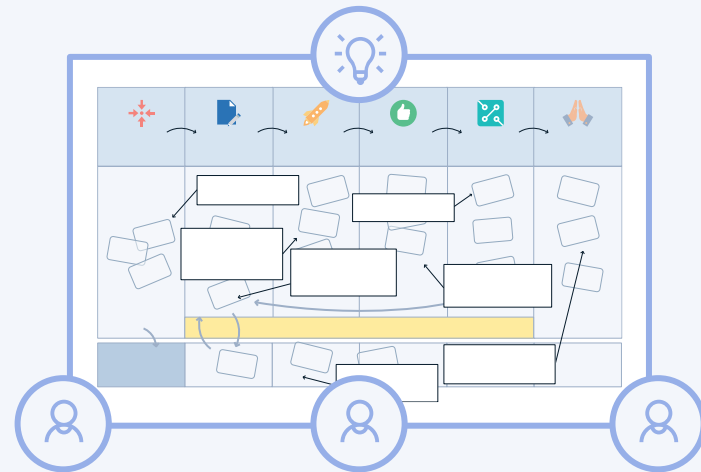
We want to maximize the decentralized development of opportunities across the organization, only limited by framework conditions such as budget and other key guardrails.

The ultimate outcome is an agile and self-learning organization.

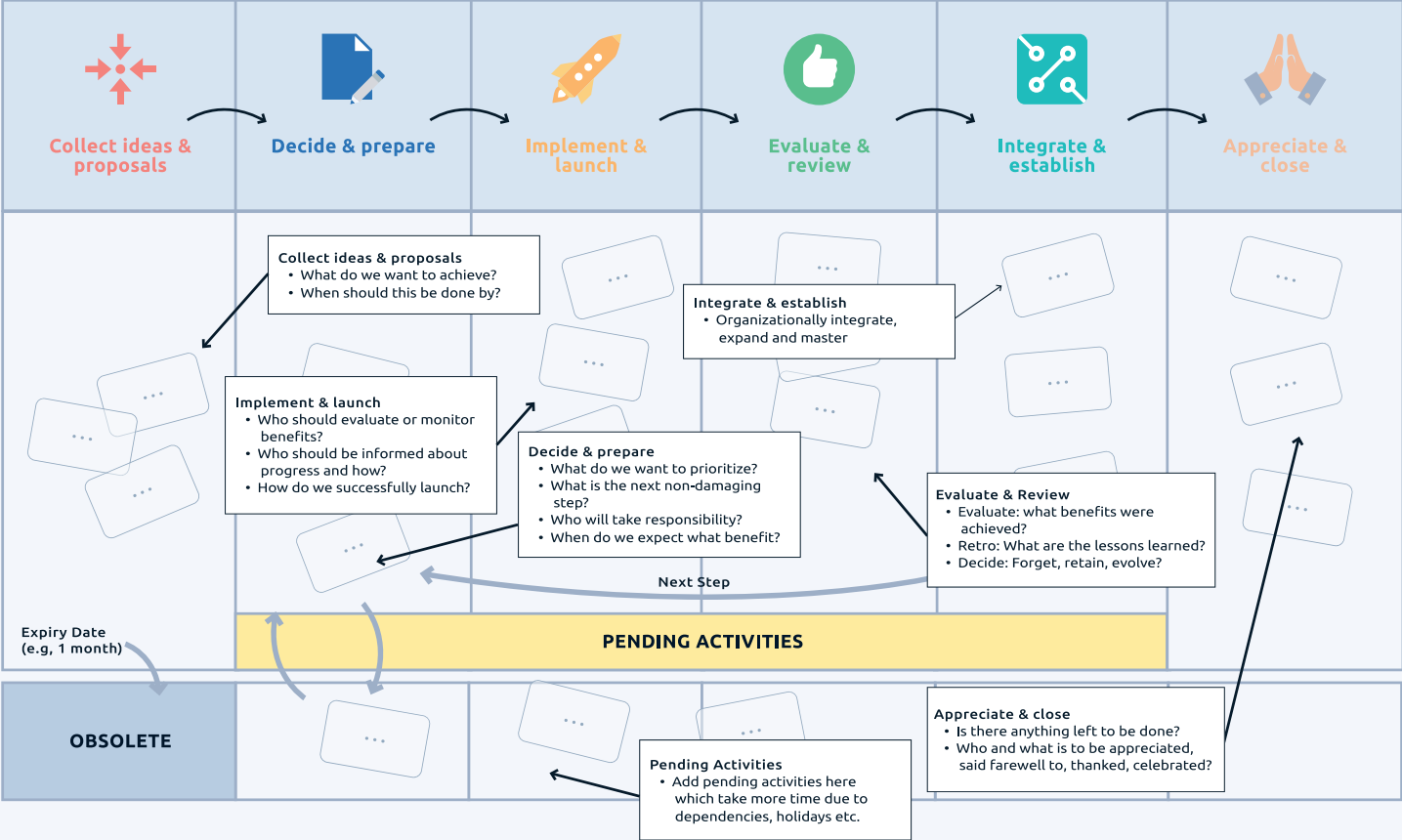
> Please read the [related chapter in the book](#) to fully understand the concept of Company Board

The self-transforming Organization

- > Last but not least, we want to equip the organization with the tools to evolve itself.
- > For this purpose, we establish a “company board”, at the level of each market segment, within each ring and each circle, so that all members can contribute their ideas and proposals to help the organization grow and evolve.
- > The board can be established either physically or online and is the place where colleagues can work “on the organization” and share their ideas. This approach allows every person to contribute consciously to evolving the teams, organizational structures and processes, as well as products and services.
- > The company board is initially established by the *Organizational Development Circle* at the start of a new initiative. Over time, colleagues adopt the tool, share their own ideas on the organizational level and introduce the tool in their segments, rings or circles.
- > A company board session should be held every two weeks. It is a timeboxed event in which all ideas are reviewed. It will last 20 minutes in a well-established organization. It may be a good idea to combine it with a broader townhall meeting.
- > Each company board has rules which are established with the founding circle. These are e.g. budget, design competences, 1st/2nd/3rd level support rules or other areas of responsibilities.



THE UNITE COMPANY BOARD



Background to the UNITE Company Board

What goes on the company board?

- > The company board only contains work that leads to organizational change or is not covered by processes, structures, artifacts and roles from regular day-to-day work. Anything unanticipated, unresolved, and not planned or unforeseen items belong on the company board. These ideas and proposals are then further developed to reach a mutual decision on how to evolve the way we work together.

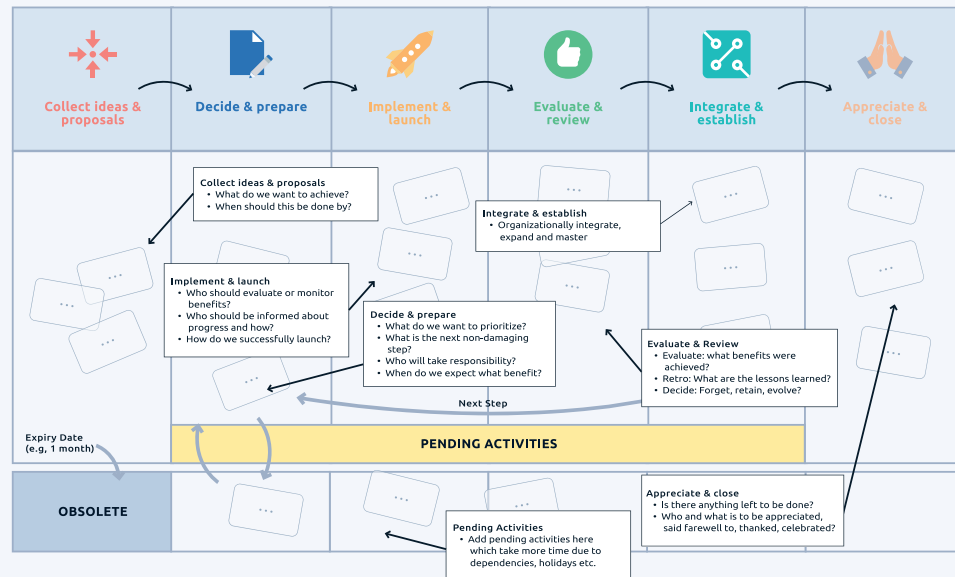
The following principles apply to the company board:

- > The company board always governs the area of responsibility of a circle, area or plenum.
- > It always focuses on the work of the circle.
- > Topics or issues beyond a circle are managed on a corresponding company board.
- > Each idea or proposal is covered with a separate card or piece of paper.
- > A series of columns visualizes the different states of a proposal as progress is made.
- > Changes to proposals or their state may only be changed in agreed working meetings.
- > If no other decision-making process is defined, we suggest applying the "universal decision process" described later.

Adding a new items

Each item should convey the following information:

- > Content: What is it about?
- > Which role, sub-circle, or individual member decides or is responsible for the content?
- > What specific decision-making process, if any, is to be used?
- > What benefits are expected? How can the benefit be determined? By whom?
- > Expected date for next status change, if applicable.



Column 1: “Ideas & Proposals”

Which ideas have enough power? The company board starts on the left with the column for “Ideas & Proposals”. Ideas are possible decisions. Typically, people in organizations have many more ideas than they can actually implement.

An idea often results from dissatisfaction and names a possible change to improve a situation. In this respect, obstacles and risks also have a place in this column.

Expiration date

Sometimes an idea has already lost its power a few days later. Or vice versa, some ideas infect others and become more powerful. That is why an expiration date is of great help. At each company board meeting, each entry is briefly reviewed. If someone has thought of the idea or perhaps even developed it further, the expiration date is updated.

Column 2: “Decide & Prepare”

This is the most challenging column. A vague and fuzzy idea is reformulated into a concrete benefit and next step described.

Benefit instead of activity

Don't get trapped into activism, overcome the temptation and formulate the benefit, resource usage and other consequences first to make the intention decidable.

Only then should the next steps be described. This will also make it easier later on to measure in the "Evaluate and Review" column whether the expected outcome has been achieved.

Entries should be reduced to manageable steps so that they can be completed after two to three company board meetings.

The remaining steps of the activity can be parked in the "Open" area.

Show responsibility

The pull principle applies: entries are not assigned or distributed but are pulled by colleagues from the column “Ideas & Proposals”. Entries will have a clear responsible person from now on: a specific person is ready to take responsibility for this entry.

Column 3: “Implement & Launch”

- > Entries can be pulled to this state only during company board meetings using the universal decision process, described further down in the document.
- > Entries in this column describe a next step that is as manageable as possible or is currently in progress.
- > The respective steps are implemented, developed, produced or tried out.
- > During the company board meeting the colleague responsible can briefly report on the status of implementation.
- > Entries can be pulled to the state “Evaluate and Review” once they are finalized.

Column 4: “Evaluate & Review”

Once development, testing or implementation is complete, the card moves to the "Evaluate & Review" column.

Most often, it is a target-performance comparison:

- > What benefits did we expect?
- > What benefits have actually been realized?
- > What does this mean for further action?

Column 5: “Integrate & Establish”

- > If this entry has only been trialed, evaluate whether integration into other areas is possible and appropriate.
- > Plan what the next steps are, taking into account the experience from the "Evaluation & Review" column and possible residual concerns in the "Pending Activities" area.

Column 6: “Appreciate & Close”

- > In the simplest case, completed concerns are simply moved here to make clear and document that they are done.
- > The possibility and opportunity arises for ritual closings and appreciations: depending on what was involved, those involved are explicitly thanked and their work is acknowledged.

At the bottom: «Pending Activities»

This area is a parking lot for concerns and ideas that are too large to be implemented in one piece. It is an overflow pool when concerns in the "Decide and Prepare" column are too large.

Once the active concern is integrated and completed, this original Overall Concern is searched and updated:

- > Is the overall concern still current?
- > What has changed?
- > What would be the next small step now?

Introducing the “Universal Decision Process”

In this decision-making process, we allow for the simultaneous consideration of content, personnel and procedural proposals, thus remaining very flexible and open.

Collecting proposals

The current proposal is presented. Subsequently, possible further proposals are collected.

In the case of new proposals, it is important to check:

- > Who is responsible for implementing the decision?
- > When should a retrospective take place and who organizes it?

The new proposals are each briefly presented. Questions of understanding are clarified. The moderator does not allow expressions of opinion or discussion. If possible, only the person from whom the proposal comes answers a question of understanding. The Current As-Is (it stays the way it is) also counts as a proposal.

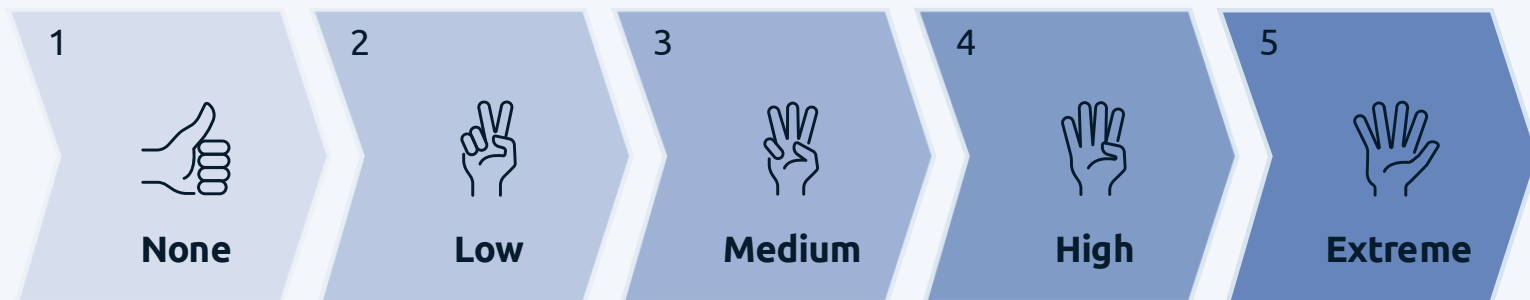
Measuring resistance

1. The moderator explains the five hand signals as possible resistance values.
2. The moderator asks for each proposal in turn: "What is your resistance to this alternative?"
3. Everyone gives their hand signal at the same time and the moderator notes the total sum of the fingers. This is repeated for each of the alternatives.

The alternative with the least resistance is the winner.

The Universal Decision Process: measuring resistance

The resistance query measures the resistance against an option and allows to make a joint group decision. An abstention (no hand-sign) counts as 1.



Moderation Principle: Updating from right to left

The concept of the company board is based on Kanban. The moderation process starts in the right column and then moves to the left column by column.

In each column, the content is then updated from top to bottom. On the one hand, this involves whether a card changes processing status and is moved one column further to the right. On the other hand, it is about the exchange of other important information about each card.

Moderation Principle: conducting Company Board Meetings

The company board meeting should be strictly regular in bi-weekly or monthly meetings. In our experience, 20-60 minutes is sufficient for most organizations.

All members of the organizational unit for which the company board is operated are always invited.

Meetings are held regardless of how many are present. The rule is: those present at the time decide taking into account the interests of the members who are not present.

Moderation Principle:

Preparation with the support of the facilitators

To ensure that the valuable and expensive time spent together at company board meetings is used well, the following helps:

- > The moderators meet 30 - 60 minutes beforehand, go through all the cards once in advance and anticipate possible changes in status, complications, information, discussion and decision-making needs. If necessary, also contact those responsible for specific maps in advance for this purpose.
- > During this time before the actual meeting, the moderators are also available for all participants to prepare, for example, to go over the content and wording of specific concerns.
- > Those who wish to bring about a decision during the meeting are encouraged to indicate this to the facilitators in advance and to agree with them on the wording and facilitation of the decision.
- > There should be a standard for how decisions are made, for example, using the Universal Decision Process.

Moderation Principle:

Situational moderation decisions

The moderators can refuse or postpone the processing of individual cards. For example, because they cannot understand the content of contributions despite their best efforts, to prioritize due to a lack of time, or because the leadership monitor is not the appropriate setting or location for the concern.

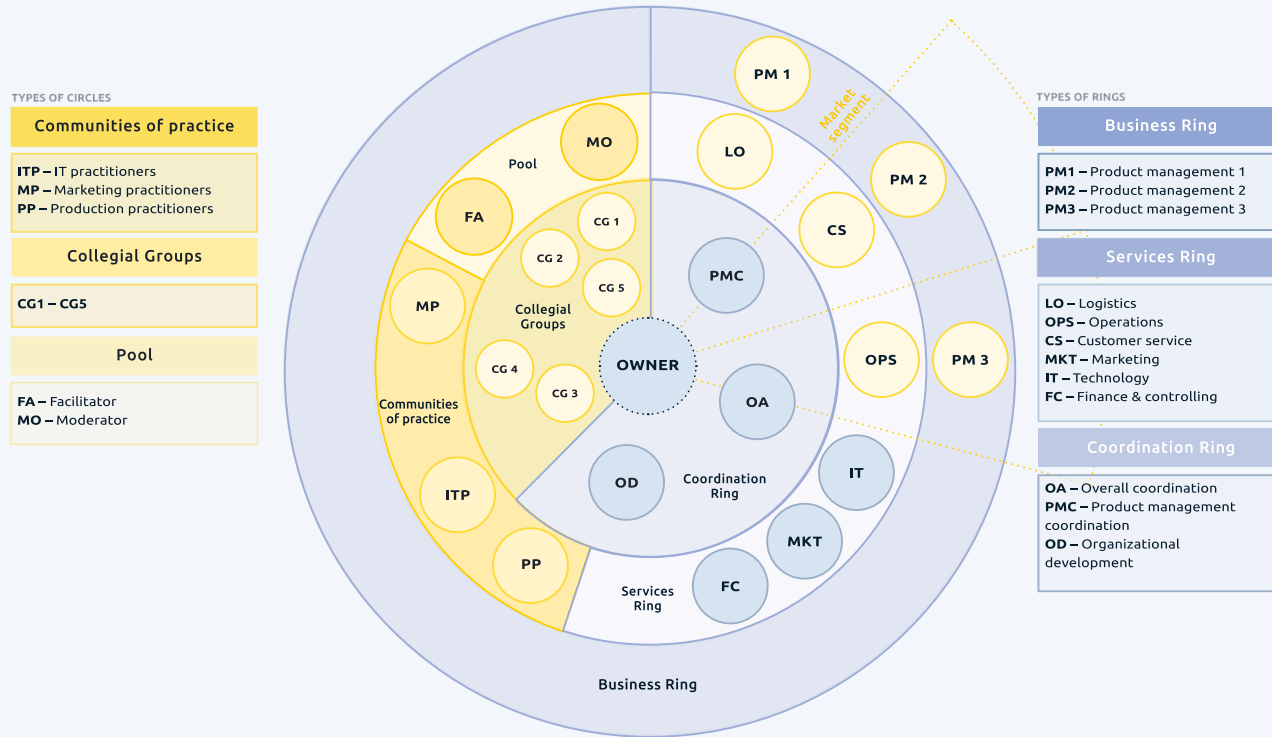
For each card, facilitators must carefully distinguish and specifically handle different types of communication:

- > Is necessary and meaningful information being communicated?
- > If someone does not get to the point, speaks incomprehensibly or about irrelevant content, the moderators admonish the speakers and, if necessary, interrupt their contributions.
- > Are comprehension questions asked or are opinions expressed in disguise as questions?

A company board meeting is not for discussion or opinion. It may be necessary to refer issues that are obviously still in need of discussion to other formats and meetings. For moderators, this distinction is always challenging because it is rarely clear-cut and almost always gradual.

Related models

THE UNITE CIRCULAR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



Introducing the circular organizational structure

The circular organizational structure is an alternative to a classical pyramid organizational structure. It supports in particular agile organizations who are operating in fast-paced environments and allows to tap into the intelligence of all involved.

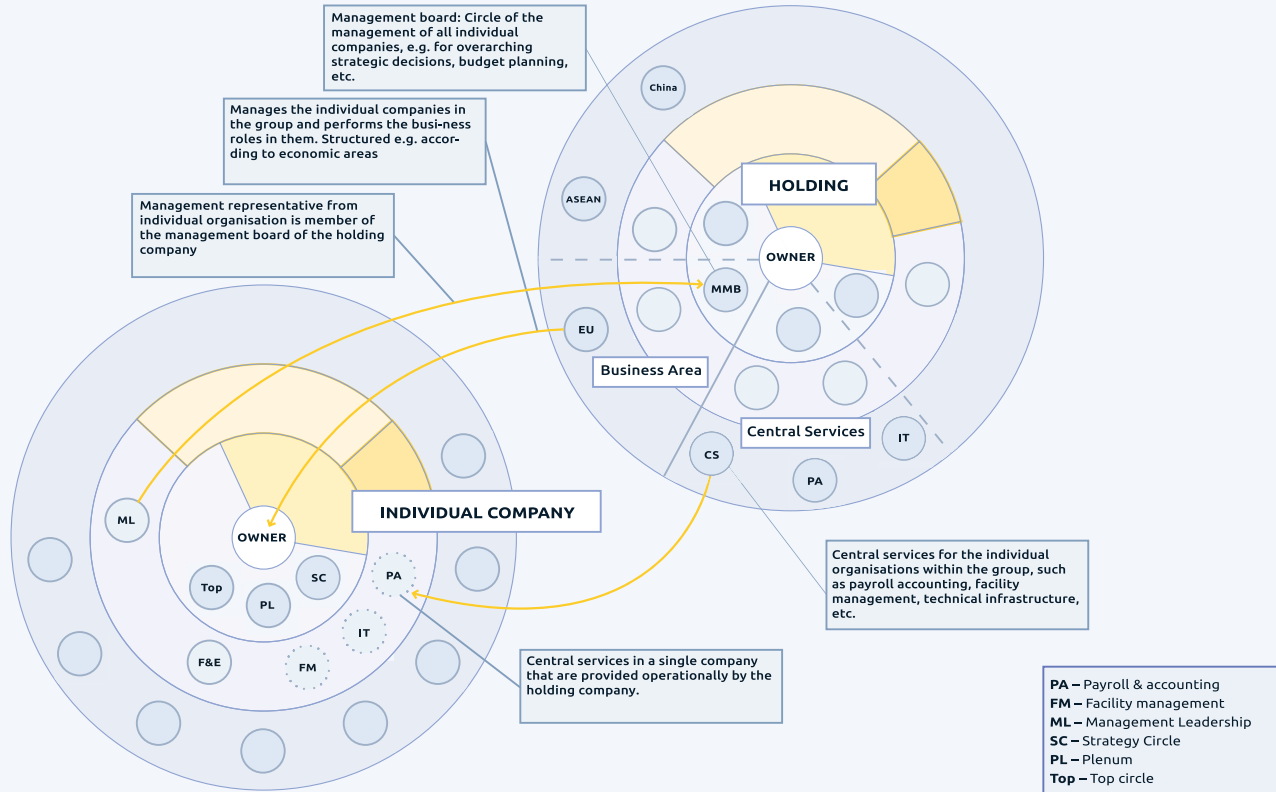


THE UNITE CIRCULAR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Download the UNITE Models for FREE



THE UNITE APPROACH TO SCALING THE CIRCULAR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



Scaling the circular organizational structure

Your business idea launched and grows and grows. Where to go from know, how can we scale and still keep the start-up culture, entrepreneurship and mindset alive. Look no further, visit the UNITE model "Scaling the circular organization".



THE UNITE CIRCULAR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Download the UNITE Models for FREE



Main authors



MARTIN KÖNIG

Organizational Transformation Coach & Lecturer

SAFe SPC, OKR Master, Coach for Self-Governing Organizations, Leadership & Team Development; Lecturer Agile Organization Development at the University of Applied Sciences FHNW Basel.

I have coached and advised over one hundred owners of traditional, family-owned businesses, international corporations, NGO's, C-level members and Boards of Directors. My mission is to empower people and activate their intrinsic motivation to radically simplify the complicated and uncertain path of change towards a living, thriving, self-learning and future-proof organization. My mandates includes coaching and advising of strategy development, leadership- and team development, and organizational transformation from classic hierarchical to self-governing, agile companies.

SEND AN E-MAIL

martin.koenig@tripleminds.ch



STEFAN F. DIEFFENBACHER

Founder & Managing Director of Digital Leadership, Industry thought leader for digital innovation & transformation

Executive MBA, MSc Enterprise Process Management, Master in International Management, TSTA, CPM, PMP, Scrum Master, Enterprise Architect

Over 20 multi-million Euro & Dollar projects, 14 years abroad living in 11 countries, research and lectures at numerous European universities, 18 startups either co-founded or invested in, setup of over 20 companies, led over 1.000 workshops, numerous awards and always new impulses – this is Stefan F. Dieffenbacher. Led large scale projects & programs with multi-million-\$ impact for: BMW, BNP Paribas, Deutsche Telekom, Epson, Etihad Etisalat, Hubert Burda Media, IBM, Jaguar, Linde, Mobily, o2, Pfizer, Sapient, Sky, VNG, Vodafone, and others.

SCHEDULE YOUR CALL

Office +41 (0) 44 562 42 24
sd@digitalleadership.com



Thank you for
making your work
available **Open**
Source!

»We help to build organizations for the future. We courageously need to break new ground, make decisions and shape the future.«

At tripleminds we are convinced that people and organizations need more than the ability to analyze. We are all living organisms that have to deal with internal and external influences. Only when we live empathy, adopt a change of perspective and unfold our potential, we can shape the future in a strengthened way.

That is why we at tripleminds create the framework for our clients so that all three levels - knowledge, willingness and action - are brought to bear in a balanced way.

- So that the potential as a person and as an organization is recognized and lived.
- So that together we can courageously break through pattern.
- So that the values are effective as an orientation for action for employees and customers.

We create clarity, make a significant contribution to real high-performance teams and support you and your organizations in developing your appropriate system for your future.

DISCOVER TRIPLEMINDS



Proudly sponsored by Digital Leadership.



And many others..



**HIGHLY EXPERT TEAM WITH
HUGE EXPERIENCE.**

OUR TEAM OF PARTNERS at Digital Leadership are executive-level professionals with outstanding leadership and delivery capabilities in their respective areas. What unites us is our values and beliefs, strong methodological foundation, 'Digital Leadership' experience and our willingness to drive change jointly with our customers.



**THE LARGEST SET OF
METHODOLOGY GLOBALLY.**

THE UNITE MODELS are the by far largest library of innovation and digital transformation models available on the market globally. They cover all important domains end2end and uniquely – they are deeply integrated. Please be invited to leverage them in your organization. **Let's UNITE and create a world worth living in !**



**THE BOOK ABOUT HOW
TO CREATE INNOVATION**

HOW TO CREATE INNOVATION is a practical, comprehensive, OpenSource guide for successful innovation and digital transformation. The UNITE initiative and movement, supported by a global team of industry leaders and innovation researchers, aims to spark a revolution in global innovation and transformation.

SCHEDULE YOUR CALL

Office +41 (0) 44 562 42 24

engage@digitalleadership.com

www.digitalleadership.com

digitalleadership.com



The Only Book On Innovation You'll Ever Need

Thought-leaders contributed

60+

Pages of content

450+

Ready-to-use tools & models

50+

HOW TO CREATE INNOVATION provides the methodology, models, setup and cultural prerequisites to successfully create innovation. Leveraging the UNITE frameworks for innovation and digital transformation, organizations can create innovation in a target-oriented way, leverage their strengths, create Blue Oceans and overcome luck.

 **ORDER WITH DIGITAL LEADERSHIP**

- > Get immediate access to the UNITE models!
- > Digital edition: get the Open Source ePub and PDF files!

 **ORDER WITH AMAZON**

Unfortunately Amazon only offers the closed source Kindle version :-)

Trusted by global companies:



amazon.com



BNP PARIBAS

Hubert Burda Media

■ BASF



SIEMENS

Verbundnetz Gas AG

Discover the world's largest library of innovation & transformation models!



Over 10k
downloads /
month

The UNITE Models are downloaded every month over 10k times!

ALL MODELS ARE OPENSOURCE and are available free of charge!

Discover the UNITE innovation & transformation
tools and canvases here:

DISCOVER THE UNITE MODELS

FREE

Discover our Innovation Practice

Innovation is the only effective survival strategy



Who better to entrust with your business innovation than those who wrote the most complete book on the topic?

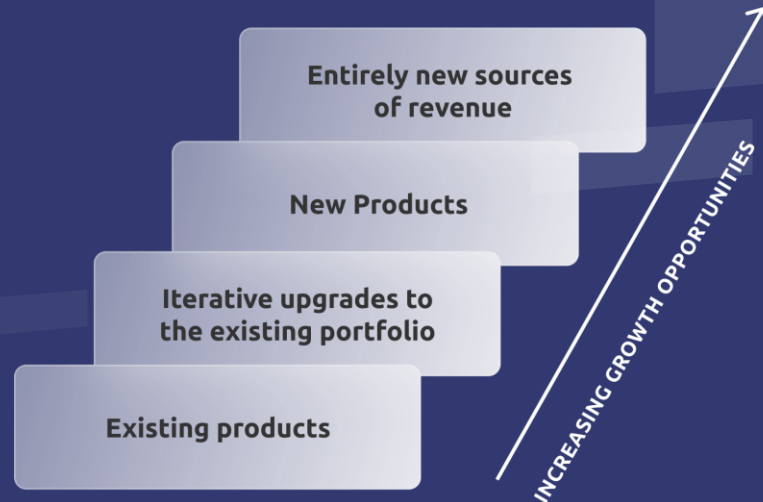
Digital Leadership has successfully helped corporate start-ups find their footing and Top-Five players in all sectors around the world identify and create new opportunities.

SCHEDULE YOUR INITIAL CALL

DISCOVER MORE ➤



Take control of your game!
Schedule your free business
assessment call with our team!



Discover our Culture & Organizational Change Practice



Don't let a decoupled culture and structure hold your business back

Do you know why most innovation and transformation projects fail?

Organizations are pumping plenty of cash into innovation and transformation initiatives. The problem is that the expected results often fail to materialize.

The primary issue is not one of ideas or directions – initiatives get stuck in strategy-execution. Let's thus turn the number one innovation obstructor in the best business enablers ever.

SCHEDULE YOUR INITIAL CALL

DISCOVER MORE ➤



Take control of your game!
Schedule your free business
assessment call with our team!



We build digital winners.



It's what we are made for. Let's create winning digital businesses – together. And, at the same time, let's create a world worth living in.

Digital Leadership is a strategy-execution firm built on strong and innovative values. We support our customers in strategizing, building and securing their future through the creation of fully digitally enabled, and extraordinarily successful, products and businesses. Our agile, lean, fast-track business setup, coupled with access to an extensive pool of highly specialized and trusted resources, allows for ideating and building in an effective and meaningful way.

Shared goals are the cornerstone of our customer approach. To date, our team has successfully led 74 projects with numerous global players across all industry sectors, ranging from \$50,000 projects to \$100 million programs. But helping our customers' build their futures is not enough. We are committed to changing the world through the sharing of powerful innovation and transformation practices. Join the UNITE movement and help us start an innovation revolution.



EXPLORE OUR WEBSITE

Office +41 (0) 44 562 42 24



amazon.com



BNP PARIBAS

Hubert Burda Media

• BASF



SIEMENS



Thank you!
Let's UNITE and create a world worth living in!

Do you want to share your knowledge as well?

Share my knowledge with the world!