

Organizational Study

Supporting Resilience

An **Organizational Study** is a way of **looking back** at what a group has been doing and taking stock of how well it has been performing. In this way an Organizational Study contributes to **The Resilience Practice Mix**, which, as a whole, strengthens the resilience of nonprofit organizations, businesses, associations, and even whole communities.

An Organizational Study helps identify an organization's competitive advantage. Once known, the competitive advantage can be used to inform the existing vision, mission, and goals of an organization as part of the **looking ahead** process. In this way it can point an organization in the direction of potential growth and development.

Additionally, an Organizational Study contributes to **mindings** by helping the organization identify areas where management improvement is needed. Finally, it contributes to effective **responding** as it helps to focus its efforts in moving forward with its plans.



Resilience

"The ability to anticipate, prepare for, and respond and adapt to incremental change and sudden disruptions." (Denyer, 2017)

The Resilience Practice Mix is inspired by and adapted from Denyer (2017).

How does it work?

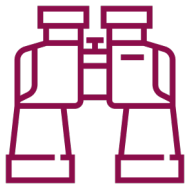
Think of an organizational study as a **case history** of the organization. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used to collect and analyze information that tells the story of the organization. Most of our organizational studies review internal organizational documents, external documents that the organization has published online or in print, and conduct surveys that can include of organizational leaders, board members, staff, constituents, clients or customers, and other "key informants" who know the organization well through direct connections with it. Interviews and/or focus groups with these key informants is also often included in an organizational study.

Statistical analysis can be used to analyze the surveys. Content analysis, a method for systematically examining and making inferences from both written and spoken text, is used to identify, sort, and weight data for its relevance to the case history and to identify emerging themes. Ongoing communication with key informants can be used to verify the accuracy of factual information, to clarify the meaning of the data, and enhance understanding.

This can take some time and, yet, in the end, the study tells a story about the organization increases understanding what the organization has been doing and, more importantly, how it has been performing. There are five components of an organizational study done by Tenacious Change.

How is an Organizational Study conducted?

The approach used by Tenacious Change is based on Pearce & Robinson's (2011) Strategic Management Model. It includes five areas of for examination to get a comprehensive understanding of an organization, its work, and its performance.



Environmental Scan

The **Environmental Scan** exams three levels of the environment in which an organization works:

- 1) **Remote Environment:** What are the economic, social, political, technological factors beyond the organization's control which affect it?
- 2) **Industry Environment:** Who or what is the competition for the same services or products provided by the organization?
- 3) **Operating Environment:** What factors in the immediate environment impacts the organization's ability acquire needed resources?



Internal Analysis

The **Internal Analysis** assesses the quantity and quality of an organization's financial, human, and physical resources. It also uses information gathered in the Environmental Scan to consider how the organization compares to it's competition. An Internal Analysis helps illuminate three important facts about an organization:

- 1) **Alignment:** Is everyone on the same page? Do key actors in the organization share a similar and supportive understanding of the organization's vision and mission?
- 2) **Competitive Advantage:** What makes the organization different from other organizations that working in the same industry and on similar issues?
- 3) **Financial Resources:** How well resourced is the organization?



Business Strategies Analysis

The **Business Strategies Analysis** allows the organization to make choices based on the findings of the Environmental Scan and Internal Analysis. Typically, Business Strategies Analysis includes the identification of both **Generic** and **Grand** strategies.

A **Generic Strategy** is a core idea or philosophy about how an organization grows and competes effectively. There are three generic strategies:

- 1) **Low-cost Leadership**, which is competing on the basis of providing the same or similar products and services at a cost lower than the competition.
- 2) **Differentiation**, which is competing by creating and marketing unique products or services for various client or customer groups.
- 3) **Focus**, which is competing on the basis of low-cost or differentiation to the needs of a particular group of clients or customers.



For More Information

Email - info@tenaciouschange.us
Web - www.tenaciouschange.us

An organization's **Grand Strategy** is a long-term approach providing basic direction for reaching long-term objectives. It tends to be more specific than the generic strategy. There are as many as 15 different Grand Strategies (Pearce & Robinson, 2011) which are typically available to organizations. Some are a better fit with nonprofit organizations than for-profit businesses. In considering the Grand Strategy, it is often useful to consider two things:

- 1) **The purpose of the Grand Strategy**—Is it to maximize strengths or overcome weakness?
- 2) **The emphasis for growth**—Is it internal focused on the redirection of resources within the organization or is it external focused which typically refers to growth through merger with or acquisition of another organization?

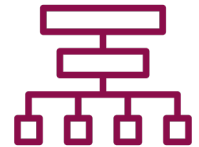
Implementation

Implementation asks the question, “What are the next short-range steps the organization can take to utilize its competitive advantage to the fullest?” **Implementation seeks to identify and recommend specific actions to move the organization toward accomplishing its long-term objective(s).** To be clear, Implementation recommendations, and an Organizational Study as a whole, is not a strategic plan. However, everything that is learned and considered in an Organizational Study may be used to inform the development of a strategy plan.



Leadership, Structure, and Culture

Leadership, Structure, and Culture is concerned with creating an infrastructure that strengthens the organization and moves it toward achievement of its vision, mission, and strategic goals. Like Implementation, this part of the study is informed by the previous analysis. It brings together insights from the Environmental Scan, Internal Analysis, and the Business Strategies Analysis to offer specific ideas, suggestions, and recommendations. When indicated by the analysis, this part of the study will offer recommendations with regard to:



- **The optimal roles for the organization's leaders.**
- **Adaptations to the organization's structure, including governance, management, and decision-making.**
- **Strengthening the culture of the organization to support recruitment and retention of staff.**

Can an Organizational Study be done with a nonprofit organization?

Yes, and we have done them. Tenacious Change works with both for-profit and nonprofit businesses. The phrase “nonprofit business” can seem strange to people in nonprofit organizations. The term is appropriate though because *nonprofit organizations are businesses*. They are different from for-profit businesses because of their legal status. They may also be different from many for-profits because their **double-bottom line** of financial sustainability and social-well being or even a **triple bottom-line** of social well-being, environmental health, and a just economy (also known as “people, planet, and prosperity”). An Organizational Study benefits both for-profit businesses and nonprofit organizations. This is especially true if they are building resilience in order to navigate the waters of change—whether that change is gradual or sudden.

What will an Organizational Study deliver?

An Organizational Study delivers five types of feedback and the rationale for them:

- 1) **Kudos** which are acclamations for what is working well and affirmation of those things for which improvement or change is not indicated.
- 2) **Suggestions** which are ideas presented for consideration on matters of low urgency.
- 3) **Recommendations** which are suggestions on matters of some urgency that may also be time sensitive.
- 4) **Strong Recommendations** which are recommendations on matters of high urgency that need to be considered soon because of their time sensitivity.
- 5) **Warnings** which are stronger recommendations on matters of great urgency which may put the organization at risk if not addressed immediately.

All of this will be organized into a report for the organization in a format determined in collaboration with the client.

Meet with Us to Learn More

For over a decade Tenacious Change has been providing resilience and development services to small nonprofits and businesses often overlooked by larger consultancies. We know time and money are precious commodities. **Give us a chance to tailor a proposal that fits for you!**

Email us (info@tenaciouschange.us) to set up a complimentary conversation via Zoom, Google Meet, or by phone. In that time we can learn more about your organization, what you want from your Organizational Study and determine if we are a good fit for what you need. If we are a good fit, we will explain how we can help your organization **achieve high quality results** at a **fair value** within a **reasonable timeframe**. Let's talk soon!

References

Denyer, D. (2017). *Organizational Resilience: A summary of academic evidence, business insights and new thinking*. BSI and Cranfield School of Management.
Pearce, J. A. & Robinson, R. B. (2011). *Strategic management: Formulation, implementation, and control* (12th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Irwin.



For More Information

Email - info@tenaciouschange.us
Web - www.tenaciouschange.us