White paper

Understanding the architecture of an organization implies more then the commonly used deterministic views for engineering and maintaining technical systems. Organizations should be seen as social systems. Managing the behaviour and performance of a group of cooperating professionals and their processes, needs therefore a more holistic examination. This is one of basic concepts behind the SqEME approach of process management.

This white paper will give you insight into the principles of the SqEME approach of process management. It will explain how these principles affect the modelling process and the modelling conventions of organization architecture. The architecture development method within the SqEME approach of process management is defined by the use of four different windows for looking at an organization. These windows are called Constitution, Chemistry, Construction and Correspondence. It will show how process modelling from a social system perspective can contribute to both technical challenges as to the challenge of organizational change.

For the working out, use has been made of experience, acquired in dozens of projects in which the implementation of thinking in processes stood central. The Dutch Police Force and the Public Prosecution Service *(Openbaar Ministerie)* are examples where this has been performed organization-wide following this method. Around SqEME, a network of independent consultancy agencies and users of the method has arisen, who apply the method in their work in the area of process management (www.sqeme.nl). The SqEME® method is expressed in the four C's: Correspondence, Construct, Constitution and Chemistry. At SqEME® Process Management this has been "translated" in the terms: Dashboard, Deployment, Business Activities and Messaging.

PRINCIPLES

SqEME® Process Management is a result and process oriented method based upon the following principles:
- inclusive and open system thinking;
- horizontal organizing;
- a holistic approach of organizing;
- professional workers.

Inclusive and Open System Thinking
SqEME for process management uses the term *inclusive thinking*. The term *inclusive thinking* has been adopted from the philosopher Feitse Boerwinkel. It introduces an alternative for the antagonistic thinking (thinking in contrasts) and exclusive, egocentric thinking. He describes it as: "A thinking that is fundamentally based upon the idea that my good (luck, life, welfare) is not achieved at the cost of or without the other, but that it can only be obtained if that person at the same time intends to achieve and improve the

good of the other." (Boerwinkel 1966). The fundament of the inclusive thinking is the consciousness that humanity forms one family and that one cannot harm the fellow-human without -in him- injuring oneself. Or, expressed more positively, the consciousness that one only comes to full development if one does not stay at oneself but comes to greater cooperation with others. As Boerwinkel states, "man is no longer worth what the own brain is worth, but what all brains of all people are worth". He arguments his plea to abandon the antagonistic and exclusive thinking with the statement that any war will in the end only have losers and that Europe, after many hundreds of years of warfare, finally has discovered that cooperation in the end is more profitable. Apart from this, in less powerful words many evidence has been delivered and dozens of exercises have shown that cooperation leads to result faster than going your own way.

Inclusive thinking propagates to ban the making of enemy images, as well as ways of thinking that are derived from warfare. Inclusive thinking stands for empathizing with the way of thinking of others. This attitude is necessary to abandon "department thinking" in favour of a way of thinking in which one takes responsibility for each others acts and therewith for the common results. Stated in an earthly manner: it is assumed that it also is a remedy for "internal political games" and contributes to a culture in which people take their responsibility, knowing that their interest depends of the common interest. In this way, it also is a manner to express the ideas of Weick. Only when you try to really understand the thoughts and ideas of the other, you will succeed to conquer and prevent ambiguities in communication. With this philosophical approach, SqEME underlines that it is not only sensible, but also necessary to get to the truth of the basic principles, the philosophical fundaments, the possibly religious roots and the cultural characteristics of an organization. To achieve this, SqEME uses some concepts, in fact *Constitution* for the SqEME method and *Business Activities* for SqEME® Process Management. For SqEME® Proces Management, the point of departure is inclusive thinking, including the guidelines Boerwinkel supplies for inclusive thinking:

- One has to beware of considering oneself superior above others and one has to avoid "self-righteousness".
- One has to assume the other is convinced in his opinions.
- One has to be willing to listen to the other and be aware of one's own beliefs.
- One has to beware of stereotyping.
- One has to find a form to both work and live together by helping and encouraging each other and, where necessary, providing clear criticism and, if it must, opposition.

The choice for inclusive thinking is not meant idealistically in the first place. SqEME shares the opinion of Boerwinkel that it is a realistic choice. Process management is not meant to present things more beautiful or more noble than they are. SqEME® Process Management is mainly meant to make the organization *result oriented* , and results that

are achieved at the cost of others will at short term either lead to opposition or, at longer term, lead to rebellion or to a forceful counteraction. Just keeping in mind the own interest is not only a proof of short term thinking, but especially foolish and a form of hunting for results without any durability. Process management is also about *cooperation* and from this perspective, the concept of inclusive thinking is a powerful and meaningful starting point. The necessity to cooperate finds its origin in the idea that organizations are open systems. On this subject, SqEME embraces the notions of Senge and the ideas of Emery and Trist ("managing the boundary conditions").

Horizontal Organizing

The shift in the traditional conception of process thinking is described in literature as the shift from a vertical approach of an organization to a horizontal approach. This implies something else than the "tilting of an organization". At tilting of the organization, the traditional principles of thinking in tasks and responsibilities and the institution of a hierarchy that has to supervise their correct implementation are in fact maintained. The supplementary effect of holding on to this way of thinking is that one chooses for a matrix organization in which employees get two superiors: a functional and an operational boss, involving all conflicts of interest and the possibility to play this one boss off against the other. Matrix organization do beautifully on paper but appear to function only rarely in practice. Yet, organizations that want to change over to process-oriented operation seem to choose for an intermediate solution like this an appoint so-called process managers who sometimes get a functional task or sometimes an operational one. Either they or the employees they supervise then walk into the "antipodeans" of the process managers.

SqEME® Process Management takes the view that an organization is to consider as a bundling of processes (Weick) in which the main subject is the internal communication; the organisation as an "information processing system" therefore. From this point of view, on one hand one discovers imperfections and blockades that explain why up till now things never went as they were expected to go. On the other hand one only then sees what has to be done to really make new technologies work, in fact to make an organization into an integral system, in which employees only have to respond at exceptional situations, because automated production and control systems adequately respond to standard situations. Reacting to exceptional situations after all means freedom of act, in which the essence is to make choices that match the objectives of the organisation, more or less indifferent the way in which they are achieved. In fact SqEME adopts the idea that functional/hierarchical organizing or the Taylorism of Scientific Management has surpassed its date of expiration. SqEME especially focuses at the information/communication processes and at the correctness and completeness of this information. Like in a Can Ban system an empty basket is the signal to start producing.

Not more but also not less than necessary to fill up the basket again. One could say that the information should start a flow of energy. SqEME uses the terms *Chemistry* for the SqEME® method and *Messaging* for SqEME® Process Management.

A holistic approach of organizing
With the rise of the rationalism, a tradition in the way of examining organizations has appeared that comes down to the concept that to comprehend a complex system, one has to divide a problem into sub-problems, just as long till one has an issue left that can be handled. There is not much to bring up against this method, other than that one loses sight at the interconnection of the parts, whilst their relation can be a part of the explanation why something either works or not. The traditional methods of research were especially meant to reduce complexity. As our "calculators" got more powerful, we could handle a greater complexity, but this did not lead to a larger insight in the coherence. The Taylorisme of Scientific Management mainly aimed at splitting up, specializing and standardizing, whilst modern production control systems made this much less necessary, and required integration more than specialization. SqEME® Process Management focuses much less at detailing of the descriptions of the processes and has more attention for the decision loops. The idea is even that every process is unique and that it will never show itself in exactly the same form. Besides, any process has its own natural fluctuations. As anyone who learns to ride a bicycle has to discover that cycling requires a certain amount of swinging and that, when one tries to correct on that, it will result in a fall.
SqEME regards descriptions mainly as a tool to get to recognizing a pattern that, in combination with performance indicators, possibly can trigger an intervention but if things are doing well, just delivers the signal "all O.K." so that the management should absolutely nót intervene. In fact, workflow management is nothing else than recognition of patterns and production control systems are based on earlier discovered patterns to have processes take place in a certain way. Certain certification models, as ISO 9000, demand the processes to be described. The SqEME method can be convenient for this, especially when the strive is to reduce the description of processes to the absolutely minimum necessary. However SqEME recognizes the benefit of description of processes, it is not a drawing tool. It does have a certain form of "language and signs", but these are mainly meant to express the key aspects of the SqEME method to have organizations reach their goals. The large supply of software that can be helpful in describing of processes must certainly not be seen as an alternative for the SqEME method, but as a welcome supplement. SqEME® Process Management has to be regarded as a guiding framework meant to get to a common language for process design and process control.

Also with a holistic approach, or perhaps especially then, there is not only the need to recognize the different parts, but also the need to know what the performance indicators are (or should be) to get the whole to function properly. Armed with this knowledge, one

can monitor whether the system functions properly, recognize possible hiccups or maybe discover possibilities for improvement. Measuring the heartbeat, blood pressure and the bodily temperature does not explain how our body operates, but it does indicate its condition. For organizations in this respect it will be the performance indicators of financial origin, product quality, process time, use of material and consumption of energy, etcetera. Apart from this, users of the EFQM/INK management model get confronted with the question: "Who is monitoring our processes apart from ourselves?", in other words: "Who are our stakeholders?" and with the question: "Which performance criteria do they use?" It might be wise to adopt the performance criteria they think are important in our set of performance criteria and perhaps it can then even be necessary to adjust our manner of process description for this. The concepts performance indictors and process descriptions are gathered under the terms *Correspondence* for the SqEME method and *Dashboard* for SqEME® Process Management. The principle of *looking through four windows*, that SqEME uses both as a methodology and as a method for process management, is meant as a work-out of a holistic approach.

Professional workers

For SqEME, organizations are in the first place people. Distinguishing who exactly are the actors is an important principle. Besides this, it is true that these actors need tools and resources to perform the processes they are responsible for. An important "aid" with this is that the knowledge and skills to perform the various activities are present. In this, SqEME recognizes the principle of "tacit knowledge" and "explicit knowledge" (Polanyi), where "tacit knowledge" is the non-explicit (or almost non-explicit) knowledge and experience of someone, that often is regarded as a proof of "craftsmanship", and "explicit knowledge" is the knowledge and experience that can be registered. Managers often strongly feel the need to register all knowledge and experience that is present, and deny with this that this is either impossible or requires an extreme effort. Apart from the fact that this position denies that every human being is a unique personality, it can also be regarded threatening or offending. The questioning for present knowledge can make the impression that one doubts whether this knowledge really is present. It can also induce the idea that that knowledge is consciously held back at ones own interest. Starting points that do not exactly match the principles of inclusive thinking. When one assumes that every process takes place in a slightly different way every time, one has to ask oneself whether the efforts and the risk one runs by the urge to register everything counterbalance the expected benefit.

SqEME assumes that processes are performed by professionals or occupationally mature employees or that it pays off to approach actors in the organization as occupationally mature employees or professionals. The selection on the basis of occupational maturity or professionalism, or bringing employees to that level is in this view a crucial supportive

process. As mentioned, the same occupationally mature employees or professionals must have the necessary means and resources at their disposal. Knowing the structure of the organisation and their place in it can be seen as a part of that; they must know who are their (internal) clients and suppliers and what their tasks and responsibilities are. Those tasks and responsibilities will then have to be focussed at the creation of a process-centred organisation and not to make her slide down to a classical hierarchic structure, in which knowing these elements is indeed regarded as sufficient. Describing who the actors are and which tools and resources they have, are categorized by SqEME as the concepts *Construct* for the SqEME method and *Deployment* for SqEME® Process Management.

Looking through four windows
SqEME visualizes the mentioned ideas by using four windows. The term window has been chosen to express the idea that it concerns watching the same object with a different view. Overlap is unavoidable and up till a certain degree even desirable. The four windows stand apart from each other, signifying that there is no fixed order to be followed and that there is no pre-assumption of cohesion from two dimensions as known in the so called Harvard Matrix or two-by-two matrix, frequently used in business administration. SqEME as a methodology for analysis uses Constitution, Chemistry, Control and Construct.

Image 1. The four windows of the SqEME® methodology

When the windows shown above are worked out into more detail, they contain the points of attention as displayed in image 2.

Constitution:
What are the essential characteristics of the organization?

- Spirit
- Identity
- Mission
- Vision

Chemistry:
What makes it tick, how does the energy flow?

- Interacting
- Influencing
- Motivating
- Learning

- Guidelines
- Performance criteria
- Auditing
- Reporting

Correspondence:
How do we monitor the organization, how do we know?

- Function
- Rules
- Procedures
- Information technology

Construction:
How have we deployed and facilitated the work in the organization?

Image 2. The four windows in more detail

After having put into words the answers for a window, one looks through another window and tries to find answers to the questions and points of attention, but one has to take into account the answers given in the preceding windows. So it can be necessary to get back to a previous window, to correct or modify the answers given there. By continuing this process during some time, an increasingly sharp image of the object one tries to understand originates. If the object is an organization, the Constitution Window should lead to an answer to the question "Which *strategic management model* has been chosen for?", the Chemistry Window should answer the question: "How have we organized communication and motivation?", the Control Window goes into the question: "Which monitoring systems do we use?", and the Construct Window: "How have we in fact arranged the organization?".

The windows Constitution and Chemistry are mainly about the principles of the organization, whilst the windows Control and Construct are about rules that apply to the organization.

Since the four windows are not connected in the way of the four quarters of a two by two matrix are, they don't have any hierarchy. Neither is there a fixed sequence. The only sequence which can be derived is the principle of holding the past as a probable cause for the future. The approach will result in subjectivity, which means results will be different for any individual. The SqEME® methodology accepts subjectivity as a phenomenon and deals with it by the consistency of using the four windows as a mutual check leading to an integral, complementary, verifiable and specific approach of a particular object. Of course in some situations it can occur that a certain order is obvious.

SqEME uses two sets of windows: One to be able to use SqEME as a methodology for analysis and the other to use SqEME as a method for process management. The windows for SqEME® Process Management are named: Business Activities, Messaging, Dashboard and Deployment.
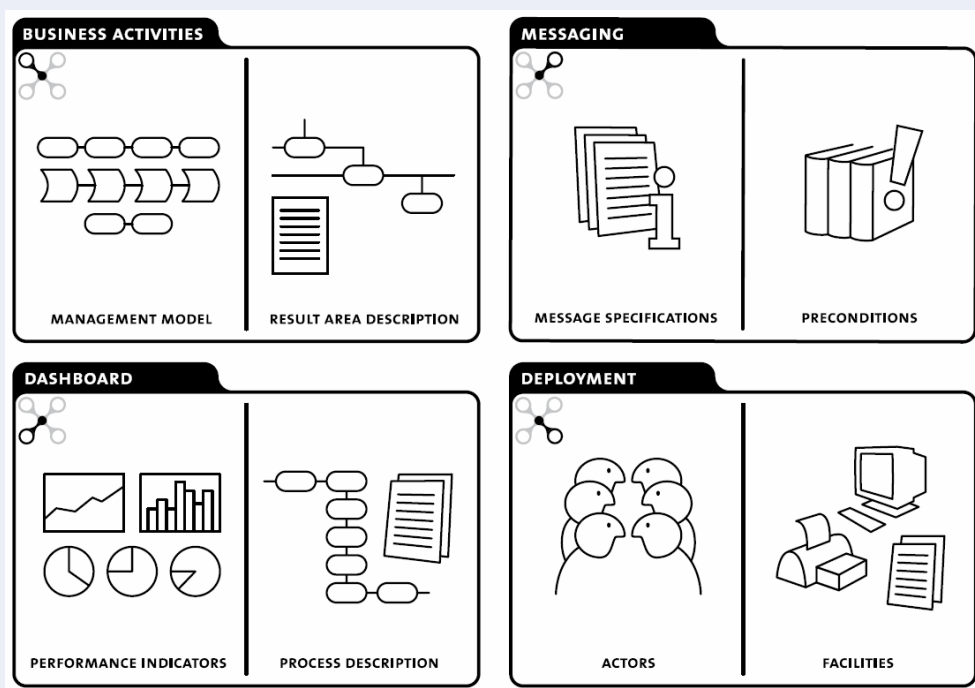

Image 3. The windows of SqEME® Process Management

More information about the application of SqEME® Process Management can be found in the SqEME Pocket Guide 'Language and signs', a standard for process architecture.