

TOP ELEVEN LIST

FOR MOVING THROUGH THE DIAGNOSIS PHASE



1. Give a clear 'why'

Why are you engaging in an organizational change improvement process of some kind? Why is it important? And how will the team benefit from this?



2. Don't assess what you're not willing to address.

Don't start an assessment if there is not a clear commitment from the organization and leadership to address what may come up. Consider what is truly possible to address with the resources available to you. Try and match the resources available, including time, to the scope of your assessment. Assessing more than you can address can negatively affect trust in leadership and energy for creating change within the organization.



3. Don't go it alone

If you do the diagnosis alone, you will likely run into more trouble later when you try to mobilize the system for action. Working with others also helps bring in different perspectives that you hadn't considered. But don't over-collaborate; that can slow you down and lead to inefficiency.



4. Be strategic about who should be involved

Figure out the key staff needed to work with you starting from diagnosis through to mobilization. These are likely the staff who are well-regarded by others, even if they don't have formal authority. You might consider them the "opinion-makers" on your team. Decide if you need engagement from different parts of the organization or who may be most affected by potential changes.



5. Plan and then be ready to change the plan

What are the steps involved in the diagnosis? What are the steps involved to figure out what to do about the diagnosis? Be intentional and have a plan; be sure to include in that plan moments to reflect with key staff about how it's going and how to adjust the plan if it's not working.





6. (Over)-Communicate clearly and consistently

People may get nervous when they don't know where something is headed or when and how they can engage. Clearly communicate about the overall process, how team members should engage, and who will be involved in key decisions so that expectations are aligned.



7. Stay mindful

Have things you learned in the diagnosis triggered positive or negative emotions for you? Consider why this might be happening and how it could affect the process and its outcomes. Be mindful about how the diagnosis is affecting your staff. Are they experiencing similar or different reactions - how might that affect the process and its outcomes?



8. Follow the energy

If you notice you or your team feeling energized about a discussion during the diagnosis/assessment, follow that energy as that may indicate greater momentum for change and improvement.



9. Be transparent and open

A common pitfall in this stage is to hide the truth—which everyone knows is happening and does not appreciate. If the plan changes, let people know. If you learn something from the diagnosis that is uncomfortable, face it. And keep your metaphorical door open. This helps staff know they can talk to you if they're feeling any anxiety or confusion about what is going on.



10. Appreciate what's working and who is participating

The diagnosis will likely reveal many positive things about your team and organization. Celebrate that. It is always helpful to appreciate people who take time to actively participate in the process. Demonstrate your gratitude.



11. Model the change you are ultimately after in how you manage the process

Modeling is everything. Don't tell people you want to create a more adaptive team and then not adapt your own plan to diagnose the system. Don't tell people that every opinion is valid and then completely discount a lone voice. Be the leader you want everyone else to be. Embody your values.

