An Introduction to the 5 Phases of HOP Integration
by Andrea Baker

In just 5 days, you'll see a dramatic increase in energy and decrease in body fat. You'll have more stamina to do the things in life you truly enjoy. You'll feel better, look better, have better relationships, make more money, find inner peace, increase your intellect, develop more empathy…for just 5 payments of $19.99…

Despite being bombarded with messages that promise us the world in exchange for just a bit of our time, or a bit of our money, there is no magic pill…for (most) anything.

There certainly is no magic pill for organizational change (although a lot of people would love to benefit by convincing you otherwise).

"Rolling out" HOP

Several times a week I am asked how to "rollout" Human and Organizational Performance (HOP). The short answer (if I can be so bold as to be blunt) is that we can't "rollout" HOP, at least not in the same way we traditionally think about rollouts. Rollout is term that we usually use when referring to a program. It calls to mind a top down approach with massive amounts of training, action plans, due dates, status calls…you know the drill. You've heard this before, so forgive me…but HOP isn't a program. You may be thinking, "Fine, fine! It's not a program, why do all of you HOP people keep stressing that!?" This is a more than fair question, and a concept I personally struggled with, so let me do my best to explain.

The first piece of information I stumbled upon that helped me reconcile what it means to "not be a program," was a model of organizational structure from Dr. Edgar Schein (hang with me, I promise despite this early reference to "model of organizational structure" I won't get technical or preachy). Schein teaches us that within an organization, all the programs we have, the tools we use, the "corporate language" we speak, the behavior we portray (all of the pieces that we can detect rather easily) come from something deeper that is harder to see – the shared beliefs, values and assumptions of our organization. A simple way of visualizing this concept is using an iceberg model (below).

tools, programs, language, behavior

shared beliefs, values and assumptions

(adapted from Dr. Edgar Schein)
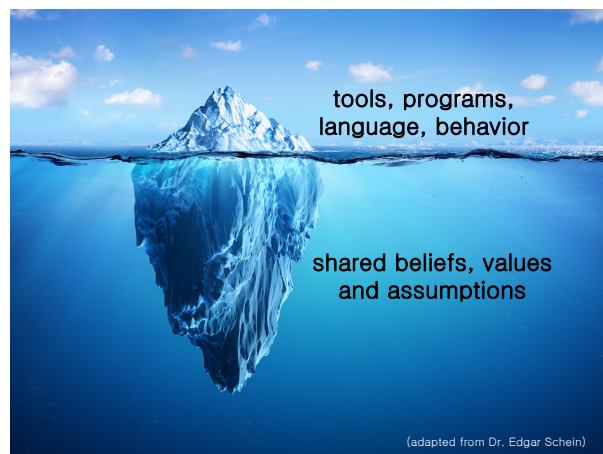
The top and bottom of the iceberg are interdependent. For example, if a large number of people in an organization *believe* that the best way to prevent non-compliance is through internal auditing, then you

can bet the organization has a very robust internal auditing *program*. And furthermore, by requiring the execution of that *program*, the organization continually reinforces the *belief* that built it[1].

The HOP philosophy can be found at the <u>bottom</u> of the iceberg, not the top.

HOP is a group of principles (or organization beliefs) that *shape* our programs, tools, behaviors, and language. We are looking to adjust the organization's shared beliefs around blame, error, the definition of safety, the role of the worker, complacency, risk normalization, contextual influence, failure, the importance of learning from normal work (…and the list goes on) with the end goal of creating more resilient systems. And while we "rollout" many of the pieces of the top of the iceberg, we cannot "rollout" the pieces of the bottom of the iceberg. We can *influence* the bottom of the iceberg, and we can set a <u>plan</u> for *how* to influence the bottom of the iceberg, but that plan is much more nuanced and organizationally specific than a rollout plan would be.

The Elusive HOP Plan

I hope I've shed a bit of light on why a program-esque "rollout" doesn't quite fit the HOP journey. But what of that plan just mentioned? The good news is there is a road map (of sorts) but it looks more like an ingredient list than it does a recipe.

Humor me for a moment as I take a seemingly unrelated tangent…The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is a nonprofit that tasks itself with the extraordinary mission of influencing social norms for very large populations…on a limited budget. One such example is their work around vaccines. UNICEF works to change a population's belief system around vaccines in order to increase the number of individuals willing to vaccinate their children with the end goal of making vaccination a new social norm for that community; they are influencing the bottom of the iceberg (assumptions and beliefs around vaccines) in order to change behavior in the top of the iceberg (getting parents to vaccinate their children). UNICEF has several publications that outline *how* they plan for such an incredibly difficult undertaking. A section of one of the publications stood out to me:

> *Whichever planning model you use, you should:*
>
> - *Rely on evidence relevant to your context*
> - ***Consider all** levels of the Social Ecological Model and the participants' perspectives at each level*
> - ***Foster community participation***
> - *Develop a program that is culturally sensitive and relevant*
> - ***Not make assumptions about the populations/participant groups***[2]

UNICEF consistently emphasizes the areas I've made bold above. I have done my best to translate what they have learned in those three areas into our HOP world.

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[1] Dr. Schein's model has three layers: artifacts (visible organizational structures and processes), espoused beliefs (values, goals, visions), basic assumptions and beliefs (unconscious beliefs, perceptions, feelings). The model has been simplified for this discussion.

[2] "MODULE 2: Steps for Developing a Strategic C4D Program Plan." UNICEF, 3 April 2019, www.unicef.org/cbsc/files/Module_2-MNCHN-C4D-Guide.docx

In planning out how we adjust an organization's beliefs (around blame, error, definition of safety, etc.) we have to:

1) Recognize each organization (and the various parts of that organization) have different shared beliefs, values and assumptions. Learn what they are and build off of them.
2) Find your advocates and build the plan *with* them. Those closest to the organization know the details needed to forge a path of change better than anyone.
3) A plan built on assumptions will fall short.

Which brings us back to the notion of a magic pill. Similar to what UNICEF has learned, I have not found that a forced-fit, "one-size-fits-all" plan works when trying to influence organizational beliefs.

So yes, we all need a plan. But the copy/paste function of the plan from one company/organization/department to the another doesn't work well; **we can't build a plan <u>with</u> the people in that organization, <u>tailor made</u> to complement an organization's current views, if that plan isn't built with that organization, from the ground up.**

The 5 Phases of HOP Integration

So far all I've claimed is we can't effectively roll out HOP like a program, and it is difficult to cut and paste a plan. It would be pretty crummy of me to end the discussion here…so I won't. In addition to learning what doesn't work well, we've seen a pattern start to emerge of what *does* work well. The pattern isn't quite a roadmap, but a number of distinct (semi-sequential) phases. There appear to be 5 phases of HOP integration:

- **Leadership Interest**: garnering leadership support
- **Building HOP fluency**: education around, and continued exposure to HOP Principles to facilitate a paradigm shift in thought
- **Operational Learning**: practicing how to learn and improve, both proactive and reactively
- **Alignment:** building HOP principles and operational learning mechanisms into existing processes, programs, and practices
- **Safeguard Management**: using operational intelligence (gained through operational learning mechanisms) to continuously and collaboratively design, iterate and manage safeguards

Listing the phases in this fashion does do us a bit of disservice: the phases are not nearly as sequential as this presentation appears to suggest. In practice, pockets of organizations can have leadership interest, quickly build fluency and operationally learn before other pockets of the organization have even heard of HOP. HOP fluent individuals can begin to operationally learn and use the resulting "case studies" to build leadership fluency (or run into roadblocks if the leader is not ready for the change). Alignment can begin at a site level and build as "best practices" until those ideas begin influencing organizational programs. Safeguard management can be a biproduct of operational learning before any formal alignment. And so on.

The listing also fails to show that within these phases there is an inflection point where we move from influencing the bottom of the iceberg, to "rolling out" programs at the top of the iceberg (generally this transition happens while working within the alignment and safeguard management phases).

There is a lot to say on about each of the phases…unfortunately, much more than would be conducive to discuss in this format. My main goal in mentioning them here is to give a list of structural "ingredients" to those of you working hard to advance your organization's HOP journey.

"You cannot be a prophet in your own land"

…but you can be an architect of culture change.

It is extremely difficult (but not impossible) to single-handedly garner leadership support and build HOP fluency from within your own organization, independent of where you fall within the reporting structure. And there is no magic pill or magic program to help bring about this change. That said, individuals fluent in HOP principles, operational learning, and an organization's practices, can be the *architect* of a HOP culture change blueprint. And we *do* need a blueprint; although culture change has organic elements, it still requires strategic planning to bring the right ingredients to the right place at the right time. We may need help from some "prophets" along the way, but we don't need to abdicate our role as the *architect* of our own HOP journey.