

The Reframing Matrix

by Olivier Serrat

Everyone sees things differently—knowledge often lies in the eye of the beholder. The reframing matrix enables different perspectives to be generated and used in management processes. It expands the number of options for solving a problem.

Rationale

Perspective is a mental view, an ingrained way of perceiving the world. Different people have different experiences and see in different ways: understanding how they do expands the range of solutions that one might devise to address a question or problem.

Definition

The reframing matrix is a simple technique that helps examine problems from distinct viewpoints. In other words, individuals or groups place themselves in the mindsets of different people and imagine what solutions the latter might come up with. The reframing matrix was devised by Michael Morgan.

Process

The reframing matrix lays a question (or problem) in the middle of a four-box grid. It is then examined from four typical business perspectives

- **Program Perspective:** Are there issues with the program (or product or service) we are delivering?
- **Planning Perspective:** Is the business (or communications plan) appropriate?
- **Potential Perspective:** Is the program replicable? Can it be scaled up?
- **People Perspective:** What do the people involved think?

The figure below offers one example of the so-called Four Ps Approach, with illustrative questions aimed at a new program that is not raising funds effectively.

Figure: The New Program Does Not Raise Funds Effectively

Program Perspective Is the program attractive? Has the program been proved elsewhere? Is the program technically sound?	Planning Perspective Are we approaching the right donors? Do we have the right strategy? Does the implementation plan make sense?
The new program does not raise funds effectively.	
Potential Perspective Is the program replicable? Can the program be scaled up?	People Perspective What do beneficiaries think of the program? What does staff think of the program? Why are donors funding other programs?

Source: Adapted from Ben Ramalingam. 2006. *Tools for Knowledge and Learning: A Guide for Development and Humanitarian Organizations*. Overseas Development Institute.
 Available: www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/KM_toolkit_web.pdf.

Then again, the four-box grid can be used to consider a question (or problem) from the perspectives of different groups of stakeholders, e.g., staff, clients, suppliers, and partners, or specialists, e.g., engineers, lawyers, economists, or information technology specialists. The table below shows how one might figure out the potential perspectives of internal and external stakeholders in the context of a development agency.

Table: Stakeholder Perspectives

Headquarters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director General • Director • Program/project officer • Counsel • Cofinancing officer • Control officer • Procurement specialist • Evaluation specialist 	<p>How would each stakeholder perceive the question (or problem)</p> <p>What would each stakeholder see as benefits and drawbacks?</p> <p>What might each stakeholder see as potential benefits and drawbacks?</p>
Field office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project manager • International consultant • National counterpart 	<p>What solutions might each stakeholder offer?</p>
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers/fishers • Women • Children and youth • Ethnic minorities • Local authorities 	<p>How relevant is each stakeholder to the situation at hand?</p>
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executing agency • Implementation support agencies • Civil society • Financing agency 	

Source: Adapted from Ben Ramalingam. 2006. *Tools for Knowledge and Learning: A Guide for Development and Humanitarian Organizations*. Overseas Development Institute. Available: www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/KM_toolkit_web.pdf

Further Reading

Michael Morgan. 1993. *Creating Workforce Innovation: Turning Individual Creativity into Organizational Innovation*. Allen & Unwin.

For further information

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Asian Development Bank

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