

Resilience and Fragility

An Organizational Scorecard

The definition of resilience is that when a disruption occurs the organization/system can absorb the impact and maintain both its purpose and its function via an adaptive response. The following Scorecard provides the primary characteristics of resilient and fragile systems. The hope is that you can use this Scorecard to assess your organization's migration toward greater resilience as we continue to face the disruption that has become part of our new emergent reality.

Characteristics of Resilient Organizations	Characteristics of Fragile Organizations
Diverse with critical redundancy.	Monocultures focused on efficacy that critical redundancies that are needed to ensure resilience are unknown or nonexistent.
1 2 3 4 5	
Filled with connectivity within the organization and between the organization and its external environment.	Characterized by culture silos where people and departments don't see their connection to each other. Closed system mentalities are pervasive both within the organization and between the organization and the external environment.
1 2 3 4 5	
Invested in "slow variables, those elements and assets that take time to strengthen or manifest a quick return. Examples are people's talents, organizational culture, basic research, and research and development. Metaphor: amending the soil to strengthen future harvests.	Focused on quick returns without the deep understanding of the elements that help create annual profits. Examples would be quarterly and annual profits, productivity, etc.
1 2 3 4 5	
Adapt quickly and have adaptive strategies that reflect an integrated understanding of the complexity of the whole system.	See problems as simple or complicated but don't see the deeper complexities of highly connected systems. Tend to solve problems by fixing the "part that is broken" instead of seeing the context and contributing variables that create that problem in the organizations. Adaptive strategies emerge from a parts perspective – like production, sales, or HR to respond to disruptions that come their way. The adaptive strategies don't connect how these decisions may unintentionally cause the organization increased disruption in the future or to other parts of the organization.

Great at learning; learning becomes a way of being, integrated naturally within and throughout the organization. Lessons are widely shared and known. The organization and the people in it feel comfortable with inquiry and will scan and share emergent patterns that may be important for the organization to proactively adapt to.

Characterized by an organizational closed minded system and the people in the organization are closed minded to anything other than the way they already think. They may seek feedback and information that affirms their thinking, but rarely opens their mind to disconfirming information / feedback.

1 2 3 4 5

Places of high engagement and create the psychological safety and trust needed to support engagement. They have relationships and processes that actively support co-creation and innovation. There is a reward system that supports high levels of engagement.

Requests for engagement are seen as inauthentic and are responded to with silence, agreement, compliance, or an inauthentic response. Management may see employees as incapable to engage and need direction instead of collaboration. Organizational cultures tend to feel unsafe for employees and they don't trust their leaders. Employees can see their leaders as "owners" of the organization and who primarily benefit from organizational profits.

1 2 3 4 5

Distributive leadership structure formed through many formal and informal networks that lead the organization and contribute to mission fulfillment. Many people share and contribute to the outcomes of the organization and benefits and burdens are widely shared. When disruptions occur, there are many people in the organization at all levels who both proactively scan the environment for them and make small and larger adaptive responses that allows the organization to maintain its function / purpose.

Strong hierarchical structure that reinforces command and control increase its fragility. If there is any dysfunction in the chain of command (at any level) that team, department, division or organization will be dysfunctional as well. Command and control structures are dependent on direction from the top of the organization. This makes it more fragile because the organization depends on a few leaders to see the disruption and direct the adaptive response.

1 2 3 4 5