BUILDING AN EVALUATIVE CULTURE: THE KEY TO EFFECTIVE EVALUATION AND RESULTS MANAGEMENT

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Abstract: As many reviews of results-based performance systems have noted, a weak evaluative culture in an organization undermines attempts at building an effective evaluation and/or results management regime. This article sets out what constitutes a strong evaluative culture where information on performance results is deliberately sought in order to learn how to better manage and deliver programs and services. Such an organization values empirical evidence on the results it is seeking to achieve. The article outlines and discusses practical actions that an organization can take to build and support an evaluative culture.

Résumé :   De nombreux examens des systèmes de rendement basés sur les résultats ont fait remarquer qu'une faible culture évaluative dans une organisation mine des tentatives de construction d'une évaluation efficace et/ou d'un système de gestion des résultats. Cet article expose ce qui constitue une culture évaluative solide où les données sur les résultats de rendement sont délibérément cherchées afin d'apprendre comment mieux gérer et offrir des programmes et services. Une telle organisation apprécie la preuve empirique des résultats qu'elle cherche à atteindre. L'article met en évidence et examine des mesures pratiques qu'une organisation peut adopter pour construire et appuyer une culture évaluative.

INTRODUCTION

Efforts to introduce results management and evaluation in organizations are widespread (Mayne & Zapico-Goni, 1997; Moynihan, 2006; Norman, 2002; OECD, 2005; Perrin, 2006; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2000) and have been underway in many jurisdictions for many years. Quite a few organizations have implemented various approaches to measuring their performance through ongoing monitor-

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ing and evaluations. Yet assessments of these initiatives frequently point to modest efforts made to obtain performance information and limited use made of the information gathered, outside of some external reporting on performance (Johnson & Talbot, 2007; Moynihan, 2005; Pollitt, 2006; ter Bogt, 2004; Weiss, 1998). Managers may, indeed, see these efforts as being imposed on them and hindering their ability to get on with the job of managing.

This author has argued (Mayne, 2009) that a key to building more effective results management and evaluation approaches is the need to develop and maintain an evaluative culture in an organization. On an ongoing basis, there needs to be a climate in the organization where evidence—empirical information—on performance is valued, sought out, and seen as essential to good management. Without such a climate, adherence to systems and procedures can dominate attitudes toward results management and evaluation.

The need for such an evaluative culture is frequently recognized and acknowledged (Curristine, 2005; Hernandez & Visher, 2001; Kamensky and Morales, 2005; Mayne, 2007b; Moynihan, 2005; Nutley, Walter, & Davies, 2007; Operations Evaluation Department, 2005; Perrin, 2006; Williams, Laat, & Stern, 2002). For example, when their results-based management (RBM) efforts were launched, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was clear:

> Creating a culture of accountability for results is at the heart of recreating UNDP as a sufficiently funded organization where all available resources are put to best possible use for development results in programme countries. (UNDP, 1999, p. 17)

> RBM must aim at … fostering a … culture of performance. (UNDP, 2000, p. 6)

More generally, Kim (2002), in discussing efforts at organizational change in government, argues that "[c]hanging organizational culture is key to the successful implementation of major improvement strategies" (p. 2).

But typically, much less is actually done in organizations to actively foster and build such a culture. After many years of implementing results management, including evaluation, many assessments in organizations have found that a robust evaluative culture is still

absent. For example, an evaluation of the results-based management regime at the UNDP concluded that "UNDP has a weak culture of results" (UNDP, 2007, p. xi). There was a similar finding at the World Bank (Operations Evaluation Department, 2007, p. xi): "The challenge remains to change the Bank's culture and the staff perceptions that serve as informal incentives and disincentives to managing for results." In reviewing studies of efforts at organizational change more generally, Kim (2002, p. 9) notes "that the most frequently cited reason given for failure [of change efforts] was a neglect of the organization's culture. Failure to change the organization culture doomed the other kinds of organizational changes that were initiated." In a review of New Zealand's evaluation capacity, the State Services Commission and Treasury (2003) found that capacity was patchy and that a principal cause was "*a variable culture of inquiry*: demand for high quality evaluative activity from Ministers, Parliament, central agencies, and State sector managers and commitment to using the findings of evaluative activity to inform decisions are variable" (para. 7).

Thus, while there is frequent reference in the literature to the importance of an evaluative culture, considerably less is said about how to build such a culture in an organization. Based on relevant literature and experience, this article discusses what constitutes an evaluative culture, and sets out and discusses specific actions that an organization can take to foster and strengthen an evaluative culture. The focus is on organizations that are trying to build effective evaluation and results management practices. Most commonly, these are in the public sector, including not-for-profit and international organizations. In my view, the lack of an adequate supporting evaluative culture is the main reason for the often modest success of these efforts.

SOME TERMS

Results management is managing inputs and outputs with a view to maximizing the likelihood that the benefits intended from the program or intervention are realized. Managers are expected to have clearly in mind the intended outcomes their programs are trying to accomplish, and to best manage the resources and authorities they have available toward those ends. Results management might be called evidence-informed management, where deliberately gathered evidence is used to inform planning and implementing decisions. Table 1 sets out what results management involves.

In my view, as indicated in Table 1, results management is broad and includes ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and other research efforts at assessing aspects of performance, along with the systems and procedures in place to make use of the information acquired from these activities. I note that *results management*, especially when equated with the term *results-based management*, is often used as a synonym for monitoring results, but I am using the term in this broader sense. Nevertheless, I will also use *results management and evaluation* to stress the inclusion of evaluation in results management. To be clear, the focus is not on (just) monitoring and evaluation, but on managing (for results) in an organization.

Organizations engaged in results management would likely have in place at least some of the aspects of each of the four basic elements in Table 1, that is, results-based planning, monitoring, using the information to learn, and reporting.

I have used *results* to include both outputs and the collection or chain of subsequent outcomes. The results management regimes of some organizations either by intent or in practice focus on outputs rather than outcomes. Measuring and using output information is an important part of supporting an evaluative culture. However, a much more challenging goal is building an evaluative culture where information on outcomes is seen as essential to good management.

Table 1
Elements of Results Management

Results-based planning:
- overall results to be accomplished are set out;
- accompanying theories of change are articulated, based at least in part on past experience; and
- specific performance expectations—such as targets—established.

Monitored implementation:
- monitoring and evaluating of the results being achieved; and
- assessment of the contribution being made by the program's activities to observed results.

Results-informed learning:
- using the empirical evidence gathered on results to improved performance through adjustments to
  - delivery approaches,
  - the underlying theory of change and hence the program design, and/or
  - the performance expectations.

Accounting for performance:
- using results information to credibly present a performance story on what has been accomplished and learned.

I use the term *evidence* in its everyday use of the term—as empirical facts and information pertinent to a conclusion being drawn, specifically on the performance of an organization. This would include not only empirical evidence on results that have been observed, but also the assumptions and understandings behind programs and interventions. It also includes the findings from systematic reviews of prior evaluation and research. Some people in the evidence-based policy and practice movement argue that only the most robust evidence—specifically that obtained from experimental and perhaps quasi-experimental designs—should be counted as "real" evidence. I am not using that narrow view of evidence. See Mayne (2009) for further discussion.

WHAT CHARACTERIZES AN EVALUATIVE CULTURE?

Kim (2002, p. 3) suggests, "Culture conveys a sense of identity to employees, provides unwritten and, often, unspoken guidelines on how to get along in an organization. Culture matters because it is a latent and often unconscious set of forces that determine both individual and organizational behavior." A number of authors and reports have looked at the issue of an evaluative culture, what it is and how to get there. Based on a review and synthesis of this literature, Table 2 lists the key characteristics of an organization with a strong evaluative culture.

Table 2
Characteristics of an Evaluative Culture

An organization with a strong evaluative culture
- engages in self-reflection and self-examination (i.e., self-evaluation):
  - deliberately seeks evidence on what it is achieving, such as through monitoring and evaluation (2, 6, 9)
  - uses results information to challenge and support what it is doing (7)
  - values candor, challenge and genuine dialogue (4)

- engages in evidence-based learning:
  - makes time to learn (4, 3)
  - learns from mistakes and weak performance (1, 5)
  - encourages knowledge transfer (4, 5, 7)

- encourages experimentation and change:
  - supports deliberate risk taking (8)
  - seeks out new ways of doing business (6, 5, 9)

Note. Adapted from (1) Barrados and Mayne (2003); (2) Botcheva, White, and Huffman (2002); (3) Britton (2005); (4) David (2002); (5) Goh (2001); (6) General Accounting Office (2003); (7) Hernandez and Visher (2001); (8) Pal and Teplova (2003); (9) Smutylo (2005).

Thus, an *evaluative culture* denotes an organizational culture that deliberately seeks out empirical information on its performance in order to use that information to learn how to better manage its programs and services, and thereby improve its performance. Such an organization values empirical evidence on the results—outputs and outcomes—it is seeking to achieve. It is these evidence-seeking behaviours that characterize an evaluative culture and distinguish it from a more general learning culture.

Other terms used for such a culture include a results culture, a culture of results, a culture of performance, an evaluation culture, and a culture of inquiry. I note that the oft-used expression *results culture* is sometimes interpreted simply as focusing on results, as in setting out some performance indicators and tracking and reporting progress against them or pursuing a client-focused service culture. I envisage an evaluative culture as rather more than this.

An absence of these characteristics will be recognized by many as all too common in organizations. Thus, a weaker evaluative culture might, for example,

- gather results information, but limit its use mainly to external reporting,
- acknowledge the need to learn, but not provide the time or structured occasions to do so,
- undergo change only with great effort,
- claim it is evidence-seeking, but discourage challenging and questioning the status quo,
- talk about the importance of achieving results, but frown on risk-taking and mistakes, and/or
- talk about the importance of achieving outcomes, but value following rules and processes, and delivering outputs.

Issues of organizational culture and learning is a large field, with an extensive literature. Reviews of the field, such as by Easterby-Smith and Araujo (1999), Nutley et al. (2007), and Popper and Lipshitz (1998) all note the emergent nature of the field and the many contested frameworks that have been proposed. In an earlier article (Barrados & Mayne, 2003), we used a framework presented by Lipshitz and Popper (2000, p. 348), shown in Table 3. More recently, Nutley et al. (2007, p. 167) presented a list of cultural values—celebration of success, absence of complacency, tolerance of mistakes, belief in human potential, recognition of tacit knowledge, prioritizing the immeasur-

able, openness, trust, and outward looking—that facilitate organizational learning. Their list for the most part can be correlated with the values in Table 3, which clearly underline the practices in Table 2.

Table 3
Organizational Learning Values

Inquiry: Persisting in a line of inquiry until a satisfactory understanding is achieved.

Integrity: Giving and receiving full and accurate feedback without defending oneself and others.

Transparency: Exposing one's thoughts and actions to others in order to receive feedback.

Issue orientation: Focusing on the relevancy of information to the issues regardless of the social standing (e.g., rank) of the recipient or source.

Accountability: Assuming responsibility both for learning and for implementing lessons learned.

Note. Adapted from Lipshitz and Popper (2000).

BUILDING AN EVALUATIVE CULTURE

This article addresses what can be done to foster such cultural values—that is, which structures, practices, and actions can be put in place to support an evaluative culture. Again the organizational learning literature offers numerous suggestions but little consensus. For example, based on Cameron and Quinn (1999, p. 15), Kim (2002, p. 3) suggests that "[a]n organizational culture is reflected by what is valued, the dominant leadership styles, symbols, the procedures, routines, and the definition of success that make an organization unique." Others have had similar suggestions, often including the need to fundamentally change the culture (OECD-DAC Joint Venture on Managing for Development Results, 2006; Operations Evaluation Department, 2005). Pal and Teplova (2003, p. 27) suggest otherwise, arguing that what is needed is not "a wholesale change in organizational culture—it requires clarity about trust, risk, and openness factors, not a revolution in the organization itself.… What is needed is some specific advice on aligning organizational culture, performance measurement, and horizontality."

I suggest that a number of practices shown in Table 4 and discussed below are needed to build such a "culture of inquiry." Table 4 was developed from a synthesis of a large number of sources provided in the discussion text, as well as Auditor General of Canada (2000), Mayne (2007a), Nutley et al. (2007), and OECD-DAC (2006). It also reflects my experience working with organizations. Garvin, Edmondson, and Gino (2008) suggest three similar building blocks for building learning

in an organization: "supportive learning environment, concrete learning practices and processes, and leadership behaviour that provides reinforcement" (p. 110). As discussed below, experience has shown that the absence of any one of these elements makes it quite difficult to build and maintain effective results management and evaluation.

Table 4
Elements to Fostering an Evaluative Culture

Leadership
- Demonstrate senior management leadership and commitment to results management and evaluation
- Inform demand for results information
- Build results measurement and results management capacity
- Establish and communicate a clear role and responsibilities for results management

Organizational structural supports
- Supportive organizational incentives
- Supportive organizational systems, practices, and procedures
- An outcome-oriented and supportive accountability regime
- Learning-focused evaluation and monitoring

A learning focus
- Build in learning
- Tolerate and learn from mistakes

Leadership

Most discussions of organizational culture point to the importance of leadership, for example, CCAF (2001, p. 9), Kim (2002, p. 6), Managing for Development Results (2007), Mayne (2007b), and Nutley et al. (2007, p. 128). Leadership must be seen as supporting and promoting the organizational values listed in Table 3.

Demonstrated Senior Management Leadership and Commitment

Many discussions of implementing results management and evaluation identify clearly demonstrated senior leadership as essential (Auditor General of Canada, 1997; Binnendijk, 2001; General Accounting Office, 2002; Hoole & Patterson, 2008; Norman, 2002; Perrin, 2006). Strong senior leadership in building an evaluative culture can be evident through such actions as:

- *supporting the results management regime*, including demonstrating the benefits of using evidence, identifying and supporting results management champions (Perrin, 2006),

supporting results management with resources, and supporting managers who experiment and make use of the lessons learned;

- *providing consistent leadership in results management*, including consistent and regular communication on results management and actions consistent with an evaluative culture—walking the talk (Norman, 2002); and
- *managing expectations for results management*, through setting out reasonable yet challenging expectations (OECD, 2005), proceeding gradually and with modesty (Mackay, 2006), and balancing accountability with learning (Perrin, 2006).

In addition, senor managers need to *oversee the results management regime*. Over and above their regular managing roles, reflecting on Table 1, I would argue that there are a number of specific roles for senior managers in a results management regime:

- *agreeing* on a strategic results framework for the organization, and results frameworks for programs and policies;
- *challenging* theories of change behind programs, and evidence gathered on performance;
- *approving* feasible and challenging performance expectations;
- *using* results information in approving reprogramming decisions and for holding managers to account;
- *overseeing* key aspects of results management: evaluation and monitoring systems, results-informed learning, and results reporting by program managers; and
- *reporting* on organizational performance.

Informed Demand for Evidence on Performance

Results management can be significantly encouraged and supported if there is informed and sensible demand for results information in an organization. Key ways that informed demand can occur is through:

- having managers and senior managers *ask for results information*, and
- requiring that *planning, budgeting, and reporting be results-based*.

A culture of results can be greatly enhanced if managers at all levels, and especially senior levels, consistently and routinely ask for results information—empirical evidence—in planning, implementing, and reviewing situations (Mackay, 2006; OECD, 2005; OECD-DAC Joint Venture on Managing for Development Results, 2006; Steering Group for the Managing for Outcomes Roll-out 2004/05, 2003). That is, a significant role for all managers in fostering and supporting results management is to routinely ask questions about results, evidence, and the assumptions behind programs and interventions when reviewing, assessing, and making decisions on plans, operations, and reports. Knowing that such questions will be forthcoming ensures that those carrying out these tasks will pay attention to results and evidence. Asking the questions will help ensure that relevant performance information is available when it is needed, and that assumptions about theories of change are routinely challenged. In this way, performance information—evidence on what is working, what is not, and why—becomes a routine and natural part of managing the organization.

In New Zealand, the Steering Group for the Managing for Outcomes Roll-out 2004/05 (2003) suggested five types of questions to be asked about major strategies and interventions:

- Are they designed well, aligned to real needs, and likely to improve outcomes?
- Do the quantity, quality, and coverage of outputs match the intervention logic?
- Are near-term results and outcomes improving in the areas anticipated?
- How strong is the evidence that change resulted from the strategy or outputs?
- Are there any unplanned consequences (positive or negative)? (p. 7)

Informed demand for evidence on results and performance in an organization can be supported by promulgating requirements that planning, budgeting, and reporting activities and documents are informed by performance evidence. Many organizations have done this, but the requirements becomes real, I would argue, when the "results questions" become a normal feature of management, that is, become an embedded part of the organizational culture, making clear the value placed on inquiry.

There is some danger here. Planning and reporting systems for results designed mainly for use by the corporate centre of an organization can become the sole focus of results management in an organization, significantly reducing its usefulness for line managers. As a recent review of many years of experience in the UN system concluded, "results-based management will continue to be an administrative chore of no real utility" unless significant changes are made in how the General Assembly operates (Office of Internal Oversight Services, 2008, p. 2). Gill (2008) in reviewing the New Zealand experience reaches a similar conclusion: "making progress on managing for performance requires more than technical solutions to supply side problems of information, systems design and capability. At its heart performance management is as much an exercise in understanding how bureaucrats manage within their organisations and attempt to manage the external authorising environment" (p. 11).

Building Results Measurement and Results Management Capacity

Building a culture of results in an organization does require a capacity to be able to articulate and measure results and a capacity to understand how results information can be used to help managers manage (OECD-DAC Joint Venture on Managing for Development Results, 2006; Perrin, 2002, 2006). Some level of in-house professional results management support is usually required to assist managers and staff (Binnendijk, 2001; Perrin, 2006; Ramage & Armstrong, 2005). This would include those with expertise in evaluation, monitoring, and, as needed, research skills. Further, senior and middle managers need to know and understand what results management is all about, and how they need to support it. This capacity can be enhanced through

- providing *ongoing training* to managers and staff in the various aspects of results management,
- identifying and encouraging *peer champions*,
- *integrating results management training* into the regular management training program;
- including *self-evaluation* as part of the results management training;
- providing *clear and effective guidance* to managers on results management; and
- using *results management networks* to share lessons and foster an evaluative culture.

Establish and Communicate a Clear Role and Responsibilities for Results Management

The need for a clearly articulated vision has been noted as essential to fostering an organizational culture (Goh, 2000; Kotter, 1996). In the context of fostering an evaluative culture, this means that management needs to

- set out the *aims and underlying principles* for its results management regime, including developing and communicating a clear strategy for results management,
- agree on *key terminology*, and
- define the *roles and responsibilities* of senior managers, managers, program staff, and professional staff in the regime.

Agreeing on terminology is often not a straightforward task. The results management field uses a variety of definitions to define concepts, and organizations have their own terminology they have been using. Further, it may be useful to develop, as much as possible, terms that managers and staff can relate to. The traditional results management jargon—such as "logic model"—may not be readily accepted or adopted.

Organizational Structural Supports

The second group of elements needed to foster a results culture (Table 4) are structural supports. Specific structural aspects of organizational life give day-to-day meaning to the organization's culture. Cousins, Goh, Clark, and Lee's (2004) review of organizational learning literature "underscore[s] the importance of organizational support structures in developing cultures of learning" (p. 131). These include both formal and informal incentives, as well as systems, practices, and procedures that include how the accountably regime operates in the organization.

Supportive Organizational Incentives

Having the right formal and informal incentives in place is essential to fostering a culture of results, probably more important than capacity issues. A discussion of incentives needs to begin with the question: incentives for what? In considering incentives that support a performance management regime, what kind of behaviour are we seeking to foster?

Many argue or imply (Osborne, 2001; Swiss, 2005; Wholey, 1983) that the key to good results management is meeting output and/or outcome targets; hence rewards and sanctions should relate to attaining expected results. Indeed, rewarding heads of organizations that have met organizational performance targets has been implemented in some cases, such as with the executive agencies in the UK and other performance pay systems (Boston, Dalziel, & John, 1999; Greer, 1994).

However, this may not be the best approach on which to base incentives, especially in areas where the results sought are long term and the cause-effect chain between activities and the outcomes sought is not straightforward. Indeed, experience with rewarding the meeting of targets has for the most part been with output targets. The problems even here are daunting: realistic yet challenging targets are required that can be readily measured and agreed. Swiss (2005) recognizes these problems but still suggests the use of personnel rewards for meeting targets to foster results management.

I suggest that it may be more relevant within an organization striving for an evaluative culture to foster empirical-based learning as the bottom line for evaluation and results measurement. In results management, the aim is to have individuals and units deliberately plan for results and then monitor and evaluate what results are actually being achieved in order to adjust activities and outputs to perform better. Thus, good results management would be evident in the elements listed in Table 1, and achieving these should be what is rewarded.

Over 20 years ago, Wholey (1983) provided a useful categorization of positive incentives for results management. He first noted that incentives can apply to individuals (or groups of individuals) or to organizations. He then suggested three types of supporting incentives in the public sector: intangible incentives, perks, and financial incentives. These are reward incentives that reward "good" behaviour. Using Wholey's framework, Table 5 outlines a variety of reward incentives that an organization could consider to reward good results management and hence foster an evaluative culture.

Osborne (2001), Wholey (1983), Swiss (2005), Hatry (2006), and others all stress the importance of considering non-financial incentives in positively motivating people. These are available to most organizations and should be easier to implement than many of the financial incentives. Indeed, budget-based incentives, it could be argued—as does Swiss—are generally *not* appropriate. Thus, for example, budgets

should be informed by results information including whether targets are being met, but are determined based on a number of additional factors. Perhaps the reason for underperforming is that not enough had been invested in the program. The priority of the program, and hence its budget, has to be assessed in relation to other priorities. And there are always political factors, including the need to be seen funding certain areas. The most potential for effective incentives is probably in the area of intangible incentives and perks.

Table 5
Reward Incentives for Results Management

Type of Incentive	Incentives for Managers and Staff	Incentives for Organizational Units
Intangible incentives	Personal recognition (phone calls, personal notes, photographs)	
	Public recognition (in speeches, newsletters, intra- and internet, media releases)	Public recognition (in speeches, newsletters, intra- and internet, media releases)
	Honour awards (certificates, citations, plaques, awards banquet)	Honour awards
	More interesting assignments	Challenging new projects
	Removal of constraints (such as less reporting requirements)	Removal of constraints (such as less reporting requirements or less scrutiny from the centre)
	Delegation of authority providing more flexibility	Delegation of authority providing more flexibility
Perks	Travel to conferences	
	Selection for training	
	Educational leave	
	More flexible working hours	
	Better office space	
	Free parking	
	Additional annual leave, sabbaticals	
Financial incentives	Promotions	Increases in program budgets
	Bonuses	Allocations of discretionary funds
	Cash award	Discretionary use of savings
	Pay raises	Staff allocations
		Allocations of overhead resources
		Renewal of discretionary grants

Note. Adapted from Wholey (1983).

Supportive Organizational Systems, Practices and Procedures

To foster an evaluative culture, all the systems, practices, and procedures in an organization need to align and be consistent with that culture. Thus, for example:

- *Adequate autonomy to manage for results:* Managers seeking to achieve outcomes need to be able to adjust their operations as they learn what is working and what is not (Binnendijk, 2001; General Accounting Office, 2002; Norman, 2002). Managing only for planned outputs does not foster a culture of inquiry about what are the impacts of delivering those outputs. Managers need to be provided with the flexibility to adjust their operations in light of the evidence available.
- *Results-friendly information systems:* Organizations have financial, human resource, planning, and reporting systems. These may only be able to incorporate results information with considerable difficulty and frustration by those trying to move to results management. Revising or building new information systems that are results-friendly—that readily incorporate results information—is essential to integrating results management into an organization. Otherwise, the gap between the rhetoric of an evaluative culture and the realities of everyday work will be quite evident.
- *Linking results management with other reform initiatives:* Many organizations are instituting a variety of management reforms these days. For there to be an evaluative culture created, results management needs to be seen as a key aspect of reform, not a one-off initiative to, for example, meet some external requirements.

An Outcome-Oriented and Supportive Accountability Regime

How accountability is exercised in an organization plays a key role in defining its culture, since accountability defines what aspects of performance are important. There are several issues here:

- *Recognizing and addressing the challenges of being accountable for outcomes:* If managers are simply accountable for following procedures and delivering planned outputs, there is little incentive to actively seek evidence on the outcomes being achieved. And if managers were to be literally accountable for achieving outcomes—which are not under their control—they would seek to ensure that accountability is only for outputs. There is a need to adapt the accountability regime to include the idea of influencing outcomes, of being accountable for and rewarding good managing for outcomes (Auditor General of Canada, 2002; Baehler, 2003; Mayne, 2007c; Perrin, 2006). Thus, for example, if outcome targets

and other expectations have not been met, the most important question should be what has been learned as a result and what will change in the future. On the other hand, managers do need to remain directly accountable for day-to-day delivery of outputs.

I argue elsewhere (Mayne, 2007c) that *accountability for outcomes* should consist of (a) providing information on the extent to which the expected and other outputs and outcomes were attained, and at what cost; (b) demonstrating the contribution made by the activities and outputs of the program to the outcomes; (c) demonstrating the learning and change that have resulted; and (d) providing assurance that the means used were sound and proper.

- *Rewarding good results management:* Rewarding good managing for results—such as undertaking or welcoming evaluation, taking informed risk and experimentation, using results information to inform decision making, holding learning events, and sharing information on results—demonstrates that the organization or unit does indeed value inquiry and reflection. This is just one of the values listed in Table 3: assuming responsibility for both learning and implementing lessons learned. One would expect to see a results focus in an internal performance appraisal system. Pal and Teplova (2003) stress the importance of accountable leadership in building a culture of learning.

Learning-Focused Evaluation and Monitoring

Undertaking evaluation and monitoring can significantly help to foster an evaluative culture, as discussed by such authors as Cousins et al. (2004); Forss, Rebien, and Carlson (2002); Levin-Rozalis and Rosenstein (2005); Marra (2000, 2004); Patton (2007); Preskill, Zuckerman, and Mattews (2003); and Williams, Laat, and Stern (2002). In reviewing studies of building evaluation capacity, Cousins et al. (2004, p. 129) conclude that "[m]any of these studies showed that collaborative and participatory evaluation approaches can have profound effects on the use of evaluation findings as well as processes." Echoing this, Forss et al. (2002) argue that it is during the process of the evaluation that the main learning occurs, rather than as a result of the final report per se. If managers and staff are involved in the process of measuring and analyzing results information, they are likely to see the value of such efforts and make use of the information gathered. That is, they are

likely to build interest in and appreciation of an evaluative culture. But all this may happen only if evaluation and monitoring are seen as learning tools, rather than, as can often be the case, tools for accountability. If the main purpose of evaluation and monitoring is seen as a means to check up on managers and staff, learning—and hence an evaluative culture—is less likely to be supported. Levin-Rozalis and Rosenstein (2005, p. 88) argue that "[i]n order to generate and encourage learning, evaluation has to be inclusive and responsive. One way of achieving inclusiveness and responsiveness is through participatory types of evaluation." In a volume devoted to the issue of process use (Cousins, 2007), Carden and Earl (2007) discuss how improved process use was used to enhance evaluative thinking at the International Development Research Centre.

A Learning Focus

The third and last set of elements in Table 4 needed to support an evaluative culture deal with learning. Learning from empirical evidence and analysis of past performance is what an evaluative culture is all about. But deliberate efforts are needed to build a capacity for and acceptance of learning in an organization.

Build In Learning

Numerous authors have discussed approaches to building learning in an organization (Argyris & Schon 1978, 1996; Botcheva, White, & Huffman, 2002; Britton, 2005; Cousins et al., 2004; Crookall & Schacter, 2002; David, 2002; Easterby-Smith & Araujo, 1999; Pal & Teplova, 2003). Lipshitz and Popper (2000) and Lipshitz, Popper, and Friedman (2002) discuss a variety of organizational learning mechanisms. Here I want to discuss several specific ideas:

- *Institutionalized learning events:* In my view, most useful is the idea of institutionalized learning events (Barrados & Mayne, 2003; Moynihan, 2005). A learning event could be structured around a current issue of concern where the available information and evidence is brought together in a digestible format for an informed discussion by the interested parties of the issue and what the available evidence implies for future actions. Nutley et al. (2007, p. 311) stress the importance of using "specific deliberative processes" to enhance the use of evidence. They argue that "the interplay between supply and demand of information is what really matters,"

just what should occur at a learning event. They talk about the useful role learning "brokers" (p. 128) could play in such settings, a role evaluators could well undertake. Similarly, Van der Knaap (1995) argues the need for "constructive argumentation" as a way to enhance policy-oriented learning. The International Development Research Centre holds annual learning events (IDRC, 2006).

- *Encouraging knowledge sharing:* As noted earlier, an evaluative culture values sharing information and knowledge, such as providing group learning opportunities (David, 2002) and developing supportive information sharing and communication structures (Cousins et al., 2004; Goh, 2001; Hernandez & Visher, 2001). Launsø, Rieper, and Rieper (2007) discuss the use of evaluative feedback as an approach to facilitate learning between groups of professionals with very different values and orientation.

- *Encouraging learning through experience:* Learning also occurs through direct on-the-job experience. Organizations can enhance this type of learning by encouraging efforts to identify and communicate good practices (Britton, 2005; Kim, 2002; Pal & Teplova, 2003).

- *Making time for learning:* A key constraint for many managers is time. Keeping a program on track is a full-time job, and it is hard to find time for reflection and learning. David (2002) discusses this need to make time to learn and providing adequate resources to do so. Britton (2005, p. 31–32) offers numerous suggestions on specific ways an organization can create learning spaces. It is interesting to note the extensive time that organizations do find for planning, in contrast to the time set aside for learning.

Tolerating and Learning from Mistakes

Mistakes occur in organizations and are not welcomed. But in a learning and evaluative culture, mistakes need to be tolerated and seen as an opportunity to learn what went wrong and how to do better the next time. Michael (1993) talks about "governing by learning" and the need to embrace mistakes if society is to advance. The evaluation of the World Bank's results management efforts (Operations Evaluation Department, 2005) and Norman's (2002) review of New Zealand experience similarly point to the importance of experimentation and learning from mistakes. Barrados and Mayne (2003) talk about seeing mistakes as opportunities to learn. Goh (2001, p. 334)

argues that, in a learning organization, "[m]istakes and failures as a result of experimentation are not punished, but are used as lessons learned."

WHAT NOT TO DO

All organizations have numerous formal and informal incentives in place that managers and staff react to. In some cases, while the original impetus for the incentive or procedure may have been valid, the incentive in a results management regime may now be in fact a disincentive. Across-the-board budget cuts are a good example. Such cuts are often implemented because they are easy to implement, don't require making a lot of tough decisions, and (may) appear "fair." However, they clearly do not reward programs or units that are making good progress in results management and probably send the message that when it comes to budgets—the kingpin of bureaucratic life— results don't matter. Table 6 provides examples of organizational actions that do not support an evaluative culture.

Table 6
Examples of Disincentives for Fostering an Evaluative Culture

- Penalizing programmes/projects that provide results information (perhaps showing weak performance) over those that do not provide such information.
- Across-the-board budget cuts.
- A constant focus by management on outputs rather than outcomes.
- No reward or recognition of units that are making good progress in implementing results management.
- Setting unrealistic results targets and then criticizing 'poor' performance.
- Poor quality results information that cannot be trusted.
- Results information that is not relevant or too costly in relation to possible use.
- Results information overload, with inadequate synthesis done.
- Accountability that focuses only on following rules and procedures.
- No apparent organizational interest in learning and adapting.
- Frequent changes in the results being sought.
- Inadequate regular review of the results being sought—the targets set—and the underlying theory of change, leading to perverse behaviour chasing the wrong results.

In a similar vein, the evaluation of the result management regime at the World Bank (Operations Evaluation Department, 2005) suggests:

Perverse incentives appear when:
- A "checklist mentality" is created.
- Meeting indicators—as opposed to creating results—becomes the dominant goal.
- "Quick wins" dominate long-term sustainability.
- To ensure goal attainment, ambitions are set too low.
- The best people and the most resources are assigned to the best-performing activities rather than those that perform poorly and need resources the most to improve performance.
- Managers have so little real control over outputs that setting targets becomes a purely symbolic and ritual exercise, with later avoidance of reporting on results versus plan, or another ritual game of distributing the blame for failure. (p. 13)

Pal and Teplova (2003, p. 21) identify a number of cultural barriers to implementing performance measurement that are pertinent in our more general context: emphasis on process and input over performance, cynicism, lack of trust, risk aversion, aversion to making mistakes, and an inward-looking organization. Where they exist, these are all cultural barriers that need to be avoided or addressed if an evaluative culture is to be built.

Figure 1 suggests what is at play. Cultural values clearly influence how the organization operates and runs its business. But in addition, the actual practices of the organization and the actions it takes influence its culture. Cultural values referred to here are not the espoused values of the organization but its actual values in use.

Figure 1
Linking Cultural Values and Practices
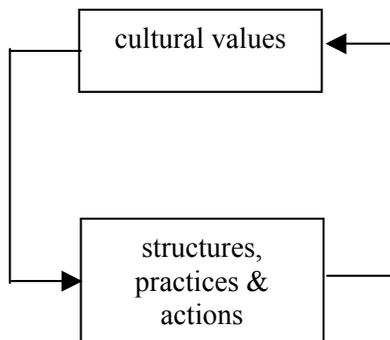
As much as working to develop strong leadership, putting in place supporting practices and encouraging a learning focus, organizations need to assess their current practices, actions, and incentives to identify those that may be working against an evaluative culture. Identifying such disincentives may not be straightforward, as they may be quite embedded in the current culture. Surveys of employees might be one way to help identify such practices. Pal and Teplova (2003, p. 28) suggest undertaking a cultural audit, since "[i]t is impossible to change an organizational culture unless one knows what that culture is." Goh, Quon, and Cousins (2007) have developed and tested an organizational learning survey instrument. Botcheva, White, and Huffman (2002) provide a scale for assessing learning culture. Garvin, Edmondson, and Gino (2008) discuss a tool they developed for assessing the extent of learning occurring in an organization.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

While organizations may tip their hats to the importance of an evaluative culture, little is usually done to deliberately build and maintain such a culture. Efforts are typically put into building systems of measurement and reporting, and enhancing the capacity of staff, all of which can be delegated somewhere down in the organization. Yet, I would argue, without a compatible evaluative culture, efforts at building capacity and systems are not enough for an effective evaluation or results management regime to thrive. Over and over again, assessments of evaluation and results management regimes find them wanting and point to the lack of a culture that supports and values the use of empirical evidence to routinely inform management as a major barrier.

As I argued elsewhere (Mayne, 2008), systems of results activities do not make a results culture. An organization may have systems for planning for results, monitoring results, and reporting on results, but without the appropriate supportive culture, these systems may be a hindrance rather than a help to good results management. Evidence for an evaluative culture would look for examples of the practices outlined in Table 2, such as in structured learning events held regularly, visible senior management support, decisions routinely informed by results information, and honest mistakes tolerated.

Seeking an evaluative culture does not imply that rules and procedures are not important. Public and not-for-profit organizations are using public monies and authorities, and they need to do so with

some care. Results are not being sought at any cost; good perform-ance includes attention to the means used. In an evaluative or results culture, results are being pursued, keeping in mind proper means, including appropriate assessment of the risks that programs face.

This article is about creating an evaluative culture in organizations. Where this involves organizations led by ministers, a question not really addressed is how to get politicians to support an evaluative culture, especially given their frequent predilection for controls when things go wrong, and concerns about waste and mismanagement. Obviously, forms of education might help, as might the availability of empirical evidence when needing to defend programs. I suspect also that evidence that adequate controls are in place would be needed, as well as evidence on results. Gill (2008) discusses the roles of ministers in New Zealand's results management efforts. Building an evaluative culture at the political level remains uncharted territory!

Developing an evaluative culture in an organization will not happen through good intentions and osmosis, nor by building results systems and measuring results. It requires deliberate efforts by the organi-zation and especially its senior managers to encourage, implement, and support such a culture. It needs to be clear to managers and staff that results information and evidence are valued and expected to be a regular part of planning, budgeting, implementation, and review. This article has suggested numerous ways that such a culture can be developed and maintained in an organization, and has noted the extensive literature on organizational learning that can be brought to bear. Mayne (2008) outlines a possible strategy for moving for-ward. It was also noted that organizations can undertake activities, deliberately or not, that undermine such a culture, and that specific efforts are required to assess current management regimes for their compatibility with an evaluative culture.

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