

Reading: Exploring Design Alternatives

Review the Vision and Charter

Before the team members begin to design the future state, they should review the vision. Remember that you want to design a new organization based on a vision of the future, not an analysis of what is wrong with the current state.

As a team, you should discuss the vision and the problem to be solved and be able to articulate why the future state is meaningful.

The team should also review its charter and all design constraints or “givens” from the Steering Committee. Unless any of these constraints have been identified as negotiable, all design options must meet them.

Benchmarked information is often helpful in the design process because it may provide a different perspective and approach to the design problem.

Explore the Alternatives

To explore the alternatives, the Design Team should consider the following questions:

- What new or changed services or products need to be provided?
- What will the new or changed processes look like?
- What will the new or changed structure look like?
- What types of key roles or responsibilities will people have?
- How will people relate to their customers?
- How will technology be used?

Many necessary elements of the future state probably have become obvious during the analysis.

Consider New Processes

When the change involves improving current processes, design alternatives need to be based on a thorough understanding of these processes. There are many approaches for generating improvements to processes, including those based on total quality management and systems analysis.

When the change involves designing new processes, services, or structures, design innovation is best accomplished through a series of brainstorming sessions.

The team needs to shift its thinking to the ideal. When you do this, you are more likely to come up with innovative solutions. Often, simple solutions are the answer to seemingly complex problems.

Create Graphic Images of the Future State

It often helps to use graphic representation in the design process. Having a visual image of what the new work process or organization would look like may help you identify potential problems in the recommendations.