

*He chose the 'Museum Beelden aan Zee', 'Museum Sculptures on the Seaside' in Scheveningen to have an experiential dialogue about organisational culture and organisational change. Fred Buining. An organisational developer with a personal style of working based on mutual trust, respect and curiosity.*

# While relating to the image that slowly takes shape

## **Why did you choose this museum to talk about organisational culture and change ?**

“ An organisational culture is something beyond a logo, clients, a product or service, buildings and desks. It's an experience. To have a meaningful dialogue about organisational culture and organisational change can only be done being immersed in a setting that evokes similar emotions. That's called experiential learning. Since we are not part of an organisation I have chosen 'Museum Beelden aan Zee' which will give you a symbolical sense and feel of the successful organisational culture of the 21st century.”

## **Are you saying we can symbolically compare the museum with an organisational culture ?**

“Symbolically, yes definitely ! The architect Wim Quist created a building which profoundly protects what is inside against the outside world but at the same time stimulates our curiosity sometimes to the point where it becomes unbearable. The building strongly invites exhibiter and visitor to use it's space. Unique in this experience is that the facade, walls and doors are not in the foreground but far in the background in defining that space. The museum is built in the dunes and therefore has no facade. The building is not visible from beach or

boulevard. Doors and walls do not seem to be present, in the foreground which is pure space and light...that 'demands' to be filled and used. Symbolically I see the 'embracing...protection... stimulus' as the cultural experience of 'intrapreneurship' and the 'almost absent framing of space by doors and walls' as the cultural experience of sustainability. Both play a key role in the organizational culture of the 21st century.”

## **Can you say a little bit more about 'intrapreneurship' and 'sustainability' ?**

“If an organisation is to frightened why change ? it should be seriously embarrassed. People in organisations should be empowered to ask questions like: 'Where do we change ? How do we change ? At what speed do we change and which rhythm ?' Globalisation, digitalisation, greying population, climate crises, credit crunch, shift of economical centre to Asia, etc. These are all trends that influence our world and for which none of our leaders has the 'right' overarching approach available. In such a world the only strategy to follow as an organisation and a leader is diversification of the approaches one has. In other words: increase your freedom of choice. And ensure that usage. Go for more diverse and more successful trials of securing the future.

## **Fred Buining**

*Fred Buining studied industrial design engineering at the Technical University Delft. He has his own consultancy and international network of OD work: Fredwerk. Fred works among others for Shell as external associate organisational effectiveness, SEEDA South England Economic Development Agency, SABIC, DSM, Publicis. His vision 'emerging change', in the end man wants to rise above themselves and create. To create the space for that in organisations is a demanding profession and sadly enough still very much in demand. He guest lectures organisational dynamics at a business school in Berlin. In 2008 he received a fellowship from the University of Surrey for 'creative teaching and learning in change processes'. He is married and has a son.*

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To be very concrete the diversity of answers in the organisation is stimulated under the heading 'intrapreneurship', which is providing a safe environment where our curiosity is stimulated to lead change. Think of creativity (training and HR policy), innovation (open innovation programs), diversity (training and HR policy). Ongoing responsible usage of freedom of choice is stimulated through 'risk management' (corporate venturing, risk management training, open innovation), service-ability and less individualistic leaders (level 5 leadership training), self organisation (train self managing teams), accountability (training and project management). But be aware that all the examples given above are purely examples of instruments. They are no guarantee for building a successful organisational culture. Think of an artist

when creating a sculpture. The success of the artist lies not in the availability of the instruments and their usage, but in the choice of instrument in the moment and handling the instrument by the artist, while relating to the image that slowly takes shape."

### **Sustainable freedom of choice for everyone in the organisation. That sounds too good to be true ?**

"Still that's what it is all about today in organisational development. You might say 'It's hot'. Just google on topics such as network organisation, virtual organisation, sustainable organisations, natural systems design, emerging organisations, accountability, creativity. They all can be related to two headings 'intrapreneurship' and 'sustainability'. To good too be true...not really.

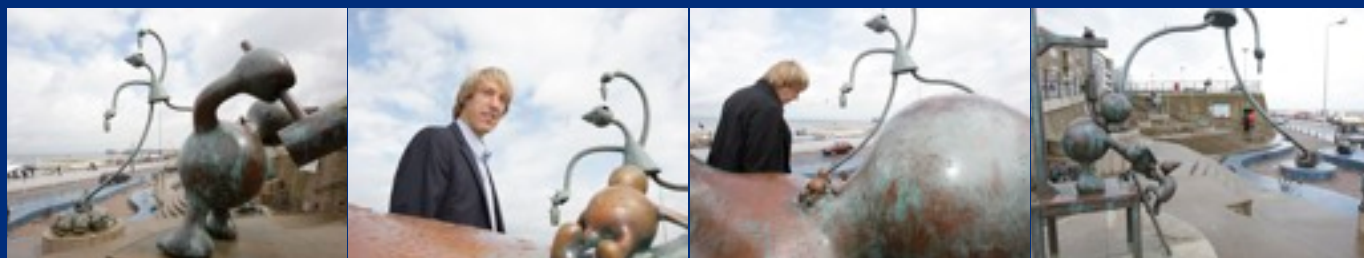
### **We strive for an image in our mind that evokes happiness.**

In my work I visit many companies and organisations in the Netherlands and abroad. And there are a number of organisations who have a surplus in people on their way building such a culture. In no particular order, Univé, Shell, Heineken and AH. I believe that these companies will be interesting to watch in their development in the 21st century. Look at the success of Univé in e-business, Shell's efforts in the development of difficult exploitable oil and gas reserves, the Beertender and Music Hall of Heineken and AH's product offer management and recovery from their crisis in the USA. All demonstrations of an internally developed sustainable potential to respond fast and innovative to developments in the market. That's the kind of organisation that I feel confident about."

### **Which characteristics does a successful organisation have ?**

"Let's take as an example the meeting culture in three different organisations. In the first organisation employees are personally invited for meetings and attend the whole meeting. In the second organisation meetings are announced on a meeting board and participants enter the meeting when they believe they can contribute and leave when the meeting generates no more value for them. In the third organisation has no meetings. The first organisation limits space, the second organisation creates space while the third organisation offers no space. I believe that successful organisations of the 21st century through their ways, not limit space, not set boundaries but through their culture and their ways of working create space for employees to be filled over and over again in a sustainable way."

## The choice of instrument in the moment, the handling of the instrument by the artist while relating to the image that slowly takes shape.



### That's probably easier said than done. How do we develop a organisational culture like that ?

“For sure we do not develop training programs. Or rather we need to develop change programs in which employees participating in projects pro-actively implement change and supports moments when needed resources. Resources in terms of money, time, people, knowledge, modifications of the organisation, but above all support in developing skills and capabilities to be successful in the challenges they face in the moment. Through these projects the new culture emerges and it's contribution in securing the future of the organisation is demonstrated. Such a program is very powerful for the individual participants, for the teams and for the organisation as a whole.

Organisational change is a much more living process then we have believed so far in which the dynamics between the employees play a leading role. If we can anticipate that we would not have so many ‘problems’ around organisational change but it would feel as natural as breathing. In the UK I am part of a team that created such a change program, stimulating change at Universities and Higher Education throughout the UK. That program is very successful and is creating real culture change in higher education. Some universities also use the program and use it as an internal program. Practically not all organisations are equipped to do that so for those we develop a custom program that blends with the structures and instruments available already.”

### What are returning topics in change processes ?

“There are many returning topics of which some are more present then others. In every change process however power plays a role. Any change process includes always a corrective movement in a network of power relationships, a network that failed to change along with the changing needs of the organisation.

The starting point is the changing need(s) of the organisation but a key role in the change process itself is the game around power relationships. Take the case where an organisation against all expectations runs into difficulties in their innovation project. After some research we can identify a change in behavior between managers. Where in the past they would co-operate smoothly, they now are aggressive and keep each other on a short leash. This change in behavior could be traced back to a top manager who was brought in to manage a takeover and restructuring of the organisation.

This manager stayed on in this position without changing his management style. His aggressive managerial style trickles down through the organisation and starts to poison the collaborative culture between managers. Fascinating isn't it ? In such a case there are different ways to facilitate the change. We can coach the manager in developing a different style of managing. We can coach their colleagues to more effectively counter the top managers behavior. Of course we can also move the top manager out of the organisation or enable the organisation to adopt the more aggressive management style and use it to their best advantage. Whatever the chosen approach is, it's directed towards movement of the power network.”

### What are the success factors in change processes ?

“I will not mention all the factors, which also depends on the type of change, but definitely ‘imagination’ and ‘change agents’. With our imagination we create an image of the world in our mind about the world's dynamics. Dreams from our superconscious, fantasies from our subconscious and reality are mixed together in this image. We strive for an image in our mind that evokes happiness. We are not always successful in that given the time or images we receive from others. To illustrate using the exhibition here called “against nature”.

The exhibition “against nature” refers to this mixture of dream, fantasy and reality. To unravel those images and consequently draw conclusions requires professional support. We need a third party to move us to an observer perspective. Are we able to separate dream, fantasy and reality, draw conclusions and align our actions with the images. That’s the work of a change agent. An internal or external employee who on demand can work with other employees to shape their imagination to create a ‘happy’ mix of dream, fantasy and reality which enables employees to align and act. You definitely will be successful with employees who continuously imagine how the world is and will become and continuously shape their actions in line with their imagination. It will create a process of continuous change, driven by the imagination of your employees in response to their environment.

### **Where are the chances for employees ?**

“That’s there where you see the chances. That almost sounds like a ‘Johan Crujff answer’ but do not be fooled by the simplicity. Don’t ask me where you need to become intrapreneurial. That’s a waste of energy, tea conversation, workshop gossip. Do-be,do-be, dobedobedo ! The execution that’s what’s courage and determination is for. Tell me what you see and together we get to work to make it concrete and actionable.

### **Which recommendation can you give employees ?**

“Try to feel the space, do not sit and wait and do not seek someone who will show you the boundaries, the walls and doors, in short the limitations of the organisation. As soon as you feel the space, be vigorous, passionate, willful and stay that even after a few setbacks. Intrapreneur you become over night and will last a lifetime.

In case a lack of power support is the bottle neck, do not sit and moan. Go find someone who with your powerful support can make a difference and use the organisational space in a new and future shaping way. Be a servant to the organisation and others.”

### **Museum Beelden aan Zee**

Harteveldstraat 1 / Boulevard, 2586 EL,  
Scheveningen, The Hague, Netherlands.  
Opening hours: Tuesday till Sunday from 11.00 until  
17.00 hours.  
Entrance fee: adults 7.00, children (5-18) 3.50 euros

[www.beeldenaanzee.nl](http://www.beeldenaanzee.nl)

