

The Application of Soft Skills

What do the indicators tell us?

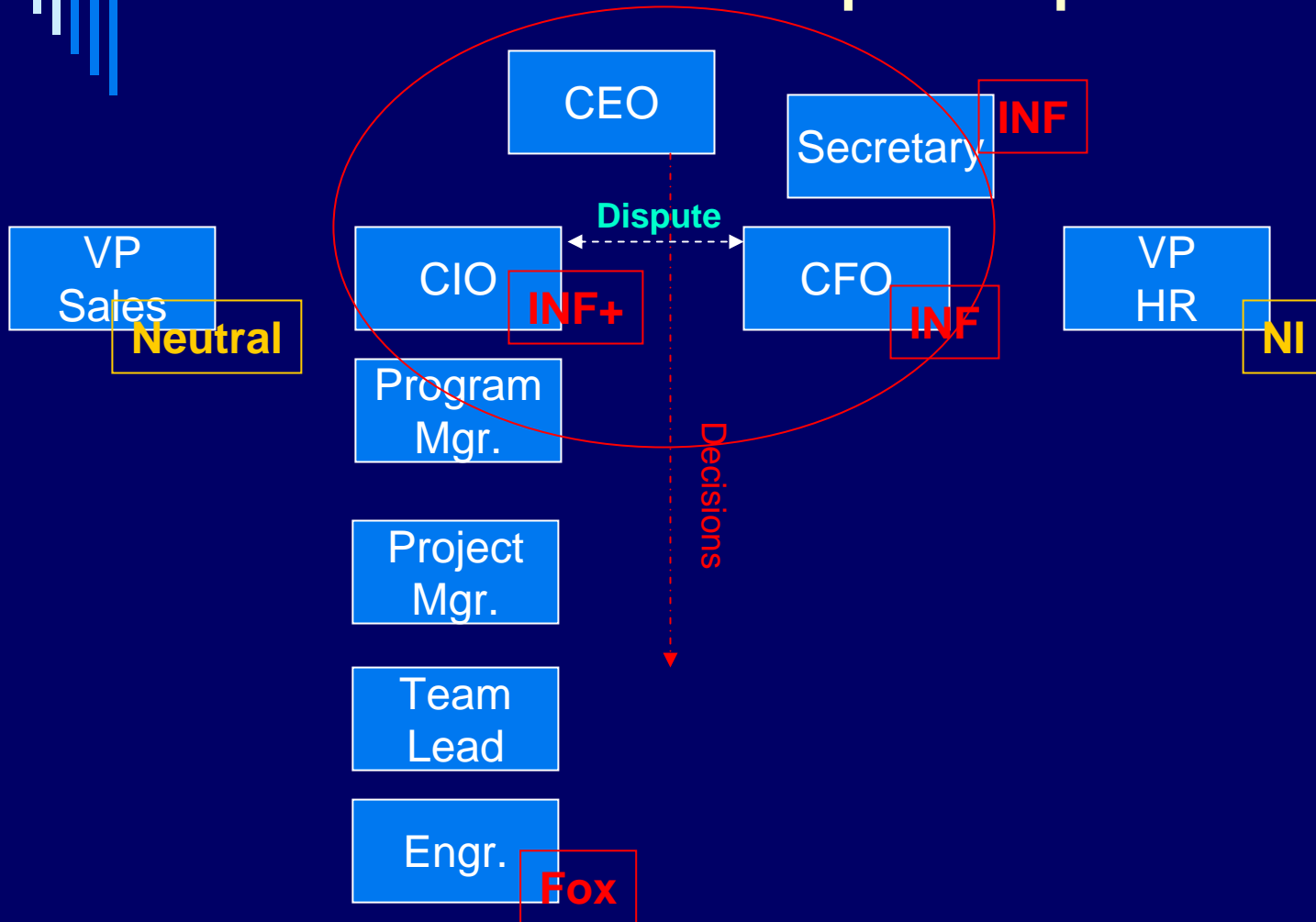
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Questions to Ask: Teams

- ❑ Morale
- ❑ Staffing for success
- ❑ Hours expended versus error-free work produced
- ❑ Team structure and interaction

The Relationship Map





Questions to Ask: The Relationship Map

- Who is/are the decision-maker(s), who are the influencers?
- What is the corporate/office culture?
- What is the process for making decisions?



Questions to Ask: How do they lead?

- ❑ Do leaders exhibit emotional intelligence?
- ❑ How do they attack problems and risks?
- ❑ Are they risk-tolerant or risk adverse?
- ❑ Do they take responsibility for their actions?



Questions to Ask: What is the Political Climate?

- ❑ What is the overall project or program political environment?
- ❑ What are the influences from outside? From inside?
- ❑ What is the true mission of the project? Of the organization? What are the stated missions?



Questions to Ask: What does the information mean?

- What do these indicators tell me?
- What can the leaders do about problems and perceptions? Are they willing to make and support a change?
- What will it take?



Situation for Discussion

The system is in additional User Acceptance Testing (UAT), and the testing is not going well. The government client, who had earlier rejected major parts of the system during the first UAT for not meeting specifications and not being user-friendly, is frustrated by an apparent lack of contractor responsiveness. The subject applications are both financial and functional and interface with each other throughout the agency lifecycle. The government users, brought in from around the country to test the applications, are not happy with the look and feel of the new mainframe-based system, required by their CIO, and want to return to their non-standard Windows-based applications. They are sitting in a room alone doing testing and usually communicate with the developers over the phone and by email. Government management will no longer speak with the contractor's project manager and is discussing possible legal redress.

The contractor has staffed their team with green engineers who, through trial and error and on-the-job training, have matured their skills. The first project manager died from a heart attack, and the leadership promoted the technical director into his position. It is his first project-manager position. The program manager is the salesman who sold the deal, and the executives want to make him accountable for his sale. He has no technical or management experience. He oversees two teams, one in the D.C. area and one at a technical center in the mid-west, who are working on different parts of the system. The local team dislikes the program manager, who directs through a combination of threats and rewards. Executives are just beginning to become involved because of client complaints, which have now risen to the client CIO level.



Other Questions?

- Now that we've seen the studies, can we add other questions that will help us understand dynamics and formulate plans?