

# The 4F Factors: Being Disqualified to Function as an Organization

Andy Grove, the Chairman of Intel, published a book called *Only the Paranoid Survive: How to Exploit the Crisis Points That Challenge Every Company and Career* (Bantam Doubleday Dell). His thesis was based on the assumption that there are about six major external factors that can influence the future of a company and that a major shift in any of these factors from where each is at the present can change the entire future of the company. He calls them the **10X Factors**.

While Grove concentrates on the *external* factors that can change the course of a business, we also want to consider the *internal* factors that influence the course of a business.

We call these the **4F factors**. The **4F Factors** are the organizational and people characteristics that make the difference between an organization that performs to goals, offers a quality work life, and adapts well to changing business conditions versus one which struggles to meet or falls short of goals, has a climate described by those who work there as characterized by mistrust, frustration, and alienation, as well as being one which is unwilling or unable to adapt to changing internal or external conditions.

We call these the **4F Factors** as an analogy to the military draft categories of the past. Anyone classified as 1A was defined as fit to serve in the military. A 1Y classification meant that the person had a temporary condition that would prohibit service, but that the condition could change. Here is the definition of a 4F classification:

The Selective Service System classification "4-F" is officially defined as follows:

1630.44 Class 4-F: Registrant not acceptable for military service.

In Class 4-F shall be placed any registrant who is found by the Secretary of Defense, under applicable physical, mental or administrative standards, to be not acceptable for service in the Armed Forces; except that no such registrant whose further examination or re-examination is determined by the Secretary of Defense to be justified shall be placed in Class 4-F until such further examination has been accomplished and such registrant continues to be found not acceptable for military service."

The short version: A person classified F-4 is not acceptable for military service in the United States forces.<sup>1</sup>

We call these the 4F Factors because they can permanently disqualify an organization from performing in the business, educational, or not-for-profit marketplace. In addition, as with the 4F classification, these are not *external* conditions; they are *internal* to the organization.

The 4F Factors include:

- The Culture of the Organization
- The Organization's Values
- The Leadership (Character and Competency) of the Organization
- Communication in the Organization
- Motivational Systems
- Human Resource Policy and Systems
- Employee Relations: How Leadership and the Organization Treats People
- Leadership, Values, and Culture-Bearing Mechanisms.

Based on the research of the last three decades, there is a general understanding of the description of the state of each of these factors in a high performance/high motivation organization. The extent to which an organization deviates from the known high performance norms on these factors and/or the extent to which several of the factors are not aligned (inconsistent with each other), the result is what we are calling a "4F condition."

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks to "Google Answers" for this information. See <http://answers.google.com/answers/threadview?id=217409>