

Organisational Development Case Study



Organisation X recently went through an organisational restructure. Two months after the restructure, directors were concerned about turnover and openness to change. Staff perceptions of the firm's direction were assessed using the FutureSelves online tool.

Process

Eleven employees, spread across three offices went through the internet based FutureSelves questionnaire.

Personal career, motivational and performance development was addressed by encouraging staff to have one on one career development sessions with consultants. Outcomes included renewed career goals, changed thinking, and new resources to address issues. In these sessions, skills and interests, career options (including motivators), and their perception of the organisation were discussed.

Team development took place through a workshop, which discussed an aggregation of all individuals' reports¹. This covered the teams:

- skills and interests – including strengths and opportunities for improvement
- career options – including motives, roles and workplace values
- organisational values – including strengths, weaknesses and direction.

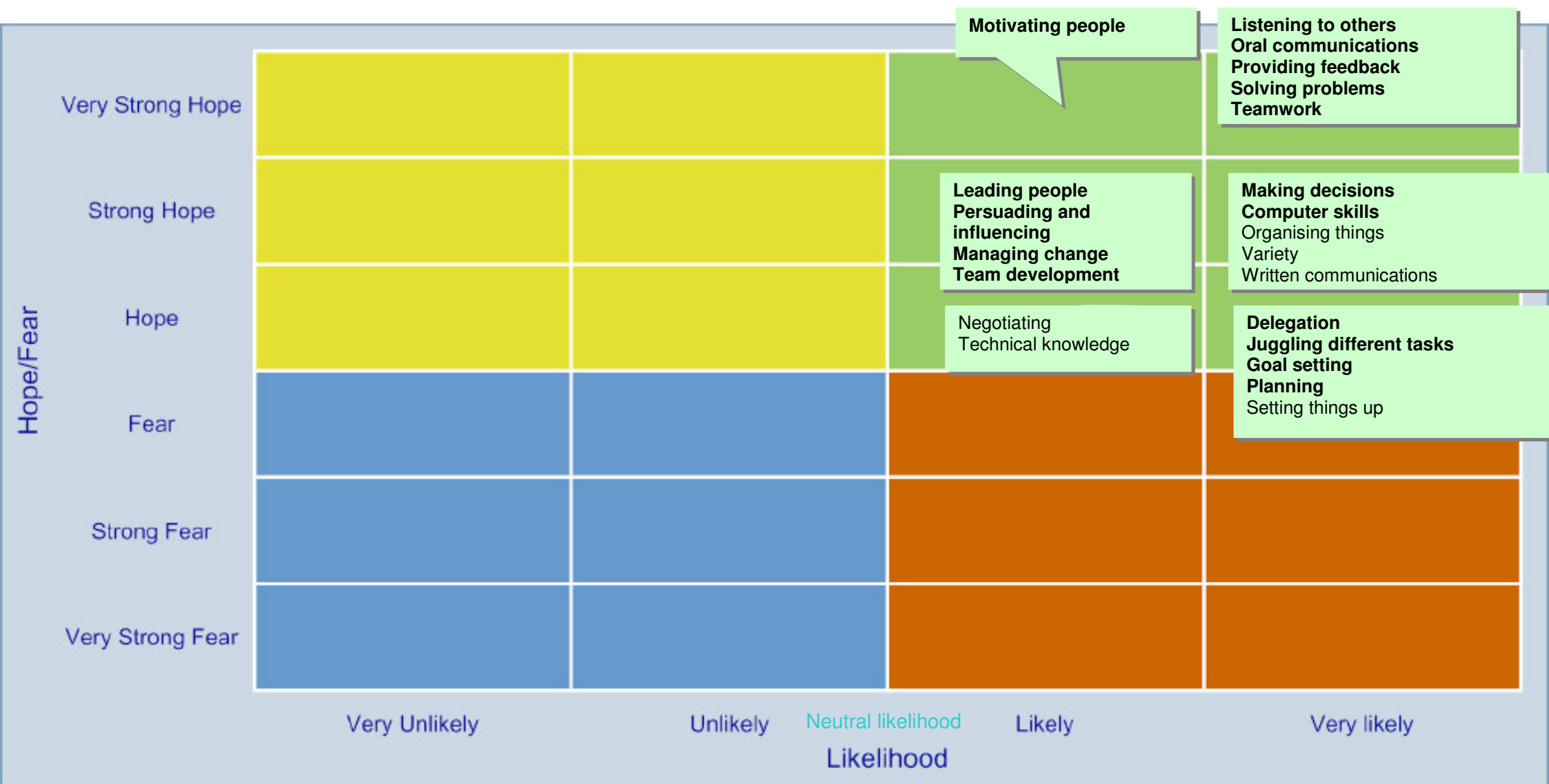
Ground rules, expectations and meeting objectives were discussed. Results of the group discussion follow.

Specific tasks to implement the responses were identified and allocated. It was agreed to review progress in two months and to redo the tool to gauge progress in six months.

¹ *How the aggregation was done*

- Results were downloaded into excel and analysed through pivot tables.
- Responses for each of the sections (skills and interests, career options, organisational values, were broken down into four quadrants (opportunity, dreams, dreads, threats). In each of these quadrants, where four or more team members had placed an item in that quadrant, the item was included in the summary graphs below.
- Placement within quadrants was determined by the most frequent responses to the hope/fear question, and the likelihood question. I.e. the most common strength of hope or fear, or likelihood.
- When more than 9 team members had placed an item in the same quadrant, that item was highlighted in bold to reflect its importance.
- Information on past / present experience was deleted from the group report. An analysis of responses showed reports of no prior experience were very infrequent.

Team Skills and Interests – what you are good at, and what you like doing – what skills and interests do you have?



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Skills and Interests

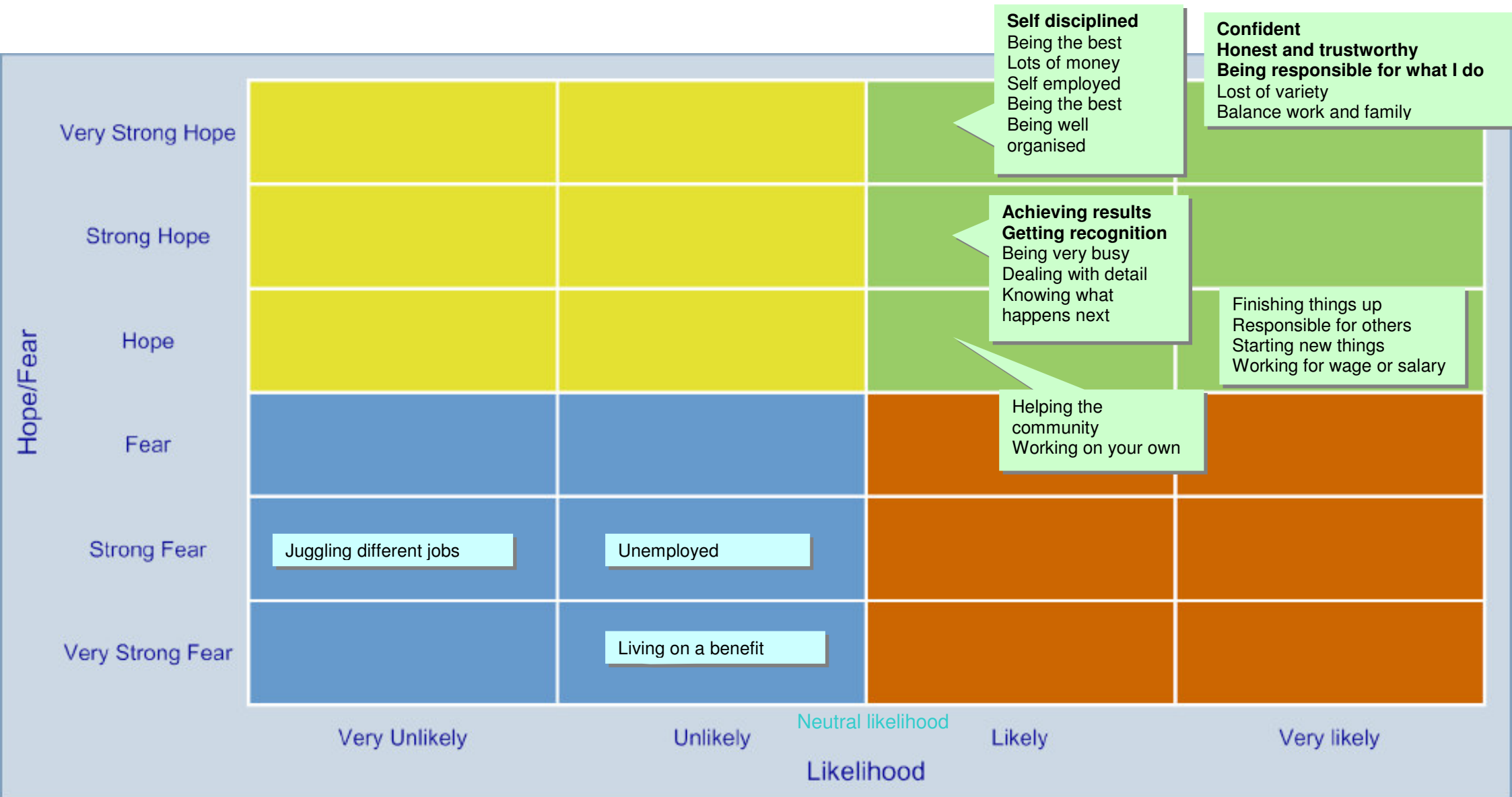


The team discussed what was important; differences between their own individual report and the summary report, and differences between themselves. Team members discussed what team and individual strengths they showed, and how they related to their role.



The group identified that their strongest strengths were in people skills, such as listening to others and motivating people. Organisational tasks such as delegation, juggling tasks, and goal setting were less appealing, but were where opportunities for improvement most probably lay.

Team Career Options – what motivates and what ways of working would you like in the future?



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Career Options

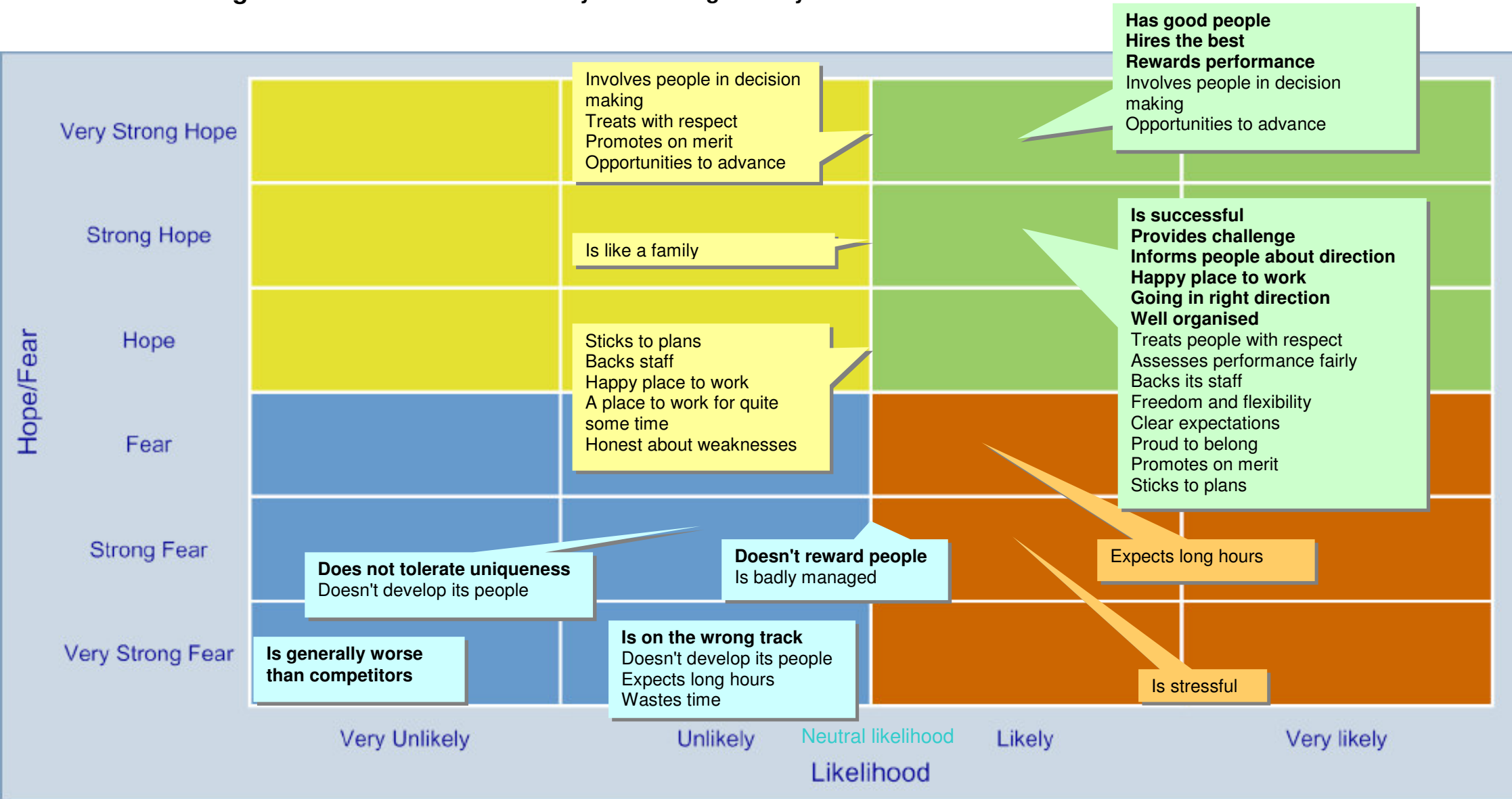


Team members discussed how the career options, which consist strongly of working styles and motivators, were reflected in day-to-day behaviours. The discussion began by identifying the strongest opportunities and why they were important, differences between the individuals, how to build on strengths, and ways work practices could improve to reflect the strengths.



The team agreed that confidence, honesty and trustworthiness were particular features of the group. The discussion focussed on the behaviours and values that lie behind the items achieving results and getting recognition. The team drew connections between these items, and the items juggling tasks and motivating people from the previous graph. They identified several ways to better recognise good performance to encourage people to stay.

Team Organisational Values – what ways of working would you like in the future?



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Organisational Values



The charts showed strong appreciation of many good points of working in the firm, such as rewarding performance, providing challenging work, having good people, being successful and treating people with respect. A discussion of these good points raised appreciation of working there, compared to similar firms.

These responses represented areas for improvement: Opportunities to advance, being like a family, being honest about weaknesses, involving people in decision making, and being a place to work for quite some time.

A discussion of these points identified the need for regular internal communications, including feedback from employees about direction and plans for the future. There were also concerns about the need to retain staff, with more training and development in new, emerging areas of the business. The restructuring's impact was discussed. Some areas, such as lack of communication, were identified as short-term transition issues.

Managers were surprised at the extent to which people may leave the firm because of limited opportunities for advancement and lack of involvement in decision-making. There was considerable discussion of why this was so, with an open and constructive discussion of specific projects and work design issues. Some reality checking about what was realistic and what was not took place as part of this discussion.

Discussion of fears rated as unlikely identified a belief that the firm was better than competitors, and was generally well organised.

The issues identified above were supported in the fears rated as likely to happen. The employees feared that the following issues were likely to be part of their future:

- Working long hours
- Stress

These issues related to the unlikely hopes – such as opportunities for advancement, addressing weaknesses and being a place to stay. It emerged that the firm was seen as a relatively short-term transit point in careers because of these factors.

Response



In response to this feedback through the FS tool, and the planning session, the following actions were identified.

- Increase sharing of work load across offices
- Share project opportunities as much as possible
- Allow staff to work from home when they need to concentrate on demanding work
- Support employees who are completing professional qualifications by allocating time each week for them to concentrate on this
- Encourage staff to take breaks, particularly lunch breaks
- Fun trips e.g. skiing, horse trekking
- Manage the expectations of deadlines better
- Strive for work life balance – encourage employees to develop interests outside of work
- Look to develop international careers – in the long term