# DEVELOPING CRITICAL MASS

This model is for use in an organization that is working to develop and maintain a productive and humane organizational culture.

**High competence and commitment**: People invested in all aspects of the organization's life (teams, client/customer/ member service, organizational vision & values, self care and development,  carrying out tasks specific to the position); high degree of emotional maturity, competence and commitment

**Supporters**: Not as invested as the core. Possibly somewhat less competence or commitment. Yet are "with you" in the effort. Are aware of organizational norms and have decided to cooperate with the norms and serve by use their competence
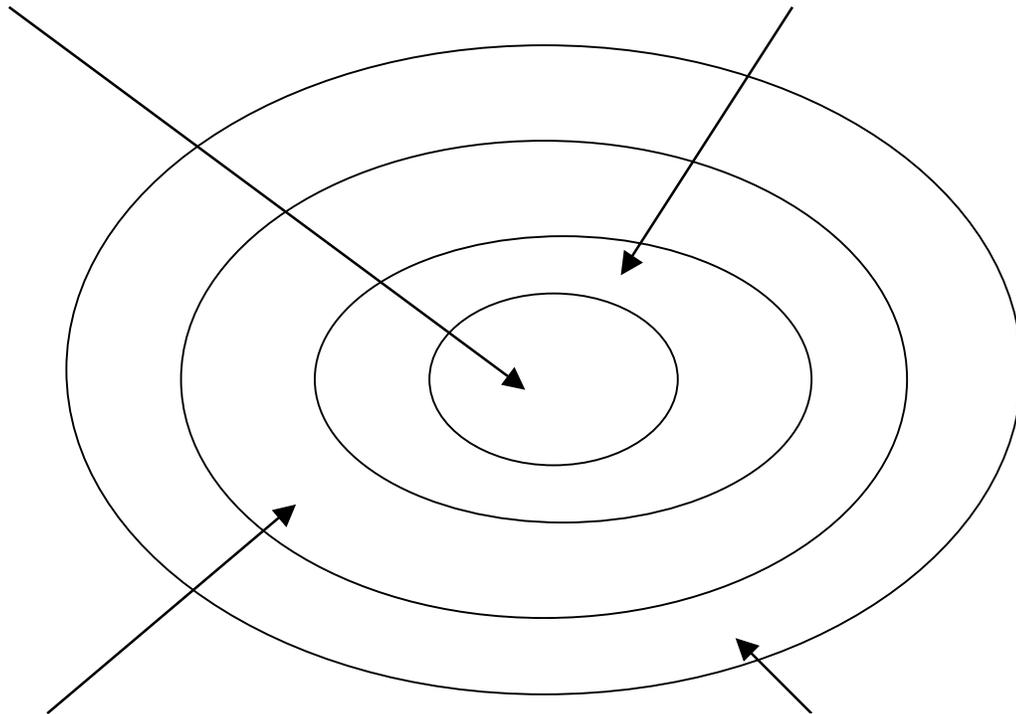
**"Just Going Along"**: May have mixed feelings regarding commitment; may want to"just do my job" (the job defined in very narrow terms); competence may be in limited areas; may "go along" with health or non-health at the center. People may be in this stance in some organizations while in others taking a *Core* or *Supporter* stance.

**Stances of Cynicism, Counter- dependency, Passivity** : Most organizations have people that are not able or willing to take a healthy and productive stance. This may be a stance that the person typically takes or may be situational. We are all here at times.

**STRATEGY:** In most organizations -- Build a "critical mass" of people with a stance of *High Commitment & Competence* and *Supporters*. Develop organizational processes, values and norms that reinforce a productive, empowering, and humane culture. Accept people in the stance they have taken; invite them to develop their abilities and willingness to invest themselves more broadly and deeply. Place boundaries on behavior that is undermining the well being of the organization's culture.

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# DEVELOPING "CRITICAL MASS":
# AN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

## A. Build a Core of High Competence and Commitment

1. Be clear about who must be part of the core, e.g., key managers, organizational leaders, members of an internal training team, etc. People who by their position in the organization have significant influence on productivity and the organizational culture need to be part of this core group. Through training, coaching and hiring processes bring these people "on board".

2. Acknowledge and reward those who are in this group.

3. Provide regular training and coaching to support and develop them.

## B. Focus on Developing and strengthening a "Critical Mass" of people with *High Competence and Commitment* and *Supporters*. Avoid getting caught up in trying to "fix" people in *Stances of Cynicism, Counter-dependency, or Passivity*. Do set boundaries on behavior that undermines what is healthy in the organization's life. Take a stance of accepting people in the stance they have taken; invite them to develop their commitment and competence, and to invest themselves more broadly and deeply.

## C. Develop Organizational Processes, Values and Norms that Develop and Maintain a Productive, Empowering, Humane Organizational Culture

Develop a clear vision that includes your mission, primary task, core values and broad direction. Create processes for organizational listening to its own life and the external context. Nurture a capacity to maintain organizational integrity while adapting to new forces in the organization or environment.

## D. Including Everyone

1. *Supporters* - Offer ongoing training and coaching; seek and encourage people ready to go further.

2. *"Just Going Along"* - All of us are in this stance in relationship to some organizations.
Include them in activities around the mission, core values, etc.; invite them to develop increased competency; engage them through the regular processes of the organization (not in special one-to-one sessions) --- listen to them in the processes of assessment/channeling/focus groups/MBWA ----> sharing the vision with them, saying to them what you need/expect -----> inviting them to move forward with the organization; do not over react to their low commitment or competence.

3. *Stances of Cynicism, Counter-dependence, Passivity* - Ignore their stance if possible; if the stance needs to be challenged engage people one-to-one by listening to their

views ----> sharing your vision for the organization's direction and culture ---> invite the person to join in making the vision work; if their stance and activities threaten the organization's direction and culture seek ways to create boundaries that limit their influence in the system.

4. There may be people who appear to vacillate among stances, e.g., at times seeming to be *High Competence and Commitment*, at other times just *Supporters*. It may be possible to stabilize this by inviting the person to maintain a more consistent stance and offering help as required.

## E. Address the Situation if There is an Inversion of the "Emotional" System

If the emotional center of the organization is held by those with *Stances of Cynicism*, *Counter-dependency, Passivity* the task will be to displace those at the current center and establish a "critical mass" as described. Organizations or subsystems of organization can find themselves captured by a form of emotional coercion by people caught up in in one of these stances. Others who may be more committed, competent or emotionally mature back away from leadership.

## F. Decide on the Shape of the System that is Needed Given the Organization's Work

Most organizations can tolerate a certain amount of *"Just Going Along"* and a *Stance of Cynicism, Counter-dependency, Passivity*. You may not have the resources for consistently selecting or rewarding people of higher commitment and competency. Some organizations expect to include these people because of the mission of the organization, i.e. some religious groups. Other organizations have missions that require all its members to have high commitment and competence, e.g., Navy Seals, the bishops of a church.