



# Intelligent Failure Competency Model

Organizational System Component	System Sub Element	Very Poor (absent)	Poor (mostly absent or misapplied)	Good (some presence or working well in specific areas)	Very Good (present and functioning well across the organization)
<b>Strategy &amp; Goals</b> <i>Who we are and what we do</i>	Overall objective	Leadership doesn't value reflection or learning.	Organizational goals do not express the importance of learning.	Goals express desire to learn, but failure is not mentioned.	Learning from successes and failures is explicit in organizational goals.
	Planning	Planning and implementation strategies do not allow for adaptation based on learning.	With a few exceptions, plans tend to be formal, rigid and driven from the top-down.	Plans are developed with broad-based input. When they are inappropriate, we are able to adapt them.	Plans allow for ongoing adaptation, are developed inclusively and identify hypotheses that will be tested.
<b>Technology &amp; Work</b> <i>How we do what we do</i>	Processes	The tools and/or formal processes needed to deal with failure productively do not exist.	The tools that exist for handling failure productively are often inappropriate or inadequate.	There are a few tools and/or process which are useful in learning from failures.	Right-sized, formal processes ensure maximum learning from failures.
<b>Formal Organization</b> <i>How the parts of the organization relate to each other</i>	HR practices	Failure, when discovered, is routinely punished.	Failure is only acceptable for certain people in my organization.	Many job descriptions include mention of learning.	Everyone in the organization is responsible and accountable for learning.
	Organizational Structure	We are rewarded only for achieving planned results, not effort or learning.	Only success is rewarded except in a few specific cases where learning and effort were recognized.	In specific areas of the organization, trying new things and learning is rewarded.	We are rewarded for effort and learning, not simply outcomes.
	Job Design	I lack the time and/or resources for reflection.	Occasionally, I find time to reflect.	I can usually find time to reflect when it is important.	Learning and reflection is a critical part of my job and I always make time for it.
<b>Informal Organization</b> <i>The emergent characteristics of the organization that affect how it operates</i>	Organizational Culture	My organization's culture is not conducive to dealing with failure productively.	There is a tendency to acknowledge failure, assign responsibility, and move on quickly.	There is a norm of speaking openly about both successes and failures all the time.	We know to constantly look for errors, expecting failures in everything we do.
	Social Networks	There is a strong tendency towards blame in times of failure.	It is rare for someone to be shunned because of a failure.	Most people react with curiosity for what was learned in times of failure.	People in my network value learning over laying blame.
<b>External Influences</b> <i>Relevant aspects of the surrounding environment</i>	Competitors, Regulators	Regulators and competitors are considered a threat. Failures are hidden.	When confronted with failure, the organization will discuss it.	Failures are openly discussed. The organization has a healthy relationship with regulators.	The organization shares failures externally. Stakeholders tend to appreciate the complexity of the work.



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<b>People</b> <i>Characteristics of the individuals who comprise the organization</i>	Individual Motivations	I don't feel I am confident enough and/or in a secure enough place in my work to deal with failures openly.	I am willing to share the failures as long as I believe I can fix them.	I understand not all failures are created equally and treat them accordingly.	I can confidently own up to failures, knowing my manager and peers will work with me to learn and improve.
	Knowledge	There are no examples or role models of what it looks like to deal with failure productively.	I have some knowledge on how to deal with failure from external examples and articles I've read.	There is a good understanding in the organization of what it takes to analyze and learn from failures.	People I work with are excellent role models. They discuss failures and work together to learn from them.
	Skills	It is difficult to come up with new ideas, test and iterate in my context.	I have been tempted to experiment with new ideas but haven't followed through.	I occasionally test new ideas in the interest of learning and improvement.	I have frequent opportunities to participate in learning and improvement initiatives, and access to training if I want it.
	Needs & Preferences	Dealing well with failures is unnecessary. We simply should make sure we don't fail.	Improving how we learn from failure is a low priority in my context.	I see a need for reacting productively to failures.	Reacting productively to failure is important. I am keen to improve how I and others learn from failure.
	Background	Regardless of one's background, failure is not an option at our organization.	The organization allows some room for failure. However, only those from backgrounds where failure is considered acceptable tend to act on this.	General support is provided so that failure is considered acceptable but does not take into account specific backgrounds of employees.	It is recognized that our background affects our perception of failure. The organization supports employees appropriately so that failure is considered acceptable universally.
	Influence of Leaders	Leaders never speak openly about their own failures and react negatively when others fail.	Leaders tend to speak in broad terms about failures (e.g. mistakes were made) and rarely reward people for speaking up.	Leaders tell stories of failure and what they learned from them. They reward others who do the same.	Leaders believe in taking responsibility for the failures of their employees and working with them to ensure learning.