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WAVZ IMPACT GRID®

An Interdisciplinary Model for
Systemic Organizational Diagnostics

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His approach combines theoretical foundations from systems theory, the sociology of space, organizational culture, and brand management with methods proven in practice. As a strategist, designer, and sparring partner, he primarily supports owner-managed companies in understanding complex transformation processes holistically and shaping them effectively.

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Preface

Organizations today are under pressure—not only from technological developments, but also from societal shifts and changing expectations regarding work, purpose, and impact. Traditional models increasingly reach their limits. The problem is not a lack of willingness to change, but rather that structure, space, identity, and culture are often misaligned.

The WAVZ Impact Grid® did not originate at a desk, but in practice: from observations, conversations, and processes across medium-sized enterprises, municipal organizations, and innovation projects. Time and again, it became clear that adjusting individual levers is not sufficient. What truly matters is the interplay of all relevant fields of impact.

As a systemic diagnostic and development instrument, the WAVZ Impact Grid® analyzes organizations from multiple perspectives—across four central dimensions (WORK, SPACE, BRAND, PEOPLE) and four levels of impact (Structure, Space, Culture, Impact). It reveals where tensions arise, where patterns contradict each other, or where development is blocked—and provides a solid foundation for targeted intervention. Not normative, but context-sensitive and internationally adaptable.

This white paper outlines the theoretical foundations, the structure, and the fields of application of the WAVZ Impact Grid®. It is addressed to decision-makers, consultants, practitioners, and scholars who recognize that sustainable transformation cannot be imposed externally, but must emerge from within the system itself.

Frank Höhne

Summary

The WAVZ Impact Grid® is an interdisciplinary analysis and development model that examines organizations across four dimensions (**WORK, SPACE, BRAND, PEOPLE**) and four levels of impact (**Structure, Space, Culture, Impact**). It integrates strategic working methods, spatial and social environments, brand identity, and organizational culture into a holistic framework, thereby providing a reliable basis for sound strategic decision-making.

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In the international context, the WAVZ Impact Grid® is positioned as a complementary framework to established reference models such as **Kotter's 8-Step Model**, the **St. Gallen Management Model**, the **McKinsey 7S Framework**, the **Viable System Model (Stafford Beer)**, and **Laloux's Reinventing Organizations**. While these approaches typically rely on linear change processes, structural control logics, or static organizational typologies, the WAVZ Impact Grid® enables a simultaneous and interdependent analysis of all 16 fields of impact. It draws on theoretical foundations from **systems theory, organizational research, sociology of space, brand management, and transformation theories**, thereby distinguishing itself clearly from one-dimensional or purely normative frameworks.

The methodology is compatible with both **qualitative and quantitative research methods** and can be applied to a wide variety of organizational types – from **SMEs to large corporations and NGOs**. It is adaptable to different regional contexts and internationally applicable, ranging from the **German-speaking DACH region** to **Europe**, the **United States**, and other global markets. This ensures that the WAVZ Impact Grid® is not only locally relevant but can also be deployed in **cross-cultural studies and international comparative analyses**.

This white paper outlines the **theoretical framework**, the **methodological foundation**, and the **practical applications** of the WAVZ Impact Grid®. It is designed to be used both in **consulting practice** and in **academic contexts**, including **international conferences and peer-reviewed publications**. The methodology is **empirically integrable** and supports **mixed-methods designs** in which **qualitative pattern recognition** and **quantitative validation** are combined. As a result, transformation becomes not only **measurable** but also **steerable and comparable**, thus enabling its use in **scientific studies, benchmark analyses, and evidence-based transformation programs**.

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1. Introduction

Organizations today face a dual pressure to transform: on the one hand, driven by global megatrends such as digitalization, sustainability, demographic change, and geopolitical shifts; on the other hand, by internal challenges such as talent shortages, cultural tensions, and increasing structural and procedural complexity. While many approaches focus narrowly on technologies, methods, or culture, what is often lacking is an integrated model that systematically connects these factors and applies them to the specific context of an organization.

The WAVZ Impact Grid® addresses this gap as a diagnostic and orientation framework: it makes relational alignments and tensions visible and derives context-sensitive impulses for development. Theoretically, it builds on Niklas Luhmann (Soziale Systeme, 1984), Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017), Martina Löw (Raumsoziologie, 2018), as well as on brand and transformation research, including David Aaker (Building Strong Brands, 1996), Marty Neumeier (The Brand Gap, 2005), Byron Sharp (How Brands Grow, 2010), John P. Kotter (Leading Change, 1996/2014), and Richard P. Rumelt (Good Strategy, Bad Strategy, 2011). Its translation into an applicable methodology enables scalable diagnostics—from SMEs to large corporations—always with a focus on the specific structures, spaces, cultures, and impact relations of an organization.

The model links four dimensions (**WORK, SPACE, BRAND, PEOPLE**) with four analytical levels of impact (**Structure, Space, Culture, Impact**). This creates a **4×4 matrix** with **16 fields of impact**, each of which can be examined individually as well as in their interrelations. In this context, SPACE refers to the design of physical, digital, and social environments, while the level of impact called Space analyzes how such environments shape collaboration, culture, and performance. WORK encompasses both strategic and operational processes—independent of the given environment. This logic generates distinct diagnostic and action fields and prevents conceptual overlaps.

Thus, the WAVZ Impact Grid® is more than a diagnostic tool. It functions as a strategic framework for orientation that enables organizations not only to measure change but also to systematically prioritize it and translate it into actionable steps. Progress thereby becomes verifiable, not abstract, but grounded in clearly defined criteria and evaluation logics. The methodology is designed to be applicable both in traditional consulting processes and in self-directed transformation initiatives—ensuring transparency, comparability, and traceability in both cases.

The aim of this white paper is to present the theoretical foundations, methodological logic, and practical applicability of the WAVZ Impact Grid® in a comprehensible way. It combines scientific precision with the practical relevance organizations need to not only analyze change but also shape it effectively. Readers will gain a clear overview of the theoretical pillars on which the model rests, how it is structured, and in what form it can be applied in practice.

2. Theoretical Foundations

Organizations today face multidimensional pressures for change—driven by technological developments, societal shifts, and evolving expectations regarding work, purpose, and impact. Traditional approaches reach their limits when they consider individual aspects in isolation. Frequently, the alignment between structure, space, brand/identity, and culture is missing—yet it is precisely these interdependencies that determine sustainable effectiveness.

International studies have demonstrated for years that isolated change initiatives rarely achieve the desired impact. John P. Kotter (Leading Change, 2012; Accelerate, 2014) shows that a large proportion of transformation projects fail when they do not address multiple organizational levels simultaneously. Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee (The Second Machine Age, 2014) provide evidence that digital transformations succeed only when organizational, cultural, and spatial factors are incorporated simultaneously. Frederic Laloux (Reinventing Organizations, 2014) illustrates that profound transformation is possible only through the synchronization of multiple dimensions.

Regional characteristics differ in tendency:

DACH region: pronounced dominance of structure- and process-oriented approaches with a strong focus on efficiency and compliance.

Northern Europe: greater emphasis on participatory cultural development and spatial flexibility.

USA: strong focus on brand management, performance metrics, and scalable management frameworks.

The WAVZ Impact Grid® integrates these perspectives into a coherent, context-sensitive frame of reference, thereby creating a universally transferable foundation for organizational development—independent of industry or geography.

It does not present itself as yet another methodological add-on or “framework among many,” but as a systemically integrated analytical model built upon a robust foundation of scientific disciplines: systems theory, organizational culture research, sociology of space, brand management, transformation research, and—considering current developments—the study of artificial intelligence in socio-technical contexts. These perspectives are deliberately combined within the WAVZ Impact Grid® into a coherent, interdisciplinary reference framework and operationalized in an analytical matrix for organizational development.

A central principle that connects all theoretical reference points is the self-observation of organizations. Systems reflect themselves in their structures, spaces, brands, and cultural patterns—often implicitly, without these patterns being consciously recognized. By making such forms of self-observation visible and analyzable, the WAVZ Impact Grid® provides access to the underlying assumptions and logics of an organization. This reflective process creates the foundation for identifying fractures, tensions, and developmental potentials—and for shaping them effectively.

2.1 Systems Theory: Organizations as Communicative Systems

Within the dimension **WORK (work organization & processes)**, systems theory as developed by Niklas Luhmann (Soziale Systeme, 1984; Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft, 1997; Einführung in die Systemtheorie, 2002) provides a central theoretical foundation. Luhmann conceptualizes organizations as autopoietic, operationally closed systems that reproduce themselves through communication. Decisions do not arise linearly from information or intentions but emerge as the outcome of a self-referential system that generates meaning within its internal logic while simultaneously distinguishing itself from its environment.

Direct steering from the outside is therefore excluded. For interventions to unfold an effect, they must be perceived within the system as “connectable” (anschlussfähig). This is precisely where the WAVZ Impact Grid® is positioned: its purpose is not to change organizations from the outside but to shape the conditions under which change can emerge within the system itself.

Another key concept emphasized by Niklas Luhmann (Beobachtungen der Moderne, 1992) is the self-observation of systems: organizations reflect upon their own structures, expectations, and decision premises. For the WAVZ Impact Grid®, this implies that analysis and diagnosis are not imposed externally but become effective as part of organizational self-perception. In this way, self-observation is operationalized and made systematically usable for developmental processes.

2.2 Sociology of Space: Spaces as Social Constructs

Within the dimension **SPACE (spaces & collaboration)**, the works of Martina Löw (Raumsoziologie, 2001; Soziologie des Raums, 2019) provide a theoretical foundation. Space is not understood as a physical object or a mere container, but as a social construct: it emerges through processes of spacing (the arrangement of objects, people, symbols) and synthesis (the perception and attribution of meaning by subjects). Spaces are not neutral givens; they are continuously produced and reproduced—while simultaneously exerting influence on behavior, belonging, status, and identity.

The WAVZ Impact Grid® makes this perspective applicable by interpreting spatial arrangements—both physical and digital—as expressions of organizational logics. Spaces are not merely planned but also read: What do work zones reveal about hierarchies? What does their design indicate about trust, control, or collaboration? And how do hybrid spatial structures shape existing patterns?

A central concept here is spatial self-observation: organizations mirror themselves in their spatial orders, unconsciously revealing their cultural assumptions. Only through reflection can fractures, tensions, and developmental potentials be identified and deliberately shaped. In this way, the WAVZ Impact Grid® expands the sociology of space with an operative layer that enables organizations to use spaces not only functionally, but also strategically as levers for development.

2.3 Sociology of Brands: Identity, Communication, and Collective Orientation

Within the dimension **BRAND (brand & identity)**, the brand is not viewed merely as a product of communication, but as a social phenomenon that creates identity—both internally and externally. Key reference points include strategic brand management by David Aaker (Building Strong Brands, 1996) and Byron Sharp (How Brands Grow, 2010), cultural readings by Marty Neumeier (The Brand Gap, 2005), as well as identity-oriented brand management by Franz-Rudolf Esch (Strategie und Technik der Markenführung, 2010) and Jean-Noël Kapferer (The New Strategic Brand Management, 2012). In addition, sociological perspectives conceptualize brands as cultural frameworks of order. They consolidate expectations, generate belonging, and structure communication.

The WAVZ Impact Grid® analyzes how an organization's brand identity interacts—or collides—with its actual culture, communication, and leadership. It examines whether the brand appears coherent externally, whether it is understood internally, and whether it is supported or undermined by processes, spaces, and structures. Frequently, tensions emerge between appearance and reality—between staged performance and lived practice.

A central concept here is brand self-observation: organizations reflect themselves in their brand, unconsciously revealing their values, contradictions, and power relations. Only through such reflection does it become clear whether the brand represents lived reality or mere staging. In this way, the WAVZ Impact Grid® expands the sociology of brands with an operative layer that enables organizations to deploy their brand not only communicatively but also structurally and culturally as a lever for development.

2.4 Organizational Culture: Values, Patterns, and Dynamics of Change

Within the dimension **PEOPLE (culture & employees)**, organizational culture research provides a central theoretical foundation. Key reference points include Edgar Schein's three-level model (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 1985; 4th edition 2010), complemented by approaches from Frederic Laloux (Reinventing Organizations, 2014) and John P. Kotter (Leading Change, 1996). Culture is not understood here as a merely "soft" topic, but as a formative order that shapes behavior, frames decisions, and either enables or blocks transformation.

The WAVZ Impact Grid® applies this perspective to make cultural patterns visible: Which values are officially communicated, and which are actually lived? Where do leadership style, spatial design, processes, and brand presence align—and where do tensions emerge? Culture and structure are not analyzed in isolation but examined in their interplay, in order to identify leverage points for sustainable development.

A central concept is cultural self-observation: organizations mirror their underlying assumptions and power relations in artifacts, rituals, and everyday practices—most often unconsciously. The WAVZ Impact Grid® renders these hidden patterns visible, open to reflection, and thus shapeable. In this way, it extends organizational culture research with an operative layer that enables organizations not only to describe culture, but to deliberately use it as a lever for development.

2.5 Transformation Research: Change as a Systemic Dynamic

Within the dimension WORK, transformation research provides an essential theoretical foundation. Key reference points include John P. Kotter (Leading Change, 2012), Richard Rumelt (Good Strategy, Bad Strategy, 2011), and A.G. Lafley and Roger Martin (Playing to Win, 2013). While these approaches offer valuable insights, they predominantly follow linear or phase-oriented logics. The WAVZ Impact Grid® expands this perspective by conceptualizing transformation not as a one-time project, but as a continuous dynamic.

Transformation is understood as the interplay of multiple levels: structural adaptation, spatial redesign, brand development, and cultural change. Crucially, these levels are not examined in isolation but analyzed in terms of their interrelations—so that blind spots, contradictions, and blockages can be identified at an early stage.

A central principle is transformational self-observation: organizations continuously reflect on their strategies, decision logics, and change processes (John P. Kotter, Leading Change, 1996; Richard Rumelt, Good Strategy, Bad Strategy, 2011; A.G. Lafley and Roger Martin, Playing to Win, 2013). The WAVZ Impact Grid® makes these feedback loops visible, operationalizes them, and enables organizations to shape transformation as a learning, iterative process—rather than as a singular intervention.

2.6 Artificial Intelligence in Socio-Technical Contexts

The integration of AI into organizations is never solely a technical matter, but always simultaneously a structural, cultural, and ethical one. The WAVZ Impact Grid® incorporates current research—including Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee (The Second Machine Age, 2014), Thomas H. Davenport and Rajeev Ronanki (Artificial Intelligence for the Real World, 2018), Paul R. Daugherty and H. James Wilson (Human + Machine, 2018), and Marco Iansiti and Karim R. Lakhani (Competing in the Age of AI, 2020)—which consistently demonstrates that the success of AI implementations depends fundamentally on the alignment of processes, competencies, spatial design, and leadership culture.

Within the WAVZ Impact Grid®, AI is not treated as an isolated technology but as an integral component of a socio-technical system. This means that the deployment of AI is analyzed in its interaction with roles, decision-making processes, learning cultures, and brand identity. In this way, potential benefits can be systematically leveraged, while risks—such as issues of acceptance, ethical conflicts, and concerns regarding transparency and information security—can be identified and addressed at an early stage.

2.7 Extended Theoretical Foundations

In addition to its core references—systems theory, sociology of space, organizational culture, sociology of brands, and transformation research—the WAVZ Impact Grid® is expanded through complementary theoretical approaches. The aim is not to accumulate further models, but to deliberately integrate perspectives that are particularly relevant to today's transformation processes: strategy development, leadership logic, digitalization, and sustainability.

Richard Rumelt (Good Strategy, Bad Strategy, 2011) provides a precise understanding of why strategies fail—not because of the wrong goals, but because of a lack of clarity, contradictory actions, and the neglect of real challenges. The WAVZ Impact Grid® takes up this logic by not asking for abstract visions, but by examining the concrete alignment between strategy, structure, space, and culture.

A.G. Lafley and Roger Martin (Playing to Win, 2013) emphasize the necessity of clear, explicit strategic choices. Their framework is not adopted schematically in the WAVZ Impact Grid®, but serves as an impulse for analyzing the strategic logic within the dimension WORK, and for testing its coherence with structure, space, brand, and culture.

With respect to brand and communication, the WAVZ Impact Grid® draws on **Byron Sharp (How Brands Grow, 2010)** as well as **David Aaker and Erich Joachimsthaler (Brand Leadership, 2000)**. Sharp deconstructs common myths of brand management and advocates for a consistently data-driven perspective—a view that is directly applied within the Grid to assess communicative effectiveness in the dimension BRAND.

The impact of digital transformation is also incorporated—for example, through **Paul Daugherty and H. James Wilson (Human + Machine, 2018)**, who describe artificial intelligence as a system-altering driver of socio-technical structures. For the dimension of sustainability, **Daniel Esty and Andrew Winston (Green to Gold, 2006)** provide critical impulses: ecological considerations must not be understood as isolated projects, but need to be embedded as a structural logic within both strategy and culture.

Current Research Findings Confirm and Extend These Foundations

Recent studies reinforce and deepen these theoretical underpinnings. **McKinsey & Company (Study, 2023)** demonstrates in a global meta-analysis that organizations which simultaneously address strategy, brand management, spatial work design, and cultural development are up to 2.3 times more likely to achieve significant performance improvements compared to those pursuing change initiatives in isolation.

Steve Denning (Harvard Business Review, 2022) emphasizes the importance of an adaptive systems view for sustainable transformations, in which physical, digital, and cultural structures must be orchestrated together. Complementing this, **Iansiti and Lakhani (2020)** highlight the role of new operating models for the digital orchestration of organizations, while **Mankins and Litré (2024)** stress the significance of integrated leadership and governance logics for managing complex transformation processes.

Gerald C. Kane et al. (MIT Sloan Management Review, 2024) show that AI integration is only effective when it is not implemented in isolation but in parallel with organizational learning, cultural adaptation, and spatial redesign. It is only through the interplay of these layers that technological potential can be translated into sustainable organizational performance.

These theoretical extensions make the WAVZ Impact Grid® directly relevant to current debates in both research and practice—without departing from its systemic core logic.

2.8 Methodological Note: Model Logic

To conclude this theoretical section, the developmental logic of the WAVZ Impact Grid® is outlined—highlighting both its academic foundations and its consistent orientation toward practical applicability.

The model was neither deductively derived from a single theory nor does it follow the classical logic of academic model-building. It emerged through a praxeological development approach: grounded in systematic observations of transformation practice, theoretically supported by multiple disciplines, and from the outset designed for application, connectivity, and impact.

In contrast to deductive approaches, which develop hypotheses and models based on a single theory, the WAVZ Impact Grid® follows an integrative, transdisciplinary logic. It brings together different perspectives, makes tensions visible, and translates them into a systemic matrix—not normative and not typological in the sense of rigid categories, but dynamic, context-dependent, and dialogically applicable.

Thus, the WAVZ Impact Grid® is neither a traditional academic teaching model nor a mere consulting tool. It is a reflection and diagnostic instrument for complex organizations—academically grounded, practically tested, and consistently oriented toward effective transformation.

3. Model Architecture

The WAVZ Impact Grid® is built on a clearly defined architecture that enables organizations to be analyzed systematically and from multiple perspectives. Unlike linear maturity models or normative target systems, it does not position itself as an evaluative authority that distinguishes between “right” and “wrong.” Instead, it functions as a diagnostic instrument that reveals how elements interact—or obstruct one another.

At its core lies a two-dimensional matrix that links four dimensions of organizational reality—WORK, SPACE, BRAND, and PEOPLE—with four analytical levels of impact—Structure, Space, Culture, and Impact. This combination produces 16 fields of impact that can be both analyzed and actively shaped.

The architecture of the model is not a theoretical abstraction but the result of systematic practice observation. Wherever tensions arise between aspiration and reality, planning and practice, space and behavior, developmental pressure emerges. The WAVZ Impact Grid® addresses precisely these points—not with universal solutions, but with a structured analysis that makes interdependencies visible and derives targeted options for action.

3.1 Conceptual Clarification

This chapter clarifies the central terms and the systemic logic on which the WAVZ Impact Grid® is built. It explains:

- ✎ the dimensions of organizational design,
- ✎ the levels of impact as analytical perspectives,
- ✎ and the 16 fields of impact as intersections of both.

The four dimensions—WORK, SPACE, BRAND, PEOPLE—represent the key domains in which organizations are shaped and experienced. The four levels of impact—Structure, Space, Culture, Impact—provide the analytical lenses through which these dimensions are examined.

Each field of impact represents the intersection of one dimension with one level of impact, for example SPACE × Culture or BRAND × Structure. Analysis is not conducted in isolation for each field but always with attention to interdependencies: How do individual areas reinforce or obstruct each other? What tensions or coherences emerge?

The aim is not to define an ideal state, but to understand contextual fit—and from this derive targeted development options. The model compels organizations to transcend silos and makes the inner logic of organizational dynamics visible.

The theoretical basis of this architecture draws on foundational theories of organization and culture. Edgar H. Schein and Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017) highlight that culture can only be meaningfully understood in the interplay of its levels—artifacts, values,

and underlying assumptions. Niklas Luhmann (Soziale Systeme, 1984) provides the systems-theoretical perspective, according to which organizations reproduce themselves through communication. Martina Löw (Raumsoziologie, 2018) demonstrates that spaces are not static containers but social constructs shaped by practices and relations. Together, these foundations illustrate why the WAVZ Impact Grid® relies on a multi-perspective logic.

Note on Terminology: Within the model, “SPACE” designates the dimension of the working environment, whereas “Space” as a level of impact refers to the spatial analytical perspective applied across all dimensions. This dual usage is intentional; in what follows, we clearly distinguish between SPACE (dimension) and Space (level of impact).

3.2 The Four Dimensions

The four dimensions of the WAVZ Impact Grid® define distinct yet interconnected fields of analysis. Each is rooted in different academic disciplines, enabling organizations to be examined from multiple vantage points. Together, they form the analytical backbone of the model and open up complementary perspectives on how structures, environments, brand identity, and culture emerge and exert influence.

Each dimension is theoretically grounded and carefully selected to represent essential aspects of organizational reality—from formal work organization to the cultural patterns that shape daily practice. This selection follows an integrative logic: it draws from diverse schools of thought (systems theory, spatial sociology, organizational culture research, brand sociology, and transformation research) and translates them into a practice-oriented, systemically connected diagnostic framework.

International findings underline the relevance of this multidimensionality. John P. Kotter (Leading Change, 1996) demonstrates that transformation initiatives frequently fail when they are not approached systemically. Richard P. Rumelt (Good Strategy, Bad Strategy, 2011) emphasizes that strategic coherence emerges from clear diagnosis, guiding policy, and consistent actions. Frederic Laloux (Reinventing Organizations, 2014) highlights that profound transformation requires the synchronization of structural, cultural, and identity-related elements.

The WAVZ Impact Grid® integrates these insights into a coherent system that can be adapted across organizational sizes and contexts—from SMEs to multinational corporations to non-profits. Regional distinctions are also accounted for: in the DACH region, emphasis often lies on structural efficiency; in Scandinavia, on participatory culture and flexible spatial concepts; and in the United States, on brand leadership and performance orientation. This adaptability ensures the model’s applicability both in international consulting practice and in academic discourse.

WORK – Work Organization & Processes

The WORK dimension examines how an organization structures, governs, and develops its work. It goes beyond operational efficiency and frames work organization as a strategic resource: Which processes genuinely contribute to achieving objectives, which obstruct development—and which persist merely out of habit?

At its core, this dimension focuses on organizational design and workflow, decision-making logics, role distribution, and interface management. Attention is given not only to formal structures but also to how they are enacted in practice. An organizational chart may appear coherent on paper, yet in reality it can be undermined by informal hierarchies, implicit power dynamics, or absent communication routines.

WORK therefore assesses the alignment between formal order and everyday work practices. It analyzes whether responsibilities are clearly defined and processes consistently designed, or whether gaps, redundancies, and conflicting objectives weaken the system. It also considers the organization's capacity to adapt its structures with agility—without losing stability and orientation.

International research underscores the relevance of this dimension: Richard P. Rumelt (Good Strategy, Bad Strategy, 2011) emphasizes that strategic effectiveness depends on the coherence of goals, resources, and processes. John Doerr (Measure What Matters, 2018) demonstrates, through the OKR approach, how clear goal systems can increase transparency and focus—provided they are embedded within a consistent organizational logic. Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee (Machine, Platform, Crowd, 2017) highlight that digital transformation succeeds only when it is accompanied by structural adaptability.

This dimension illustrates how closely the quality of work is tied to the quality of governance and decision-making. A weak WORK structure generates friction, overload, and prioritization conflicts—whereas a strong one fosters focus, clarity, and organizational capacity for action. In connection with the other dimensions of the WAVZ Impact Grid®, it becomes clear that work organization functions not only as an internal ordering system but also as a force shaping cultural patterns, spatial use, and brand delivery.

SPACE – Spaces & Collaboration

The SPACE dimension views spaces not as static backdrops but as active co-creators of organizational reality. It asks how physical, digital, and hybrid work environments shape collaboration, communication, and decision-making—and what symbolic messages they convey.

At its core lies the functional and social logic of space: Are environments designed to foster exchange, enable concentration, and strengthen identity? Or do unintended barriers—spatial, technical, or cultural—emerge that hinder collaboration? The analysis spans architecture and furnishings, digital collaboration tools, and informal meeting points whose significance is often underestimated.

International comparative data reveal marked differences: Ethan Bernstein and Stephen Turban (The Impact of the 'Open' Workspace on Human Collaboration, 2018) show that open workspaces only enhance productivity when combined with clear structures for communication and retreat. The European Workforce Study (Great Place to Work, 2025) further highlights that Scandinavian countries emphasize participatory culture development and flexible workspace design, while the DACH region tends to prioritize functional efficiency and clearly delineated zones.

SPACE also examines the interplay between spatial design and culture. Open-plan areas can foster transparency and dialogue—or, if poorly integrated, lead to noise, distraction, and a lack of retreat. Conversely, clearly structured zones with defined usage rules can provide security and orientation without diminishing openness.

This dimension also accounts for the symbolic role of spaces: They communicate appreciation, status, and belonging—or the opposite. A poorly equipped meeting room sends a different signal than a carefully designed, flexibly usable project space.

Within the WAVZ Impact Grid®, SPACE highlights that space is never a neutral factor but a resonant body of organizational processes. It can amplify tensions between formal structures and lived practices—or serve as a lever to strengthen collaboration, brand identity, and cultural transformation.

BRAND – Brand & Identity

The BRAND dimension examines how clearly, consistently, and effectively an organization lives its identity—both internally and externally. Brand here is not seen as a mere communications product, but as a strategic framework that guides decisions, behaviors, and perceptions, as emphasized by David Aaker (Building Strong Brands, 1996) and Jean-Noël Kapferer (The New Strategic Brand Management, 2012).

At the core lies the question of whether brand promise and lived reality align. BRAND assesses how positioning, values, and visual identity are interwoven with organizational culture—and whether internal identification among employees is as strong as external perception among customers, partners, and the public. Research by Byron Sharp (How Brands Grow, 2010) and David Aaker (Building Strong Brands, 1996) shows that such coherence is essential for brand strength, whereas discrepancies between claim and reality lead to trust erosion and long-term brand value decline.

This perspective also exposes interfaces with other dimensions: A coherent brand experience can only emerge when processes (WORK), spaces (SPACE), and culture (PEOPLE) align with the same guiding principles. Contradictions—for instance, when an organization communicates openness but internally operates in a rigidly hierarchical way—become systematically visible, as Marty Neumeier (The Brand Gap, 2005) points out.

BRAND extends beyond classic marketing metrics. It analyzes the structural anchoring of the brand, the degree of its cultural integration, and the quality of its enactment in everyday interactions. This includes brand architecture, employer branding, service experiences, and even crisis response, as highlighted by David Aaker and Erich Joachimsthaler (Brand Leadership, 2000).

Within the WAVZ Impact Grid®, brand is not just measured but treated as a living system: an anchor of identity, a differentiating factor, and a bridge between strategy and lived reality. A strong brand exerts transformative power internally as well as externally—provided it is more than a logo, namely a lived attitude, as Mary Jo Hatch and Majken Schultz (Taking Brand Initiative, 2008) underline.

PEOPLE – Kultur & Mindset

This dimension describes the lived culture of an organization—what manifests in processes, behaviors, and unspoken rules. Values, norms, rituals, and implicit expectations: PEOPLE represents the social fabric in which meaning, motivation, and belonging emerge.

Its theoretical foundation is rooted in Edgar H. Schein and Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017), who conceptualize culture as a layered system of visible artifacts, enacted values, and unconscious assumptions. Schein emphasizes that cultural transformation cannot be achieved solely through formal measures, but depends on how deeply values are embedded and translated into everyday practices.

Frederic Laloux (Reinventing Organizations, 2014) highlights that a culture becomes resilient only when it is linked to self-organization, purpose, and holistic collaboration. John P. Kotter (Leading Change, 2012) adds that cultural change is inseparable from leadership behavior and structural conditions—without consistent role models at the top, change initiatives lose momentum.

A crucial complement is provided by Amy Edmondson (The Fearless Organization, 2019), who demonstrates that psychological safety is a prerequisite for learning, innovation, and sustainable transformation. Without an environment where employees feel safe to ask questions, admit mistakes, or challenge assumptions, cultural change remains superficial.

The WAVZ Impact Grid® draws on these insights not only to capture cultural dynamics, but to understand them in interaction with other dimensions. PEOPLE examines how leadership attitudes, conflict patterns, and team identities evolve—and how these factors influence trust, motivation, and engagement. The focus is not on normatively labeling cultures as “good” or “bad,” but on uncovering the tensions that either block or accelerate change.

Culture thus becomes a central lever of transformation—not as a soft side effect, but as a shaping force that cuts across all organizational layers. It determines whether change is absorbed, resisted, or actively co-created—and thereby whether organizational development achieves sustainable impact.

3.3 The Four Levels of Impact

The four levels of impact complement the dimensions of the WAVZ Impact Grid® with a vertical axis of analysis: they differentiate how structure, space, culture, and impact manifest within organizations—thereby opening up distinct layers of observation.

Each level provides a specific perspective on organizational dynamics, ranging from formal order to material conditions, all the way to experienced effectiveness.

#WORK #SPACE #BRAND #PEOPLE

Structure

The structure level describes what is formally regulated and documented within an organization: organizational charts, process descriptions, role profiles, governance models, and policies. It represents the “official” order of the system—what appears manageable on paper. Structures provide orientation, create reliability, and define responsibilities.

Niklas Luhmann (Soziale Systeme, 1984) emphasizes that structures are not merely formal guidelines but communication patterns that unfold their own internal logic. Henry Mintzberg (Structure in Fives, 1993) illustrates how organizations evolve into characteristic structural types—from machine bureaucracy to adhocracy—and how these shape their functioning. Alfred D. Chandler (Strategy and Structure, 1962) demonstrated that strategic decisions inevitably drive structural adaptation (“structure follows strategy”), while Richard Rumelt (Good Strategy, Bad Strategy, 2011) stresses that structures are only effective when coherently aligned with goals, resources, and processes.

Yet, formal regulation does not automatically translate into lived effectiveness. Often, gaps appear between what is planned and what actually happens. John P. Kotter (Leading Change, 2012) notes that transformation efforts frequently fail because existing structures are too rigid or misaligned with actual behavior and leadership practices. Gareth Morgan (Images of Organization, 1986) adds that organizations must be seen not only as technical systems but also as social constructs—a “machine logic” embedded in structures can severely constrain flexibility and learning capacity.

At this level, it becomes evident whether structures exist merely as a compliance exercise—or whether they genuinely contribute to organizational development. The WAVZ Impact Grid® systematically exposes this gap between “paper organization” and “lived organization” and examines whether structure functions as a stabilizing framework or as a bureaucratic brake.

Space

The space level encompasses far more than architectural conditions. It understands space as a social arena of possibilities that shapes collaboration, communication, and decision-making. Martina Löw (Raumsoziologie, 2001) describes space as the relational arrangement of people and objects that makes social practices possible in the first place. Bill Hillier (Space is the Machine, 1996) demonstrates with his space syntax theory how spatial structures shape communication patterns and power relations.

Architecture, zoning, furnishings, and digital work environments define proximity and distance, encourage interaction, or provide opportunities for retreat. Francis Duffy (The New Office, 1997) highlights how office design is always an expression of organizational logic, while Franklin Becker and Fritz Steele (Workplace by Design, 1995) emphasize that work environments influence both efficiency and identity.

Spaces operate consciously—through open areas, interaction zones, or representative settings—and unconsciously, through grown structures, symbolic configurations, or implicit access restrictions. Gary T. Moore (Environment and Behavior, 1987) adds that spatial design communicates implicit messages about appreciation, status, control, and belonging.

Within the WAVZ Impact Grid®, this level analyzes how spatial conditions are strategically designed and used to support desired interactions, identification, and efficiency—or whether they obstruct potential. Peter Cappelli (The Future of the Office, 2021) notes that hybrid work models fundamentally alter the logic of space, while Andrew Harrison, Paul Wheeler and Carolyn Whitehead (The Distributed Workplace, 2004) show that physical and digital environments must be considered together to enable effective collaboration.

The decisive question is whether spatial design supports or undermines the desired culture: a well-designed project space can energize collaborative work, while a poorly configured digital platform can paralyze it. The WAVZ Impact Grid® makes these interrelations visible, positioning space not as a static setting but as an active lever of organizational development.

Culture

The culture level reveals what is truly lived within an organization: routines, rituals, interaction styles, conflict resolution practices, and unspoken rules. Edgar H. Schein and Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017) describe culture as a multilayered system of visible artifacts, enacted values, and unconscious assumptions. Geert Hofstede et al. (Cultures and Organizations, 2010) demonstrate that collective imprints are deeply embedded in behaviors and decision-making logics. Culture cannot simply be mandated—it emerges from shared experiences, collective interpretive patterns, and repeated social practices.

It often operates subtly, yet it fundamentally shapes motivation, trust, collaboration, and the capacity to deal with change. John P. Kotter and James L. Heskett (Corporate Culture and Performance, 1992) show that strong and consistent cultures can facilitate change by providing security, meaning, and orientation. At the same time, they warn that weak or contradictory cultures may obstruct transformation by amplifying uncertainty or preserving entrenched power structures.

This level therefore asks whether values and guiding principles are truly translated into everyday behavior—or whether they remain confined to mission statements and presentations. Frederic Laloux (Reinventing Organizations, 2014) emphasizes that meaning-making and self-organization only take root where culture is not merely declared but authentically lived. Amy C. Edmondson (The Fearless Organization, 2018) adds that psychological safety is essential for conflicts to be addressed constructively, rather than suppressed until they escalate.

Within the WAVZ Impact Grid®, culture is not examined in isolation but in its interplay with structure, space, and impact. Cultural patterns influence how rules are implemented, spaces are used, and outcomes are achieved—while, conversely, structures and spaces shape the culture that unfolds within them.

Impact

The impact level describes the tangible outcomes of organizational practice—independent of intention or planning. It represents the systemic output of an organization and encompasses both measurable and perceived effects: performance, goal attainment, brand perception, employee

retention, customer satisfaction, or innovative capacity. Robert Kaplan and David Norton (The Balanced Scorecard, 1996) and David Aaker (Building Strong Brands, 1996) show that impact is shaped not only by quantitative metrics but also by soft factors such as trust or brand strength.

Impact is therefore not simply a KPI set but the result of complex interactions between structure, space, and culture. Michael Beer and Russell Eisenstat (The Silent Killers of Strategy Implementation, 2000) demonstrate that even well-founded strategies can fail if structures, processes, and culture do not align consistently.

A crucial aspect here is the distinction between intended outcomes (planned results) and emergent outcomes (results that actually materialize), as described by Henry Mintzberg and James Waters (Of Strategies, Deliberate and Emergent, 1985). This distinction reveals the extent to which organizations are capable of achieving their goals under real-world conditions—or whether they fail due to internal contradictions.

Within the WAVZ Impact Grid®, impact functions as a litmus test: it highlights whether structure, space, and culture interact coherently or whether fractures exist. John P. Kotter (Leading Change, 2012) points out that intentions often falter in execution when priorities remain unclear or interfaces break down. Simon Sinek (The Infinite Game, 2019) adds that impact is only sustainable when it conveys long-term meaning, rather than being reduced to short-term metrics.

Moreover, Michael Porter and Mark Kramer (Creating Shared Value, 2011) emphasize that impact must be understood in both economic and societal terms in order to secure legitimacy and competitiveness in the long run. Thus, impact is not the end of a chain but a manageable feedback loop: it calls on organizations not only to measure outcomes but to systematically reflect on them and translate them into organizational learning.

Overall summary of the four levels of impact:

In their interplay, the four levels of impact reveal how formal structures, spatial conditions, lived culture, and actual outcomes are interconnected. Only when viewed in their entirety does it become clear whether the organization acts consistently, or whether fractures, contradictions, and untapped potential exist. This interrelation makes the WAVZ Impact Grid® an instrument that does not merely evaluate individual factors but systematically examines their coherence – thereby providing a foundation for targeted and effective organizational development.

3.4 The Matrix Structure

From the combination of the four dimensions with the four levels of impact, a 4×4 matrix emerges with a total of 16 fields of impact. Each of these fields represents a systemic unit of analysis that opens up a specific perspective on the organization – for example, the interface between leadership and work organization (WORK × Structure), spatial design (SPACE × Culture), or brand identity (BRAND × Impact).

The matrix compels organizational phenomena to be viewed not in isolation, but in relation: where formal structures collide with lived culture, where architectural environments do not fit the leadership style, or where internal narratives contradict external brand communication, tensions arise. The analysis of the WAVZ Impact Grid® begins precisely at these intersections – regardless of whether the root cause is structural, spatial, cultural, or identity-based.

The fields of impact are not rigid categories but diagnostic search grids. They serve to identify blind spots, fit issues, and systemic fractures. Their systematic consideration provides the basis for a multiperspective diagnosis – and for qualitative assessment in the subsequent analysis process (see Chapter 4). Through this linkage, the instrument not only describes symptoms but makes visible their systemic causes – thereby enabling targeted, context-sensitive development impulses.

International management research confirms the added value of such multidimensional diagnostic approaches. Henry Mintzberg (Structure in Fives, 1993) shows that organizations can only be understood through the interplay of formal and informal elements. Niklas Luhmann (Soziale Systeme, 1984) highlights that social systems are stabilized through relations and differences. Frederic Laloux (Reinventing Organizations, 2014) emphasizes that true transformational dynamics emerge precisely at the intersections between structures, spaces, and culture. The WAVZ Impact Grid® integrates these insights into a practice-oriented matrix that does not remain theoretically abstract but highlights actionable development fields.

The following table illustrates how the fields are interpreted in the context of the WAVZ Impact Grid®:

	WORK	SPACE	BRAND	PEOPLE
Structure	Organizational design, role definitions	Space planning, occupancy concepts	CD, brand guidelines, governance	Leadership principles, HR processes
Space	Workplace logic, digital toolss	Architecture, media/ meeting spaces	Design systems, exhibition areas	Social spaces, meeting point
Culture	Leadership practices	Use of space, accessibility	Language culture, self-image	Team norms, informal rules
Impact	Execution capacity, goal attainment	Satisfaction, sense of belonging	Brand image, external perception	Motivation, engagement

3.5 The 16 Fields of Impact

The 16 Fields of Impact of the WAVZ Impact Grid® form the anchor point of the analysis. They emerge from the combination of the four dimensions (WORK, SPACE, BRAND, PEOPLE) with the four levels of impact (Structure, Space, Culture, Impact), each representing a specific intersection of organizational reality. Every field opens its own perspective on the interplay of order, meaning, and behavior – and illustrates how strongly organizations are shaped by tensions and contradictions.

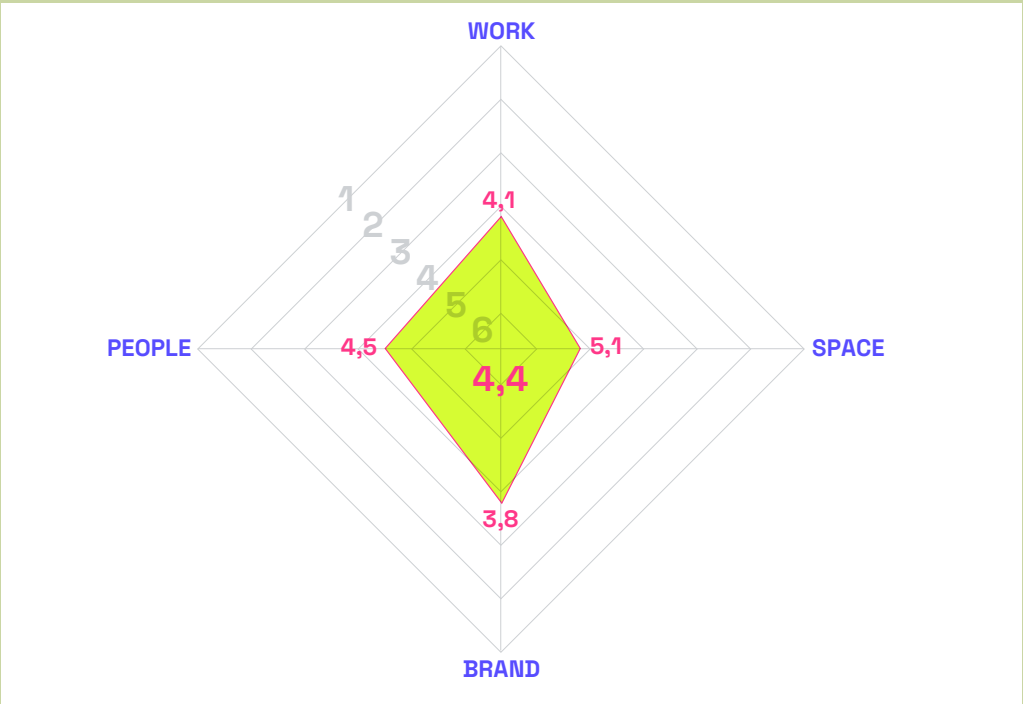
In contrast to classical categories or normative assessment grids, these fields are not fixed responsibilities or functions. Rather, they serve as analytical spaces in which dynamics become visible: overlaps, contradictions, reinforcements, and fractures. The fields are intentionally kept open – not to invite arbitrariness, but to allow interpretation within context.

A few examples illustrate the function:

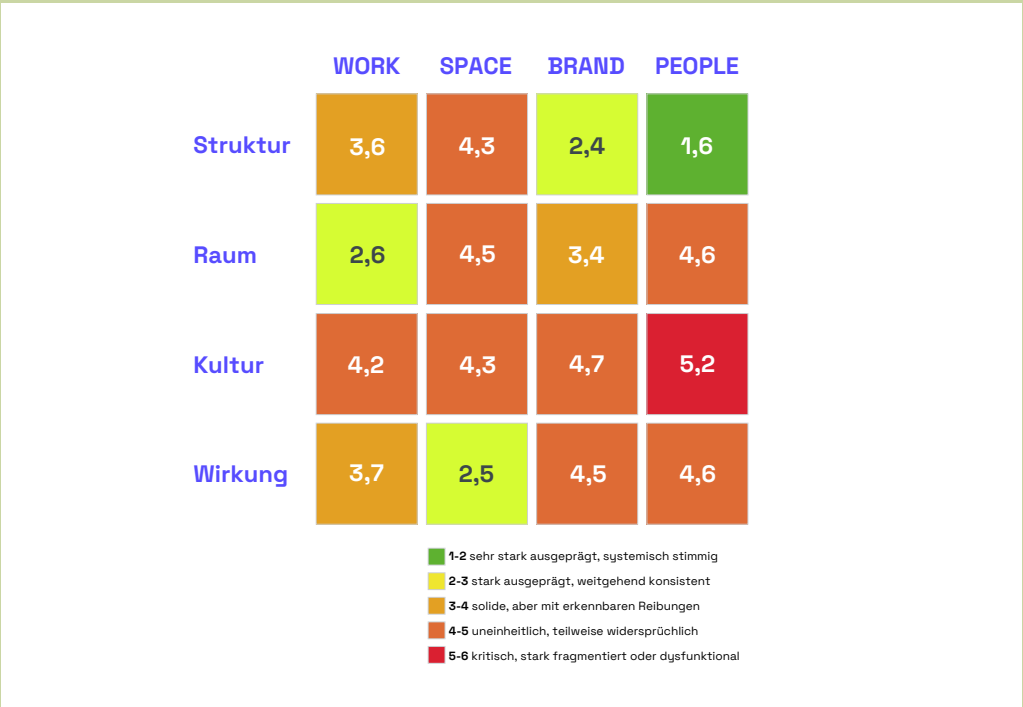
- ✎ **WORK × Structure** – asks about the alignment of formal roles, processes, and decision logics. How clear are responsibilities? How stable or agile is the organizational setup – and how quickly can it adapt to change (Richard Rumelt, *Good Strategy, Bad Strategy*, 2011; John Doerr, *Measure What Matters*, 2018)?
- ✎ **SPACE × Culture** – examines how spaces shape behavior. Are trust, belonging, or hierarchy spatially manifest – for example, through open zones, segregated areas, or informal meeting places (Martina Löw, *Raumsoziologie*, 2001; Ethan Bernstein and Stephen Turban, *The Impact of the ‘Open’ Workspace on Human Collaboration*, 2018)? Which spatial symbols or gestures reinforce existing patterns?
- ✎ **BRAND × Impact** – investigates whether the external brand image is consistent with internal experience. Is there coherence between communication promises and actual employee or customer experiences? Are values only communicated or truly embodied in interactions (David Aaker, *Building Strong Brands*, 1996; Byron Sharp, *How Brands Grow*, 2010)?
- ✎ **PEOPLE × Space** – asks about the social function of space: Where do teams actually meet? Which places are avoided – and why? What role do hybrid work arrangements play for belonging and cohesion (Peter Cappelli, *The Future of the Office*, 2021)?
- ✎ **WORK × Culture** – analyzes whether lived values and routines support or hinder work organization. Do cultural patterns generate informal shortcuts – or paralysis (Edgar H. Schein and Peter Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 2010; Frederic Laloux, *Reinventing Organizations*, 2014)?
- ✎ **PEOPLE × Impact** – reveals how leadership styles, team climate, and conflict patterns affect motivation, retention, and performance (John P. Kotter, *Leading Change*, 2012; Amy Edmondson, *The Fearless Organization*, 2018).

These fields must not be viewed in isolation. It is precisely their interactions that make the WAVZ Impact Grid® a systemic diagnostic instrument. A tension in PEOPLE × Structure – for example, caused by dysfunctional leadership processes – may spill over into BRAND × Impact, leading to loss of customer trust. Conversely, a strategically well-placed spatial intervention in SPACE × Space can also positively influence cultural processes.

In practice, it has become evident that it is not the evaluation of individual fields that is decisive, but the relations between them: Where do weaknesses overlap? Where do stable patterns emerge, and where do tensions escalate? Which fields are root causes, and which are merely symptomatic? The 16 Fields of Impact enable organizations not only to observe these patterns, but to systematically analyze them – and to derive concrete, actionable impulses for development.



Exemplary Representation of a WAVZ® Radar Chart



Exemplary Representation of a WAVZ® Heatmap

4. Methodology and Application

The application of the WAVZ Impact Grid® reveals patterns, areas of tension, and obstacles to development within organizations. Its foundation is a structured mixed-methods approach that systematically combines qualitative and quantitative data collection. John W. Creswell & Vicki L. Plano Clark (Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research, 2017) demonstrate how the integration of both approaches generates both deep understanding and comparability.

The unique potential of the model lies in its multiperspectivity. The 16 fields of impact enable not only the analysis of individual phenomena but, more importantly, of their relations: for example, how spatial structures influence leadership behavior, how brand-related self-perceptions collide with organizational reality, or how cultural patterns contradict formal structures. Robert K. Yin (Case Study Research and Applications, 2018) emphasizes that multidimensional designs make systemic interdependencies visible and ensure robust findings.

4.1 Data Collection Formats

Data collection within the WAVZ Impact Grid® deliberately follows a pluralistic methodology: qualitative and quantitative approaches are combined to generate a multi-layered, robust picture of the organization. The goal is not to determine a supposedly objective truth, but to reveal relevant patterns, tensions, and dynamics within the system—both in their depth and in their interconnectedness. Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017), Richard P. Rumelt (Good Strategy, Bad Strategy, 2011), and John W. Creswell & Vicki L. Plano Clark (Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research, 2017) each demonstrate in different contexts how such multiperspective approaches lead to reliable insights.

The following data collection formats form the core of the methodology and structure the application of the model::

1. WAVZ® Analyzer – Full Survey or Focused Analysis

The WAVZ® Analyzer is the central digital data collection instrument of the WAVZ Impact Grid®. It systematically covers all 16 fields of impact, combining qualitative and quantitative questions (John Doerr, Measure What Matters, 2018), and integrates results from interviews, document analyses, and spatial observations (Martina Löw, Raumsoziologie, 2001). The platform enables intra-organizational comparisons, group and time-based progress tracking, as well as direct data preparation for in-depth analyses. This internal differentiation is essential to reveal not only averages but also areas of tension and potential zones with precision.

The Analyzer can be applied in two modes:

- **Full survey across all fields of impact** – recommended for initial comprehensive assessments or during phases of profound transformation (John P. Kotter, Leading Change, 2012).
- **Modular application** – targeted examination of individual dimensions or fields identified in the WAVZ® QuickCheck as particularly critical or development-relevant. This approach reduces complexity, focuses resources, and accelerates subsequent processes without abandoning the systemic logic of the model (Richard P. Rumelt, Good Strategy, Bad Strategy, 2011).

2. WAVZ® QuickCheck – Compact Preliminary Scan

The WAVZ® QuickCheck is a reduced, digital short version of the Analyzer. It covers three core questions per field of impact and provides an initial indication of strengths, weaknesses, and potential areas of tension. John Doerr (Measure What Matters, 2018) demonstrates how even small, structured surveys can have a significant steering and guiding effect.

The QuickCheck can serve as:

- ✎ **an early warning system to highlight critical areas before a full analysis,**
- ✎ **an orientation tool for the targeted use of the Analyzer,**
- ✎ **and an entry point into further consulting processes without generating high data collection efforts at the outset.**

3. Guided Interviews – Context and Depth

Interviews with key individuals from different areas and hierarchy levels provide subjective interpretations, implicit knowledge, and insights into hidden routines. They help contextualize quantitative findings and reveal areas of tension from the participants' perspective. Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017) demonstrate how such interviews uncover hidden cultural patterns.

Guided interviews are particularly valuable when:

- ✎ **contradictory results appear between quantitative fields,**
- ✎ **sensitive issues are involved (e.g., power structures, conflicts, cultural fractures),**
- ✎ **hypotheses for further analysis need to be developed..**

Frederic Laloux (Reinventing Organizations, 2014) emphasizes that such dialogues can unlock new developmental impulses and alternative courses of action. Additionally, Uwe Flick (Qualitative Sozialforschung, 2018) and Helfferich (Leitfaden- und Experteninterviews, 2011) highlight the methodological relevance of this interview format for qualitative organizational analysis.

4. Workshops and Group Discussions – Collective Reflection

Moderated group formats create the opportunity to develop shared perspectives, perceptions, and interpretive patterns. Tim Brown (Change by Design, 2009) shows that collaborative formats especially foster creative thinking and joint problem-solving. At the same time, interaction and communication patterns can be observed in real time. Hasso Plattner, Christoph Meinel, and Ulrich Weinberg (Design Thinking, 2015) demonstrate how structured group processes make implicit knowledge visible and productively usable.

David Kolb (Experiential Learning, 1984) adds that collective learning is most effective when it is linked to concrete experiences and jointly reflected upon. Workshops and group discussions are particularly suitable for:

- ✎ **making divergent perspectives visible,**
- ✎ **jointly developing initial solution approaches,**
- ✎ **building acceptance for subsequent change initiatives.**

5. Document Analyses – Comparing Aspiration and Reality

The systematic evaluation of organizational charts, strategy papers, brand guidelines, or mission statements serves to compare formal self-description with lived reality. David Aaker (Building Strong Brands, 1996) highlights how brand identity and mission statements act as steering instruments – but only when they are consistently lived. Niklas Luhmann (Soziale Systeme, 1984) emphasizes that official structures and narratives often diverge from the actual communication patterns of an organization. Uwe Flick (Qualitative Sozialforschung, 2018) further stresses that document analyses unfold their full diagnostic power particularly when combined with interviews and observations.

Document analyses make it possible to identify:

- ✎ **where official narratives are consistent,**
- ✎ **where goal systems collide with observable patterns,**
- ✎ **and how strategic directives are received in practice.**

6. Spatial Observations and Symbol Analyses – The Impact of the Environment

Physical, digital, and symbolic work environments shape behavior, communication, and belonging. Martina Löw (Raumsoziologie, 2018) shows that spaces are not neutral, but structure social orders and create belonging. Peter Cappelli (The Future of the Office, 2021) demonstrates how work environments in the digital age take on hybrid forms, creating new patterns of collaboration and power. Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017) add that symbols and artifacts are central markers of organizational culture.

Spatial and symbol analyses help to identify:

- ✎ **What messages are conveyed by architecture, layout, and design?**
- ✎ **Do they support or hinder exchange, concentration, and identification?**
- ✎ **Which symbolic markers (e.g., office placement, equipment, digital presence) reinforce hierarchies or foster equality?**

Modularity as a Core Principle:

All data collection formats of the WAVZ Impact Grid® can be applied modularly. They may be used individually, sequentially, or in combination – depending on objectives, context, and available resources.

In this way, the WAVZ Impact Grid® combines qualitative depth with quantitative structure – offering a scientifically grounded, practice-oriented foundation for transformation. It does not rely on short-lived trend narratives but on clearly discernible systemic patterns rooted in international research traditions.

The model is compatible with interviews, group discussions, spatial analyses, and document studies. Norman K. Denzin (The Research Act, 1970) and Uwe Flick (Triangulation, 2018) demonstrate how methodological triangulation increases the validity and reliability of empirical results.

The decisive difference compared to the classic “questionnaire model”: the diagnosis does not pursue normative evaluation but focuses on uncovering relevant tension fields that are critical for systemic development. Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017), Richard P. Rumelt (Good Strategy, Bad Strategy, 2011), and John P. Kotter (Leading Change, 1996) emphasize that change only succeeds if systemic breaks and contradictions are made visible and addressed

4.2 Working Within the Fields of Impact

The 16 fields of impact within the WAVZ Impact Grid® form the operational core of the analytical process. Each field represents a specific intersection of a dimension and a level of impact, thereby opening up a clearly defined perspective on organizational dynamics. Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017) and Richard P. Rumelt (Good Strategy, Bad Strategy, 2011) demonstrate that it is precisely at these intersections where tensions arise – and these tensions are decisive for transformation.

In practice, these fields are examined both individually and in their interrelations, ensuring that the analysis does not merely capture isolated findings but instead reveals systemic patterns. Niklas Luhmann (Soziale Systeme, 1984) and A.G. Lafley & Roger L. Martin (Playing to Win, 2013) emphasize that organizations can only be truly understood when their structures, strategies, and communication patterns are analyzed in their interplay.

Process of Fieldwork

Work within the fields of impact follows a structured, multi-stage approach:

➤ Collection of field-specific data

Targeted observations, key figures, documents, and interview statements are gathered, aligned with the respective field. John Doerr (Measure What Matters, 2018) shows how metrics can provide orientation and generate focus. Depending on the context, these may include process indicators, space utilization data, brand tracking, or employee surveys.

➤ Cross- and longitudinal comparison

Results are systematically compared within a dimension and across dimensions to reveal interdependencies. Example: Results from WORK × Structure are compared with WORK × Culture to assess the alignment between formal organization and lived values. Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017) emphasize that these comparisons highlight how deeply culture and structure intertwine. Niklas Luhmann (Soziale Systeme, 1984) provides the theoretical foundation by describing organizations as interconnected systems of expectations.

➤ Interpretation in context

Findings are interpreted against the background of organizational goals, conditions, and industry-specific characteristics. Richard P. Rumelt (Good Strategy, Bad Strategy, 2011) and John P. Kotter (Leading Change, 1996) stress that data only generate impact when embedded in strategic and organizational contexts. Both internal factors (leadership culture, technology use) and external influences (market pressure, regulation) are considered.

➤ **Derivation of developmental impulses**

Fields of action are identified that should be addressed either in the short term or strategically. Tensions are not necessarily deficits but can open productive spaces for development. Frederic Laloux (Reinventing Organizations, 2014) and Tim Brown (Change by Design, 2009) show how contradictions can release creative energy when consciously harnessed.

➤ **Methodological foundation**

Uwe Flick (Triangulation, 2018) underscores that only the combination of different perspectives—interviews, observations, metrics—creates the validity and depth required for reliable developmental impulses.

Methodological Integrity

The specific design of question paths and validation procedures is deliberately not disclosed in full detail within this document. This safeguards the methodological integrity of the WAVZ Impact Grid® and ensures its application at the intended level of quality. At the same time, this approach allows the methodology to be sensitively adapted to different types of organizations, industries, and transformation initiatives.

Exemplary application to selected fields of impact:

- **WORK × Structure** – Examination of the alignment between roles, processes, and decision-making paths. Focus: Clear responsibilities, functioning interfaces, decision logic.
References: John Doerr (Measure What Matters, 2018), Richard P. Rumelt (Good Strategy, Bad Strategy, 2011).
- **SPACE × Culture** – Analysis of how physical and digital spaces shape behavioral patterns.
Focus: Interaction zones, retreat areas, hybrid collaboration opportunities.
References: Martina Löw (Raumsoziologie, 2018), Peter Cappelli (The Future of the Office, 2021).
- **BRAND × Impact** – Comparison of external brand communication and internal experience.
Focus: Consistency between promises and actual lived experiences.
References: David Aaker (Building Strong Brands, 1996), Marty Neumeier (The Brand Gap, 2005), Byron Sharp (How Brands Grow, 2010).
- **PEOPLE × Space** – Examination of social meeting places and their effects on collaboration.
Focus: Trust, belonging, informal exchange formats.
References: Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017), Frederic Laloux (Reinventing Organizations, 2014), Niklas Luhmann (Soziale Systeme, 1984).

Objective of Field Analysis

The crucial point is that the analysis within the fields of impact does not merely document symptoms but makes interrelations legible. Examining the organization along the matrix reveals where structural and cultural patterns reinforce one another – and where they collide. This systemic perspective enables the derivation of precise and context-appropriate developmental impulses, which are further elaborated within the recommendations for action (see Chapter 4.5)..

4.3 Analysis and Evaluation Procedures

The evaluation of collected data follows the 16 fields of impact within the WAVZ Impact Grid® – each representing a specific intersection of one organizational dimension with one level of impact (Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein, Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017; Niklas Luhmann, Soziale Systeme, 1984). Each field is treated as an autonomous systemic unit of analysis.

The focus is not on the classical assessment of target–actual deviations, but on making visible the tensions, inconsistencies, and systemic potentials that emerge between structure, space, culture, and impact (Richard Rumelt, Good Strategy, Bad Strategy, 2011; A.G. Lafley & Roger Martin, Playing to Win, 2013).

Qualitative Evaluation

The qualitative analysis focuses on patterns, fractures, and alignment issues, for example:

- **Formal regulation vs. informal practice**
Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017)
- **Spatial symbolism vs. organizational self-image**
Martina Löw (Raumsoziologie, 2018)
- **Communicated brand vs. lived identity**
David Aaker (Building Strong Brands, 1996); Byron Sharp (How Brands Grow, 2010)

The aim is not to isolate individual symptoms but to identify and interpret relational constellations (Niklas Luhmann, Soziale Systeme, 1984). Field-specific findings are therefore always set in relation to adjacent fields and overarching patterns.

Quantitative Evaluation

To structure and visualize the results, several complementary formats are employed:

Radar Charts

- **Provide a profile of the organization across all 16 fields of impact**
- **Enable differentiation by dimensions, levels of impact, or thematic clusters**
- **Suitable for overviews, internal comparisons, or time-series analyses**
John Doerr (Measure What Matters, 2018)

Scorecards

- **Aggregate assessments into actionable development potentials**
- **Allow comparisons across units, teams, sites, or time periods**
- **Enable prioritization according to urgency and potential impact** – John P. Kotter (Leading Change, 1996); Robert Kaplan & David Norton (The Balanced Scorecard, 1996)

Tension Topographies

- **Visualize systemic fault lines (inspired by systemic gap analyses)**
- **Highlight where adjacent fields diverge strongly**
- **Examples:**
 - Cultural practices do not align with formal structures
Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017)
 - Spatial arrangements undermine intended leadership culture
Peter Cappelli (The Future of the Office, 2021); Martina Löw (Raumsoziologie, 2018)

Heatmaps

- **Color-coded matrix view across all 16 fields of impact**
- **Provide an immediate overview of strengths, weaknesses, and recurring patterns**
- **Particularly useful for comparative studies, benchmarking, and internal communication formats**
- **Methodologically compatible with both quantitative surveys and qualitative evaluations**
Byron Sharp (How Brands Grow, 2010); W. Warner Burke & George H. Litwin (A Causal Model of Organizational Performance and Change, 1992)

Function of Visualizations

These formats do not serve as a final classification but as a reflexive decision basis within interpretive organizational diagnostics. They uncover dynamics often hidden in day-to-day operations and thereby create the foundation for targeted, context-sensitive development measures – Tim Brown (Change by Design, 2009); Frederic Laloux (Reinventing Organizations, 2014).

4.4 Evaluation System and Scoring Logic

Evaluation within the WAVZ Impact Grid® follows a relational approach:

The benchmark is not an abstract ideal or a normative target picture, but rather the internal coherence of the system—with respect to structure, space, cultural patterns, and actual outcomes. Niklas Luhmann (Soziale Systeme, 1984), Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017), and Richard Rumelt (Good Strategy, Bad Strategy, 2011) emphasize that what matters is how elements fit together—not whether they appear formally “correct.”

Evaluation Scale

Scale	Meaning
1	Very strong, systemically coherent
2	Strong, largely consistent
3	Solid, but with noticeable frictions
4	Inconsistent, partially contradictory
5	Highly fragmented or dysfunctional
6	Critical – the field obstructs development

Three Guiding Questions for Assessment

➤ Structural Anchoring

How clearly is the field organized, visible, and formally integrated?

Henry Mintzberg (The Structuring of Organizations, 1979), Niklas Luhmann (Soziale Systeme, 1984), B. Burton, R. Obel & G. DeSanctis (Organizational Design, 2015)

➤ Cultural Fit

How coherent is the field when comparing stated intent with lived reality?

Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017), Frederic Laloux (Reinventing Organizations, 2014)

➤ Systemic Embedding

How consistent is the field in relation to adjacent impact fields?

Richard Rumelt (Good Strategy, Bad Strategy, 2011), A.G. Lafley & Roger Martin (Playing to Win, 2013))

Data Basis

The assessment draws on a combination of qualitative and quantitative data:

- **Interviews with key stakeholders**
Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017)
- **Observations in real work and communication settings**
Martina Löw (Raumsoziologie, 2018), Peter Cappelli (The Future of the Office, 2021)
- **Document analyses (strategy papers, process manuals, brand guidelines)**
- **Software-supported survey formats in the WAVZ® Analyzer**

This triangulation enables the recognition of patterns that remain invisible in single perspectives. Uwe Flick (An Introduction to Qualitative Research, 2018), Robert K. Yin (Case Study Research, 2014)

Significance of Pattern Recognition

What matters is not the individual score, but the constellation of relationships and tensions:

- **Insights often arise where fields diverge strongly.**
- **Example: WORK × Structure is clearly defined (2), while PEOPLE × Culture is perceived as contradictory (5) → indication of cultural dysfunction despite formal order.**

Epistemologically, this approach builds on Karl Weick (Sensemaking in Organizations, 1995), who emphasizes that organizational meaning-making is essentially driven by the identification and interpretation of patterns.

System-Internal Consistency Check

In addition, specifically designed internal validation mechanisms are used to:

- **Identify blind spots**
- **Detect tension axes**
- **Make self-contradictions visible**

These validations are not presented as a separate question category but are integrated into the analysis path. They increase diagnostic depth without complicating applicability in consulting or research contexts.

This interplay of analytical depth and context-sensitive evaluation forms the foundation for actionable development impulses – which are further elaborated in Chapter 4.5, Recommendations for Action.

4.5 Recommendations for Action – From Analysis to Development

The WAVZ Impact Grid® does not provide normative prescriptions but context-specific insights – and, building on these, targeted developmental impulses. The focus is not on achieving an ideal state but on fostering systemic coherence within the organization. Niklas Luhmann (Soziale Systeme, 1984), Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017), Richard Rumelt (Good Strategy, Bad Strategy, 2011). Recommendations emerge not from rigid models or generic checklists, but from the interplay of identified patterns.

Four principles guide the derivation of measures:

1. Systemic Relevance

Interventions are directed where structural, cultural, or spatial tensions block effectiveness. Particularly relevant are fields with high incoherence – for example:

- **Divergence between leadership image and leadership behavior**
Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017), John P. Kotter (Leading Change, 1996; 2014)
- **Contradiction between spatial arrangement and desired collaboration**
Martina Löw (Raumsoziologie, 2018)

2. Contextual Fit

Measures are never generic. They are derived from:

- **Organizational goals**
- **Routines and maturity level**
- **Market environment**
- **Readiness for change** – John P. Kotter (Leading Change, 1996; 2014), A.G. Lafley & Roger Martin (Playing to Win, 2013)

The analysis highlights where readiness for change exists – and where it does not. This prevents energy from being invested in areas that are not currently capable of development.

3. Interdisciplinary Coupling

Recommendations are not isolated but strategically linked to existing processes:

- **Strategy reviews**
- **Spatial concepts**
- **Brand development**
- **Cultural projects**

The WAVZ Impact Grid® serves here as a diagnostic backbone – not as a replacement for existing systems, but as a reflection amplifier. Richard Rumelt (Good Strategy, Bad Strategy, 2011), David Aaker (Building Strong Brands, 1996).

4. Dialogical Development

Recommendations are not to be understood as final solutions but as dialogical impulses. They are meant to spark internal discussions, open spaces for reflection, and enable decision-makers to design their own developmental logics. Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017), Tim Brown (Change by Design, 2009), Chris Argyris (Organizational Learning, 1996), optional: John P. Kotter (Leading Change, 1996).

Examples of fields for action:

✎ **Tensions in WORK × Culture**

Development of feedback formats, culture circles, leadership dialogues – Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017), Frederic Laloux (Reinventing Organizations, 2014).

✎ **Dysfunctions in SPACE × Space**

Adjustment of spatial access, sightlines, digital interfaces – Martina Löw (Raumsoziologie, 2018), Peter Cappelli (The Future of the Office, 2021).

✎ **Breaks in BRAND × Impact**

Review of brand language, alignment of internal and external narratives – David Aaker (Building Strong Brands, 1996), Marty Neumeier (The Brand Gap, 2005), Byron Sharp (How Brands Grow, 2010).

These measures are further developed within extended analytical formats – such as focus groups, future workshops, or advanced data evaluations using the WAVZ® Analyzer. Involving those affected is not an optional step but an integral component of effective and sustainable transformation.

Core Principle:

The WAVZ Impact Grid® views recommendations not as final answers but as starting points for development that emerges from within the system itself – relevant, impactful, and sustainable in the sense of systemic organizational development.

5. Contexts of Use and Research Context

Organizational development does not take place in the laboratory but within the complex fabric of everyday life – between operational constraints, historically evolved structures, and the aspiration to shape substantial change. It is precisely within this tension that the WAVZ Impact Grid® positions itself: not as an isolated analysis tool, but as a systemic reference framework that can be flexibly transferred to different contexts.

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Its range of application extends from owner-managed mid-sized companies and municipal administrations to project-based innovation labs and large-scale transformation programs in corporations. What matters is not the size of the organization but the presence of relevant friction and tension fields. Wherever these exist, the WAVZ Impact Grid® enables precise diagnosis and the derivation of tailored developmental impulses – without relying on a normative ideal or standardized change templates.

The scientific foundation of the model lies in the deliberate integration and operationalization of theoretical frameworks. It connects core elements of systems theory – Niklas Luhmann (Soziale Systeme, 1984), spatial sociology – Martina Löw (Raumsoziologie, 2018), culture and leadership research – Edgar H. Schein and Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017), John P. Kotter (Leading Change, 1996) – as well as strategic brand management – David Aaker (Building Strong Brands, 1996), Marty Neumeier (The Brand Gap, 2005). In addition, Frederic Laloux (Reinventing Organizations, 2014) broadens the perspective toward self-organized development processes. The result is an interdisciplinary analytical instrument that combines academic depth with pragmatic applicability.

In doing so, the WAVZ Impact Grid® closes the loop between analysis and development: it not only provides a theoretically grounded depiction of organizational dynamics but also creates a robust foundation for translating targeted recommendations for action (cf. Chapter 4.5) into practice – relevant, adaptable, and sustainable in the long term.

5.1 Typical Fields of Application in Organizations

The WAVZ Impact Grid® unfolds its full potential in complex change situations – wherever classical consulting approaches prove too superficial or internal steering instruments run into blind spots. Instead of generic blueprints, it offers context-specific diagnostics and multi-perspective pattern analysis.

1. Strategic Repositioning

When markets shift, business models need to be rethought, or target groups expanded, the WAVZ Impact Grid® provides a precise alignment of structure, brand, space, and culture. This establishes the foundation not only to formulate strategic guiding principles but also to anchor them in structures, processes, and cultural practices (Richard P. Rumelt, Good Strategy, Bad Strategy, 2011; A.G. Lafley and Roger Martin, Playing to Win, 2013).

2. Organizational Development & Cultural Work

In organizational development processes, the Grid functions like a cultural X-ray: it uncovers hidden tensions, analyzes leadership attitudes, team dynamics, and implicit rules, and reveals where cultural patterns support or undermine strategic intent (Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 2017; Frederic Laloux, *Reinventing Organizations*, 2014).).

3. Spatial Concepts & Site Development

Whether in new builds, renovations, or hybrid work models – the WAVZ Impact Grid® integrates spatial-sociological and organizational-psychological insights to shape spaces that are not only functional but also identity- and culture-forming (Martina Löw, *Raumsoziologie*, 2018; Peter Cappelli, *The Future of the Office*, 2021).

3. Brand Development & Identity Work

Here, brand is understood not as a logo but as a strategic anchor: the Grid assesses whether brand promise, lived values, and external perception are consistent – and where adjustments are necessary (David Aaker, *Building Strong Brands*, 1996; Marty Neumeier, *The Brand Gap*, 2005; Byron Sharp, *How Brands Grow*, 2010).

4. Leadership & Governance Questions

Especially in complex organizations, the WAVZ Impact Grid® supports the clarification of roles, decision-making logics, and power architectures – with a focus on the alignment between formal order and lived reality (Niklas Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme*, 1984; John P. Kotter, *Leading Change*, 1996).

5. Transformation Programs & Change Processes

In ongoing transformations, the Grid serves as an early warning system: it makes it possible not only to plan interventions but also to continuously observe how they unfold and what systemic counter-reactions occur (John P. Kotter, *Leading Change*, 1996; Simon Sinek, *The Infinite Game*, 2019).

6. Connectivity

The WAVZ Impact Grid® does not replace existing frameworks but amplifies their effect. It integrates seamlessly into agile models, Design Thinking, systemic consulting, and classical organizational diagnostics without subordinating itself to any single approach – extending them with a consistent, multi-perspective system diagnosis.

5.2 Differentiation from Existing Models

The WAVZ Impact Grid® was not developed to replace existing models – but to address what others often overlook: the interconnections. It is not about creating new tools, but about cultivating a new understanding of organizations – as dynamic, contradictory systems that cannot be analyzed or transformed in a linear way.

Unlike established frameworks such as Kotter's Eight-Step Model, CMMI, McKinsey 7S, or other well-known diagnostic and management models, each of which focuses on specific logics of analysis or change, the WAVZ Impact Grid® follows a relational, non-normative approach:

Kotter: While John P. Kotter (Leading Change, 1996) conceptualizes change as a clear sequence of phases, the WAVZ Impact Grid® shows that in reality multiple dynamics occur simultaneously – often contradictory, rarely predictable. It does not work with universal success factors but with context-sensitive diagnostics.

CMMI and Lean Models: Frameworks such as the Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI, 1993) or Lean approaches focus on maturity levels, deficiencies, or efficiency gains. By contrast, the WAVZ Impact Grid® does not ask how “mature” an organization is, but how coherent – within itself, with its environment, and with its own logic. It does not evaluate deficits but analyzes tensions and development potentials.

McKinsey 7S: The 7S model analyzes organizations through seven elements (Strategy, Structure, Systems, Shared Values, Skills, Style, Staff) and emphasizes alignment and balance (Tom Peters & Robert Waterman, In Search of Excellence, 1982). The WAVZ Impact Grid® integrates similar dimensions but goes further by explicitly linking structural, spatial, cultural, and impact-related aspects. It examines not only alignment but also how these elements interact in daily organizational life – where fractures or reinforcements occur.

St. Gallen Management Model (SGMM): The SGMM provides a high-level framework (including environment, strategy, structure, culture) but remains at the meta-level (Ulrich & Krieg, St. Galler Management-Modell, 1972; Rüegg-Stürm, Das neue St. Galler Management-Modell, 2002). The WAVZ Impact Grid® operationalizes this systems perspective across 16 fields of impact, making concrete tensions between structure, space, brand, and culture visible – as a diagnostic instrument rather than a generic orientation framework.

Weisbord’s Six-Box Model: Marvin Weisbord (Organizational Diagnosis, 1976) structured organizations into six fields (Purpose, Structure, Relationships, Leadership, Rewards, Helpful Mechanisms). The WAVZ Impact Grid® builds on this diagnostic tradition but extends it by adding BRAND and SPACE, shifting the focus from field enumeration to systemic interactions.

Nadler-Tushman Congruence Model: David A. Nadler & Michael L. Tushman (A Model for Diagnosing Organizational Behavior, 1980) emphasized the “fit” between work, people, structure, and culture. WAVZ shares this concern with congruence but makes it matrix-based, measurable, and comparable – while explicitly diagnosing tensions. Mismatches are not framed as deficits but as findings.

Burke-Litwin Model: W. Warner Burke & George H. Litwin (A Causal Model of Organizational Performance and Change, 1992) differentiate transformational and transactional factors and depict causal levels. The WAVZ Impact Grid® remains non-causal and non-linear: it maps relationships and fault lines in the current state as a basis for context-specific development.

Spiral Dynamics and Laloux: Don Beck & Chris Cowan (Spiral Dynamics, 1996) and Frederic Laloux (Reinventing Organizations, 2014) use typologies and evolutionary stages. The WAVZ Impact Grid® deliberately avoids such categorizations. It does not rank organizations as higher or lower developed but treats them as unique, context-dependent, and internally contradictory. Typological classifications risk oversimplifying complexity – exactly what WAVZ® seeks to avoid.

Balanced Scorecard and similar management tools: Robert S. Kaplan & David P. Norton (The Balanced Scorecard, 1992) developed a tool for steering via KPIs and strategy implementation. The WAVZ Impact Grid®, in contrast, focuses on qualitative understanding of interrelations. Quantitative results are integrated but not evaluated in isolation – what matters is systemic coherence. WAVZ is diagnosis before steering: clarifying coherence first, then deriving KPIs – complementary, not competing.

Cynefin (Complexity): Dave Snowden (The Cynefin Framework, 1999/2000) demonstrates that complex situations cannot be addressed with linear solutions. The WAVZ Impact Grid® is designed as a complexity-adequate diagnostic framework: relationships instead of phases, context instead of standard solutions.

Core difference: The WAVZ Impact Grid® does not operate with phases, maturity levels, or ideal types – but with interactions, relations, and inner logic. It applies situational analysis of organizational reality – asking: What fits here – and what does not?

This focus on context, tension, and impact makes the WAVZ Impact Grid® relevant for both practitioners and researchers – and clearly distinguishes it from established models.

5.3 Scientific Contribution

The scientific contribution of the WAVZ Impact Grid® does not lie in the development of a new theory but in the interdisciplinary integration and application-oriented operationalization of existing concepts. It builds a bridge between abstract system theory, spatial and brand-sociological perspectives, cultural interpretations, and the requirements of organizational practice. Four key contributions can be highlighted:

1. Multiperspective Diagnostic Model

The WAVZ Impact Grid® brings together four central dimensions of organizational reality – WORK, SPACE, BRAND, and PEOPLE – into a systematic diagnostic model. This specific combination has rarely been operationalized in research, even though all four domains demonstrably influence transformation and organizational effectiveness.

Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017), Martina Löw (Raumsoziologie, 2018), David Aaker (Building Strong Brands, 1996).

2. Integration of Theoretical Approaches

The model integrates core concepts from system theory, organizational culture research, spatial sociology, brand management, transformation studies, and the discourse on AI in socio-technical systems.

Niklas Luhmann (Soziale Systeme, 1984), Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017), Martina Löw (Raumsoziologie, 2018), David Aaker (Building Strong Brands, 1996), Jean-Noël Kapferer (The New Strategic Brand Management, 2012), Klaus Doppler & Christoph Lauterburg (Change Management, 2000), Wilfried Krüger (Excellence in Change, 2009), Erik Brynjolfsson & Andrew McAfee (The Second Machine Age, 2014).

This integration is not additive but produces a new systemic and relational diagnostic logic.

3. Operationalization of Complex Concepts

The structure of the WAVZ Impact Grid® (4 × 4 fields), its diagnostic pathways, and the scoring model make theoretically demanding concepts applicable in practice and research. It functions not only as an analytical tool but also as a structuring methodology for systemic understanding and design-oriented research.

Richard Rumelt (Good Strategy, Bad Strategy, 2011), Norman Denzin (The Research Act, 1970).

4. Compatibility with Qualitative and Quantitative Research

The WAVZ Impact Grid® can be applied both exploratively (e.g., interviews, spatial observations, workshops) and standardized (e.g., QuickCheck, questionnaires, scorecards). It is suited for comparative organizational analyses, longitudinal change monitoring, and is open to AI-supported evaluation perspectives.

John Doerr (Measure What Matters, 2018), Erik Brynjolfsson & Andrew McAfee (Machine, Platform, Crowd, 2017).

In sum

The WAVZ Impact Grid® offers a new methodological framework that allows organizations to be analyzed not only as systems but also in terms of their dynamics, tensions, and development potentials. It renders these empirically tangible and actionable – grounded in academically robust yet practically applicable concepts.

6. Research Perspectives and Further Development

The WAVZ Impact Grid® is not designed as a static instrument, but as an open, continuously evolving analysis and development framework. Its strength lies in its ability to connect theoretical approaches, empirical data, and practical experience in a way that remains applicable across diverse contexts – from academic research to operational transformation projects. Methodologically, its design follows a design-oriented research approach in the spirit of Design Science Research Alan Hevner (Design Science Research, 2004).

With its systemic and multi-perspective logic, the model closes a gap between conceptual organizational research and implementation-oriented consulting. It translates complex theoretical frameworks – such as system theory by Niklas Luhmann (Soziale Systeme, 1984), organizational culture research by Edgar H. Schein and Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017), spatial sociology by Martina Löw (Raumsoziologie, 2018), or brand management by David Aaker (Building Strong Brands, 1996) and Marty Neumeier (The Brand Gap, 2005) – into an applicable, empirically verifiable structure. This combination not only generates new insights into organizational dynamics, but also opens avenues for in-depth research and methodological innovation.

The ongoing development of the framework follows three guiding principles:

➤ Evidence-based adaptation

New findings from practice and research are systematically integrated into the model. Each extension must be theoretically grounded and proven effective in application.

➤ Technological integration

Digital tools such as the WAVZ Analyzer® and AI-supported evaluation methods are continuously advanced to refine data collection, pattern recognition, and the formulation of actionable recommendations.

➤ Interdisciplinary openness

The methodology remains open to impulses from neighboring disciplines such as organizational psychology, knowledge management, architecture, socio-technical studies, or sustainability research, thereby continuously expanding the analytical framework.

In this way, the WAVZ Impact Grid® evolves into a learning system: it develops in dialogue between science, practice, and technological innovation – ensuring its long-term relevance as a bridge between analysis, design, and sustainable transformation..

6.1 Methodological Deepening and Expansion

The further development of the WAVZ Impact Grid® aims to increase methodological depth while at the same time broadening its applicability across diverse organizational contexts. Two developments are central: the refinement of the data collection logic and the expansion of evaluation formats.

1. Expansion of the Data Collection Logic

The WAVZ Analyzer® already enables modular use – for example, to focus in depth on particularly relevant or critical fields after an initial pre-analysis. Future developments will seek to standardize and extend this logic: critical fields could be automatically identified, prioritized, and then analyzed more thoroughly – for instance through AI-supported evaluations. Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee (The Second Machine Age, 2014).

2. Differentiated Evaluation and Visualization Approaches

In addition, new assessment models are being tested that more clearly distinguish between short- and long-term influencing factors and highlight systemic interdependencies. Expanded visualization formats – such as dynamic tension maps or interactive score clusters – are designed not only to present findings but also to support hypothesis-building and decision-making.

3. Integration of Qualitative Deep Dives

Alongside existing quantitative formats, modular in-depth interviews, spatial observations, and brand experience analyses will be systematically integrated into the process. The aim is to provide deeper contextualization of results without losing sight of pragmatic applicability in everyday operations. Martina Löw (Raumsoziologie, 2018), David Aaker (Building Strong Brands, 1996), Marty Neumeier (The Brand Gap, 2005).

Through this methodological advancement, the WAVZ Impact Grid® remains applicable to organizations of different sizes and maturity levels – while at the same time reinforcing its academic foundation as an instrument of relational organizational diagnostics.

6.2 Technological Development and AI Integration

The digital advancement of the WAVZ Impact Grid® focuses on the WAVZ Analyzer® as the core application within the WAVZ® Tool Suite. The objective is to further develop its data collection, evaluation, and visualization logic so that both large-scale work with extensive organizational units and high contextual sensitivity in individual case analyses remain ensured.

A central field of development is the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into analysis and interpretation processes. AI extends human judgment but does not replace it. Paul Daugherty and H. James Wilson (Human + Machine, 2018). This extension follows several approaches:

1. Automated Data Evaluation

AI-driven algorithms can semantically analyze qualitative responses from interviews, workshops, or open text fields, cluster them, and relate them to quantitative values. This generates deeper insights into patterns of tension and dynamics without reducing analytical precision.

2. Adaptive Analysis Paths

Based on initial results, AI can recommend which fields should be examined in greater depth next. This enables modular use of the WAVZ Analyzer® – for instance, to analyze critical fields in detail after a QuickCheck rather than processing all 16 fields comprehensively.

3. Comparison and Benchmarking Functions

By building an anonymized comparison database, organizations can optionally align their results with aggregated values from similar industries or organizational sizes. The emphasis remains on contextual fit – benchmarks are a supplementary tool, not the sole yardstick for evaluation.

4. Simulation and Scenario Work

AI-supported models can simulate hypothetical scenarios based on current data: How would changes in one field affect adjacent ones? Such simulations do not serve prediction but rather the reflection of possible consequences.

The technological advancement follows clear principles: transparency, data protection, and methodological integrity. AI is never an end in itself but is applied only where it demonstrably enhances analytical quality, efficiency, or usability. In this way, it becomes a tool that supports organizations in building long-term capacities for reflection and learning. Frederic Laloux (Reinventing Organizations, 2014), Simon Sinek (The Infinite Game, 2019).

6.3 Interdisciplinary Research Perspectives

The WAVZ Impact Grid® is not only a practical instrument but also a research framework that connects different academic disciplines. Its strength lies in systematically translating complex theories into operationalizable units of analysis – and in enabling these units to be applied to interdisciplinary research questions.

1. Systems Theory and Organizational Sociology

Building on Niklas Luhmann (Soziale Systeme, 1984), the WAVZ Impact Grid® provides a methodological framework for empirically capturing organizational communication structures, horizons of expectation, and self-descriptions. It allows theoretical assumptions to be operationalized and tested within concrete organizations – for instance, the alignment between formal structure and lived practice.

2. Spatial Sociology and Architectural Theory

Drawing on Martina Löw (Raumsoziologie, 2018), the WAVZ Impact Grid® examines the effectiveness of physical and digital spaces in organizational contexts. This opens up research questions concerning spatial configurations, usage logics, and symbolic meaning – for example, how architecture and workplace design shape power relations or patterns of collaboration.

3. Brand and Identity Research

Based on David Aaker (Building Strong Brands, 1996), Franz-Rudolf Esch (Strategie und Technik der Markenführung, 2020), and Jean-Noël Kapferer (The New Strategic Brand Management, 2012), the WAVZ Impact Grid® connects brand management with organizational theory. It reveals how internal identity and external perception influence each other. From a research perspective, it enables precise operationalization of questions related to brand coherence, employer branding, or internal brand management.

4. Cultural and Leadership Studies

Referencing Edgar H. Schein and Peter Schein (Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2017), Frederic Laloux (Reinventing Organizations, 2014), and Simon Sinek (The Infinite Game, 2019), the model provides a methodological basis to not only describe values, norms, and leadership practices but also relate them to structural and spatial conditions. This makes it possible to identify cultural tensions often hidden in conventional cultural diagnostics.

5. Technology and AI Research

In combination with AI-supported evaluation methods, the WAVZ Impact Grid® opens new research perspectives on human-machine interactions in organizational change processes. It can serve as a testbed to examine how algorithmic analyses influence decision-making, participation, and reflection in organizations. Paul Daugherty and H. James Wilson (Human + Machine, 2018).

6. Transdisciplinary Studies

Thanks to its modular applicability, the model is suitable for mixed-method approaches that combine qualitative in-depth interviews, spatial observations, and document analyses with quantitative surveys. It can be applied in longitudinal studies to document transformation processes over time – or in comparative analyses to identify patterns across industries, cultures, and organizational sizes.

6.4 Limitations

Despite its versatility, the WAVZ Impact Grid® is not a universal diagnostic tool for all organizational questions. Its strength lies in the systemic integration of structure, space, brand, and culture – yet it is precisely here that methodological limitations arise, which must be consciously considered in both research and practice.

1. Context-dependence rather than standardization

The model deliberately avoids universal success factors or idealized target states. While this context sensitivity enhances relevance and applicability, it also complicates direct comparisons between organizations if identical parameters, levels of observation, and evaluation formats are not applied.

2. Room for interpretation

Because the analysis is based on relational assessments of alignments and tensions, results always depend on the interpretive competence of the users. Without methodological training and reflection, there is a risk of oversimplifying findings or prematurely norming them.

3. Data availability and access

The quality of the analysis strongly depends on the extent to which internal documents, spaces, people, and processes are accessible. Limited access can lead to data gaps that restrict the comprehensiveness of the matrix perspective.

4. Dynamics of organizational reality

Organizations often change more quickly than a full analysis cycle can be completed. While the WAVZ Impact Grid® can reveal these temporal shifts, it cannot replace continuous observation if dynamic developments are to be adequately captured.

5. Complexity of application

Working with all 16 fields of impact requires strong methodological expertise and a sufficient data base. Although the WAVZ® QuickCheck provides a low-threshold entry point, full application is not always feasible in resource-constrained projects or very small organizations.

6. Dependence on organizational openness

Effectiveness does not depend solely on the method, but also on the organization's willingness to engage with tensions. Resistance to transparency, questions of power, or cultural critique can block the implementation of recommendations – even if the analysis itself is highly precise

7. Conclusion & Outlook

The WAVZ Impact Grid® is more than an analytical tool – it serves as a guiding framework for effective transformation. Its value lies in uncovering patterns that often remain invisible in day-to-day operations: tensions between aspiration and reality, fractures between dimensions, and blind spots across structure, space, brand, and culture.

Insights from both research and practice highlight three core principles:

- **Relevance emerges through interplay** – the most powerful developmental impulses arise not from isolated findings, but from examining their interrelations.
- **Depth requires context** – the Grid does not provide quick fixes, but delivers well-founded starting points for decisions that fit the organization's reality.
- **Impact requires dialogue** – even the best analysis only gains traction when it becomes the starting point for open discussion and shared prioritization.

With the WAVZ® Tool Suite – consisting of the WAVZ® QuickCheck and the WAVZ® Analyzer – the model is equally applicable in advisory settings and digitally scalable. This enables organizations to move from one-off projects toward continuous organizational diagnostics, making it possible not only to plan developments but also to monitor and steer them on an ongoing basis.

Next Development Steps

The upcoming advancements of the WAVZ Impact Grid® aim to:

- **Automate digital evaluation and enhance it through AI-driven pattern recognition,**
- **Build comparative benchmarks within and across industries, without compromising its context-sensitive approach,**
- **Expand integration into existing management systems such as OKRs, the Balanced Scorecard, or ESG reporting,**
- **Open the model for interdisciplinary research collaborations to continuously validate and strengthen its theoretical foundation.**

The guiding principle remains unchanged: not to prescribe change normatively, but to enable it effectively – with a tool as versatile as the realities it was designed to address..

8. Annotated Bibliography

The following works form the theoretical foundation of the WAVZ Impact Grid®. They were not only used as sources of inspiration but actively integrated into the model's logic – either in defining its dimensions, developing terminology, or deriving specific applications. Each source was deliberately selected to support the model's interdisciplinary approach while ensuring its relevance within established scientific discourses.

Niklas Luhmann – Social Systems

Systems theory as the foundation for organizational analysis. Organizations are described as autopoietic communication systems that develop their own logics of meaning.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: Foundation for the dimension WORK × Structure; basis for diagnosing systemic self-logics, expectations, and self-observation (Ch. 3, 4).

Edgar H. Schein & Peter Schein – Organizational Culture and Leadership

Classic work on organizational culture. Introduces the three levels of culture (artifacts, values, underlying assumptions) and the role of leadership in change processes.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: Core source for the dimension PEOPLE × Culture; analysis of implicit patterns, the deep structure of culture, and processes of transformation.

Martina Löw – Sociology of Space

Theory of space as a relational arrangement of people, objects, and practices. Space is understood as a social construct.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: Basis for the dimension SPACE × Space; analysis of spatial interrelations, spacing/synthesis processes (Ch. 3).

David Aaker – Building Strong Brands

Foundations of strategic brand management: brand identity, architecture, brand equity, and brand personality.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: Foundation for the dimension BRAND × Structure/Impact; building and managing strong brands in interaction with culture.

Marty Neumeier – The Brand Gap

Practice-oriented work on brand differentiation. Focuses on collaboration, innovation, and customer experience.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: Supplementary foundation for the dimension BRAND; role of differentiation and brand experience.

David Aaker & Erich Joachimsthaler – Brand Leadership

International framework for brand management, brand architecture, and governance approaches.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: BRAND × Structure; reference for brand governance and management in complex organizations.

Byron Sharp – How Brands Grow

Empirically grounded work on brand management. Emphasizes reach, penetration, and data-driven marketing.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: BRAND × Impact; highlights the limitations of traditional approaches and provides data-based additions.

Richard Rumelt – Good Strategy, Bad Strategy

Strategy theory with a focus on diagnosis, guiding policy, and coherent actions.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: WORK × Structure; the scoring and derivation logic of the Grid follows Rumelt's three-step model (Ch. 3–4).

A.G. Lafley & Roger Martin – Playing to Win

Strategic decision logic: Where do we play, how do we win? A practice-oriented strategy framework.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: WORK × Structure and Impact; provides orientation for coherent strategic options.

John Doerr – Measure What Matters

Foundational work on OKRs (Objectives & Key Results). Emphasis on focus, alignment, and transparency.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: WORK × Impact; integrated into recommendations for action and the scoring logic (Ch. 4).

Frederic Laloux – Reinventing Organizations

Approach to evolutionary organizations. Self-organization, wholeness, and purpose.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: Delimitation (Ch. 5.2); WAVZ does not work with typologies or maturity stages but remains context-sensitive.

Simon Sinek – The Infinite Game

Long-term perspective, purpose, and trust as a play logic beyond short-term goals.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: PEOPLE × Culture, BRAND × Impact; purpose as a driver of coherence.

John P. Kotter – Leading Change

Eight-phase model of change. A classic in the change management literature.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: Delimitation (Ch. 5.2); WAVZ does not operate in linear phases but relationally.

Peter Cappelli – The Future of the Office

Study of hybrid work models.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: WORK × Space/Impact; basis for hybrid work logics within the Grid.

Where We Work – Workplace Design

Practice-oriented study of new work environments and spatial concepts.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: SPACE × Space; supplements the empirical foundation for spatial diagnosis.

Brian Robertson – Holacracy

Model for self-organized corporate governance.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: PEOPLE × Structure; reference model for alternative governance.

Plattner & Meinel – Design Thinking

Innovation logic, user-centered development.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: PEOPLE × Culture / WORK × Impact; creative processes as actionable recommendations.

Tim Brown – Change by Design

Practice-oriented work on Design Thinking and innovation methods.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: PEOPLE × Culture; innovation logic as a complement.

Daniel Esty & Andrew Winston – Green to Gold

Sustainability as a factor for competitiveness and transformation.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: BRAND × Impact, PEOPLE × Culture; ESG as a guiding logic for brand and culture.

Erik Brynjolfsson & Andrew McAfee – The Second Machine Age

Analysis of the impact of digitization and AI.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: Ch. 6.2 (AI integration); implications for WORK and PEOPLE.

Kevin Eikenberry & Wayne Turmel – Leading from Anywhere

Leadership in virtual teams and remote work.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: PEOPLE × Culture/Impact; hybrid leadership and collaboration.

Henry Mintzberg – The Structuring of Organizations

Classic structural theory: machine bureaucracy, adhocracy, professional bureaucracy.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: WORK × Structure; reality check beyond organizational charts.

Robert S. Kaplan & David P. Norton – The Balanced Scorecard

Strategy execution with KPI perspectives (finance, customers, processes, learning).

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: Delimitation (Ch. 5.2); control following diagnosis.

Dave Snowden & Mary E. Boone – A Leader's Framework for Decision Making (Cynefin)

Framework for decision-making in complex contexts.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: Delimitation (Ch. 5.2); justification for non-linear diagnostics.

James P. Womack & Daniel T. Jones – Lean Thinking

Principles of waste reduction and process optimization.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: Delimitation (Ch. 5.2); Lean as an implementation track after diagnosis.

Mary Beth Chrissis / Mike Konrad / Sandy Shrum – CMMI for Development

Framework for process maturity and capability.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: Delimitation (Ch. 5.2); not a maturity model, but a diagnostic instrument.

Ken Schwaber & Jeff Sutherland – The Scrum Guide

Framework for agile product development.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: Implementation (Ch. 4.5); not a diagnostic tool, but a delivery logic.

Franz-Rudolf Esch – Moderne Markenführung (Modern Brand Management)

Practice- and theory-oriented work on brand identity, brand strength, and mechanisms of impact.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: BRAND × Structure/Impact; adds DACH-specific brand perspectives.

Klaus Doppler & Christoph Lauterburg – Change Management

Practice-oriented guide to change processes, stakeholder dialogue, and interventions.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: Implementation (Ch. 4.5); complementary logic for interventions.

Wilfried Krüger – Excellence in Change

Systematic design of change initiatives, quality standards.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: WORK × Structure; benchmarks for governance after diagnosis.

Marvin R. Weisbord – Organizational Diagnosis: Six Places to Look

Six-Box Model for organizations.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: Delimitation (Ch. 5.2); WAVZ expands with BRAND and SPACE.

David A. Nadler & Michael L. Tushman –**A Model for Diagnosing Organizational Behavior (Congruence Model)**

Analytical model for the fit between work, people, structure, and culture.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: Delimitation (Ch. 5.2); fit/mismatch is mapped relationally in the Grid.

W. Warner Burke & George H. Litwin – A Causal Model of Organizational Performance and Change

Causal levels of change (transformational vs. transactional).

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: Delimitation (Ch. 5.2); WAVZ remains non-causal.

Waterman / Peters / Phillips – Structure Is Not Organization (McKinsey 7S)

7S model: strategy, structure, systems, style, staff, skills, shared values.

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: Delimitation (Ch. 5.2); WAVZ explicitly adds SPACE and BRAND.

Johannes Rüegg-Stürm –**Das neue St. Galler Management-Modell (The New St. Gallen Management Model)**

Meta-framework for organizations (environment, strategy, structure, culture).

Application in the WAVZ Impact Grid®: Delimitation (Ch. 5.2); WAVZ operationalizes the framework diagnostically.

9. Scientific References (APA)

For scientific classification and traceability, the WAVZ® Whitepaper follows the APA citation style (7th edition). The complete references are listed below, sorted alphabetically by the authors' last names.

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WAVZ Impact Grid®

The first model to capture structure, space, brand, and culture in an integrated way – and to systematically analyze their interactions.

Behind every high-performing organization lie complex interdependencies: formal structures that provide orientation. Spaces – physical, digital, and symbolic – that shape behavior. Brands that create identity. Cultures that guide decisions and routines. In practice, however, these dimensions are often considered in isolation – with the result that transformation frequently fails due to hidden tensions.

The WAVZ Impact Grid® breaks this fragmentation.

It integrates insights from systems theory, sociology of space, organizational culture, and brand sociology into a practice-oriented diagnostic and development tool. It reveals where internal alignment exists – and where discrepancies between strategy, spatial logic, brand promise, and lived culture are slowing down progress.

This white paper introduces the theoretical foundations, the model architecture, and its key fields of application – ranging from reorganization and brand development to AI-supported analyses.

It addresses decision-makers, consultants, and researchers who understand transformation not as a linear process but as an emergent development within a connected system.

Discover how to design your organization so that all dimensions reinforce one another – and transformation translates into sustainable impact.

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