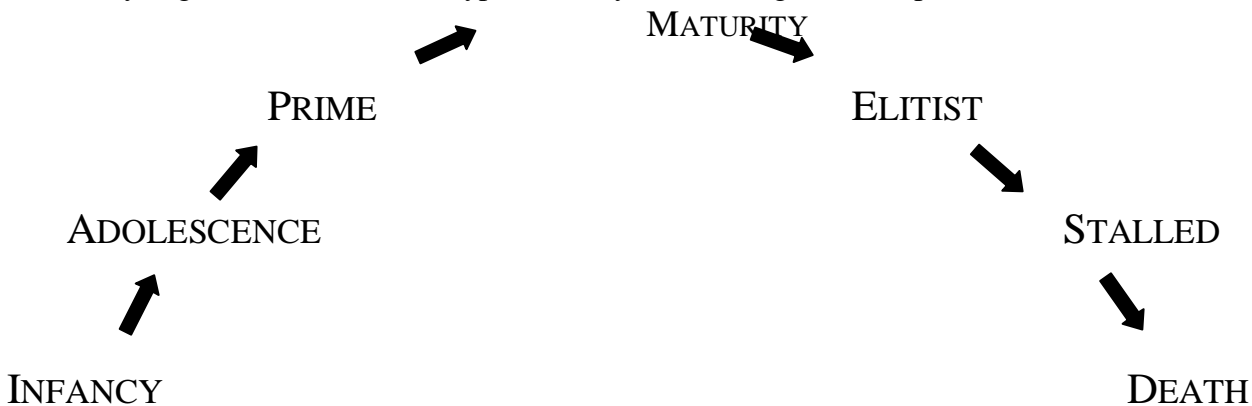


Cycles of Organizations

Organizations like people go through a life cycle in which they age, change in structure and ability and eventually begin to slow down. A typical life cycle in an organization proceeds like this:



THE CYCLE OF AN ORGANIZATION

Each of these stages of development has its own distinct characteristics.

Infancy is a start-up state in which a few people initiate almost everything. And sometimes it is a one-person show-run by the founder. The emphasis is on results not procedures and there are few policies or structures.

Adolescence marks further growth, leadership begins to be shared, more structure and rules are developed and certain rituals and ceremonies of organizational custom are created.

The PRIME is the last of the high growth stages as the organization enjoys its success and begins to balance its original spirit with balanced long-term management.

In Maturity The organization begins to slow down, people become satisfied with the status quo the climate begins to get more formulized.

ELITIST The organization begins to concentrate more on its internal concerns than external affairs, the climate becomes more formal. There is tremendous importance on the procedures and how they are done.

STALLED stage everyone is concerned with their own turf. There are tight controls from the top, teamwork plays little importance. It's a CYA attitude and people look on their involvement as "just a job".

Death on the chart may not mean actual extinction, but could imply an organization in which only a few are still actively involved and the organization is simply marking time doing the same things it has always done, and awaiting the fading away of the last of the Old Guard while celebrating and re-enacting the triumphs of the past.

The interesting thing is that unlike people an organization may change this pattern of development. At some point during the latter states an organization may develop a "New Vision" and re-create itself, in essence leap-frogging into a new cycle of growth and development. In doing so, it sheds its skin and returns to the flexibility of youth and begins to develop a new set of rules and programs. Successful organizations will periodically go through this process of "rebirth" adjusting to new needs new conditions and new opportunities.