



New knowledge on working with Clouds – how to work with assumptions

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Jelena has worked in Japan, Poland, Turkey, Italy, Russia, Ukraine, India, China, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and other countries throughout the world.

Jelena is the author of the book *Behind the Cloud – Enhancing logical thinking*. The book presents new developments in the area of working with assumptions.

Together with Oded Cohen, Jelena has co-authored the book *Theory of Constraints Fundamentals*.

She has authored numerous articles on TOC concepts and implementation, and has contributed to and edited several TOC books.

Jelena is Founder and Co-President of the International Alliance of TOC Practitioners – TOCPA.



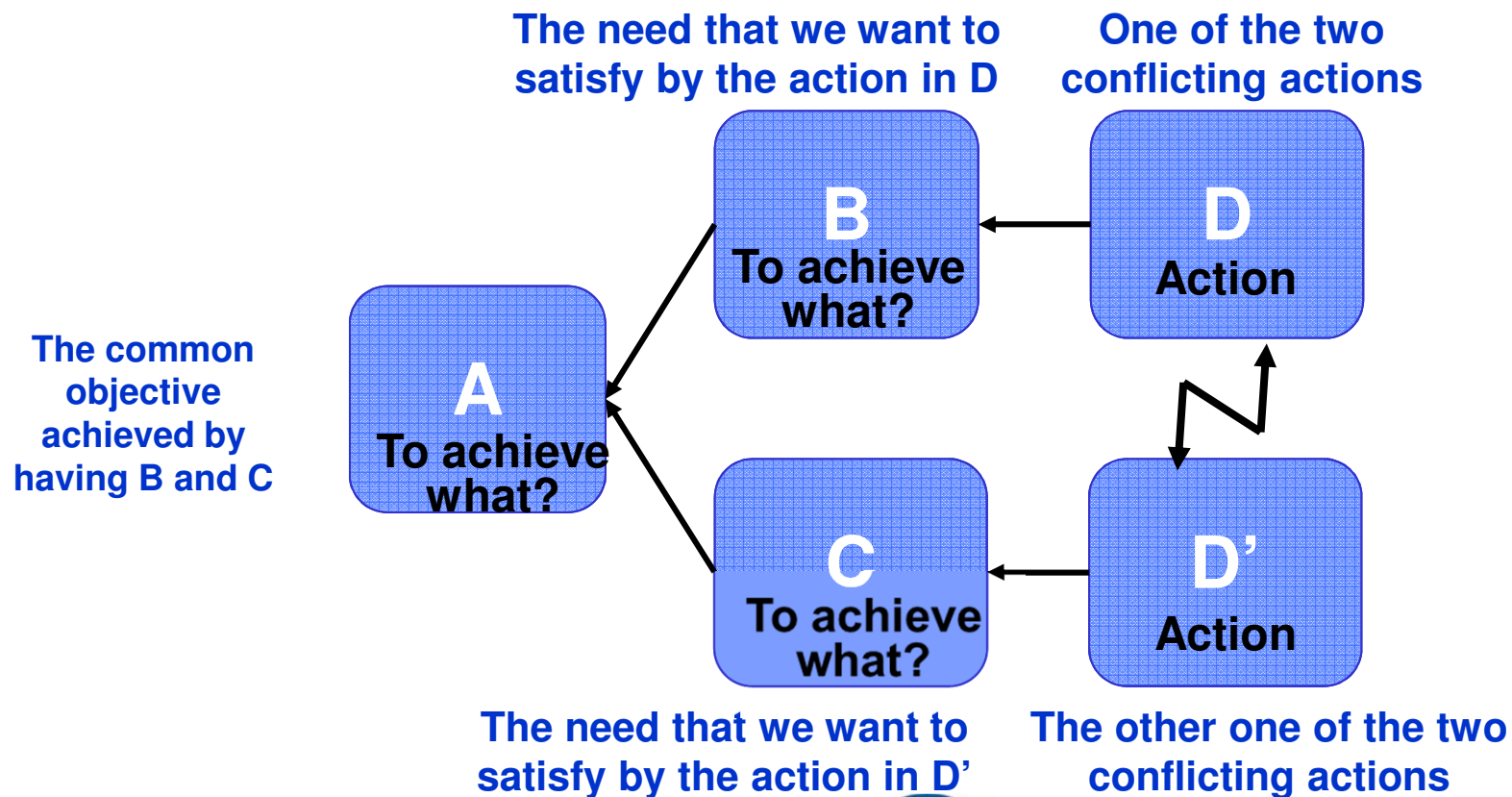
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The Cloud

The Cloud – the main logical instrument for understanding the problem/conflict/dilemma and developing a solution.

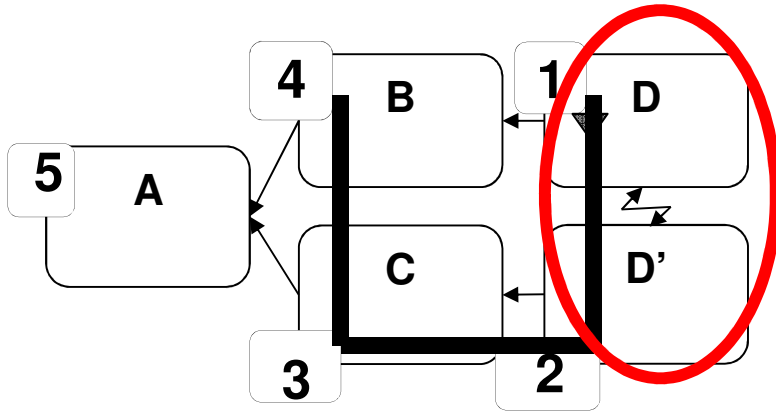


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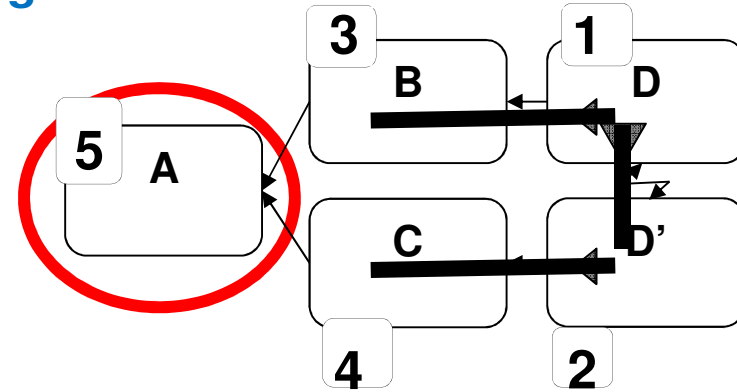


Different Cloud types have different sequence of building

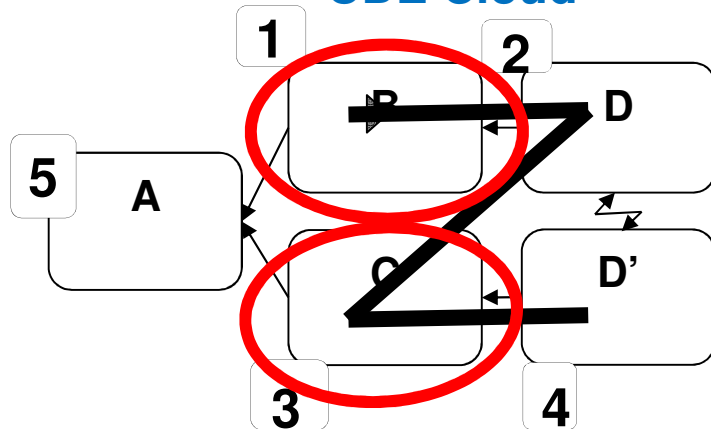
Inner Dilemma/Conflict Cloud



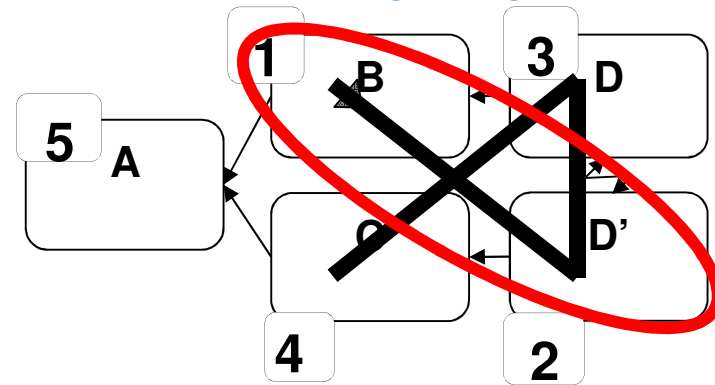
Day-to-Day Conflict Cloud & Organizational Interest Conflict Cloud



UDE Cloud



Fire-fighting Cloud

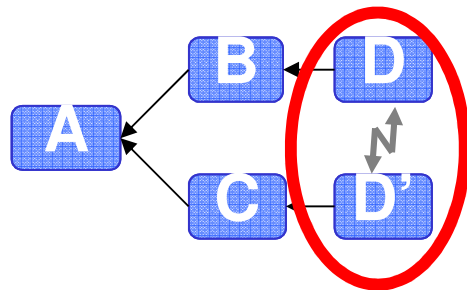




Important understanding about the Cloud

The Cloud is the “raw material” for finding the solution. We replace the conflict/dilemma with Injection that solves it.

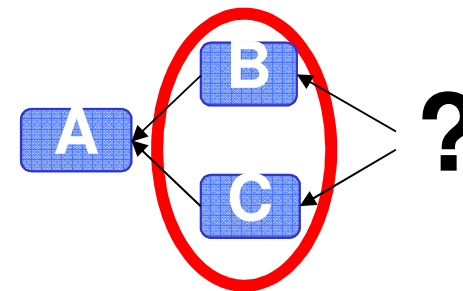
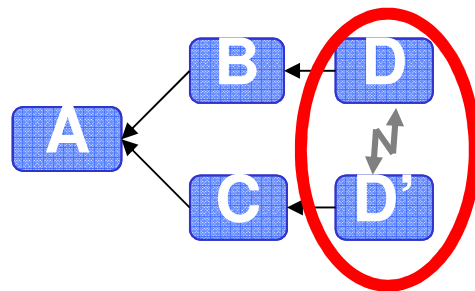
IMPORTANT OBSERVATION:



In working with the Cloud, major efforts are spent in trying to understand WHY THE **CONFLICT** EXISTS.

In my views, the focus should be more on **what makes the cloud owner believe that D and D' are the NECESSARY CONDITIONS for B and C.**

With that – we **shift the focus from WHY there is a conflict to HOW to MEET B and C.**



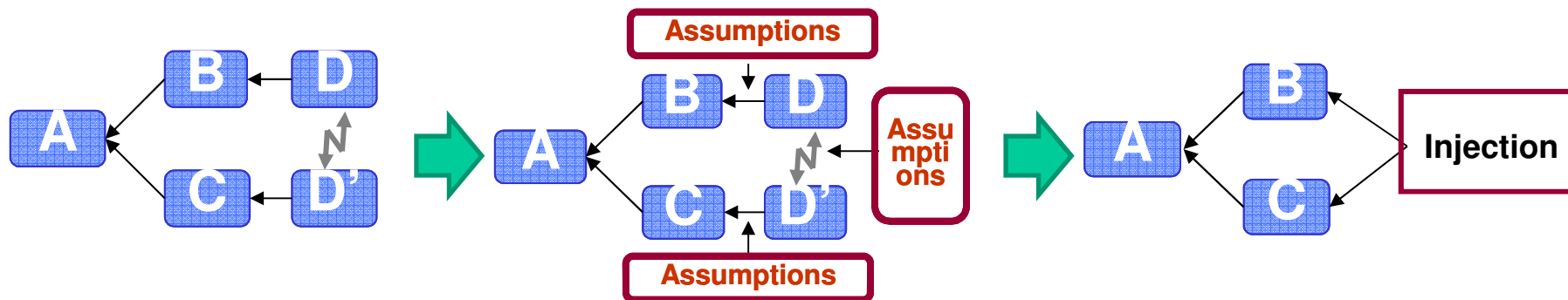


Important understanding about the Cloud

By focusing on HOW to meet both B and C, we develop an INJECTION that removes the conflict.



However, it is impossible to move from the conflict directly to an Injection.



Assumptions are the central element in the Cloud.



What are Assumptions?

In reference to the Cloud,

assumptions are facts, observations, beliefs, expectations, convictions, presuppositions, experiences, interpretations, concepts, principles, data, general knowledge and other elements of thinking with which we support our reasoning behind a logical connection.



Why do we need to work with assumptions?

- Being clear on assumptions helps to show/understand the logic and check its validity.
- Understanding assumptions behind logical connections driving behaviour or attitude helps to identify what sets of values/expectations need to be accommodated to find the solution.



Typical mistakes in surfacing assumptions

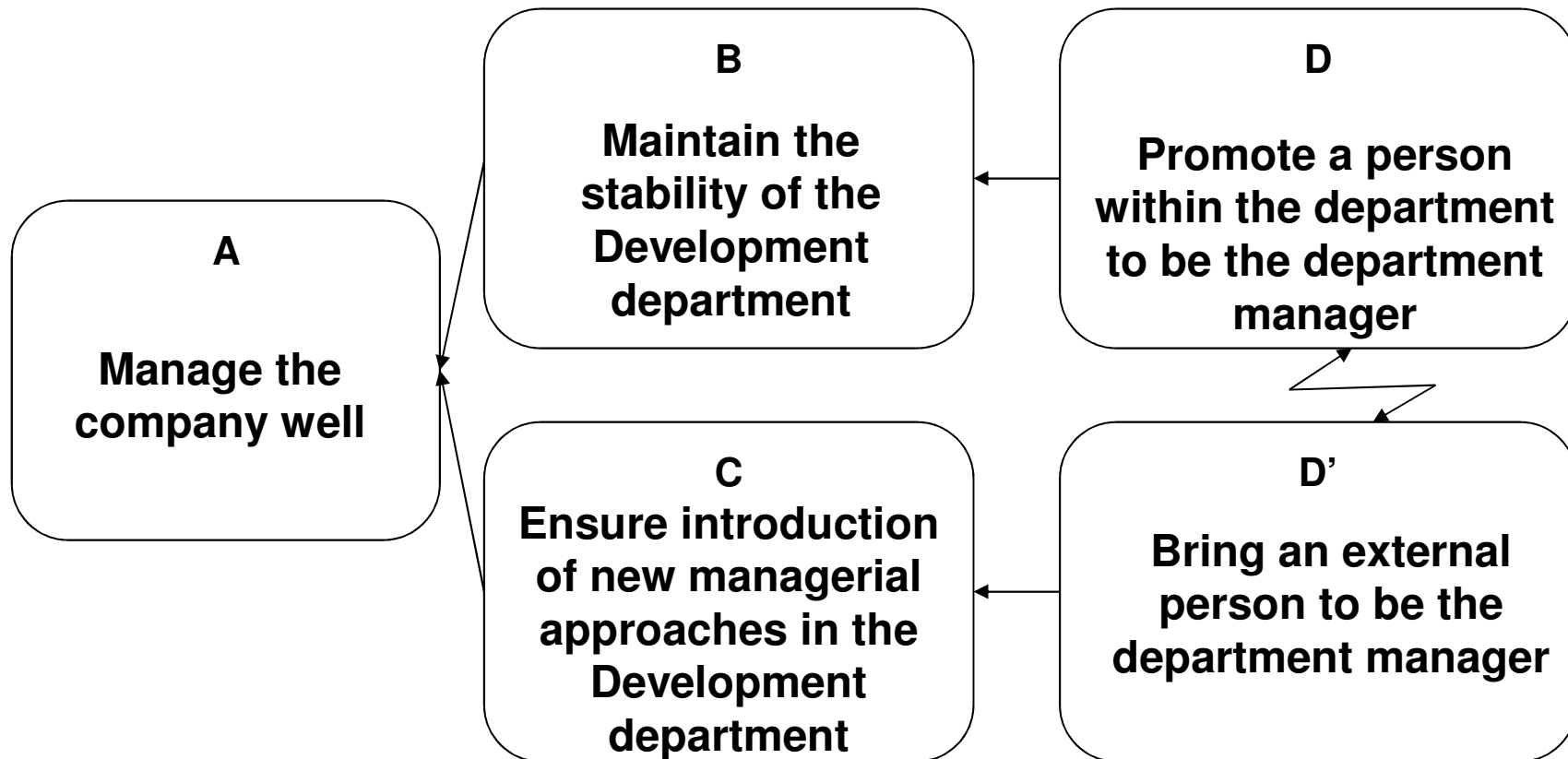
What is a “mistake” while surfacing assumptions?

A statement that does NOT help to explain the arrow which it was supposed to explain.



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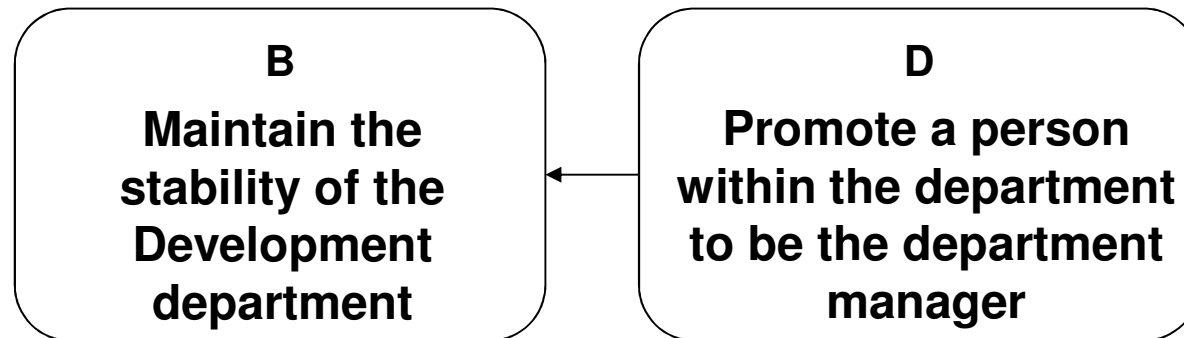
The MD's Cloud





Typical mistake 1: Reverse repetition

When the statement after 'because' is just a repetition in the reverse way of what is said at the beginning of the statement.

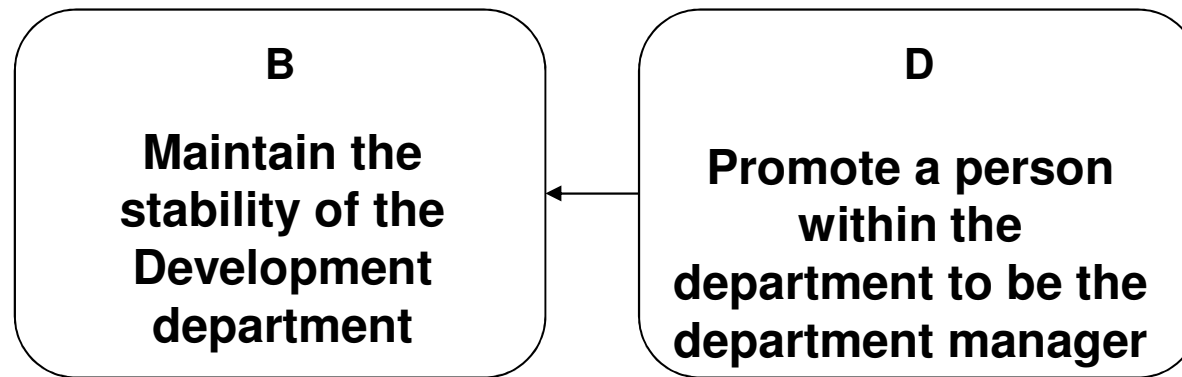


WRONG: *'In order to maintain the stability of the Development department, I must promote a person within the department to be the department manager because promoting a person within the department to be the department manager [D] is important/necessary/ the best way/ the only way to maintain the stability of the department [B]'.*



Typical mistake 2: “It is the only way”

It is another variation of the reverse repetition.



WRONG: *‘In order to maintain the stability of the Development department, I must promote a person within the department to be the department manager because it is the only way to maintain the stability of the department [B]’.*

Why is it a mistake to use the phrase “It is the only way”?



Typical mistake 2: “It is the only way” (cont.)

Why is it a mistake to use the phrase “*It is the only way*”?

“*It is the only way*” does not add anything to what has been presented in the Cloud.

The Cloud has the graphical legend that transmits its logical content.

The arrow connecting two entities is meaningful in two aspects:

- the arrow itself establishes that the connection is cause-effect
- the direction of the arrow shows which entity is the cause and which is the effect – in other words, to perform the cause is THE WAY to achieve the effect.

Therefore, the words ‘*it is the way*’ are just the repetition of what is already stated graphically and they do not help to understand ON WHAT GROUNDS the connection exists.



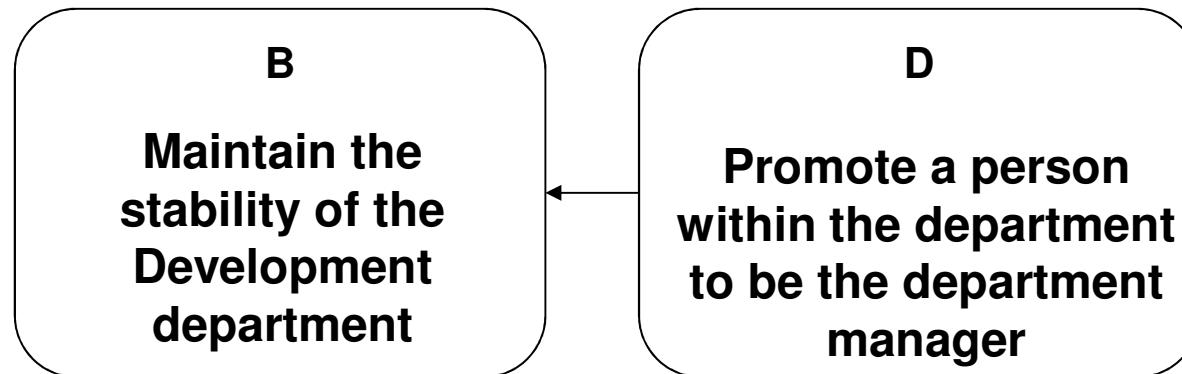
Signals of likely reverse repetition:





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Typical mistake 3: Explaining only one entity of the connection instead of explaining the arrow



WRONG: *'In order to maintain the stability of the Development department, I must promote a person within the department to be the department manager because **developing new products is a long process that requires stability**'.*

It explains only [B].

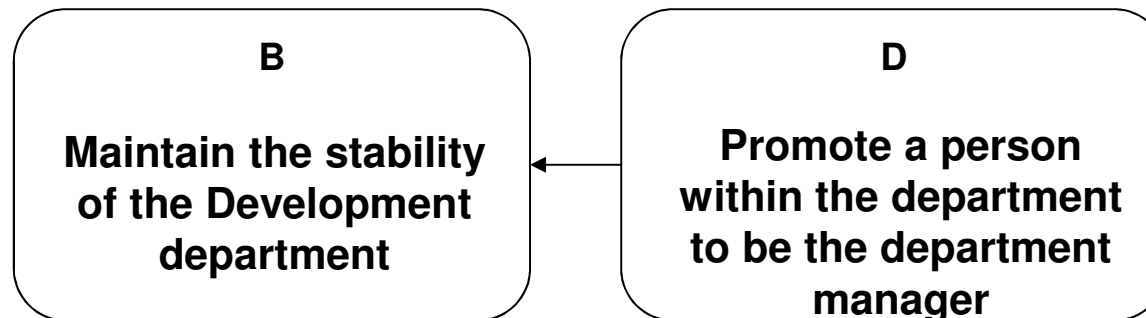


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Typical mistake 4: Stating “To achieve what?”

Wording the assumption as the **answer** to the questions “**What for we need the entity at the tip of the arrow?**” and “**What do we want to achieve by the entity at the tip of the arrow?**”

It is actually a subset of a Typical mistake 3 – Explaining only one entity of the connection instead of explaining the arrow.



WRONG: *‘In order to maintain the stability of the Development department, I must promote a person within the department to be the department manager because **stability creates atmosphere in which people feel secure and concentrate more on their work**’.*

*“**Stability creates atmosphere in which people feel secure and concentrate more on their work**” is the answer to the question “**What do we want to achieve by maintaining stability?**”*



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Typical mistake 4: Stating “To achieve what?”

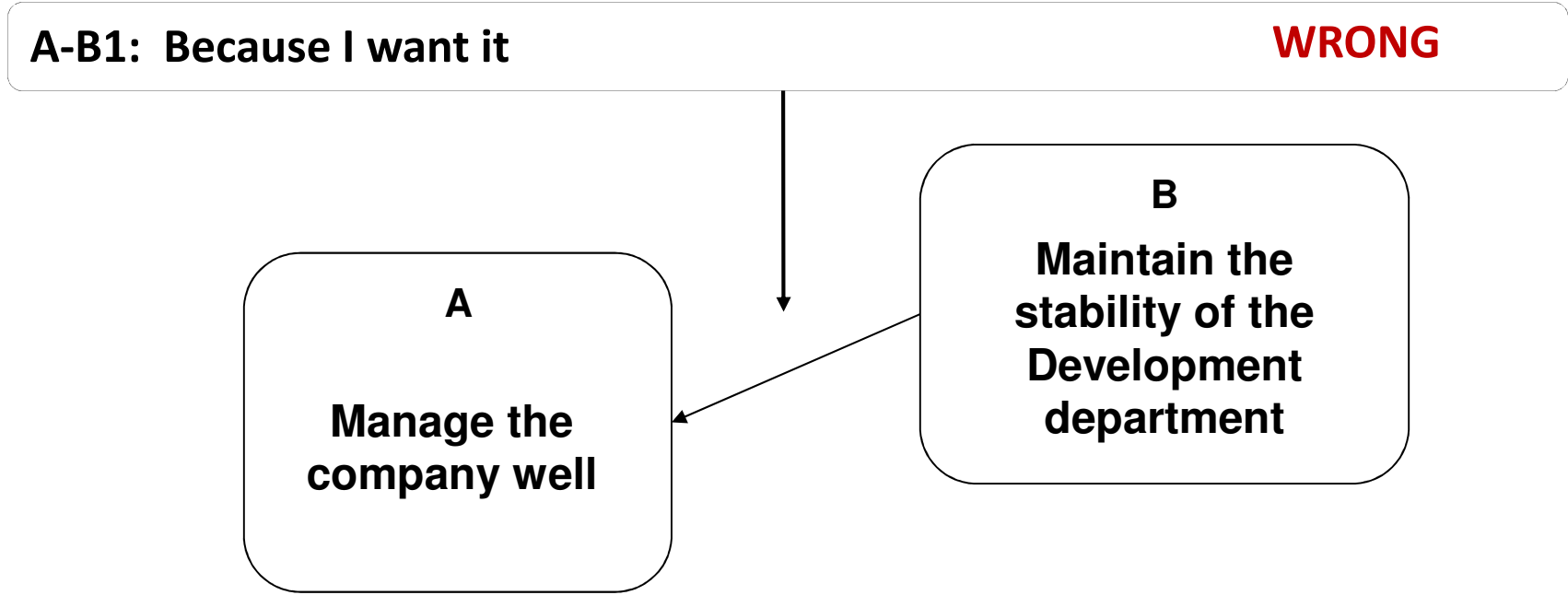


“Create atmosphere in which people feel secure and concentrate more on their work” is a relevant and valid statement RELATED TO THE SITUATION UNDER DISCUSSION, but it is NOT an assumption behind B-D.



Typical mistake 5: Irrelevant assumption

The statement that is put in the assumption box is generally true, connected to the situation and, yet, does not explain the logical connection.





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Areas where we should remember to look for assumptions

1. Expectations of others («I am expected to»)
2. Evaluation by others / measurements
3. Responsibility («I have no other choice but...»)
4. Authority («I have the right»)
5. A general way of functioning or a rule in this environment («People do not fly»)



Four Assumption Rules for straight arrows

Rule 1 – Referring words – the statement after “because” should contain some words that clearly refer to the “in order to” part of the statement, and some to the “we must” part.

Rule 2 – Explain the link, not the entity

Rule 3 – If we want... and if... then we must (checking the logic)

Rule 4 – What is the current prevailing mechanism?



Two Assumption Rules for D-D'

Rule D-D' 1: Surfacing Rule – D and D'
“**D AND D'** are in conflict because...”

The MOST typical mistake: “*D is in conflict with D', because...*”

Rule D-D' 2: “What is missing?”

Usually, it is lack of knowledge, method, rules, principles, regulation, procedure, mutual trust, mutual respect, willingness to cooperate, etc.