

Organizational Theory and Behavior

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The company presented in this paper, SunSpark Solutions, is a fictional organization with no connection to any real-life group, company, or organization. Any likeness to a real organization is pure coincidence, accidental, or just dumb luck! SunSpark, and all the attributes described herein, is a collage of experiences from the mind of the author for the purpose of education and sharing.

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I. SunSpark Solutions

SunSpark Solutions is a forward-thinking technology consulting firm operating at the intersection of environmental stewardship, digital innovation, and social responsibility. Its establishment was motivated by widespread gaps in the capacity of many nonprofits and mission-driven organizations to meaningfully reduce their digital carbon footprint. As global awareness of sustainability challenges has heightened—encompassing climate change, resource depletion, and related ecological threats—so has the urgency for technology solutions that are not only efficient but environmentally responsible. SunSpark Solutions endeavors to address these gaps by providing tailored IT consulting and sustainable tech strategies that enable mission-driven entities to flourish in the digital era while remaining mindful of ecological constraints.

A clearly defined core purpose underpins this endeavor: empowering social and environmental initiatives to adopt advanced digital tools while simultaneously minimizing their ecological impact. In line with Evolutionary-Teal principles, organizational success is viewed as contingent on autonomy, collaboration, and individual wholeness (Laloux, 2014). Rather than following a traditional hierarchy with managerial oversight, SunSpark Solutions is structured around small, peer-directed teams dedicated to specific clients or sustainability projects. This arrangement limits bureaucratic inefficiencies and encourages employees to contribute diverse talents, innovations, and expertise to shared objectives.

Foundational to this design was the creation of a mission statement informed by Teal thinking. Collaborative workshops involving environmental advocates, technology consultants, and logistical experts identified overlapping priorities such as reducing the carbon footprints of client operations, emphasizing transparent communication, and embedding social responsibility in every project phase (Nandram & Koster, 2014)). These dialogues culminated in the recognition that SunSpark's role extends beyond standard service delivery, striving instead to catalyze eco-conscious innovation with the potential for broader societal influence.

Real-world Teal examples—including Buurtzorg and Morning Star—influenced the shift toward self-management, fluid roles, and distributed authority (Laloux, 2014). Early personnel, such as software engineers and sustainability coaches, further shaped the governance system by endorsing an advice process that entrusts every individual with the right to propose strategic decisions, provided relevant stakeholders and experts are consulted (Hamel, 2011).

Transparency—integral to building mutual trust—was reinforced through open-access dashboards that furnish real-time data on project milestones, resource utilization, and financial metrics.

In conjunction with these operational frameworks, core values were articulated and

Green Agreements

≈ Sustainability ≈

≈ Transparency ≈

≈ Collective Growth ≈

embedded in daily processes. Under the banner of “Sustainability,” “Transparency,” and “Collective Growth,” employees formulated the “**Green Agreements**”—detailed guidelines addressing office resource usage, peer feedback, and interpersonal conduct (Laloux, 2014). Co-creating these standards engendered widespread commitment to upholding and refining them over time.

An inviting work environment was also prioritized, with office designs that diverge from traditional cubicles. Natural light, open collaboration zones, and meditation rooms support creativity and personal well-being, illustrating a commitment to wholeness that extends beyond professional tasks (Laloux, 2014). Equally important is the recruitment process, which emphasizes alignment with SunSpark’s overarching purpose rather than merely matching technical skills. Prospective hires engage in peer-led interviews and participate in brief test projects to ensure compatibility with the organization’s ethos of radical transparency and self-management. Once recruited, individuals undertake a multi-step onboarding program that equips them with practical skills in conflict resolution, the advice process, and reflection on how personal aspirations converge with SunSpark’s mission (Nandram & Koster, 2014; Laloux, 2014).

Overall, SunSpark Solutions reflects a holistic tapestry of collaborative organizational design, robust information-sharing mechanisms, flexible roles, and ecologically oriented values. By grounding every operational aspect in Evolutionary-Teal ideals from its inception, the organization positions itself as both a competent consultancy and a model for harnessing human ingenuity and moral responsibility toward pressing sustainability objectives. This integrated approach paves the way for future growth, signaling a trajectory that is impactful for clients, fulfilling for employees, and aligned with collective environmental well-being.

II. Core Dimensions of SunSpark Solutions' Teal Structure

A. Organizational Structure

SunSpark Solutions adopts an Evolutionary-Teal organizational structure, characterized by self-managed teams, decentralized authority, and fluid roles (Laloux, 2014). Unlike traditional hierarchical models, where decision-making is concentrated at the top, Teal organizations distribute authority across small, autonomous units that operate with a high degree of self-regulation (Bernstein et al., 2016). By replacing middle management with Sustainability Coaches, SunSpark ensures that teams receive mentorship and strategic alignment without imposing bureaucratic constraints. This non-hierarchical framework encourages adaptability, employee engagement, and shared accountability, mirroring successful case studies such as Buurtzorg in the Netherlands and Morning Star in the United States (Nandram & Koster, 2014; Hamel, 2011).

1. Self-Managed Teams and Decentralized Authority

In keeping with Teal principles, SunSpark's operational model is centered on self-managed teams that form around specific client projects or sustainability initiatives. Each team is fully autonomous, managing its own workload, setting project milestones, and allocating resources without the oversight of hierarchical managers (Laloux, 2014). This decentralized authority aligns with research indicating that self-governing teams often demonstrate superior problem-solving capabilities, as decision-making is driven by those closest to the work rather than imposed from above (Lee & Edmondson, 2017).

Self-managed structures have been shown to improve efficiency, reduce employee burnout, and increase job satisfaction (Bernstein et al., 2016). Buurtzorg, for example, transitioned away from top-down leadership by empowering its nurses to coordinate patient care independently. The result was a higher quality of service and lower operational costs, illustrating that self-management fosters both innovation and efficiency (Nandram & Koster, 2014). Similarly, Morning Star, a self-managed tomato-processing company, allows employees to draft their own job commitments, negotiate responsibilities with colleagues, and self-regulate performance, leading to greater accountability and engagement (Hamel, 2011).

At SunSpark, teams define their own goals and deliverables in alignment with the company's evolutionary purpose, an approach that enables continuous adaptation in response to

emerging environmental and technological trends. Unlike traditional organizations, where management sets rigid performance targets, SunSpark's teams co-create objectives based on real-time client needs and industry developments (Bernstein et al., 2016). This structure ensures agility, as employees are not constrained by pre-determined job descriptions but instead have the freedom to shift roles and priorities as needed.

2. Sustainability Coaches: Guidance Without Control

A key aspect of SunSpark's structure is the Sustainability Coach model, which provides non-hierarchical mentorship rather than managerial oversight. Sustainability Coaches serve as advisors who facilitate team problem-solving, resource allocation, and strategic decision-making without direct authority over employees. This mirrors the leadership-as-coaching framework seen in other self-managed organizations, where traditional power dynamics are replaced by distributed influence and knowledge-sharing (Laloux, 2014; Hamel, 2011).

The role of Sustainability Coaches aligns with research indicating that autonomy-supportive leadership—where leaders act as facilitators rather than enforcers—enhances employee motivation, creativity, and job satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Rather than dictating workflows, Sustainability Coaches provide guidance on best practices, conflict resolution, and resource management, ensuring that teams remain aligned with SunSpark's overarching sustainability mission. This structure empowers employees to take ownership of their roles while fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional development.

3. Fluid Roles and Adaptive Specialization

SunSpark rejects the rigidity of fixed job titles in favor of fluid, project-based roles that evolve according to employee expertise and organizational needs. In Teal organizations, individuals are not confined to static responsibilities; instead, they assume multiple, complementary roles that shift based on skills, interests, and team dynamics (Laloux, 2014). This adaptive specialization encourages cross-functional learning and fosters an entrepreneurial mindset, where employees proactively seek out challenges and growth opportunities (Laloux, 2014).

Complementary Roles

SunSpark rejects the rigidity of fixed job titles in favor of fluid, project-based roles

Research highlights the benefits of role fluidity in self-managed settings, particularly in fostering resilience, innovation, and employee engagement (Bernstein et al., 2016). At W.L. Gore & Associates, for example, employees are encouraged to define their own roles based on their strengths, contributing to the company's long-standing reputation for breakthrough innovations in materials science (Hamel, 2011). Similarly, SunSpark's dynamic role allocation enables employees to experiment with different responsibilities, acquire new skills, and expand their professional capabilities without bureaucratic constraints.

4. Integrated Support Functions and Distributed Decision-Making

Unlike conventional organizations, where support functions such as finance, HR, and IT operate as centralized departments, SunSpark distributes these responsibilities across voluntary task forces embedded within self-managed teams. This model reduces inefficiencies and eliminates bottlenecks commonly associated with hierarchical approvals (Lee & Edmondson, 2017). Research on decentralized governance structures suggests that cross-functional task forces improve decision-making speed, enhance collaboration, and enable faster adaptation to market shifts (Bernstein et al., 2016).

For instance, Morning Star's self-management system allows employees to access all company financials and make spending decisions without requiring approval from finance executives (Hamel, 2011). Similarly, SunSpark's open-data approach ensures that all team members have real-time access to financial reports, project budgets, and sustainability impact metrics, reinforcing organizational transparency and collective accountability.

=== IN SUMMARY ===

SunSpark Solutions' organizational structure exemplifies Evolutionary-Teal principles, where self-managed teams replace traditional hierarchies, Sustainability Coaches provide mentorship without authority, and fluid roles encourage adaptability. The firm's decentralized model fosters autonomy, continuous learning, and collaborative decision-making, aligning with empirical research on the effectiveness of self-regulating work environments. By integrating insights from case studies such as Buurtzorg, Morning Star, and W.L. Gore, SunSpark positions itself as a dynamic, responsive organization capable of sustaining long-term innovation and employee fulfillment. As research continues to highlight the advantages of self-management and non-hierarchical systems, SunSpark serves as a compelling model for how Teal organizations can

successfully navigate the complexities of modern business while remaining true to their evolutionary purpose.

B. Decision-Making Process

SunSpark Solutions employs a decentralized decision-making model rooted in the *advice process*, a foundational principle of Evolutionary-Teal organizations (Laloux, 2014). This method grants employees full decision-making authority while ensuring that choices are informed by collective intelligence rather than dictated by hierarchical approval structures (Lee & Edmondson, 2017). Research on self-managed organizations suggests that decentralized decision-making enhances agility, engagement, and accountability, ultimately leading to more effective problem-solving and innovation (Bernstein et al., 2016; Lee & Edmondson, 2017).

1. The Advice Process: Empowering Employees While Leveraging Collective Wisdom

SunSpark Solutions utilizes the advice process as its core mechanism for decision-making. Under this model, any employee can initiate a decision, provided they follow these three steps (Laloux, 2014):

- I. **Seek input from relevant experts or stakeholders** – Employees must consult those with expertise in the subject matter and those directly affected by the decision.
- II. **Consider the advice in good faith** – The advice gathered should be thoughtfully assessed, weighing both risks and opportunities.
- III. **Make the final decision** – The individual retains the authority to proceed with their decision, even if all consulted parties do not agree.

This approach differs from consensus-based decision-making in that employees are not required to incorporate all perspectives or reach unanimous agreement. Instead, the advice process ensures that decisions are informed by diverse insights while maintaining efficiency (Laloux, 2014). Such a structure contrasts with traditional top-down command models, where approval bottlenecks slow down progress and limit employee autonomy (Lee & Edmondson, 2017).

Case studies of self-managed companies demonstrate the effectiveness of the advice process in enhancing organizational adaptability. Morning Star exemplifies this model by allowing employees to draft Colleague Letters of Understanding (CLOUs), formalizing commitments with

peers instead of seeking managerial permissions (Buchanan, 2013). This peer-to-peer accountability structure fosters trust and transparency while ensuring alignment with organizational goals.

2. The Role of Transparency and Data Accessibility

For the advice process to function effectively, decision-makers must have access to relevant organizational data. SunSpark Solutions upholds a culture of radical transparency, providing employees with real-time financial reports, project performance metrics, and sustainability impact assessments. Research indicates that open-data policies significantly enhance employee confidence and decision quality, as individuals can make data-driven choices without relying on managerial oversight (Bernstein et al., 2016).

Transparency

Financial reports, project metrics, and sustainability impact assessments

At Buurtzorg, transparency plays a similar role in team-based decision-making. Nurses coordinate patient care autonomously, drawing on shared databases and peer consultations rather than waiting for hierarchical approvals (Bernstein et al., 2016). SunSpark’s decision-making model similarly empowers teams with access to relevant knowledge, enabling them to respond swiftly to emerging sustainability challenges and client needs.

3. Decentralized Decision-Making and Organizational Agility

SunSpark’s decision-making framework is designed to enhance agility by eliminating hierarchical constraints. Research on self-organizing systems suggests that flattened decision-making structures improve organizational responsiveness, adaptability, and resilience in uncertain environments (Spreitzer et al., 2017). Unlike conventional organizations, where decisions often require multiple layers of managerial approval, SunSpark’s employees are encouraged to act quickly, leveraging expertise across teams.

W.L. Gore & Associates exemplifies the benefits of decentralized decision-making through its “lattice” structure, in which employees make autonomous choices while leveraging cross-functional advice networks (Hamel, 2011). Similarly, SunSpark fosters collaborative, fast-paced decision-making by maintaining fluid communication channels and cross-team advisory networks.

4. Guardrails and Decision Accountability

While the advice process promotes autonomy, it also integrates mechanisms for accountability to prevent poorly considered decisions. At SunSpark, employees document major decisions and their rationale within an internal knowledge-sharing system, ensuring that past choices inform future ones. Research suggests that documenting decision rationales improves learning retention and prevents knowledge silos, particularly in decentralized settings (Lee & Edmondson, 2017).

Additionally, SunSpark encourages post-decision reflection, where employees evaluate the outcomes of their decisions and share insights with peers. This practice aligns with continuous learning frameworks, where iterative feedback loops refine decision-making over time (Spreitzer et al., 2017).

=== IN SUMMARY ===

SunSpark Solutions' decision-making framework exemplifies Evolutionary-Teal principles by distributing authority through the advice process, fostering collective intelligence, agility, and accountability. Research indicates that decentralized decision-making enhances employee engagement, reduces bureaucracy, and accelerates responsiveness to changing business landscapes (Bernstein et al., 2016). By implementing transparent data-sharing, cross-functional consultation, and post-decision reflection, SunSpark ensures that decision autonomy is balanced with informed responsibility. This model positions SunSpark as an adaptable, employee-driven organization that thrives on trust, expertise, and shared purpose.

C. Conflict Resolution Process

SunSpark Solutions employs a multi-step, peer-driven conflict resolution process aligned with the principles of Evolutionary-Teal organizations. In the absence of hierarchical oversight, Teal organizations require structured yet flexible conflict resolution frameworks that empower individuals to resolve disputes early, fairly, and transparently (Laloux, 2014). The self-managed team concept—introduced in the “Organizational Structure” section—functions best when conflicts are addressed proactively through clear procedural mechanisms, minimizing escalation and fostering collaboration (Lee & Edmondson, 2017).

1. The Role of Conflict in Self-Managed Organizations

Unlike traditional hierarchical companies, where conflicts are often resolved through managerial intervention, Teal organizations encourage peer-driven resolution methods that strengthen team cohesion and accountability (Hamel, 2011). Studies suggest that decentralized organizations benefit from formalized conflict-resolution structures, as they promote trust and prevent unresolved tensions from disrupting overall performance (Edmondson, 1999).

Peer-driven Resolution

Promote trust and prevent unresolved tensions from disrupting overall performance

At Morning Star, a fully self-managed company, employees navigate disputes through direct, structured dialogue, ensuring accountability while preventing unnecessary escalation (Bernstein et al., 2016). Similarly, FAVI, a self-managed French manufacturing company, uses peer-based mediation strategies, demonstrating that clear, transparent conflict resolution processes reduce workplace friction and enhance long-term team dynamics (Laloux, 2014).

2. SunSpark's Four-Step Conflict Resolution Process

SunSpark Solutions' approach to conflict resolution is structured yet non-bureaucratic, ensuring that disputes are addressed efficiently and equitably. The process consists of the following four steps:

- I. **Direct Dialogue** – Employees are encouraged to resolve disputes privately and directly, without third-party intervention. Open and direct communication is the most effective method for resolving interpersonal conflicts, as it fosters trust and accountability. To support this, SunSpark provides interpersonal communication training as part of its onboarding process, equipping employees with the skills necessary for constructive, solution-focused discussions (Edmondson, 1999).
- II. **Peer Mediation** – If direct dialogue does not resolve the conflict, a neutral Sustainability Coach or experienced peer mediator facilitates further discussion. Peer mediation has been shown to improve conflict resolution efficiency, as colleagues often possess greater contextual understanding than external mediators (Lee & Edmondson, 2017). SunSpark's Sustainability Coaches are trained in nonviolent communication and active listening techniques, ensuring that mediated discussions remain collaborative rather than adversarial (Rosenberg, 2003).

- III. **Peer Panel Review** – If mediation proves ineffective, a small panel of employees (typically composed of relevant stakeholders) is convened to review the dispute and provide recommendations. Studies on peer-based governance systems indicate that decisions made by diverse panels tend to be perceived as fairer and more legitimate than unilateral managerial rulings, reinforcing team commitment to outcomes (Bernstein et al., 2016; Edmondson, 1999).
- IV. **Final Consideration** – In rare cases where resolution remains elusive, a founding leader or external mediator may be consulted to provide a final perspective. This step is a last resort and is only used if prior methods fail to achieve a mutually satisfactory resolution. Research suggests that external mediation is most effective when all prior internal options have been exhausted, as it minimizes unnecessary reliance on third-party intervention while maintaining organizational autonomy (Gelfand et al., 2012).

3. Ensuring a Culture of Conflict Competence

For this conflict resolution model to function effectively, SunSpark Solutions cultivates a culture of conflict competence, in which employees view conflict as a natural and constructive element of teamwork (Runde & Flanagan, 2012). Employees receive training in conflict resolution strategies, including active listening, de-escalation techniques, and negotiation skills, ensuring that they are prepared to navigate disputes independently (Gelfand et al., 2012).

Additionally, SunSpark integrates regular team check-ins, where employees have structured opportunities to discuss tensions before they escalate. Studies show that proactive conflict management reduces long-term organizational stress and enhances overall team performance (Edmondson, 1999).

4. Transparency and Psychological Safety in Conflict Resolution

An essential component of SunSpark's conflict resolution model is psychological safety, which ensures that employees feel comfortable raising concerns without fear of retaliation (Edmondson, 1999). Research suggests that organizations fostering psychological safety experience higher levels of innovation and collaboration, as employees are more likely to voice concerns and offer solutions (Lee & Edmondson, 2017).

SunSpark maintains transparency in the conflict resolution process by:

- Providing clear documentation on each step in the process, ensuring that employees understand their rights and responsibilities.
- Keeping conflict discussions confidential, preserving trust among all parties involved.
- Offering post-conflict debriefs, where employees reflect on lessons learned, fostering continuous improvement in interpersonal dynamics (Gelfand et al., 2012).

=== IN SUMMARY ===

SunSpark Solutions' conflict resolution framework reflects Teal principles of self-management, transparency, and peer-driven accountability. By integrating direct dialogue, peer mediation, panel review, and final consideration, SunSpark ensures that conflicts are resolved quickly and equitably without reliance on hierarchical authority (Laloux, 2014). This model is supported by empirical research demonstrating that structured conflict resolution enhances team cohesion, psychological safety, and long-term organizational resilience (Bernstein et al., 2016; Edmondson, 1999). By fostering a culture where conflict is viewed as a growth opportunity rather than a disruption, SunSpark exemplifies how Teal organizations can sustain high-trust, high-performance work environments.

D. Compensation

SunSpark Solutions employs a self-set salary model with peer calibration and profit-sharing mechanisms, reflecting the core principles of Evolutionary-Teal organizations, which emphasize transparency, fairness, and collective responsibility (Laloux, 2014). Traditional compensation structures, characterized by hierarchical pay scales and opaque salary determinations, have been shown to contribute to workplace dissatisfaction, reduced trust, and internal competition (Card et al., 2012; Cullen & Perez-Truglia, 2022). By contrast, self-set salaries and profit-sharing models encourage employee engagement and alignment with organizational goals, as demonstrated in companies such as Morning Star, Semco, and Buurtzorg (Hamel, 2011; Laloux, 2014; Nandram & Koster, 2014).

1. Self-Set Salaries with Peer-Based Calibration

At SunSpark, compensation decisions are made through an open and collaborative process in which employees determine their own salaries by reviewing transparent financial data, proposing

their salary, and engaging in peer discussions for fairness and alignment (Dames, 2023). This method ensures that individuals take full responsibility for their compensation while ensuring that salaries reflect the organization's financial health and peer expectations.

The self-set salary process follows three key steps:

I. Financial Transparency and Budget Review

- Employees access real-time financial reports, including revenue, operating costs, and overall compensation budgets.
- Providing financial transparency allows employees to make informed decisions based on organizational sustainability rather than personal gain (Laloux, 2014).

II. Salary Proposal

- Each employee submits a salary proposal that aligns with their contributions, experience, and role evolution.
- Research on self-managed firms indicates that when individuals propose their own salaries, they tend to self-regulate and adjust expectations in accordance with organizational realities (Hamel, 2011).

III. Peer Calibration Process

- A peer review committee, consisting of colleagues across different teams, evaluates salary proposals for fairness and alignment with organizational goals.
- Employees are encouraged to provide rationale for their salary requests, promoting mutual accountability and ensuring that pay structures remain equitable and justifiable (Cullen & Perez-Truglia, 2022).

Empirical research supports the benefits of peer-based salary calibration, particularly in fostering trust, transparency, and perceived equity (Card et al., 2012; Stouten et al., 2018). Studies on pay transparency suggest that organizations with open salary policies experience higher employee satisfaction and lower turnover rates, as transparency reduces pay-related uncertainty and perceptions of favoritism (Cullen & Perez-Truglia, 2022).

2. Eliminating Individual Bonuses in Favor of Equal Profit-Sharing

SunSpark Solutions does not offer individual performance-based bonuses, which have been criticized for fostering competition over collaboration (Cullen & Perez-Truglia, 2022). Instead, profits are distributed equally among employees, reinforcing shared responsibility for organizational success.

The decision to eliminate individual incentives is based on research showing that extrinsic rewards, such as performance bonuses, can undermine intrinsic motivation and long-term engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In contrast, profit-sharing models have been linked to higher organizational commitment, cooperation, and financial sustainability (Kuvaas et al., 2017).

3. Rationale for Equal Profit-Sharing at SunSpark

I. Collective Accountability

- Profit-sharing ensures that everyone benefits from the company's success, reducing internal competition and aligning interests toward long-term growth (Dames, 2023).

II. Trust and Collaboration

- Research indicates that individual performance bonuses can create zero-sum dynamics, leading to unhealthy competition, information hoarding, and short-term decision-making (Cullen & Perez-Truglia, 2022).
- In contrast, organizations that implement team-based or company-wide profit-sharing report higher cooperation and knowledge sharing (Kuvaas et al., 2017).

III. Reduced Pay Disparities and Increased Retention

- Studies have found that organizations with flatter pay distributions experience lower employee turnover, as employees perceive compensation as more equitable (Card et al., 2012).

4. Compensation Transparency and Trust

A critical component of SunSpark's compensation strategy is full transparency regarding salaries and financial data. Research on pay transparency suggests that when employees have access to salary data, perceptions of fairness improve, and trust in leadership increases (Cullen & Perez-Truglia, 2022).

At SunSpark:

- Salaries are openly shared, allowing employees to see how compensation aligns across distinct roles.
- Financial updates are provided quarterly, ensuring that compensation adjustments remain sustainable.
- Peer accountability mechanisms discourage salary inflation and encourage employees to align compensation with actual contributions (Card et al., 2012).

Profit Sharing

Profits are distributed equally, reinforcing shared responsibility

≈ Collective Accountability ≈

≈ Trust and Collaboration ≈

≈ Reduced Pay Disparities and Increased Retention ≈

Case studies of Teal organizations support the effectiveness of transparent compensation models. For example, Morning Star publishes all salary data internally, empowering employees to self-regulate pay decisions while maintaining organizational viability (Hamel, 2011). Similarly, Semco's participatory salary-setting process has been shown to foster stronger employee engagement and financial sustainability (Laloux, 2014).

=== IN SUMMARY ===

SunSpark Solutions' compensation model reflects Teal principles of autonomy, transparency, and collective accountability. By integrating self-set salaries with peer calibration, equal profit-sharing, and full financial transparency, SunSpark ensures that compensation is fair, sustainable, and aligned with organizational values. Empirical research supports these approaches, demonstrating pay transparency, collective incentives, and participatory decision-making enhance organizational trust, cooperation, and long-term financial success (Card et al., 2012; Cullen & Perez-Truglia, 2022; Kuvaas et al., 2017). SunSpark's model positions it as a pioneer in equitable and sustainable compensation practices, setting a benchmark for Evolutionary-Teal organizations seeking to redefine how compensation fosters collaboration rather than competition.

E. Dismissal Process

The dismissal process at SunSpark Solutions reflects Evolutionary-Teal principles of self-management, transparency, and mutual accountability. In contrast to traditional hierarchical organizations, where terminations are often dictated unilaterally by managers or HR departments, Teal organizations treat dismissal as an absolute last resort (Nandram & Koster, 2014; Laloux, 2014). As previously noted, self-managed teams work best when structured mechanisms exist to address underperformance and misalignment before termination becomes necessary (Lee & Edmondson, 2017; Bernstein et al., 2016).

Last Resort

Structured mechanisms to address underperformance and misalignment before termination becomes necessary

SunSpark Solutions ensures that peer-driven accountability, structured conflict resolution, and transparent feedback mechanisms precede any dismissal decision. By fostering an environment where employees actively manage their own performance and fit within the organization, SunSpark

minimizes the need for involuntary termination, instead encouraging self-selection and voluntary transitions (Laloux, 2014).

1. Dismissal as a Last Resort

SunSpark adheres to the fundamental Teal principle that termination should occur only after all mediation efforts have been exhausted (Laloux, 2014). If an employee struggles with performance or alignment with SunSpark's core values, intervention begins with structured feedback and support mechanisms rather than immediate dismissal. This aligns with research showing that well-defined mediation and coaching processes improve employee retention and long-term engagement (Edmondson, 1999).

The dismissal process follows a four-stage approach, ensuring fairness, transparency, and dignity for all parties involved:

I. Peer Feedback and Self-Correction

- Employees receive constructive peer feedback when concerns about performance or value misalignment arise.
- SunSpark encourages self-correction by providing employees with clear expectations and access to coaching or mentorship resources (Bernstein et al., 2016).
- Studies indicate that when employees receive honest feedback in psychologically safe environments, they are more likely to adjust behaviors and resolve concerns before escalation occurs (Edmondson, 1999).

II. Structured Mediation and Support

- If issues persist, the conflict resolution framework is activated, allowing the employee and concerned peers to engage in structured mediation.
- Sustainability Coaches or experienced colleagues serve as neutral facilitators, guiding discussions toward resolution rather than punitive action (Laloux, 2014).
- Research suggests that mediation programs reduce voluntary turnover and enhance workplace harmony by fostering constructive dialogue (Gelfand et al., 2012).

III. Peer Panel Review for Unresolved Cases

- If mediation does not lead to resolution, a peer panel consisting of diverse team members is convened to review the situation and determine the best course of action.
- This approach ensures equity, as no single manager or executive has unilateral authority to terminate employment (Lee & Edmondson, 2017).

- Peer-driven reviews are associated with higher perceived fairness and greater acceptance of termination decisions (Stouten et al., 2018).

IV. Voluntary Transition or Collective Dismissal Decision

- In most cases, individuals recognize when they are no longer a fit for the organization and self-select out before reaching formal dismissal (Laloux, 2014).
- If self-selection does not occur and the peer panel determines that continued employment is not viable, a collective decision is made to part ways.
- Research shows that employees are more likely to accept dismissal decisions when they are made collectively and transparently rather than imposed by top-down management (Gelfand et al., 2012).

2. Respectful Offboarding and Transition Support

SunSpark Solutions is committed to humane offboarding practices, ensuring that employees leaving the organization do so with dignity and support. Unlike traditional companies, where terminations can be abrupt and impersonal, SunSpark provides career transition assistance, coaching, and external placement referrals to help departing employees find new opportunities (Laloux, 2014).

Key aspects of SunSpark's offboarding process include:

I. Career Counseling and Job Placement Assistance

- Employees receive guidance on next career steps, including resume workshops, networking support, and referrals to external opportunities.
- Research suggests that organizations offering transition support experience lower reputational risks and maintain stronger alumni networks (Cascio, 2009).

II. Exit Interviews and Reflection

- Departing employees participate in structured exit discussions to reflect on their experience and provide feedback on the dismissal process.
- Studies show that exit interviews improve organizational learning by identifying cultural misalignments and areas for process improvement (Stouten et al., 2018).

III. Maintaining Alumni Relationships

- Former employees are invited to remain part of SunSpark's extended professional network, reinforcing the idea that leaving is a transition rather than a severance.

- Research on corporate alumni programs indicates that maintaining strong post-employment relationships leads to future collaborations and referrals (Cascio, 2009).

3. Psychological Safety and Transparency in the Dismissal Process

SunSpark's commitment to psychological safety ensures that employees can raise concerns about performance or cultural fit without fear of retribution (Edmondson, 1999). The organization fosters an open dialogue on performance and growth, reducing the stigma associated with leaving and encouraging honest conversations about career alignment.

In the "Conflict Resolution Process" section, psychological safety helped maintain transparency. In the dismissal process it is also especially important:

- **Transparent Performance Metrics:** Employees have access to clear performance indicators and peer-driven feedback loops to understand how they are contributing to the organization (Bernstein et al., 2016).
- **Open Conversations on Career Trajectories:** Employees are encouraged to reflect on whether SunSpark remains the right fit for their evolving skills and interests (Laloux, 2014).
- **A Non-Punitive Approach to Underperformance:** Rather than treating underperformance as grounds for termination, SunSpark sees it as an opportunity for learning and role realignment (Lee & Edmondson, 2017).

=== IN SUMMARY ===

SunSpark Solutions' dismissal process reflects the principles of self-management, fairness, and transparency, ensuring that employment decisions are made collectively and with dignity. By integrating peer-driven feedback, mediation, and voluntary transitions, SunSpark minimizes involuntary terminations while maintaining high performance and alignment with organizational values. The process is supported by empirical research, demonstrating that psychological safety, structured mediation, and transparent decision-making improve workplace harmony and long-term organizational resilience (Bernstein et al., 2016; Edmondson, 1999; Stouten et al., 2018). SunSpark's approach ensures that employees feel valued and supported, even in cases where continued employment is not the best path forward.

Dignity

Employees feel valued and supported, even in cases where continued employment is not the best path forward

F. Organizational Environment (Building)

SunSpark Solutions designs its organizational environment to reflect the wholeness and self-management principles of Evolutionary-Teal organizations (Laloux, 2014). Traditional workplaces often reinforce hierarchical control through physical status markers, restrictive policies, and rigid workspaces. In contrast, Teal organizations cultivate environments that foster collaboration, personal authenticity, and well-being (Laloux, 2014). Research indicates that workspace design significantly influences employee productivity, engagement, and emotional well-being, particularly when organizations integrate natural elements, flexible structures, and inclusive policies (van der Voordt, 2004).

Workplace Design

Cultivate environments that foster collaboration, personal authenticity, and well-being

SunSpark's workplace environment is intentionally designed to support openness, autonomy, and holistic employee well-being by incorporating:

- Open-concept design with natural light and plants, fostering collaboration and psychological well-being.
- The removal of status markers, ensuring all employees share the same physical space.
- Quiet rooms for meditation and personal reflection, promoting mindfulness and stress reduction.
- Family-friendly and pet-friendly policies, reinforcing the principle of integrating personal and professional life in a meaningful way.

By prioritizing psychological safety, inclusivity, and flexibility, SunSpark fosters an environment that enhances creativity, innovation, and job satisfaction (Hyland et al., 2015).

1. Open-Concept Design and Biophilic Workspaces

The physical workspace at SunSpark Solutions is built around an open-concept layout, eliminating barriers between employees and reinforcing a culture of transparency and collaboration. Research suggests that open workspaces improve communication, encourage cross-functional interaction, and enhance team cohesion (van der Voordt, 2004).

Additionally, biophilic design elements—such as indoor plants, natural materials, and abundant natural light—are integrated into the workspace. Studies show that exposure to natural elements in the workplace reduces stress, improves cognitive function, and increases overall well-

being (Kellert, 2018). Organizations that incorporate biophilic design have reported higher employee engagement, increased creativity, and lower absenteeism (Kellert, 2018).

SunSpark applies these principles by:

- Maximizing natural light exposure, using large windows and open seating arrangements.
- Incorporating green walls and indoor gardens, reinforcing sustainability and ecological consciousness.
- Providing ergonomic workstations that allow for movement and adaptability, supporting employees' physical well-being.
- Eliminating status markers to promote equality

Traditional office environments often use corner offices, private workspaces, and executive parking spaces to reinforce hierarchical structures (Hamel, 2011). In Teal organizations, such markers of rank are removed, ensuring that employees interact as equals and workspaces are shared openly (Laloux, 2014).

At SunSpark Solutions:

- **No executive offices or designated parking spots exist**, ensuring a non-hierarchical spatial arrangement.
- **Workspaces are flexible**, allowing employees to choose where they work based on their needs.
- **Shared areas are designed for spontaneous collaboration**, encouraging cross-functional dialogue.

Research suggests that flattening hierarchical workspaces enhances trust and reduces perceived power imbalances, leading to more effective teamwork and decision-making (Bernstein & Turban, 2018).

2. Quiet Rooms for Mindfulness and Reflection

Recognizing the importance of mental well-being, SunSpark provides dedicated quiet spaces for meditation, reflection, or uninterrupted deep work. Research on mindfulness in the workplace suggests that access to quiet, reflective spaces reduces stress, enhances emotional regulation, and improves cognitive performance (Hyland et al., 2015).

Employees at SunSpark can utilize dedicated meditation rooms, which are designed to:

- Encourage daily mindfulness practices, supporting emotional balance and focus.

- Serve as technology-free zones, promoting deep thinking and introspection.
- Provide employees with a retreat for de-escalating stress, reducing burnout and fatigue.

Case studies of self-managed organizations, such as Heiligenfeld (a Teal-inspired healthcare organization), demonstrate that integrating mindfulness practices into the work environment leads to improved employee engagement, reduced absenteeism, and stronger workplace relationships (Laloux, 2014).

3. Family-Friendly and Pet-Friendly Policies

SunSpark Solutions promotes wholeness by integrating family-friendly and pet-friendly policies, allowing employees to bring their full selves to work. Research indicates that workplace flexibility enhances job satisfaction, reduces stress, and improves employee retention (Kossek et al., 2014).

Key policies include:

- **Flexible work arrangements** for employees with caregiving responsibilities.
- **Child-friendly spaces**, ensuring employees can occasionally bring children to the office.
- **Pet-friendly policies**, reinforcing a relaxed and supportive work environment.

Studies on family-supportive work environments suggest that such policies enhance employee loyalty, well-being, and organizational commitment (Kossek et al., 2014). By providing a space where employees do not have to separate personal and professional responsibilities, SunSpark fosters greater work-life integration.

4. Blending Personal and Professional Space for an Authentic Workplace Culture

By eliminating rigid boundaries between professional and personal life, SunSpark Solutions cultivates an authentic and engaging organizational culture. Research supports the idea that when employees feel psychologically safe and can express themselves fully, they experience greater job satisfaction and perform at higher levels (Edmondson, 1999).

At SunSpark, the physical environment reinforces this cultural ethos by:

- **Encouraging personalization of workspaces**, allowing employees to express individuality.

- **Supporting informal interactions in shared areas**, facilitating stronger workplace relationships.
- **Providing wellness amenities**, such as yoga spaces, relaxation zones, and informal social events.

Studies suggest that organizations that embrace holistic workplace design experience higher levels of employee engagement, creativity, and innovation (Kellert, 2018). By creating an environment where employees feel supported and valued, SunSpark ensures long-term organizational success while remaining aligned with Teal principles of wholeness and self-management (Laloux, 2014).

=== IN SUMMARY ===

SunSpark Solutions' physical workspace is designed to align with Evolutionary-Teal principles, fostering collaboration, inclusivity, and employee well-being. By implementing an open-concept layout, removing hierarchical status markers, integrating mindfulness spaces, and supporting work-life integration, SunSpark creates an environment that encourages creativity, trust, and psychological safety (Bernstein & Turban, 2018; Hyland et al., 2015). Empirical research supports that such workplace designs enhance employee engagement, reduce stress, and improve overall organizational effectiveness (Kossek et al., 2014). SunSpark's organizational environment thus serves as a model for self-managed companies seeking to create purpose-driven, people-centric workplaces.

G. Values and Ground Rules

SunSpark Solutions integrates explicit values and ground rules into its organizational culture to reinforce self-management, psychological safety, and collective accountability (Laloux, 2014). In Evolutionary-Teal organizations, values are not merely abstract statements but guiding principles actively embedded in daily decision-making (Laloux, 2014). Research suggests that clearly defined organizational values enhance employee engagement, ethical behavior, and trust, particularly in self-managed environments where authority is decentralized (Edmondson, 1999).

Real Values

≈ Green Agreements ≈

≈ Values Cafés ≈

≈ Everyday Work Practices ≈

At SunSpark, core values—sustainability, transparency, and collective growth—are operationalized through explicit behavioral agreements, known internally as “Green Agreements.” These agreements establish shared expectations for communication, sustainability practices, and collaboration, ensuring that SunSpark employees work in alignment with the organization’s evolutionary purpose.

1. Green Agreements: Translating Values into Action

To ensure that values are actionable and meaningful, SunSpark formalizes them through three key dimensions of workplace behavior:

I. Respectful Communication

- Employees commit to active listening, constructive dialogue, and mutual respect in all interactions.
- Ground rules include “no interrupting in meetings,” “assume positive intent,” and “use nonviolent communication techniques” (Rosenberg, 2003).
- Studies show that psychologically safe work environments promote knowledge sharing, innovation, and trust (Edmondson, 1999).

II. Sustainability Norms

- Employees follow responsible resource use guidelines, such as minimizing waste, using renewable energy where possible, and adopting low-carbon work practices.
- Sustainability commitments align with corporate social responsibility research, which links eco-conscious policies to increased employee motivation and stakeholder trust (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012).

III. Collaboration Guidelines

- Employees are encouraged to offer and receive peer feedback regularly, fostering a culture of continuous learning and mutual development (London & Smither, 2002).
- Research on peer-driven accountability models suggests that teams function more effectively when structured feedback mechanisms are in place (Edmondson, 1999).

2. Values Cafés: A Living Values Framework

Unlike traditional corporate values, which often become static and disconnected from daily operations, SunSpark ensures that its values remain dynamic and adaptable through quarterly Values Cafés. These open forums provide employees with opportunities to:

- Discuss challenges in upholding core values.
- Propose refinements to the Green Agreements.
- Share real-world examples of values in action.

Research indicates that frequent reflection on values strengthens organizational commitment and psychological safety, ensuring that employees feel personally invested in maintaining a high-trust workplace culture (Edmondson, 1999).

3. Embedding Values into Everyday Work Practices

To reinforce the Green Agreements, SunSpark integrates values-driven behaviors into daily workflows. These include:

- **Decision-Making Alignment:** Employees reference the Green Agreements when navigating complex decisions, ensuring alignment with SunSpark’s sustainability mission (Edmondson, 1999).
- **Onboarding & Training:** New hires undergo values-based orientation programs, where they engage in scenario-based exercises that demonstrate how SunSpark’s values apply in practice (Laloux, 2014).
- **Feedback & Conflict Resolution:** Values serve as guiding principles in mediation processes, ensuring that employees approach disputes with respect, transparency, and collective growth in mind.

4. The Role of Transparency and Psychological Safety

SunSpark fosters radical transparency by ensuring that:

- All company decisions, financial data, and performance metrics are openly shared.
- Employees have a voice in shaping the organization’s evolution.

This level of openness is linked to higher employee engagement, lower turnover, and increased organizational trust (Bernstein & Turban, 2018). Furthermore, studies show that psychological safety—where employees feel safe to express ideas and concerns—correlates strongly with organizational innovation and adaptability (Edmondson, 1999).

=== IN SUMMARY ===

SunSpark Solutions' approach to values and ground rules reflects the Teal philosophy of embedding guiding principles into everyday operations. Through the Green Agreements, Values Cafés, and transparent communication practices, SunSpark cultivates a high-trust, high-engagement culture where employees actively embody sustainability, collaboration, and transparency. Research supports that when values are clearly defined and reinforced through structured mechanisms, organizations achieve higher employee commitment, ethical integrity, and operational resilience (Edmondson, 1999).

By ensuring that values are continuously revisited and co-created, SunSpark Solutions demonstrates how Teal organizations can evolve dynamically while maintaining cultural cohesion and integrity (Laloux, 2014).

H. Recruitment Process

SunSpark Solutions employs a peer-driven recruitment process designed to identify individuals who align with the organization's evolutionary purpose, self-management model, and collaborative culture. In contrast to traditional hiring processes that rely on HR-led selection and hierarchical approvals, Evolutionary-Teal organizations emphasize peer-based recruitment, trial periods, and transparency, ensuring that new employees integrate seamlessly into self-managed teams (Laloux, 2014).

Recruitment

Peer-based recruitment, trial periods, and transparency, ensuring that new employees integrate seamlessly into self-managed teams

Research indicates that values-based hiring, where candidates are assessed based on alignment with organizational principles rather than technical skills alone, leads to higher retention, increased job satisfaction, and stronger cultural cohesion (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). SunSpark Solutions follows this model by implementing a multi-step peer hiring process, ensuring that potential employees understand the organization's Teal framework and can thrive within a decentralized structure.

1. Peer-Based Recruitment: A Collaborative Hiring Model

SunSpark's recruitment process is structured to eliminate hierarchical decision-making and instead empower teams to select their own colleagues. This approach follows the Buurtzorg model,

where new hires engage with future peers rather than HR managers, allowing mutual evaluation of fit and expectations (Nandram & Koster, 2014)).

The recruitment process includes:

I. Peer Interviews

- Candidates meet directly with potential teammates, who assess their fit with SunSpark's values, collaboration style, and adaptability to self-management (Nandram & Koster, 2014).
- Research on collaborative hiring models suggests that peer involvement increases employee engagement and fosters a sense of shared responsibility for new hires (Bernstein et al., 2016).

II. Values and Self-Management Orientation

- Candidates participate in discussions on SunSpark's Teal principles, the advice process, and conflict resolution mechanisms to ensure they understand the autonomy and responsibility required.
- Studies indicate that providing candidates with a realistic preview of self-managed work environments reduces attrition and enhances long-term success (Cascio, 2009).

III. Trial Work Periods and Shadowing

- Instead of relying solely on interviews, candidates are invited to shadow teams or engage in a paid "trial task," where they work alongside future colleagues.
- This practice mirrors Buurtzorg's hiring model, where nurses assess their own compatibility with the organization before fully committing (Nandram & Koster, 2014).
- Research suggests that trial periods improve hiring accuracy, allowing both candidates and existing employees to evaluate mutual fit beyond surface-level assessments (Petriglieri et al., 2019).

IV. Collective Hiring Decisions

- Following the trial period, team members discuss the candidate's performance, cultural fit, and overall alignment with SunSpark's mission.
- The final decision is made collectively, without input from a central HR authority, reinforcing distributed decision-making and team ownership (Laloux, 2014).
- Studies on self-managed organizations confirm that peer-selected teams exhibit higher trust, commitment, and performance cohesion compared to manager-led hiring (Bernstein et al., 2016).

2. Transparency in Recruitment: Open Communication and Mutual Evaluation

SunSpark Solutions maintains full transparency throughout the hiring process, ensuring that candidates and existing employees engage in mutual evaluation. Unlike traditional organizations, where recruitment decisions are often top-down and opaque, SunSpark emphasizes open discussion, feedback, and access to company information.

Key transparency elements include:

- **Public Access to Hiring Decisions:** Teams openly discuss and document their hiring choices, ensuring that decisions are made based on shared criteria rather than subjective biases (Cascio, 2009).
- **Clear Expectations for New Hires:** Candidates receive detailed information on self-management principles, decision-making autonomy, and organizational culture, reducing post-hire misalignment (Petriglieri et al., 2019).

Research on transparent hiring processes suggests that organizations with clear and participatory recruitment frameworks experience higher engagement, lower turnover, and stronger commitment among employees (Cascio, 2009).

3. Cultural Fit and Long-Term Retention

SunSpark's recruitment process prioritizes alignment with organizational values over rigid skill-based hiring. While technical skills remain important, research indicates that hiring based on cultural fit leads to higher long-term retention and job satisfaction (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

To assess cultural alignment, SunSpark integrates:

- **Scenario-Based Interviews:** Candidates participate in discussions or exercises simulating real-world team interactions, allowing peers to evaluate collaboration skills, adaptability, and alignment with SunSpark's values.
- **Feedback Loops:** Candidates receive open and honest feedback throughout the hiring process, reinforcing SunSpark's commitment to transparency and mutual respect.

Empirical studies suggest that organizations with peer-led hiring frameworks experience greater workforce stability, as employees feel more accountable for their hiring decisions and are invested in the success of new team members (Bernstein et al., 2016).

=== IN SUMMARY ===

SunSpark Solutions' peer-based recruitment model exemplifies Teal hiring principles, ensuring that new employees align with the organization's values, self-management framework,

and collaborative culture. By eliminating hierarchical hiring processes, integrating trial periods, and fostering transparency, SunSpark creates a high-trust, high-engagement workplace where employees take active ownership of team composition and organizational evolution (Laloux, 2014). Research confirms that values-driven, participatory hiring enhances employee retention, satisfaction, and cultural cohesion, positioning SunSpark as a leader in self-managed recruitment practices (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

I. Onboarding Process

SunSpark Solutions designs its onboarding process to align with Evolutionary-Teal principles, emphasizing self-management, purpose alignment, and holistic employee integration (Laloux, 2014). Unlike traditional onboarding programs, which often focus solely on compliance and job-specific training, Teal organizations adopt immersive, values-driven onboarding experiences that ensure new employees develop both technical competencies and cultural alignment (Petriglieri et al., 2019).

Research indicates that a well-structured onboarding process enhances employee engagement, retention, and long-term performance, particularly in non-hierarchical environments where autonomy and self-direction are essential (Bauer et al., 2007; Saks et al., 2007). SunSpark's onboarding model is structured to ensure new employees fully integrate into the self-managed structure, understand the organization's evolutionary purpose, and cultivate strong interpersonal connections.

Onboarding

≈ Foundations Training ≈

≈ Purpose Alignment ≈

≈ Eco-Rotation ≈

≈ Mentorship ≈

1. A Four-Part Onboarding Process

To foster a **deep sense of belonging, autonomy, and alignment**, SunSpark Solutions implements a **four-part onboarding framework**:

I. Foundations Training: Developing Core Competencies in Self-Management

- New employees participate in an intensive orientation program covering SunSpark's decision-making framework (advice process), conflict resolution methods, and wholeness practices (Laloux, 2014).

- Training sessions focus on psychological safety, active listening, and constructive feedback, ensuring that newcomers understand how to function effectively in a peer-driven environment (Edmondson, 1999).
- Studies show that employees who receive early training in organizational culture and communication norms experience greater engagement and job satisfaction (Bauer et al., 2007).

II. Purpose Alignment: Connecting Personal and Organizational Missions

- SunSpark integrates workshops and reflective exercises that help new hires identify their personal calling and align it with the company's sustainability mission (Hamel, 2011).
- Research suggests that employees who feel a strong alignment between their values and organizational purpose exhibit higher levels of motivation, creativity, and commitment (Petriglieri et al., 2019).
- SunSpark follows a Patagonia-inspired approach, where employees are encouraged to bring their whole selves to work and integrate their passions into their roles (Hamel, 2011).

III. Eco-Rotation: Cross-Team Learning and Organizational Familiarization

- New hires rotate through multiple teams in their first few months, gaining exposure to different areas of the organization.
- This practice mirrors Zappos' onboarding rotation model and Buurtzorg's nurse integration process, both of which emphasize relationship-building, cross-functional learning, and deepening organizational insight (Bernstein et al., 2016).
- Research suggests that rotational onboarding improves long-term retention and knowledge-sharing by enabling employees to build broad internal networks and understand cross-team dependencies (Ployhart et al., 2006).

IV. Mentorship: One-on-One Support for New Employees

- Each newcomer is paired with a "SunBuddy," a peer mentor who provides guidance, emotional support, and assistance in navigating self-management structures (Bauer et al., 2007).
- Studies indicate that mentorship during onboarding leads to faster adaptation, stronger organizational commitment, and increased job satisfaction (Allen et al., 2004).
- The mentorship program also functions as a bridge between formal onboarding and full integration, allowing new hires to ask questions, gain confidence, and build informal support networks (Bauer et al., 2007).

2. Transparency and Mutual Evaluation in Onboarding

SunSpark's onboarding process emphasizes mutual evaluation, ensuring that both the employee and the organization assess fit before long-term commitment. Unlike traditional companies, where onboarding is a one-way process, SunSpark treats it as a collaborative experience where:

- New employees receive full transparency about organizational finances, decision-making, and long-term strategy.
- Feedback loops allow new hires to share insights about their onboarding experience, helping refine the process.
- Trial periods provide an opportunity for both the employee and SunSpark to determine long-term alignment.

Research shows that mutual evaluation during onboarding reduces early turnover, increases job satisfaction, and strengthens cultural alignment (Ployhart et al., 2006; Saks et al., 2007).

3. Psychological Safety and Continuous Learning

To ensure that new hires feel safe to ask questions, experiment, and grow, SunSpark fosters a psychologically safe onboarding environment (Edmondson, 1999). This includes:

- Encouraging open discussions about challenges faced during onboarding.
- Providing structured check-ins with mentors and peers to offer support.
- Integrating opportunities for self-reflection, ensuring that employees develop confidence in self-management.

One of the reoccurring concepts is that of psychological safety. It starts here in the Onboarding Process. Research suggests that psychological safety is a key predictor of successful onboarding, as employees who feel safe are more likely to seek feedback, take initiative, and develop strong workplace relationships (Edmondson, 1999; Saks et al., 2007).

=== IN SUMMARY ===

SunSpark Solutions' Teal-inspired onboarding process prioritizes self-management, purpose alignment, and cross-team learning, ensuring that new hires integrate successfully into the organization's decentralized structure. By incorporating Foundations Training, Purpose Alignment,

Eco-Rotation, and Mentorship, SunSpark creates an immersive, engaging, and supportive onboarding experience (Laloux, 2014).

Empirical research supports the effectiveness of values-driven onboarding, showing that organizations that invest in cultural integration, peer mentorship, and rotational learning achieve higher retention, engagement, and long-term performance (Bauer et al., 2007; Edmondson, 1999; Saks et al., 2007). SunSpark's model ensures that employees transition smoothly into self-managed roles, fostering long-term success and organizational resilience.

J. Professional Development (Training)

SunSpark Solutions employs a self-directed, peer-driven professional development model, aligned with the Evolutionary-Teal principles of continuous learning, adaptability, and wholeness (Laloux, 2014). Unlike traditional organizations that rely on top-down training programs, rigid career ladders, and hierarchical performance evaluations, SunSpark empowers employees to take full ownership of their professional growth. Research indicates that autonomy in learning fosters intrinsic motivation, enhances engagement, and leads to higher long-term retention of skills (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

SunSpark's professional development framework incorporates self-driven learning budgets, peer learning, immersive retreats, and continuous feedback, ensuring that employees remain adaptable, innovative, and aligned with the company's evolutionary purpose (Hamel, 2011).

1. Self-Directed Learning: Personal Learning Budgets and Flexibility

At SunSpark, professional development is self-driven, meaning that each employee manages their own learning journey. Employees receive an annual personal learning budget, which can be used for:

- **Courses, certifications, and workshops** related to their evolving roles.
- **Conferences and industry events**, fostering external networking and innovation.
- **Independent learning resources**, such as books, research materials, and online training (Hamel, 2011).

Research on self-determined learning suggests that employees who control their professional development experience greater career satisfaction and improved job performance (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Furthermore, studies show that organizations that invest in flexible, personalized learning paths experience higher levels of innovation and engagement.

2. Peer Learning: Collective Knowledge Sharing

SunSpark's professional development approach emphasizes peer-based learning, where employees share expertise, mentor colleagues, and collaborate on skills development. Instead of relying on centralized HR-led training, employees participate in:

- **Peer learning sessions**, where colleagues present on emerging industry trends, technical skills, and sustainability initiatives.
- **Skill-sharing workshops**, where employees teach others based on their own expertise and interests.
- **Cross-team knowledge exchanges**, encouraging employees to learn beyond their immediate domain.

This model follows the Buurtzorg framework, where employees engage in peer-supported learning networks instead of relying on external training programs (Nandram & Koster, 2014)). Research indicates that peer-driven learning enhances skill retention, increases collaboration, and strengthens team cohesion (Marsick & Watkins, 2003).

3. Company-Wide Retreats: Blending Technical and Personal Growth

SunSpark hosts **annual retreats** that combine:

- **Technical training**, covering advancements in sustainability consulting, digital tools, and process innovation.
- **Personal development exercises**, such as mindfulness workshops, leadership reflection, and creativity-enhancing sessions.
- **Team-building activities**, reinforcing psychological safety and collective intelligence (Edmondson, 1999).

Organizations like Patagonia and W.L. Gore & Associates have successfully integrated personal development into company retreats, reinforcing employee engagement and purpose alignment (Hamel, 2011). Studies suggest that blending professional and personal growth in training fosters long-term employee commitment and well-being (Card et al., 2012).

4. Continuous Feedback and Holistic Growth

Instead of annual performance reviews driven by hierarchical management, SunSpark implements:

- **Regular feedback circles**, where peers provide constructive insights into each other's growth.
- **Self-reflection exercises**, allowing employees to assess their strengths and learning needs.
- **Mentor check-ins**, where employees receive personalized guidance from peer mentors (Cole et al., 2008).

This model aligns with holistic, strengths-based development frameworks, which emphasize collaborative learning over punitive performance reviews (Laloux, 2014). Research suggests that employees thrive when feedback is developmental, frequent, and peer-driven rather than top-down (Bernstein et al., 2016).

=== IN SUMMARY ===

SunSpark Solutions' self-directed, peer-supported professional development model embodies Teal principles of learning autonomy, collaboration, and continuous growth. By eliminating hierarchical training structures and replacing them with self-managed learning budgets, peer knowledge-sharing, immersive retreats, and continuous feedback, SunSpark cultivates a dynamic, engaged workforce capable of adapting to evolving challenges (Hamel, 2011; Laloux, 2014). Research confirms that organizations prioritizing flexible, employee-driven learning foster higher job satisfaction, innovation, and long-term success (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

K. Purpose

SunSpark Solutions operates with an evolutionary purpose that transcends profit-maximization, aligning with the Evolutionary-Teal paradigm, which views organizations as living systems with an emergent purpose (Laloux, 2014). The company's core mission is: **To help mission-driven organizations minimize their digital ecological footprint and drive sustainable innovation.** It is not a static statement but a continuously evolving guidepost. Unlike traditional businesses that

Core Mission

To help mission-driven organizations minimize their digital ecological footprint and drive sustainable innovation

pursue predefined strategic goals, Teal organizations allow purpose to emerge organically through collective sensing and adaptation (Senge, 2006).

Research indicates that organizations driven by purpose experience higher employee engagement, innovation, and long-term resilience, particularly when strategic direction is shaped by those closest to the work rather than dictated from the top (Porter & Kramer, 2011; Porth et al., 1999). SunSpark ensures that its purpose remains central to decision-making, resource allocation, and stakeholder relationships, reinforcing the belief that profit is a lagging indicator of value creation rather than the primary goal (Laloux, 2014).

1. Emergent Strategy: Listening to Purpose

SunSpark's approach to strategy deviates from traditional top-down planning, instead relying on continuous sensing of opportunities, client needs, and technological advancements. This follows the Teal model of "listening to purpose," in which organizations evolve based on internal and external signals rather than rigid strategic roadmaps (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

Key aspects of SunSpark's emergent strategy process include:

- **Decentralized Strategic Input:** Employees closest to clients and sustainability trends propose initiatives based on real-world insights (Laloux, 2014).
- **Adaptive Resource Allocation:** Instead of fixed annual budgets, resources are dynamically assigned based on the company's evolving sense of purpose (Senge, 2006).
- **Cross-Functional "Sense and Respond" Meetings:** Employees engage in structured dialogues to identify new directions and refine existing projects (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

Research on adaptive strategy confirms that organizations that prioritize continuous learning and emergent decision-making outperform those reliant on rigid planning, particularly in complex environments (Petriglieri et al., 2019; Senge, 2006).

2. Beyond Competition: Purpose-Driven Collaboration

SunSpark embraces the Teal philosophy that competitors can be allies when it serves the greater mission. Traditional businesses operate in zero-sum paradigms, where success is measured by market share and competitive dominance. In contrast, purpose-driven organizations prioritize collective impact, recognizing that collaborating with like-minded entities accelerates innovation and societal progress (Freeman & Auster, 2011).

At SunSpark:

- **Potential competitors are engaged as partners** when collaboration advances sustainability goals.
- **Open-source knowledge-sharing is encouraged**, allowing other organizations to benefit from technological advancements without barriers.
- **Industry-wide initiatives**—such as green tech alliances—are pursued to drive systemic change rather than isolated impact (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

Research on shared value creation suggests that companies that collaborate with competitors in mission-driven markets see higher innovation rates, better stakeholder relationships, and increased resilience (Freeman & Auster, 2011; Porter & Kramer, 2011).

3. Profit as a Lagging Indicator of Value Creation

Unlike traditional firms that prioritize short-term profitability as a key performance metric, SunSpark views profit as a natural byproduct of mission-driven success. In Teal organizations, financial sustainability emerges when companies focus on delivering real value rather than extracting maximum revenue (Laloux, 2014).

At SunSpark:

- Profits are reinvested into sustainability initiatives that align with the company's purpose.
- Financial metrics are considered secondary to impact-driven indicators, such as carbon footprint reduction, client mission alignment, and industry influence.
- Employee compensation is tied to collective impact rather than individual financial performance, reinforcing a shared commitment to purpose.

Studies on purpose-driven enterprises confirm that mission-centric companies enjoy stronger customer loyalty, enhanced employee retention, and sustained long-term profitability, despite deprioritizing short-term financial targets (Porter & Kramer, 2011; Porth et al., 1999).

=== IN SUMMARY ===

SunSpark Solutions' purpose-driven operating model reflects the Evolutionary-Teal principle that organizations are living entities guided by an emergent purpose (Laloux, 2014). By implementing a decentralized, adaptive strategy process, fostering industry collaboration, and treating profit as a secondary outcome, SunSpark ensures that its work remains aligned with sustainability goals and mission-driven innovation. Research confirms that organizations that

anchor decision-making in purpose experience greater agility, long-term viability, and stakeholder trust (Freeman & Auster, 2011; Porter & Kramer, 2011; Senge, 2006).

SunSpark’s commitment to self-management, shared value creation, and impact-first thinking serves as a model for how Teal organizations can thrive in purpose-driven markets while maintaining financial sustainability and meaningful industry influence.

L. Mood Management Process

SunSpark Solutions prioritizes mood management as a core organizational practice, ensuring that employees maintain psychological well-being, engagement, and alignment with the company’s evolutionary purpose. In Evolutionary-Teal organizations, mood is considered a critical factor influencing team cohesion, decision-making, and overall effectiveness (Laloux, 2014). Research suggests that workplace emotional climates directly impact productivity, creativity, and collaboration, making conscious mood management an essential practice for self-managed organizations (Cole et al., 2008; Edmondson, 1999).

To cultivate a positive, resilient, and high-trust organizational atmosphere, SunSpark integrates structured reflection, mindfulness practices, and gratitude-based rituals into daily and weekly workflows. By treating mood management as an ongoing process rather than a reactive response to stress, SunSpark fosters an emotionally intelligent workplace where employees feel psychologically safe and empowered to contribute (Barsade & Gibson, 2007).

1. Key Components of SunSpark’s Mood Management Strategy

SunSpark employs four core mood management practices, ensuring that emotional well-being is integrated into workplace culture rather than treated as an afterthought.

I. Weekly “Sustainability Sync” Meetings: Emotional Check-Ins

To promote open communication and emotional transparency, SunSpark begins each week with a “Sustainability Sync” meeting, during which employees:

- **Share personal reflections** on their emotional state, work-life balance, and overall energy levels.
- **Discuss team dynamics**, identifying any tensions or obstacles that may be affecting collaboration.

- **Align personal and organizational moods**, ensuring that **teams remain connected to SunSpark's broader mission** (Cole et al., 2008).

Research indicates that regular emotional check-ins enhance trust, engagement, and psychological safety, particularly in decentralized teams where traditional managerial oversight is absent (Edmondson, 1999). Studies also suggest that teams that actively address emotional well-being perform better under pressure and demonstrate higher levels of collaboration (Barsade & O'Neill, 2016).

II. Encouraging Mindfulness Breaks and Nature Walks

SunSpark provides dedicated quiet spaces and encourages employees to take mindfulness breaks or nature walks as needed. Research on mindfulness in the workplace suggests that brief meditation or nature-based activities significantly reduce stress, enhance cognitive function, and improve emotional regulation (Hyland et al., 2015).

SunSpark's mindfulness initiatives include:

- **A dedicated quiet room** for meditation, reflection, or relaxation.
- **Encouraging outdoor breaks** in natural settings to help employees reset their focus.
- **Optional guided mindfulness sessions** offered weekly.

Organizations that integrate mindfulness and nature-based wellness practices report higher employee satisfaction, reduced burnout, and increased resilience (Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Hyland et al., 2015).

III. Monthly Retrospectives: Gauging Organizational Mood

To maintain a pulse on overall workplace morale, SunSpark conducts monthly retrospectives, during which teams:

- **Assess the emotional climate of the organization**, identifying trends in morale and well-being.
- **Discuss root causes of mood fluctuations**, including workload challenges, interpersonal conflicts, or external pressures.
- **Co-create solutions** to improve engagement and maintain a positive, productive workplace atmosphere.

Studies show that organizations that regularly assess and adjust their emotional climate experience lower turnover, higher employee engagement, and stronger workplace trust

(Edmondson, 1999). Retrospectives ensure that employees have a voice in shaping workplace culture, reinforcing Teal principles of self-management and collective intelligence (Laloux, 2014).

IV. Gratitude Rituals: “Good News Friday” and Appreciation Practices

SunSpark incorporates gratitude-based rituals to reinforce a culture of appreciation, mutual support, and shared success. Every Friday, employees participate in “Good News Friday,” where they:

- **Celebrate team and individual accomplishments** from the past week.
- **Express gratitude for colleagues’ contributions**, reinforcing positive workplace relationships.
- **Reflect on progress toward SunSpark’s mission**, ensuring that small wins are recognized and valued (Barsade & O’Neill, 2016).

Research confirms that workplace gratitude practices significantly enhance job satisfaction, emotional resilience, and organizational commitment. Gratitude fosters a sense of meaning and belonging, counteracting stress, and enhancing long-term engagement (Barsade & Gibson, 2007).

2. The Impact of Mood Management on Organizational Success

By integrating structured check-ins, mindfulness practices, emotional retrospectives, and gratitude rituals, SunSpark ensures that employees:

- **Remain engaged and emotionally balanced**, reducing burnout and turnover.
- **Feel psychologically safe to express concerns and ideas**, enhancing innovation and collaboration (Edmondson, 1999).
- **Develop emotional intelligence and self-awareness**, strengthening team cohesion and resilience (Barsade & Gibson, 2007).

Research indicates that organizations that prioritize emotional climate experience improved performance, higher employee satisfaction, and greater long-term adaptability (Hyland et al., 2015; Barsade & O’Neill, 2016). By embedding mood management into daily and weekly routines, SunSpark reinforces its commitment to holistic well-being, self-management, and collective growth (Laloux, 2014).

=== IN SUMMARY ===

SunSpark Solutions’ Teal-inspired mood management process ensures that emotional well-being is prioritized alongside operational success. Through weekly check-ins, mindfulness

practices, monthly retrospectives, and gratitude rituals, SunSpark fosters a high-trust, high-engagement work environment where employees feel valued, aligned, and empowered.

Empirical research confirms that mood-conscious organizations experience higher retention, increased innovation, and greater long-term resilience, demonstrating that emotional intelligence is not a soft skill but a critical driver of success (Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Edmondson, 1999; Hyland et al., 2015). By systematically nurturing workplace mood, SunSpark Solutions exemplifies how Teal organizations create cultures of well-being, purpose, and sustainable innovation (Laloux, 2014).

III. Conclusion

SunSpark Solutions exemplifies the Evolutionary-Teal organizational model, integrating self-management, wholeness, and evolutionary purpose across all aspects of its operations. By implementing self-directed teams, peer-based decision-making, and fluid role structures, the company fosters an adaptive and innovative work environment that minimizes bureaucratic inefficiencies and maximizes employee engagement (Laloux, 2014).

A key differentiator of SunSpark's approach is its commitment to transparency and inclusivity, reflected in its peer-driven hiring, self-set salaries, and collaborative conflict resolution processes. Unlike traditional hierarchical organizations, where power and control rest with leadership, SunSpark empowers employees to make strategic decisions, resolve conflicts autonomously, and shape the organization's future direction (Lee & Edmondson, 2017).

By embedding Teal principles into professional development, onboarding, and daily operations, SunSpark ensures that employees not only excel in their roles but also align their personal growth with the organization's broader mission. The integration of mood management practices, sustainability-driven workspaces, and values-based governance reinforces a culture of well-being, continuous learning, and shared accountability (Edmondson, 1999).

Moreover, SunSpark Solutions redefines success by treating profit as a lagging indicator of purpose-driven value creation, reinvesting in sustainable innovation and industry-wide collaboration. By partnering with like-minded organizations, embracing open-source solutions, and engaging in purpose-driven strategic planning, SunSpark transcends traditional competitive

paradigms and positions itself as a catalyst for positive environmental and technological impact (Porter & Kramer, 2011; Freeman & Auster, 2011).

In a rapidly evolving business landscape, SunSpark Solutions stands as a model for the next generation of purpose-driven, self-managed organizations. Through transparent governance, psychological safety, and commitment to collective growth, SunSpark demonstrates that business success and societal impact are not mutually exclusive but mutually reinforcing. This case study underscores the viability of Teal organizations in fostering meaningful work, adaptive leadership, and long-term resilience, making SunSpark an exemplary of organizational innovation in the 21st century.

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