

Why our Integral Operating System is Important to You

By Dr. Andrew D. Atwood

March 22, 2008

“You guys are like the Mayo Clinic.”

Bill McCarthy, Executive VP of Blarney Castle Oil Company

We subscribe whole heartedly to the use of our Integral Operating System (IOS) and we want to encourage everyone we work with to adopt its use, to whatever degree they are willing and able to do so. Why is our IOS so important to us? Here are four reasons.

- Our IOS is the single most comprehensive cataloguing (or indexing) system for understanding all of creation, and that includes all of a Family Owned Business;
- Our IOS gives us an enormously comprehensive and unparalleled ability to work with Family Owned Businesses in West Michigan – encouraging us to engage in the most holistic and integrated ways imaginable;
- Our IOS provides us with the shared constructs and language to communicate with everyone at Atwood+, and with every other person that is in our field of experience, be it family members, business owners, employees, suppliers, advisors – or anyone else;
- Our IOS work is on the cutting edge – we are the only people (to our knowledge) in the world focused on applying the IOS specifically to Family Owned Businesses.

Just as the operating system in a computer gives it the ability to communicate productively with programmers who create software applications, with desktop and laptop computers, and with the people who use them – so, too, our Integral Operating System encourages those of us at Atwood+ to communicate thoroughly and effectively with each other, with the Family Owned Businesses with whom we work, and with everyone else.

In this paper we are introducing our IOS and its five parts, each of which is available to your awareness right this moment – Quadrants, Levels, Lines, States, and Types – but not necessarily in that order.

Atwood + Integral Family Business Specialists

When Bill McCarthy made that comment about us, we knew he had captured our essence. Take a look at the Mayo Clinic's Mission.

Mayo Clinic will provide the best care to every patient every day through integrated clinical practice, education and research.

Mayo Clinic is a not-for-profit medical practice dedicated to the diagnosis and treatment of virtually every type of complex illness. Mayo Clinic staff members work together to meet your needs. You will see as many doctors, specialists and other health care professionals as needed to provide comprehensive diagnosis, understandable answers and effective treatment. (www.mayoclinic.com)

Something similar could be said about Atwood+ Integral Family Business Specialists.

Atwood+ Integral Family Business Specialists will provide to every Family Owned Business every day through our Integrated Operating System the development of body, mind, and spirit in self, culture, and nature.

Atwood+ is a for profit company of people dedicated to the identification and maximization of virtually every type of complex challenge facing Family Owned Businesses. The Subject Matter Specialists (SMSs) affiliated with Atwood+ work with Family Owned Businesses to provide a comprehensive and measurable Integral assessment, identification, and plan of action for the improvement of one and all. (www.atwoodplus.com)

This paper has been written to answer the question: Why is our Integral Operating System important to you?

To deliver an answer in less than 8 pages is the present charge.

Integral Theory was first developed by the philosopher Ken Wilber, and it has been presented through his many books and articles. Today, with the ubiquitous nature of the internet, literally thousands of people around the world are contributing the proliferation of Integral Theory. A growing number of people are working with the IOS, thus enabling conversations that have never occurred before in human history. If the reader is so inclined, go to www.kenwilber.com to begin your odyssey into the world of Integral Theory. For those of us affiliated with Atwood+ Integral Family Business Specialists, we are the only ones (so far) who are applying the IOS to Family Owned Businesses.

In 2006, Ken Wilber produced a book titled *Integral Spirituality: A Startling New Role for Religion in the Modern and Postmodern World*. In this important work, Wilber addresses the role of a healthy – and unhealthy – religion in our contemporary world. His 32 page introduction offers a quick overview of the IOS. We have selected quotes from that introduction, and we have offered some commentary on how Wilber’s words mesh with our work with Family Owned Businesses. Here then, are quotes from Ken Wilber, and commentary from us.

We will also be exploring what is perhaps the most important use of the Integral Map or Operating System. Because an **IOS** can be used to help index any activity – from art to dance to business to psychology to politics to ecology to spirituality – it allows each of those domains to talk to others. Using IOS, business has the terminology with which to communicate fully with ecology, which can communicate with art, which can communicate with law, which can communicate with art, which can communicate with law, which can communicate with poetry and education and medicine and spirituality. In the history of human-kind, this has never really happened before. (p. 3)

This is why the analogy of an “operating system” works so well. Anyone who knows the IOS can communicate meaningfully and creatively with anyone else who knows the IOS, regardless of their field of interest or their endeavor. To date, no other “operating system” provides this function and benefit to human beings.

Everybody is familiar with major **states of consciousness**, such as waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. Right now, you are in a waking state of consciousness (or, if you are tired, perhaps a daydream state of consciousness). There are all sorts of different states of consciousness, including *meditative states* (induced by yoga, contemplative prayer, meditation, and so on), *altered states* (such as drug-induced), and a variety of *peak experiences*, many of which can be triggered by intense experiences like making love, walking in nature, or listening to exquisite music. (p.4)

It is not common to speak of “states of consciousness” in the world of Family Owned Businesses, but they are there all the time. It was Peter Drucker who said, “The essence of business is innovation and marketing.” Consider innovation for a moment. Where do the best ideas come from? When do they occur? Who has them? The most innovative ideas come in those “Ah-ha!” moments when deeper states of consciousness are at work. Wouldn’t it be measurably more effective if you could control those deeper states of consciousness so that innovation could be evoked upon need? Of course it would. You know how easy it is to sit around and talk, and talk, and talk and nothing happens until someone “get’s out of the box” of conventional consciousness.

But on a much simpler, more mundane level, everybody experiences various states of consciousness, and these states often provide profound motivation, meaning, and drives, in both yourself and others. In any particular situation, states of consciousness may not be a very important factor, or they may be the determining factor, but no integral approach can afford to ignore them.

Whenever you are using **IOS**, you will automatically be prompted to check and see if you are touching bases with these important subjective realities. This is an example of how a map – in this case, the IOS or Integral Map – can help you look for territory you might not have even suspected was there.... (p.4)

In the above quote you can hear Wilber referencing the utility of our IOS because it prompts us to check and see if you are touching base with the critically subjective terrains of deep consciousness – which is where innovation and creative arise. That is the frontier of the creative process. That is where tomorrow is being made today.

“**Stages** of development” are also referred to as “**levels** of development,” the idea being that each stage represents a level of organization or a level of complexity. For example, in the sequences from atoms to molecules to cells to organisms, each of those stages of evolution involves a greater level of complexity. The word “level” is not meant in a rigid or exclusionary fashion, but simply to indicate that there are important *emergent* qualities that tend to come into being in a discrete or quantum-like fashion, and these developmental jumps or levels are important aspects of many natural phenomena. (p.5.)

Your Family Owned Business has emerged from one stage to the next. These stages, or levels, follow a very predictable order. By understanding stages and levels it is possible to know where you have been, where you are now, and where you will be going in the future. We can know the same about your customers and your competition. We can know the stages of development for you people, your SOPs, your culture. When we compared ourselves to the Mayo Clinic we said we were focused on the development of “body, mind, and spirit in self, culture, and nature.” That is, we are focused on the development of everything.

Whenever you use IOS, you will automatically be prompted to check and see if you have included the important **stage aspects** of any situation, which will dramatically increase your likelihood of success, whether that success be measured in terms of personal transformation, social change, excellence in business, care for others, or simple satisfaction in life. (p.7.)

It is practically useful to spend energy to check the stages of development of the various parts of your business to see if they are healthy, and if they are in need of growth. If a particular part of your Family Owned Business is not developing well, there will be

suffering. Are parts of your family, or your business, “stuck?” The likelihood is, yes. IOS helps to identify where there is suffering, and what to do to eliminate the suffering.

The **psychograph** helps us spot where your greatest potentials are. You very likely already know what you excel in and what you don't. But part of the Integral Approach is learning to refine considerably this knowledge of your own contours, so that you can more confidently deal with your own strengths and weaknesses as well as those of others. The psychograph also helps us spot the ways that virtually all of us are unevenly developed, and this helps prevent us from thinking that just because we are terrific in one area we must be terrific in all the others. In fact, usually the opposite. More than one leader, spiritual teacher, or politician has spectacularly crashed through lack of an understanding of these simple realities. To be “integrally developed” does not mean that you have to excel in all the known intelligences, or that all of your lines have to be at a level 3. But it does mean that you develop a very good sense of what your own psychograph is actually like, so that with a much more integral self-image you can plan your future development. Thus, to be “**integrally informed**” does not mean you have to master all lines of development, just be aware of them. (p. 9f)

Blind spots can be our undoing. We all know of people who really excel in some areas of their lives, but fail miserably in others. Sometimes it is because we don't have strengths in some areas, and sometimes it is because we overuse our strengths. At other times it is because we have cut-off certain parts of our selves, and projected them on to others. In any case, it is because we have not integrated all the various parts of ourselves into coherent wholes. One un-integrated part of a leader can cause him or her to fall from grace... and the accompanying losses for family and business can be enormous.

Types simply refers to items that can be present at virtually any stage or state. One common typology, for example, is the Myers-Briggs (whose main types are feeling, thinking, sensing, and intuiting). **You can be any of those types at virtually any stage of development.** These kinds of “horizontal typologies” can be very useful, especially when combined with levels, lines, and states. (p. 11)

We use the Myers-Briggs in our work. We also use the Strengthsfinder, the DiSC, and the 16pf among others. What type of person are you? What type of person is your partner, or the head of IT, or the custodian? Do you hire certain types consciously? What type of person does what type of work best? Why type of person is each of your children, and how does the type of person they are fit with your dreams for each of them? You get the idea. Types are integral to who we are, and they are part of our IOS.

There's an interesting thing about types. You can have healthy and unhealthy versions of them. To say that somebody is caught in an unhealthy type is not a way to judge them but a way to understand and communicate more clearly and effectively with them. (p. 15)

But the important point about this section is simple: various typologies have their usefulness in helping us to understand and communicate with others. And with any typology, there are healthy and unhealthy versions of a type. Pointing to an unhealthy type is not a way to judge people, but a way to understand and communicate with them more clearly and effectively. (p.15)

Jim Collins, in his book *Good to Great*, recommended getting the “right person in the right seat on the bus.” A solid idea, for sure, but how do you do that? Types will help. Find the right type for the job, then find a person who is a healthy version of that type, and put them in the seat.

The point, once again, is simply that whenever IOS is being utilized, it reminds us to check in with our waking-state realities, our subtle-state dreams and visions and innovative ideas, as well as our own open, formless ground of possibilities that is the source of so much creativity. The important point about the Integral Approach is that we want to touch bases with as many potentials as possible so as to miss nothing in terms of possible solutions, growth, and transformation. (p.17)

What potentials are available to you as the leader of a Family Owned Business, and are you tapping into those potentials? Right there, in those potentials, is where your greatness lies. Right there is where your success will be generated and sustained, as it has already been.

The greater the consciousness, the more complex the living system housing it. (p.17)

What an interesting statement. Let’s reverse the sentence for a moment. The more complex your Family Owned Business becomes, the more necessary it will be to have a greater consciousness. Consciousness can be defined, it develops in stages, and it can be encouraged. If your world is highly complex, and you try to lead with a lower level of consciousness, you will fail. Fail. As a leader you want to be one-half-step ahead of the collective consciousness of your business. That is a minimal requirement for success. And, if you can’t be one-half-step ahead you better find someone who can.

At the beginning of this introduction, we said that all 5 components of the Integral Model were items that are *available to your awareness right now*, and this is true of the quadrants as well. (p.18.)

Now we are talking about quadrants. We have referenced States, Levels, Lines and Stages, Types... and now Quadrants. All of this is happening right now, and it is all available to your awareness if you take the time to reflect in an organized way. Go to www.images.google.com and type in “Wilber’s Quadrants” and hundreds of images will be available to you. The quadrant model(s) helps us to look at the inside and the

outside of individuals and groups, and how each develops. We can look at the people in your family and in your business one at a time, and we can look at your whole family and your whole business. That is where quadrants are put to work.

Seem complicated? In a sense it is. But in another sense, the extraordinary complexity of humans and their relation to the universe can be simplified enormously by touching bases with the **quadrants** (the fact that every event can be looked at as an I, we, it, or its); **developmental lines** (or multiple intelligences), all of which move through **developmental levels** (from body to mind to spirit); with **states** and **types** at each of those levels. (p.26)

Yes, it does seem complicated. The language is new, the concepts are unfamiliar, and the level of thinking seems rather abstract at times. Fortunately, we “get it.” That is, those of us who are SMSs (Subject Matter Specialists) with Atwood+ understand our IOS and how to use it with families and businesses. If you want to learn our IOS, we will help you. In fact, we have created ways and means for people to learn about our IOS. Check those opportunities out on our website and newsletter.

Here’s one other important conclusion, **IOS** is a neutral framework; it does not tell you what to think, or force any particular ideologies on you, or coerce your awareness in any fashion. Precisely because **IOS** is a **neutral framework**, it can be used to bring more clarity, care, and comprehensiveness to virtually any situation, making success much more likely, whether that success be measured in terms of personal transformation, social change, excellence in business, care for others, or simple happiness in life. (p.31f)

This is so very important. We do, of course, have our own values. We each come from traditions that are important to us. We are not, however, pushing specific values and beliefs on the people with whom we work. Rather, we are using our IOS to frame our thinking and engagements so that everyone is included, so that everyone is encouraged to be healthy and whole, and so that everyone is given the opportunity to grow and develop. Same with the groups with whom we work. We are not, repeat NOT, coercive. We are, however, liberating.

But perhaps most important of all, because IOS can be used by any discipline – from medicine to art to business to spirituality to politics to ecology – then we can, for the first time in history, begin an extensive and fruitful dialogue between all of these disciplines. A person using IOS in business can talk easily and effectively with a person using IOS in poetry, dance, or the arts, simply because they now have a common language – or a common operating system – with which to communicate. (p.32)

Atwood + Integral Family Business Specialists

Among the SMSs affiliated with us are a graphic and web designer, a direct-sales marketer, a promotional consultant, a media guru, a fine artist, a marriage and family therapist, a social worker, a systems implementation specialist, two clergy... and more are gathering as time moves along. Together we use the IOS to address the challenges facing the Family Owned Businesses with whom we work. It is energizing for us, and for everyone else.

This is why thousands of scholars and teachers the world over came together and started Integral University, the world's first integral learning community. Because all of the various human activities, previously separated by incommensurate jargon and terminologies, can in fact begin to effectively communicate with each other by running an Integral Operating System, each of those disciplines can begin to converse with and learn from, the others. This has never effectively happened anywhere in history, which is why, indeed, the Integral adventure is about to begin. (p.32)

Why live in the mainstream if the adventure is here? We choose, with eyes wide open, to participate in the unfolding of our future. And, for a variety of reasons, we have targeted Family Owned Businesses as the corner of the universe we wish to unfold.

Thus, to **cultivate body, mind, and spirit in self, culture, and nature**. This is the extraordinary aim and goal of the Integral Approach, and we would love to have you join us in this exciting adventure. (p.32)

And we would love to have you join us in this exciting adventure!

- As a “self” you can evolve your body, mind, and spirit
- As a “culture” you can evolve your body, mind, and spirit
- As a manifestation of creation, as a material and observable slice of “nature” you can evolve your body, mind, and spirit.

“You guys are like the Mayo Clinic.” People go to the Mayo Clinic because they are looking for a thorough and objective assessment of their medical problems, and they are looking for the best and most comprehensive recommendations from the vast array of Subject Matter Specialists on their staff.

Atwood + Integral Family Business Specialist

We are like the Mayo Clinic for Family Owned Businesses