CORNERSTONE LEARNING™

BUSINESS RELICS OF BYGONE ERAS

3-5-10 YEAR BUSINESS PLANS

"Now business cycles and windows of opportunity are often hours and weeks, not years."

There was a day and age when business cycles were predictable. You could plan for a certain annualized growth, keep expenses in line, and while competition existed, you could plan for it and global disruption was never a factor. Now business cycles and windows of opportunity are often hours and weeks, not years.

Now don't get us wrong, planning is important or chaos can ensue...but **rigid financial, operational and sales plans that don't allow for ever-changing dynamics in our business world today can be the death of an organization tomorrow**. The corporate landscape is littered with organizations unwilling or too slow to change direction and their long-range business plans. Blockbuster, Kodak, Compaq Computer, the list goes on. All had very solid 3- and 5-year business plans. Until the world changed around them.

Dr. Martin Luther King was one of the greatest leaders of our time. But did he deliver a "I Have a Plan" speech? No, he delivered a "I Have a Dream" speech. While plans were created along the way, **people were motivated and mobilized by Dr. King's dream and clear vision for something better in the future, not by a financial or logistics plan**.

As you look to your organization or department's future, rather than spending massive amounts of very valuable resources in developing 30-40 page strategic business planning documents that get circulated to a few, **create a compelling and mobilizing vision where people will gladly step up and plan with you on how to achieve that vision and will be committed and engaged to creating and sustaining a long-range purpose**, versus a long-range plan.

Does your organization have a dream for the future that everyone can connect to and rally around? Or does it have 3-5-10 year business plan documents and PowerPoint's that sit on desktops or in binders on shelves? **Create the dream and the plans will follow suit.**

THE RANK AND YANK

"The practice of using a bell curve or a forced distribution to rank employees invariably kills morale."

Another left over symbol of a past performance bygone era is the use of "forced" or "bell curve" performance ranking systems, commonly referred to by the employees as "rank and yank". This rating practice was championed by Jack Welch, CEO of GE and gained popularity with management throughout the 1980's. And we say management because, trust us, **it was never popular in the employee population**.

The practice of using a bell curve or a forced distribution to rank employees invariably kills morale, pits employees against each other creating unnecessary and unhealthy competition, and wastes thousands of hours with managers and HR professionals sitting in "collaboration meetings" fighting for their people. Even though GE and many other high profile organizations have stopped using this method, many organizations still subscribe to what, hopefully soon, will be a long forgotten, ineffective, organizational practice.

With the evolution going on in organizational performance and the ever-increasing need to attract, develop, and cultivate specialized talent and skills, it important to replace "rank and yank" with continuous performance pursuit conversations and a "lead where you are" performance environment. **The onus of performance accountability shifts from a leader reviewing and force ranking performance, to both the leader and employee pursuing performance with the employee continually owning and proactively reviewing their ongoing performance activities and results each month**.

Organizations that have replaced this performance management relic in favor of continuous performance pursuit have seen tremendous improvements in both employee engagement and performance results.

It is time to make "rank and yank" a historical footnote in our organizations and business schools.

Continuous
Performance
PURSUIT

THE **"BECAUSE I TOLD YOU SO"**

"...has its origins from when performance, either at home or in the workplace, was administered through command and control."

As a child, how many of us heard the response "Because I told you so!" when you asked why you had to do something? Nearly all of us have, at one time or another, heard those dreaded words growing up. That response has its origins from a bygone era when performance either at home or in the workplace was administered through command and control.

Certainly success can be achieved with a command and control performance model, but **the actions and activities to achieve that success comes from complying with the demand rather than from a place of commitment and engagement to achieve a purpose**.

Command and control was the prevalent style of management modeled and practiced after WWII but has been on the decline since the 1980's. Still, some organizations and certain leaders manage in the past. The next generation leader doesn't use command and control to manage their people. **They inspire, enable, facilitate and develop their people and prevailing performance environments**.

So now when someone asks you the "why" question, the answer is not, "Because I told you so!". It is now an opportunity to connect with understanding, knowledge and a dialogue the engages, not demands.

LEADERSHIP IS EVOLVING AND SHIFTING, ARE YOU?

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

"Change is, well, changing, and people and organizations must evolve from managing change to leading change."

Over the last 25-30 years, change management has emerged and grown from concepts and studies about the impact of change, to thousands of books, articles and seminars created to help people and organizations manage change. But change is, well, changing, and people and organizations must evolve from managing change to leading change.

In fact, a study by McKinsey found that **70% of change programs fail to achieve their goals largely due to employee resistance and lack of leader support**. The study also concluded that when people are truly invested in change it is 30% more likely to stick. So with all the focus on change management over the last quarter century, why are we not managing change more effectively?

Traditional change models view change as originating from the top of the organization with top leaders fully invested in the initiative, creating a burning platform to instill a sense of urgency, then mobilizing mid-management around that burning platform to drive the change through the organization. The goal? To ensure all employees grasp their role in implementing the change and are on board in hopes of minimizing the resistance to the change.

Batting .300 is great if you're a Major League Baseball player, but if 70% of change initiatives fail, something needs to change! **Change should not be managed, it should be led, and led by everyone, not just senior leaders or designated change agents**. Possibilities for change can and should be identified and initiated at every level of the organization. Waiting for change to happen misses the opportunity to enable and engage the entire workforce to see possibilities for change everywhere and become nimble and agile in a dynamic performance environment. **If every employee becomes a change agent, the need to gain buy-in and the resistance to change dramatically decreases**.

Many organizations are simply not set up for agile change, they are built for stability and try to limit and manage the impact of change. Remember, 70% of change fails because of trying to manage it. Unleash the change potential in your organization and enable every employee to lead change!

THE CORPORATE LADDER

"...just a symbol of past, ineffective, highly political performance models that would often define the most "qualified" as having the most organizational tenure or time in a position."

For over 50 years, the term "climbing the corporate ladder" was often a definition of success. The idea of starting at the very bottom and working your way to President or CEO seemed to be the ultimate working dream.

But, "climbing the corporate ladder" is **no longer seen as a path to success**, just a symbol of past, ineffective, highly political performance models that would often define the most "qualified" as having the most organizational tenure or time in a position. Or even who you know that might assist you in skipping a few rungs on that ladder.

Thankfully, **organizations are rapidly evolving from archaic "corporate ladders" to agile "performance networks"** that identify and leverage unique talents and experiences and matches that talent to unique current and future performance opportunities.

Positioning yourself for this evolution of performance requires knowing, cultivating and leveraging your unique talents. **Developing the capability and capacity to lead where you are, no matter where you are.** This means leading your personal performance, not waiting to have your performance managed or reviewed. Leading change, not waiting for change to happen or letting the status quo consume your performance environment. Being accountable, even when others aren't. Creating and sustaining authentic relationships, moving past just the communicating and truly connecting with others. And working with purpose and conviction, coming into work each day with a plan and attitude to help others be the best they can be by being the best you can be.

By leading where you are and intentionally developing the unique leader and talents within yourself, you define and cultivate your own future.

DON'T LET SYMBOLS FROM THE PAST DEFINE YOUR PATH TO FUTURE SUCCESS.

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