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Change Management Closing The Gap Between Vision And Reality

Improving organizational performance should be easy. All you need to do is: 1. Start with a better vision; 2. Add improved products/services/methods and; *voila* 3. You have a better business. What's so hard about that?

In theory it *is* a simple process. In reality however, we must take into account that we are working with people and their "human nature" responses. This "people factor" is what makes change so very difficult.

We've seen the best leaders close their self-identified "performance gaps" with world-class style and grace (Gerstner and Welch got IBM and GE back on the fast track from near death experiences, while Bezos brought Amazon to success through an ocean of Internet failures).

"Getting good players is easy. The hard part is getting them to play together."

Casey Stengel
NY Yankees ex-coach

However, many leaders struggle to achieve the substantive improvements they pursue. Why the difference?

Change Management 101: We know the drill. We have a great idea for improving an area of our business. We start implementing the change and suddenly issues start coming out of the woodwork faster than water over Niagara Falls. We never thought we would hear so many "buts," "ifs," "we can'ts" and "I don't think we've considered." In fact, in the space of two weeks most "great ideas" have gone from *breakthrough-thinking* to *not-fully-considered-tragedy*. It ultimately ends with a weekend call from a close associate who's trying to help us appreciate the current level of *organizational overload*, or *conflicting initiatives* or *impending vacation schedules* with a closing request to put the improvement on hold until some later date (from whence it shall not rise again...).

Emotional, political and rational elements of human psyches can dismantle our plans time-after-time. Fear, uncertainty and doubt overcome even the greatest potential good. The perceived change in organizational roles and responsibilities brought on by this impending modification of the *status-quo* makes our most ardent supporters more questioning and uncomfortable.

The Emotional Issues: When an idea for improvement is brought forward, each of our stakeholders wants to know "what's

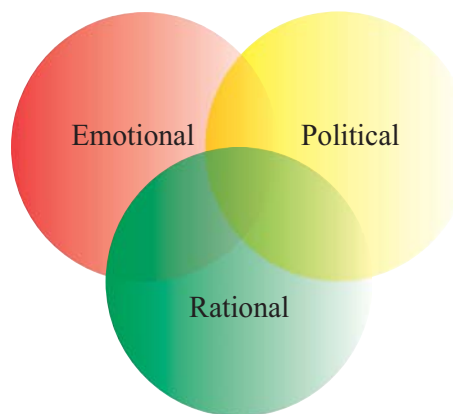
advantage that moves us forward.

The Political Issues: Like it or not, human nature promises that within each of our leadership teams, we'll have a broad range of responses, many politically fuelled. Some stakeholders may see the movement away from the past direction as an opportunity to improve their future, and perhaps justify their fight for more authority within the impending structure. Your most successful direct-reports (and in turn their most successful direct-reports) are where they are because of their strong capabilities and egos. These are the tools that the political battles will be fought with. Well planned "change management" can mitigate these in our pursuit of the "greater success."

The Rational Issues: Word of impending change is a lot like a late August brush fire in a dry section of Montana: it spreads fast with little warning. Not "knowing the facts" (what will happen, when and how) or not "getting the facts clearly in the forefront" provides the fearful detractors with ready ammunition, most of which they will create in the resulting vacuum. Unless we communicate our position actively, our adversaries will create their own position. In order to garner the support we need, we must design the front-end of our initiative with enough detail to define the strategic outcome, process time-frames and details for getting there.

Change management that excels is crucial as we drive for improved organizational success. In this increasingly competitive world, it is a necessity that provides for the ongoing growth and viability of our companies. Excellence in "leadership execution" of change management represents the challenge we must more actively address in today's highly competitive world.

Change Management Hurdles



in it for me?" They are fearful of the unknown and can be counted on to have extensive discussions on the subject.

There is additional fear from our suppliers ("will I be losing any business?"), our superiors/shareholders ("is this the *best* strategic move forward?"), our partners ("will this detract from our joint commitment?"), our customers ("do I need to second source your products or services?"), and our competitors ("this is the dumbest move I've ever seen ___ make. Can I have their business please?"). Uncertainty brings concern to each of our stakeholders. Proactive "change management" turns this energy into competitive

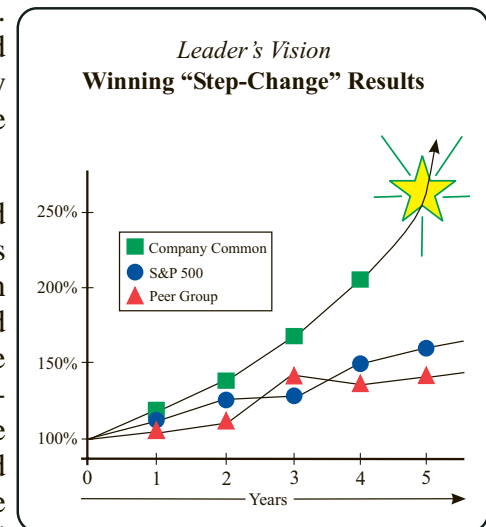
William W. Rutherford and Associates

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William W. Rutherford and Associates helps successful leaders of well-managed companies achieve a “step-change” improvement in their competitive position. Many factors make “winning” increasingly difficult in the world ahead: global competition, maturing products and services, rapidly changing customers and suppliers, and the growing impact of technology. Company performance options that we only began to consider yesterday are becoming a basic requirement for tomorrow’s success.

The Leader’s Challenge: Leaders know those areas critical to their success and want to do what is required to significantly improve their organization’s performance and effect cultural change. Past efforts to design and implement strategies to realize this vision have often been less successful than expected. Internal organizational issues, personal agendas and inadequate skills and capabilities have been problematic. Stakeholder’s lack of varied industry and “outside-their-function” experience further contribute to the challenge of making meaningful “step-change” progress.

Our “Step-Change” Approach: We start with the leader’s required *improvement* and build a specific approach to achieve it. Leaders tell us that with our assistance they make faster, more significant progress in today’s increasingly competitive world. “Step-change results and improved competitive position are a must” is a frequent comment. “We needed a new, more robust approach” and “we needed to double-the-value of our core business” is another. Yet other leaders say that we have “energized their organizations for achievement” and “substantially reduced the time required to successfully attain these results” and “created the environment for accelerated growth and learning.” Effective “step-change” improvement initiatives are a lasting and rewarding leadership decision.



*Measurable and Sustainable Results
For Best-In-The-World Companies*

William W. Rutherford and Associates provides leaders with:

- Step-change results improvement.
- The attainment of significant measurable and sustainable goals.
- Strategic and operational achievements leading to core-business performance breakthroughs.
- Organizational learning, tools, skills, measures and the confidence to accelerate future gains in competitiveness.
- A lasting legacy of success for their businesses and stakeholders.

William W. Rutherford and Associates works together with leaders to make otherwise unreasonable company, industry and market demands achievable. Experience has shown that both tangible and intangible step-change benefits are needed to accomplish the new level of business performance needed to “win” in this environment.

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Helping Leaders Improve Their Company’s Performance