

## *Developing A High-Performance Culture!*

In the early 1960s, President John F. Kennedy stated that he wanted to send a man to the moon and bring him back safely by the end of the decade; a pretty lofty goal. Senator George Smathers from Florida agreed with the ‘lofty goal’ part. So, before voting to secure funds for the initiative, he wanted to make sure he made the right decision. He visited Cape Canaveral to do a bit of detective work on his own. After much time, observation, questioning and exploration he still had not made a decision.

At the end of the day he saw a worker cleaning up and asked what her job was. Her reply was simple, *“I’m part of a team that’s going to send a man to the moon and bring him back safely by the end of the decade.”* Decision made!

This is an example of strategic alignment at its best. Everyone knows the organization’s charge, and all of the stars are in alignment (strategic intention: systems, processes, leadership, management, expectations, authority, responsibility, individual empowerment and supportive behavior). But what happens when the stars are misaligned; when the systems and departments are out of sync?

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Are You Developing a High-Performance Culture?

## *Provide Opportunities For Employee Engagement*

Employees who have a passion for what they do are practically self-engaging. In other words, they seek out reasons to stay engaged in their job and with the company. But what about those employees who aren’t quite as passionate, for whatever reason? The fact of the matter is that you can lead them down the road to engagement just by providing *opportunities* for them to do so.

Many times, employees don’t need a reason to become engaged. What they really need is the chance to become engaged. Below are five ways in which you can provide opportunities to do just that.

- **Recognize the accomplishments of employees and celebrate them** – Both parts of this initiative are important. By both recognizing *and* celebrating, you not only increase engagement and retention, you also build a greater sense of camaraderie among the members of your team.
- **Celebrate traditions within the organization** – This is another way in which to increase both engagement and camaraderie. This could be an annual awards dinner, or it might be something as simple as a summer picnic or Christmas party.
- **Initiate a mentoring program** – Once again, you’re accomplishing two goals at the same time. With this initiative, you’re facilitating a knowledge transfer between employees, in addition to bolstering engagement and retention.
- **Create a cross-training program**– Most employees want to sharpen their skill set and increase their abilities. They also want to know that they have room for advancement within the company.

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What happens when a department exists for the good of itself and individuals behave selfishly rather than for the greater customer and organizational good?

The simple fact is that the more an organization's systems and processes are aligned with its strategic intention – and all of the employees support this alignment behaviorally – the greater the opportunity for success.

In fact, if the plan is sound, it's almost impossible to fail no matter how ambitious the organization or that plan is – even if that includes sending a man to the moon.

Organizations are complex entities. Effective leadership calls for developing strategy and implementing that strategy to secure a competitive advantage. This means structuring the organization to achieve that strategy, ensuring the internal processes are focused on customer needs and focusing all of the people within the organization. The George Smathers story exemplifies the mindset of and results generated by strategic alignment. So, how can you as leaders really know how effective your organization and its strategy actually are? Rather than guess where the disconnects are, why not consider an instrument that pinpoints the strengths and limitations so that goal directed actions can occur – exactly what was needed to send a man to the moon and nothing less! Organizational assessments are diagnostics that measure how effective and efficient your organization is.

Think about it. Every once in a while it is necessary to take stock and ensure that the organization is focused on a clear strategy and that everyone within it is in alignment with what needs to be accomplished. After all, we go to the doctor periodically, we do a mental assessment on home improvement needs before we clean the garage and remodel the kitchen, and we even consciously check out our waistline and general overall health once or twice a year to determine what we need to do to make improvements. Why shouldn't we do the same for our organization? How do you know that your resources are being properly allocated, and how can you better utilize your limited resources? What are the alternatives in hidden cost, productivity, customer and employee satisfaction, and profits? If an organization's structure does not support its strategy, it is out of alignment and the strategy will not be achieved.

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You can limp along and even do 'OK', but are you really satisfied with the 'OK' part? In Jim Collins Book, *Good to Great* (an important organizational study) the first sentence is, "Good is the enemy of great." If your answer to the OK question is yes, then you've probably exhausted all you can get from this article, and an organizational assessment is not an option you are likely to explore.

Organizations that learn to identify new relationships between what they do and the results they seek can further increase the gap between themselves and their competitors. Does this sound familiar: Constant radical change, uncertainty, new rules and regulations, increased customer demands, and alphabet soup programs? How to manage it and how to thrive under these conditions depends a great deal upon how well your organization is aligned.

### ***Getting Started:***

First, are you in agreement that senior management must determine that there is a need for data in order to understand your organization? Second, are you committed to using this data to better allocate your resources to improve results? Third, gather the data.

### ***Selecting the Instrument.***

Opt for one that has a proven track record. A safe and wise bet is an assessment modeled after the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. The seven Baldrige categories provide a framework that has been proven time and time again. The results generated by Baldrige winners are consistent and astonishing. The seven Baldrige categories are:

1. **Leadership** – Includes creating and sustaining values, organizational direction, performance expectations and customer focus that promotes performance excellence.
2. **Strategic Planning** – How the organization sets direction and how plans are put into action.
3. **Customer Focus** – Addresses how the organization determines the requirements and expectations of customers. It also addresses how the organization strengthens relationships with customers and determines their level of satisfaction.
4. **Information and Analysis** – Deals with the use of data and information in the organization to better understand areas for improvement and how the organization is performing.

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5. Human Resources Development and Management – Determines how employees are encouraged to maximize their potential, as well as maintaining an environment conducive for performance excellence.
6. Process Management – Identifying how processes are designed, managed, improved and their cycle times reduced.
7. Business Results – Focuses on performance improvement in key business areas and how effectively these results are communicated throughout the organization.

These seven criteria are called the Criteria for Excellence and address all of the elements for the health and survival of your organization.



### ***Why Business Leaders Don't Do It?***

Believe it or not, there are some organizations afraid to hear the truth. Without naming names (to protect the guilty), some have told us: "Not interested. We really don't want to uncover issues that we are not prepared to face right now." Sounds strange but true. This is like favoring a doctor who touches up the X-rays. Ignoring reality flagrantly disregards the "Confront the Brutal Facts" principle from Jim Collins' important book *Good to Great*. Good decisions are impossible without an honest confrontation of the brutal facts.

### ***Who Should Conduct an Assessment?***

If any of these symptoms sound familiar, give serious consideration to assessing your organization:

- Profitability is slipping
- Customers are defecting
- Employee turnover is high
- Market share is eroding
- Internal conflict is the order of the day, excessive meetings, lack of personal accountability, communication breakdown, time management issues, reactive rather than proactive thinking, etc.
- You spend more time reacting to competition

Or the best reason of all... **You just want to improve!** ♦

~ By Grant Stewart, Performance Matrix LLC. (Baldrige Criteria Source: D.I.A.L.O.G, Achievement Seminars International, a Division of Resource Associates Corporation.)

## ***Great Managers Remove Obstacles***

*"Managing is the art of getting things done through and with people in formally organized groups. It is the art of creating an environment in which people can perform as individuals and yet cooperate towards the attainment of group goals. It is the art of removing blocks to such performance."*

~ Harold Koontz



## ***One Minute Ideas***

### ***Eight Key Leadership Strategies***

Peter Drucker, was called by BusinessWeek "*the most enduring management thinker of our time.*" In a Harvard Business Review article "What Makes an Effective Executive?" Drucker said that, as different as effective leaders may be, they all follow 8 practices:

1. Focus on opportunities rather than problems
2. Run productive meetings.
3. Think "we" rather than "I"
4. Take responsibility for decisions
5. Develop action plans
6. Ask "what needs to be done?"
7. Ask "What is right for the enterprise?"
8. Take responsibility for communicating – listen first

What a great check list to track effectiveness. I would add *to execute action plans.*

Rate yourself in each category from 1 to 10. See any areas for improvements? ♦

~ Adapted with permission from original source: Elaine Gagne, Engaging Change

*"Let our advance worrying become advanced thinking and planning."*  
~ Winston Churchill

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This will accomplish both objectives.

- **Involve employees in decisions (whenever possible)** – Of course, this might not be feasible in all situations. However, by involving them in the decision-making process, they'll feel more a part of the company.

Evaluate your company and the culture that it offers. Are you providing opportunities like the ones listed above? Are there areas in which you should improve or make a more concerted effort? By simply providing opportunities for your employees to become engaged, you might be surprised by how readily and easily they do so— with no further prompting from you. ♦

*If you have any questions about this article, or about how we can help you with your current performance, leadership, and / or hiring needs, please contact us today!*

~ Written for us by our associate Gary Sorrell, Sorrell Associates, LLC Copyright protected worldwide. All rights reserved.

## Leadership Lessons from the Ant

(Proverbs 6:6-8)

Do you want to make a difference? Then pay attention to the metaphor of the ant. It's amazing that one of the smallest of God's creatures can become one of His greatest teachers. The lessons the ant teaches us can be summarized this way:

**A – Attitude of Initiative:** Ants don't need a commander to tell them to get started.



**N – Nature of Integrity:** Ants work faithfully and need no outside accountability to keep them doing right.

**T – Thirst for Industry:** Ants work hard and will replace their anthill when it gets ruined.

**S – Source of Insight:** Ants store provisions in the summer.

If we consider and learn from the ways of the ant, we can grow wise. ♦

## Schedule of Public Courses

The following courses are being offered to the public by Harmony Coaching & Consulting. Click on the associated link for more information on the program or to register.

Course Title	Date(s)	Time	For More Information/Registration
<b>SHRM Learning System®</b> is the preparation course for the HR Certification Exam <i>(Every other Saturday)</i>	Every Other Saturday 2/23/13 – 5/4/13	8:30AM – 4:30PM	<a href="http://www.cbu.edu/shrm">www.cbu.edu/shrm</a>
<b>The Accountability Experience™</b> is a one-day workshop that helps participants discover the powerful personal and organizational benefits of individual accountability.	<b>May 9, 2013</b>	8:30AM – 5:00PM	<a href="http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=kv9895dab&amp;oeidk=a07e76jrhno7fba9dd5">http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=kv9895dab&amp;oeidk=a07e76jrhno7fba9dd5</a>
<b>The Coaching Clinic®</b> is a two-day workshop for executives, managers and leaders to experience and learn coaching skills and competencies.	<b>October 3 &amp; 4, 2013</b>	8:30AM – 5:00PM	<a href="http://www.harmonycc.net/coaching-clinic.php">www.harmonycc.net/coaching-clinic.php</a>

