

SPARKING IDEAS AND ACTION IN YOU AND YOUR BUSINESS  
HARMONY COACHING & CONSULTING

## Assessing Your Near-Retirement Workforce

There's a lot to be said about the "working in the business" as opposed to "working on the business" debate. According to the theory, people spend so much time working "in the business" that they leave themselves almost no time to work "on the business."

As a result, the future of the company suffers. This is especially the case when it comes to assessing your workforce, especially those employees who are close to retirement age. However, failing to conduct such an assessment – and to conduct it on a periodic basis – can have a negative impact on the future growth and prosperity of your company.

### Gone forever

If you have employees who have worked for any substantial length of time – think 20 years or more – those employees are valuable in more ways than one.

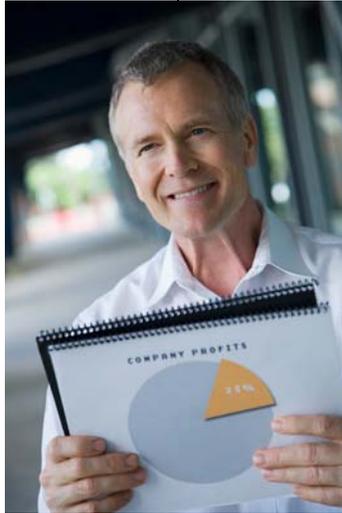
Not only do they have the skill and experience cultivated by 20 years on the job, they also have extensive knowledge of your company and how it operates.

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*How Do You Spell Success?*

## Align Your Organization for SUCCESS

Successful organizations and leaders continually look for ways and areas to improve in order to create a competitive edge. Competing in today's ever-changing, increasingly global marketplace, challenges organizations to make the best use of their resources. To meet this challenge, savvy leaders invest in developing the strategy, people and processes to most effectively meet their goals.

Contrary to popular belief, organizations do not exist to make a profit.

Organizations exist to develop loyal customers by providing valuable solutions and positive experiences. Money and profit is the reward for doing this well. The organization expending the least amount of resources to achieve their goals has a distinct advantage. That advantage translates to increased revenues, customer loyalty and profit. What do these successful organizations have in common? Their leaders relentlessly pursue the maximum degree of organizational alignment.

### What is Organizational Alignment?

Your car wouldn't get far if all the wheels pointed in different directions! Yet that's how many organizations operate – the wheels (resources including time, employees, activities, etc.) aren't aligned, so the vision is an unattainable destination. Experience shows that the interrelationships between processes and departments are key predictors of overall success. Alignment is when all systems work in concert to create customer value and achieve business results.

Any systems not completely aligned with objectives will have a debilitating impact on results. For example, if Marketing and R&D are both strong, but

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do not work together, products or services may be developed that no one wants. By the same token, if the strategy calls for employee involvement, but recognition focuses only on individual achievement, the disconnect will have a negative impact on implementation of that strategy.



It makes sense, and is possible, to align every resource directly with your vision and strategic plan to

significantly improve results. Organizations that understand and enhance the relationships between their actions and objectives create significant competitive advantage.

### **Where is Your Organization Out of Alignment?**

Is everything in your organization going in the same direction? Are your systems aligned to attract and retain loyal customers? What keeps you from operating at maximum effectiveness? When focus is aligned with desire, you begin to take action toward your goals. Successful leaders create effective systems, organizational discipline, and FOCUS. Consider the following five critical systems. What elements in your organization are working against your strategic intent?

**Strategic Planning** – Specific goals are not enough. High performing organizations have a systematic process for regular strategic thinking and business planning. They determine where they are going and how to get there. Do you have a plan with clear objectives? How well is it communicated to employees? To what degree, if any, do day-to-day operations mirror your plan?

**Structure** – The best organizations are structured to make the most of their resources...specifically, their human resources. Leadership insures that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and customers (internal and external) find it easy to do business with them. Does your organizational structure make it easy or difficult to create loyal customers and get the results you want?

**Process** – Poor processes derail even the best employees. Effective leaders create streamlined processes for absolutely every function from workflow and purchasing to communications and people development.

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To what degree do your informal and formal procedures help or hinder your ability to accomplish your objectives?

**Rewards & Recognition** – Are individual behaviors and results in alignment with your objectives? What do you measure and how often? Do you hold yourself and others accountable for the results necessary to meet your business goals?

**People** – Actions speak louder than words...How evident is your commitment to your employees? Are communications one-way or two-way? How do you value and develop people, including yourself, to get expected results?

### **Putting It All Together**

Ultimately, results depend on Leadership. Constant radical change, uncertainty, new rules and regulations, and increased customer demands are the norm. How you manage and thrive under these conditions depends a great deal upon how well your organization is aligned to meet your objectives.



Can you, will you, do what's necessary to drive toward alignment? Are you and the leaders in your organization willing and able to ask for help to make it happen?

Ask yourself the following questions...Where are you out of alignment? What gaps in your systems inhibit your effectiveness? Which system, if improved, would have the greatest positive impact on your results? Where can you focus to get the best ROI on your change efforts? In any economy, the winners are those who make the best use of their resources. Alignment is not just theory. When applied strategically, it can mean the difference between merely surviving and thriving.

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### **Need assistance? Contact us today:**

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*Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.*

*– Winston Churchill*

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As a result of the extensive knowledge and experience many (if not most) of these employees form the bedrock of your organization.

And if they retire soon, they'll be gone forever . . . and they'll take what they know with them.

So in the interest of making sure that their departure doesn't derail the company, an assessment needs to be conducted. That assessment should include the following action steps:

- Identify all members of the workforce who are conceivably within the age of retirement.
- Decide which ones hold the most value in terms of their knowledge and experience.
- Determine which employees would be the best candidates for **1.)** Acting as a mentor for new employees (possibly their own eventual replacement), and/or **2.)** Continuing to work for the company as a consultant or contractor upon their retirement.
- Meet individually with these employees and inquire about their plans. (It's important during these discussions to convey to the employees their worth and emphasize the fact that you're not trying to hurry them out the door.)
- Suggest – if you believe the time is appropriate – your plans for making the employee a mentor or eventually offering them work on a contract basis following their retirement. If you don't believe the time is appropriate, make a note to broach the subject at a later date.



### The consequences of inaction

Is this a time-intensive endeavor? Yes, it is. However, it's also a crucial issue currently facing companies of all sizes, an issue that's only going to become more urgent with the passage of time. By addressing the issue now, and doing so in a pro-active fashion, you'll reduce the chances that you'll be forced to react to the consequences of inaction.

It's often difficult to find time to “work on the business” . . . but this is one instance in which doing so will make it much easier to “work in the business” later on.

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### **Excellence –**

*The kind of people I look for to fill top management spots are the eager beavers, the mavericks. These are the ones who try to do more than they're expected to do - they always reach.*

– Lee Iacocca



# ONE MINUTE IDEAS

[Consumer.gov](http://www.Consumer.gov) is your one-stop resource for consumer information available from the federal government.

This site provides links to a variety of services available to the public such as –

- ✓ Identity Theft
- ✓ Free Credit Reports
- ✓ Recalls
- ✓ Consumer Complaints
- ✓ Do Not Call Registry
- ✓ Kids Privacy

and a variety of other services involving health, finances, careers, technology, product safety, etc...

Check it out at:

[www.Consumer.gov](http://www.Consumer.gov)



*If a man does his best, what else is there?*

– General George S. Patton

**harmony**

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## The Slingshot Approach

Have you ever felt like you were working and working, taking action and not really getting anywhere? Sometimes we feel like we're on the proverbial treadmill. So, what do we do? We take more action; try to accomplish even more. Sometimes taking more action is not the key. Actually taking a step or two back, looking and analyzing the situation, taking a break, or learning something is what's required. Taking less action may actually be what's necessary to propel you forward. This is referred to as the slingshot approach. Can you remember using a slingshot as a kid? You put the object you wanted to send flying into the rubber band, pulled it back as far as you could and then let go! Sometimes we have to pull back so that we can propel ourselves forward at a much greater velocity. So, when you feel like your working hard but going nowhere, think about pulling back to propel yourself forward!



— Bill Burch, SPHR, ACC.

## 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
Essentials of Human Resource Management	October 10 & 17, 2008	9:00 am – 4:30 pm	<a href="http://umce.memphis.edu/">http://umce.memphis.edu/</a>
<b>The Coaching Clinic®</b> is a two-day workshop for executives, managers and leaders to experience and learn coaching skills and competencies.	October 30 – 31, 2008	8:30 am – 5:00 pm	<a href="http://www.harmonycc.net/coachingclinic.asp">www.harmonycc.net/coachingclinic.asp</a>
So You Want to be a Professional Coach	November 6, 2008	6:30 – 8:30 pm	<a href="http://umce.memphis.edu/">http://umce.memphis.edu/</a>
Coaching & Counseling Skills	November 21, 2008	9:00 am – 4:30 pm	<a href="http://umce.memphis.edu/">http://umce.memphis.edu/</a>

