

The Consultant's Corner

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INSIGHTS  SUCCESS
"Building On Strengths"

Leading During Times Of Change

Of the many issues with which we wrestle each day, one certain truth is: the future will not look like the present. Competition, human creativity, and high technology will redefine the future. Yet many leaders continue to lead, manage, and operate as they have in the past.

There is a story by Price Pritchett in which he recounts his experience of viewing firsthand a life and death struggle that occurred just a few feet away from where he was sitting. He was watching a fly burn out the last of its short life's energies in a futile attempt to fly through the glass of a windowpane. The frenzied effort of the fly gave no hope for survival. Ironically, had the fly just flown in another direction, it could have easily escaped through an open door.

All too often, we are like the fly. Instead of trying harder, doing the same things, we need to do different things. We must break the shackles of conformity, challenge the routine, and break out of existing paradigms. At the core of succeeding in today's competitive environment is the ability to constantly improve, and reinvent the way we do business.

The key to working smarter is knowing the difference between motion and direction, between activity and focused action.



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"Life In The Fast Lane"

A fast company:

Competes on ideas. Netscape, for example, releases products on the Web before completion, thereby being first to market and engaging early users as co-creators.



Competes on teamwork. The whole company must be built around it.

Competes on knowledge and learning. Learning should be an everyday occurrence – part of how business is done.

Competes on values-based leadership. Retired head of Perot Systems in Dallas, Mort Meyerson, defines leadership as "making sure the company knows and embodies what it stands for; recruiting, hiring, and developing the best talent; creating an environment where employees can do their best work; and being accessible to the whole organization for both business and personal issues."

perotsystems®

Implements like crazy. An organization has to be relentless in coming up with new ideas and putting them into practice quickly.

Has a clearly defined vision and mission. The entire organization must know and embrace where the company is going and how it is going to get there. These actions must create excitement and enthusiasm among all co-workers and founders.

— Adapted from "Is Your Company Fast?"

Success in business requires training and discipline and hard work. But if you're not frightened by these things, the opportunities are just as great today as they ever were.

— David Rockefeller, US banker



ONE MINUTE IDEAS

The US Post Office

The next time you need a zip code before sending off a letter visit the site www.usps.gov. Punch in the street address, city, and state and almost instantly you'll have the zip + 4 code necessary. This sure beats waiting in lines at the post office.



Cell Phone – Do Not Call List

Just a reminder that cell phone numbers not registered on the 'Do Not Call' list are susceptible to telemarketing companies and you may already be receiving sales calls. In most instances, YOU WILL BE CHARGED FOR THESE CALLS... To prevent this, call 1-888-382-1222 or visit www.donotcall.gov and register your cell phone number on the National 'DO NOT CALL' list.

It will only take a minute of your time and it blocks (registers) your number for five (5) years.

Not sure if you're already registered – visit the web site and find out.



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To lead, we must be adept at balancing what must stay constant with what must change. Nurture a culture in which people are encouraged to seek new and better methods, while feeling secure in the familiar and in the future success of their organization. Align all resources and strategies toward the realization of the vision and goals.

In our next issue we will discuss how to create “Alignment”

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A Quick Problem-Solving Strategy

One simple and effective technique will help you solve most of the difficulties your team runs into. Follow these steps:

1. **Define the problem.** Do some research and include all the details. If a series of tasks was mishandled, include notes on each job and try to pinpoint where each error occurred.
2. **Brainstorm possible causes.** List the factors that contribute to the problem, including those that seem out of your control – such as a customer who changed his mind or any last-minute mechanical problems – and those you know you can influence, including things such as poor performance and faulty methods.
3. **Analyze the data.** Try to identify any trends or patterns that could point out underlying problems. Describe how the problem is affecting other departments, your customers or team members' job satisfaction. This information will help you decide if the problem is worth trying to solve. If the consequences are insignificant, it may not be worth your team's effort.
4. **Generate possible solutions.** Challenge team members to come up with as many solutions as possible. To encourage creative thinking, don't let members judge either the ideas or the team members who present them.
5. **Agree on solutions.** After you've generated a list of ideas, use consensus to select the most likely solution.
6. **Develop an action plan.** Discuss and agree upon clearly defined action steps. Assign volunteers to those steps, and then agree on a time frame for each.

Source: *Team Management Briefings*, as adapted from *Managing Quality Through Teams*, Lawrence M. Miller and Jennifer Howard, The Miller Consulting Group

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