

Leading Change: It's Hard to Do (Part I.)

1.) Change: It's Hard To Do — Part 1

Is it a privilege or a curse to live during interesting times? So far, the 21st century has provided a lot of challenges—terrorism, natural disasters, new international economic competitors and political discord.

All of this creates the ultimate challenge of how to survive in a world of constantly shifting conditions. Will doing business as usual allow you to survive, to continue achieving healthy growth and remain a vital organization? If not, what changes do you and your organization need to make? How do you introduce change to people with different needs, expectations and concerns?

Northwood Consulting, Ltd. is going to explore the dynamics of change and introduce a model based on the book *Spiral Dynamics: Mastering Values, Leadership and Change*, by Don Beck and Christopher Cowan, who introduced the concept to Nelson Mandela during the transition from apartheid to a non-segregated South Africa.

Change is hard to do, but it's easier when you have a guide.

Where are you now?

Before you start developing your plan or initiating change, you need to know where you are now. Executives tend to be action-oriented. Getting things done. Solving problems. Keeping the organization moving forward.

But in what direction do you want to go? And, where are you now? Beck and Cowan recommend starting by asking yourself: What business are we really in? Why does this organization really exist? What do we do? What can it become?

For instance, as an executive coach specializing in leadership development, what business am I really in? The answer is: I'm in the business of helping executives get better performance from staff, colleagues and themselves that results in improved productivity, better staff retention and increased profit.

"This review of why the entity really exists can expose new avenues of thinking, revitalize research and development efforts, polish marketing strategies and point out necessary adjustments," according to Beck and Cowan.

Discovering Your Once and Future Organization

A good exercise to start discovering the answers to these questions is one that I shared with you in the spring issue of *The Leading Edge*. Here it is again.

Step 1. From about 50 provocative photographs clipped from magazines and books, have each executive in your organization choose a photo that represents his or her image of the organization today.

Step 2. Each person reflects on the image and then writes down why he or she chose this particular image. Everyone shares his or her image and the reasons for choosing it.

Step 3. Capture the words people use to describe the organization. Identify the patterns that emerge.

Step 4. Repeat steps 1-3, except look for images of what you hope the company would look like in the future.

Step 5. Compare the present and future images and words. How are they different? What vision for the future emerges?

From completing this exercise, you'll be able to clarify your purpose, develop a mission statement, and identify your objectives for the future.

How did you get here?

There's a reason that you got where you are today. Beck and Cowan encourage you to "Acknowledge the strengths of the past so you do not sacrifice them in the name of progress. Companies in transition often 'throw out the baby with the bath water,' then struggle to reconstruct what they already had if they had only recognized its value."

If you've ever attended a workshop or read a book about making personal changes, a common exercise is to write a life review. In *Inc Your Dreams*, Rebecca Maddox writes "As you look at this record of your life, you are looking at your invisible assets... You can use the past as your springboard. You can use the learning's and understandings to mold your future in a way that changes the shape of your life."

Creating an Organizational Life Story

Review your organization's life story. Break the stories into functional chapters. Have your CFO write the story on your organization's financial successes and challenges. Your president or CEO write about how leadership and strategic vision played a role in the organization's development and growth. Your heads of marketing, sales, operations and technology can each write similar reviews from the perspective of their departments.

Then compare the stories. What patterns emerge? What values are shared? What strengths are demonstrated? Finally, what do you value about your organization and don't want to lose?

Once you have a clearer vision of where you are now and what direction you want to go in, you are ready to explore the future. The next issue of *The Leading Edge* will help you discover where you want to go and what the future might look like for your organization.

If you want to take your own organizational journey of change with an experienced guide, call Northwood Consulting, Ltd. at 301.990.6331. Plus, learn more about Spiral Dynamics by visiting www.spiraldynamics.net or www.spiraldynamics.com.



2.) What Are Your Biggest Challenges?

Northwood Consulting, Ltd. would like to hear from you about your biggest business challenges. In this issue, you learned about a model to help you review your organization and to start thinking about the future. Here's a chance to start reflecting on important questions. The answers may provide you clues to your future direction.

Please reflect on the following questions and send us your replies. To show my appreciation for sharing your insights, I will compile the responses anonymously and send the final report to you. Send to karen@northwoodconsulting.com or go to www.northwoodconsulting.com and click on Leading Edge Survey link.

1. What are your 3 biggest challenges in the next... 12 months? 3 years?
2. What is the one social or business trend that will affect your organization the most?
3. What do you need to do to prepare for the impact of these challenges and trends?