

## Executive Insight >> Thought Leaders

### Creating the High Performance Enterprise

We all know that we've entered a new epoch in business. One that is globalized and digitized, where customer expectations stretch our limits relentlessly and new competitors spring up at every juncture. And we know that our people, more than ever, will be the source of future competitive advantage. So much is clear.

What we're less clear on is how to effectively respond to, and leverage, these challenges. Particularly the people ones.

We experience critical talent shortages as we try to grow or change; good employees jump ship and we can't put our finger on why; the age of loyalty is long gone, replaced by angst and apparent disinterest; we scratch our heads at younger employees and wonder what makes them tick; We search for new approaches, but few are forthcoming, and fewer still sustain.

The reality is that organizations need to change dramatically just to survive, let alone be ready to leverage the challenges ahead. Conventional wisdom no longer works, and companies are fighting a constant and highly competitive battle to attract and retain the best talent and to establish the leadership and organizational practices necessary to assure high performance and value-creation.

If there were a single recipe, we'd all be copying it. But there's not. Each corporate circumstance is different and each decision point complex. Often it's tough to get to the root causes of issues and sporadic surprises and intermittent firefighting drives us nuts.

So what do we do? Is it time to give up the ghost? Hardly. It's just a time for some serious rethinking about organization design – strategies, structures, practices, interfaces and requirements. And for some tough choices.

This issue of Executive Insight offers a guide to begin to rethink your organization. There are no cookie-cutter solutions, nor glitzy change models, just a very pragmatic, sequential process of detailed re-examination to begin to rethink and reshape your organization.

1. Design and detail the organization needed to meet the strategic plan, with particular concentration on required competencies and skill levels, as well as performance expectations to be achieved. Conduct a thorough appraisal of needs versus current organizational

composition, identifying those with capability and/or potential to build the organization around. Build a transition plan.

2. Define senior management requirements as a priority, specify knowledge, skills and abilities essential to lead the achievement of the strategic plan and begin to recruit for gaps and to train for development needs. Be able to clearly articulate and define roles, competencies, behaviors, accountabilities and expectations.
3. Establish clear standards of performance throughout the organization, and establish and effectively manage a performance system designed to help those with capability reach their potential, to correct under-performance expeditiously and to identify and release those without the skill, knowledge, ability or potential to meet the performance requirements of the future.
4. Establish a competency in recruitment, selection and candidate integration in order to rapidly and effectively draw talent into the organization. This includes defining candidate competencies clearly, having resourceful, disciplined and effective methods to recruit high quality candidates, implementing a systematic selection approach that assures good hiring decisions are made, and having a well-designed onboarding process to ensure smooth integration of candidates into the organization.
5. Establish a proficiency in change management, including envisioning, scoping, decision-making, planning, communication, building commitment, transition management, speed, implementation and integration.
6. Develop and articulate a high performance organization vision for the Company that integrates with the business strategy. Set up systems and methods, and develop capabilities so that these key messages are reinforced on a continuing basis.

Ensure that the values contained within the vision guide business practices, actions and decision making and that Company leadership consistently and regularly demonstrates the vision in their behaviors.

7. Build or contract strengths in training needs analysis, skill assessment and employee training and development. This particularly applies to leadership and management development, core competency skill enhancement and the information technology skills needed to operate in a technologically current business.
8. Provide competency-developing and stretch assignments as a matter of course, but particularly to high potentials. Assure that leaders recognize that these "lessons of experience" are the best teacher, and that, as leaders, they have a catalytic role in making these challenging assignments available and leading and challenging the

organization and its members to ever-increasing levels of performance.

9. Establish and integrate a range of practices, policies and human resources systems that complement, enhance or optimize the strategic position.

These should include:

- Work practices, designs, interaction methods and flexible work arrangements that enhance the working environment.
  - Work standards, performance expectations, rewards, recognition and feedback systems that promote customer satisfaction, continuous improvement, employee engagement and commitment, organizational alignment, and that attain desired results.
  - Career development and succession planning processes that fuel continuous individual and organizational improvement.
10. Establish a core competency in acquisition, divestiture and alliance management, including disciplined processes for integration/de-integration and network management.
  11. Develop transnational competencies, mindsets and application capabilities. Design both global integration and local responsiveness into your structure and practices.

While this may all sound like a major undertaking, the transformational steps needed not be daunting if planned and sequenced appropriately and taking a strategic view for the long-term. Some fresh thinking and some tough choices can assure effective alignment between strategy and organizational capability in this age of new realities.

Over time, with the right continued focus and attention, you will create a truly high performance working environment that is characterized by committed and value-adding employees, openness, flexibility, esprit de corps and a passion for excellence and customer service. One that produces increasingly strong performance results year-on-year...



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