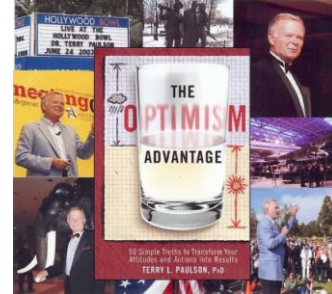


# Change! Love It and Lead It!

**Terry L. Paulson, PhD., CSP, CPAE**  
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*"If you want to manage somebody, manage yourself. Do that well and you'll be ready to stop managing and start leading." Executive Development Systems*

*"The new economy is a dangerous place. It is unforgiving, and it measures human life in dog years: Three years wasted on the wrong pursuits, or, just as bad, in avoiding the right ones, leaves you 21 years older and farther off track. There's never a time for comfort. Now, can you act as though you know that? The interesting challenge is to know that if you don't go far enough, you'll never know how far you can go." Harriet Rubin*

In today's global economy, the answers to sustaining success are not found in getting closure; they are found in moving forward to sustain and expand an organization's reputation for excellence. The best leaders do not just want a good year; they want to further and enhance a dynasty. The best don't just initiate change; they make change work over and over again as the business grows and changes. As a result, there is an unsettling truth about leadership in the future; the change leaders' race will *never* be over. The great game of leadership is no more likely to be *finished* than your family's favorite television soap opera. Instead, organizations and the men and women who lead them will have to be ready to *keep inventing* the future. As markets mature, leaders are left with a choice—to be change masters or change blockers! Far too many begin to put up roadblocks to change, deny threats or competition and embrace entitlement! Change masters see business maturity as an invitation to refocus, retool and reinvent the organization to better serve customers.

**"The best leaders don't settle for a good year. They want to create a sustainable dynasty."**  
—Terry Paulson

*"It's tough for us to accept that we don't control the rules of the game anymore. We've got to be ready to battle formidable competitors everyday, forever, without a break." Bill Almon*

*"You've got people out there who still are convinced that they're just one change away from tranquility, that all they've got to do is get re-engineering right and then life is going to slow down. Well, it's not going to." Daryl Conner, Managing at the Speed of Change*

*"In times of rapid change, experience could be your worst enemy." J. Paul Getty*

## **Manage the Leadership Tensions Involved in Making Change Work**

Change masters focus less on enduring answers and more on managing the leadership tensions. Instead of looking for one-dimensional trends that will briefly dominate the future only to fade into history, leaders work to harness the constant tension of forces that will always be part of a change leader's journey. Seemingly contradictory forces—valuing the past and embracing the future, driving a vision but being open to strategic innovation, being tight where you can and loose where you need to invest, majoring in

accountability and support—these and other dynamic tensions, once mastered, will give you an edge in continuing to invent the future for your people and your organization.

*"A visionary company doesn't simply balance between preserving a tightly held core ideology and stimulating vigorous change and movement; it does both to the extreme." Jim Collins and Jerry Porras, Built to Last*

In the fast lane of constant change, all must be challenged to get on board in order to shape its desired course. Instead of trying to relieve stress by giving people the promise of calm after the next change and then watch the trust take a dive when the next change is announced, be honest—"We are never going to be finished with change. Be excited! You will never be bored again! Who wants the "good old days" when we are creating the *new good old days* for your organization! Every leadership book talks about embracing change! Where is the tension here? It's time for a little straight talk—*Not every change is for the better!* While it is true that every improvement is the result of change, *not every change* is an improvement. The past has value, and it can be a source of inspiration and continuity. At the same time, the past shouldn't have an automatic veto. You need to take the best from the past and best from the future to forge your way into the future. That means turmoil. If you ever felt that certain people in your organization were designed to frustrate you, you are probably right. Somewhere in the struggle for the best strategy you will need to keep the *change agents* and the *status quo seekers* talking together to get *the best out of both*. Neither has a lock on truth! Leaders must learn to value and learn from both groups to find their way. You don't want a change frenzy that creates an overworked, cynical workforce; you want to promote strategic change that makes a difference to your customers.

**What is worth holding onto from your organization's past? What needs to be let go of to move forward?**

### **Use Your Vision, Mission and Business Goals as a Flexible Compass**

*"If you're not serving the Customer, you'd better be serving someone who is." Jan Carlzon, former CEO of SAS*

*"Vision without action is only a dream. Action without vision is just passing the time. Vision with action can change the world." Joel Barker*

*"Your change agents, the people who really see the future, pull the organization along. But if they get too far out, if they don't circle back, they lose people." Thomas M. Kasten*

In the midst of uncertainty, it is critical that the leaders focus on stronger execution of strategy in pursuit of delivering consistent results. They need to sustain a sense of urgency and speed while being able to remain flexible in pursuit of those results. That means that whether the future brings boom times or economic down times, the best leaders keep harnessing the natural tension created by driving the current vision while still being open to the *innovative happy accidents* that usher in new strategic opportunities that customers demand. Have a firm belief in your current business goals but balance that focus with a rock-solid commitment to strategic innovation and enabling technology. Change masters who are both focused *and* flexible value business strategy *and* surprise.

*"The key to your impact as a leader is your own sincerity. Before you can inspire others with emotion, you must be swamped with it yourself. Before you can move their tears, your own must flow. To convince them, you must yourself believe." Winston Churchill*

Driving your vision helps provide hope and focus for your future. An honest look at current reality helps energize that vision and gets your people motivated to move. People crave a meaningful direction and a leader who keeps the organization moving. Instead of expecting or waiting for a perfect laser-focused vision, work with key stakeholders to stake out a direction and then work with your people to refine that vision as you move. Stay collaborative and open to adjustments to keep the vision compelling. The biggest difference between a vision and a hallucination is the number of people who can see it; involving your stakeholders keeps the vision theirs. The companies with the most confident and committed leaders who are deep within the ranks are the companies that make change work.

**"The biggest difference between a vision and a hallucination is the number of people who can see it!"**

**–Terry Paulson**

*"I could detect a distinct correlation between this notion of vision and performance.... The good ones had a vision. As for the bad ones, it was hard to tell why the people had come to work that morning." Donald Povejsil*

*"The first and last task of a leader is to keep hope alive." John W. Gardner*

*"Spend as much time on opportunity management as you do on operations management." Gary Hamel and C.K. Prahalad*

*"There is no giant CEO brain making global allocation decisions. I believe every company needs a combination of resource allocation and resource attraction. Rather than relegating innovators to some largely peripheral 'incubator,' work instead to create vibrant internal markets for capital and for those who compete for talent--markets in which anyone with a slightly eccentric idea has the opportunity to solicit funding from anyone with a bit of discretionary budget, and talent from anyone with a few spare cycles." Gary Hamel*

The best executives are also comfortable communicating and driving a *fuzzy but strategic focus*. Making progress on an imperfect 10 degrees of direction will always be better than being immobilized by facing the chaos created by 360 degrees of unfocused choices. One of the reasons your destination will never be reached or fully defined is that customer demands will provide real-world, course-correction data and new opportunities not yet imagined. Keep your eyes on the changing horizon and stay nimble. Work to reinvent yourself instead of waiting for competitors to do it for you. Increase your odds of success by embracing innovation, *but only within* your strategic focus. Once you capitalize on one innovation, expect others to surface.

*"Never forget...that the most difficult thing in doing good business is to say no to bad business, the bad opportunities.... You must always decide who your customer is...and you should say no to every option that is not related to that customer's need." Jan Carlzon, former CEO of SAS*

*"Sometimes customers don't know what they need. If you asked a 19th-century farmer what he needed, he would have said a bigger horse. He wouldn't have said a tractor." Robert J. Kriegel*

Whether you are driving your vision or taking advantage of new innovation, remember the words of Peter Drucker, "The essence of strategy is denial." Care enough to say "no" to everything that is not strategically focused. No organization can do it all and

retain excellence. No organization can risk not capitalizing on strategic innovation and still survive. Focus on targeting your innovative risk taking and strategic positioning to make a difference where it counts for you and your customers.

**How do you drive your vision and business goals? How do you make sure your vision and mission show in your strategic change decisions?**

### **Commitment to Values Helps Build and Sustain Trust in a Cynical and Competitive World**

*"Leaders must scrupulously guard their organizations' integrity so that employees have a basis for pride. Then managers can step forward and declare their own feelings about the values of service, not as a strategic position in the marketplace, but as a personal ethical necessity." Ken Macher*

To win business in any industry, aggressive business goals are established. Living up to those commitments remains a challenge. Trust is a critical but fragile asset that has long-term payoffs for leaders, for their people and for the organization. In a cynical and competitive world, trust must be built and managed. Instead of avoiding problems, effective leaders manage the promise and deliver experience of their customers and colleagues. They confront problems quickly and keep managing the expectations of others. When disappointments occur, use them as opportunities to show that you are a problem solver, not a problem evader.

*"You need clarity on your own non-negotiables. You need to know what you won't budge on, or you'll be buffeted by the winds." Curtis R. Berrien*

For change leaders, values and integrity are always in. Live your organization's core values as you make your way through the change journey. Core values help direct your strategic choices. They are both your anchor in the rough sea and the lighthouse that helps illuminate a positive and principled course. It is your foundation for anything you build. It is what you stand for and what you hold yourself accountable to maintain no matter what the cost. This provides the internal measuring system leaders need to be consistent and build trust. This firm foundation allows you to stand up to the tough decisions all leaders face.

*"Always do what is right. It will gratify most of the people, and astound the rest." Mark Twain*

**What would you put on "your page?" How do you regain trust when you have lost the confidence of others?**

### **Change Leaders Sell the Need for Change—Be the Music!**

*"Only the paranoid survive." Andy Grove, former Intel CEO*

*"We need to be afraid of our customers, because those are the folks who give us money. I remind people every morning we should wake up afraid and use the terror as a motivator. The customers are the folks that at the end of the day are really in control.... Customers have a bigger voice online. If we make a customer unhappy, they can tell thousands of people. Likewise, if you make*

*a customer happy, they can also tell thousands of people. With that kind of a megaphone in the hands of every individual customer, you had better be a customer-centric company."*  
 Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon.com

Kurt Lewin described the change process as unfreezing-moving-refreezing. Your job as leaders is to *unfreeze* the status quo before you sell any strategic change to your people. When you wait for a crisis to be your catalyst for change, you seldom have the resources or time to do it well. Resist trying to sell people on new solutions when they don't even have an awareness of *the need to change*. Keep asking yourself, "What can I do to generate an awareness of the need to change while they still have the time and the resources to make change work? How do I become an eye-opening translator of the advantages for strategic, service-driven change?" While noting the cost of doing nothing, sell the value and hope involved in embracing change as a way of life. Music in a movie creates anticipation. As leaders, you are called to be the music for your people. Remember, fear and hope are both good motivators.

*"Restlessness is destiny calling." Ian Percy*

**What threats and opportunities are you aware of that can help get your people to drive strategic change? How can you create the *music* to sell your strategic change goals?**

## **Use Experience and Lifelong Learning to Drive Change**

*"Some teachers shine a light that allows growth to flourish, while others cast a shadow under which seedlings die." Parker J. Palmer, author of "Let Your Life Speak"*

*"The illiterate of the future are not those who cannot read or write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn." Alvin Toffler*

If you are going to break the grip of the past, you must seize control of the schools. Change leaders will continue to value experience, but they won't value employees or leaders who *rest in* their expertise. Change is driven best through learning. The best leaders want to attract new employees with the right skills and help existing employees refocus and retool their skills. Everyone talks about learning organizations, but they forget that the best organizations value learning *and* unlearning. They must learn new competencies and unlearn habits that constrain them. If your people are committed to maintaining yesterday's skills, they are not available to learn what will help them create tomorrow. You need to be the *Chief Learning and Unlearning Officer*.

**"As the Chief Learning and Unlearning Officer, invest 5% of your time in new learning at all times."**

**–Terry Paulson**

*"Learning is not compulsory, but neither is survival." W. Edwards Deming*

My great uncle used to say on the farms of Illinois, "It's easiest to ride a horse in the direction it is going." In short, part of promoting strategic change is letting people know which way the horse is going so they can develop skills that are necessary for the ride. My great uncle added a little tension of his own: "If the horse is dead, get off it." In practical terms, do your part as a change leader to redefine *loyalty*. Make it clear that you won't be able to guarantee the jobs of people whose skills are no longer needed.

You can promise to give them an early warning on strategic changes while encouraging and supporting their efforts to develop the skills they will need to *stay* part of your team.

*"We must right size and right skill." Lou Gerstner, Former CEO of IBM*

Whether you hire people with new skills or promote development within, successful companies address the development of new products or services and new knowledge in an integrated approach. To keep learning and hiring for competencies, strategic training becomes a marketing weapon. In short, build a learning culture that strategically prepares your workers to be ready for the future you are creating. I would add an adage to my great uncle's collection: "Since it's hard to know if your horse is dying, have at least two horses. In fact, in today's world, have a herd." Frightened employees without the necessary skills fight change; employees with the skills that are needed embrace change as an opportunity. Encourage everyone in your organization to invest five percent of their time in developing strategic competencies. Model what you preach. Take time to share what you are learning on your own journey.

*"One thing worse than training employees and losing them, is not training them and keeping them." Dr. Ed Metcalf*

**What strategic training do our people need to be ready for future changes? How can I better model lifelong learning as an executive?**

### **Kill the Myth of Perfection on the Road to Excellence**

*"Everything looks like failure in the middle." Rosabeth Moss Kanter*

Every change process goes through frustrating stages on the way to fruition. Forecasts fall short, unexpected obstacles pop up, momentum slows, customer demands change, significant errors surface and the critics get louder. Change leaders must manage through the miserable middle. They stay with the changes through the bumpy times by managing expectations, surfacing problems quickly, making appropriate adjustments and continuing to cultivate the change process. Organizations burdened with a *myth of perfection* have a difficult time.

*"You miss 100% of the shots you never take." Wayne Gretzky*

In this age of constant change, your commitment to quality is no longer an option; it is your *entry ticket* into the global economy. Quality is the way successful organizations do business. As a leader, continue to fund statistical process control, honor and reward successful quality initiatives and share and promote best practices. But don't let your pursuit of perfection in doing things better create a risk-averse environment. You can't support innovation without building surprise, adventure, and flexibility into your organization's culture. Tomorrow's leaders will balance their commitment to quality with an equal emphasis on *strategic* risk-taking. Leaders must support eliminating errors in established processes *while still* encouraging and capitalizing on errors that further strategic change. Kill your version of the *myth of perfection*.

**"The only places that perfect plans or people exist are in educational movies or self-help books. You won't be perfect, but you can be better if you get busy making change work!"**

**–Terry Paulson**

*"It often happens that I wake at night and begin to think about a serious problem and decide I must tell the Pope about it. Then I wake up completely and remember that I am the Pope."*  
Pope John XXIII

*"We all make mistakes. But what really makes mistakes expensive is not admitting them right away. Business culture teaches us never to admit to our mistakes but to bury them instead or to blame someone else."* Katie Paine, Founder and CEO of the Delahaye Group

The only places that perfect people exist are in educational movies; that's because they have a script and can practice it until they get it right. While you pursue the perfection quality goals aspire to, you are being asked to take quantum leaps into a world without any roadmaps. Don't be so concerned about doing things perfectly that you settle for perfecting outdated processes and wait too long to embrace innovative, transformational change. Candor and admitting mistakes are both true signs of effective leadership.

*"I never worry about action, but only about inaction."* Winston Churchill

There is a basic engineering concept worth noting: With every movement comes error. Catching that error early and making necessary course-corrections in response to those errors helps make progress towards any destination possible. In the same way, every change involves early error. Avoiding making those errors or hiding the errors that result can hasten the demise of once successful organizations. True winners in the great game of business win *and* lose more frequently than the losers, because they stay in the game. To be successful, take the trap out of excellence by striving for quality without having to wait for the perfect thought, the perfect action, or the perfect time.

*"Don't get engrossed with things over which you have no control, because that will adversely affect the things that you do have control over."* John Wooden

*"The leader's most important role is to instill confidence in people. They must dare to take risks and responsibility. You must back them up if they make mistakes."* Jan Carlzon, former CEO of SAS

**What are you doing to surface hidden errors early? What are you doing to support heroic efforts?**

## **Unleash the Power of Story in Building a Changing Organizational Culture**

*"There are two ways of spreading light: To be the candle, or the mirror that reflects it."* Edith Wharton

In a changing world, leaders will need to help teams relearn the optimism advantage. This is not a call for motivational hype. Research suggests that flexible optimists persevere even in the presence of obstacles and negative outcomes. They perceive failures as temporary setbacks, rather than final verdicts. Victory comes most often to the steady and dependable. We value leaders who have an optimistic view of the future, but we *don't like* Pollyanna! Good leaders promote a healthy tension; they balance the hope of strategic success with a realistic assessment of the obstacles that must be overcome to reach it. Selling any change requires leaders who believe in their associates' abilities to accomplish their mission. Cultivate your strategic changes every day with a good dose of hope and optimism. You build hope by pointing to successes.

*"I'm often introduced as being 'in charge of change.' I'm not in charge of anything. My role is to create mirrors that show the whole what the parts are doing—through coffee talks and small meetings, through building a network, through bringing people together who have similar or complimentary ideas. You seek out the positive deviants and support them. You feed them; you give them resources and visibility." Barbara Waugh, Worldwide Personnel Manager, HP Labs*

Having a compelling vision promotes strategic movement and change, but creating and sustaining the drive and the enthusiasm for the change journey takes work. The best change leaders pick early changes big enough to matter but small enough to win quickly. Part of energizing others is celebrating successes on the journey. Find the stories that capture and promote how the new culture is working.

*Remember, the difference between being enthusiastic and generating enthusiasm is whose ideas you get excited about. Don't push change; let your culture's successes pull change by attracting others to a better way of doing things. Be as excited about the ideas and work of your people as you are about your own. Capture hope and excellence where you find it, fan the sparks, and reflect the heat to the others who do not yet believe that change can work! Good stories are a rich reservoir of enthusiasm, feelings and wisdom.*

**"Five minutes reflecting back on your pride in your team's passion for achievement is the best investment of time you can make. Get excited about your people!"**

**–Terry Paulson**

*"Every person I work with knows something better than I. My job is to listen long enough to find it and use it." Jack Nichols*

Take time to master questions that will surface best practices worth sharing: What has been working for you? What are you doing differently that is worth bragging about?

**What new stories of your people overcoming obstacles to deliver strategic results capture what you are proud of as an organization?**

### **Change Masters Are Listening Leaders Who Ask Smart Questions**

*"Judge a man not by his answers, but by his questions." Voltaire*

*"Leaders have an obligation to ask the right questions on behalf of the organization. One of the advantages of age is that it finally dawns on you that questions are more important than answers. Questions either determine or lead to such things as quality, appropriateness, who should be involved, and what's right. The leader has a role in initiating, examining and testing questions." Max De Pre, author of "The Art of Leadership"*

*"The important thing is not to stop questioning." Albert Einstein*

Have you ever felt that no one listens to what you have to say? Don't worry, what you say as a leader may not be anywhere near as important as the questions you consistently ask. What you say is often for show; what you keep asking about is what you are really interested in. The first time you ask a new question, they know you have attended a

**"You are known more by the questions you consistently ask than by anything else you say." –Terry Paulson**



training program. If you keep asking the same question, it drives their focus as they search for the answers to satisfy your interest. A true leader is a miner whose best tools are focused attention, targeted questions, and listening expertise. What's in it for you as a miner? Treasures. You get to unearth the nuggets of creative insight, information and best practices your people have to share.

When INTEL's former CEO Andy Grove visited a high school class that had tried running their class on INTEL values for a year, he did more listening than talking. When questioned about what they had asked the CEO, one youth replied, "Oh, he was so interested in us. He wanted to know what WE had learned that HE could use." No wonder Andy Grove was so effective as a leader.

*"You can tell whether a man is clever by his answers. You can tell whether a man is wise by his questions." Naguib Mahfouz, Egyptian Nobel Prize Winner*

*"I...walk around and see my people, because just to walk around and dare to be strong, dare to give, is much more valuable than any decision I could make or any report I could read. What I give away then is mental health to the organization. The most unproductive time we have is when we sit at our desks. Because the only thing we do is read history: what has already happened, what we cannot do anything about. When we leave our offices and start to walk around and talk to people, that's when we make things happen. You give your thoughts; you get thoughts back; you draw conclusions; perhaps you even make decisions." Jan Carlzon, Former CEO of SAS*

*"The more you motivate people, the more they want to interact with you. I started Deli Days.... They are held a few days each month. If you want to see me, you take a number from a ticket wheel outside my office. Above it is an electronic numbers board ("Now Serving"), which I control with a switch under my desk. The idea is that you take a number and wait until it pops up on the board. While you wait, you can continue working, without hovering outside my office waiting for an opportunity to dart in. Each person has five or six minutes to talk with me about anything he or she wants. I think the most important rule, regardless of where you work, is to be honest with the people who work for you. You can't come off like a guru who knows everything and doesn't have a single flaw. But you can be a manager who creates an environment in which new ideas are encouraged and rewarded." Katherine Hudson, Eastman Kodak*

Don't wait until you feel like listening; build a winning listening habit. Many leaders don't take spontaneous time to listen. Instead, they schedule regular one-on-one conversations with all their key people. A weekly 15-minute walk can do wonders at focusing you and your people on the things that matter most. Be an equal opportunity listener by taking time for all levels, labels, ages, genders, and races. Once you are on your walk, here are some smart questions you might want to ask on a regular basis:

*What red flags do you see and what do you suggest we do about them?*

*What are your three major goals for the week?*

*What resources, information or support do you need to meet your goals?*

*What are you doing differently?*

*What's working for you?*

*Not everything is worth doing. What's worth abandoning in light of what must get done?*

*What strategic changes are best worth our time right now?*

*What training do you feel you need to meet your goals?*

*What three "Keepers" did you pick up from that article/book/training that we all could learn from?*

## What questions define your leadership?

### Focus on Resource Management—How to Be Tight, Loose and Flexible

*"Nothing inspires genius like a tight budget." CA State Finance Department Sign*

Cost containment and the improved prioritization and resource allocation that it requires is one of the primary focus areas for change leaders in any organization. It's no longer feast or famine; deliver results and control costs no matter what time of year it is. Like every successful organization, leaders must manage the tension between controlling costs and investing the resources needed to invent the future. No organization can afford to waste scarce resources nor can they afford to starve needed change. Cost containment will continue to be with us; the competitive challenges you face will ensure that. At the same time, employees are getting tired of hearing *more with less!* Far too many associates feel they are working harder than ever before and do not have the resources they need to meet the strategic business goals and change challenges they now face.

*"In difficult times, the most common mistake is a kind of corporate egalitarianism. Companies take 10% away from everybody, instead of separating out what's core. They need to determine what's critical and invest in that, even if it means taking 20% away from something else. There's too much democracy, because nobody wants to make anybody unhappy." Tom Rohrs, Senior VP of Global Operations for Applied Materials Inc.*

Tom Peters has always found ways to get under the skin of comfortable executives. One consistent theme has been an attack on the cost-control preoccupation of many executives: "Getting lean and mean is no small thing, but lean and mean is not a business strategy." Great leaders build a *tight-loose structure*. They use tight control where necessary and loose control where they could give people autonomy to make a difference where it counts for the organization.

*"We have a strong focus on trying to spend money on things that matter to our customers and not spend money on us. Our wealth vanishes the instant we stop doing a good job for our customers, and that's real." Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon.com*

*"The first change policy as to be organized abandonment. The change leader puts every product, every service, every process, every market, every distribution channel, every customer, and every end use on trial for its life. And the change leader does this on a regular schedule. The question it has to ask is 'If we did not do this already, would we, knowing what we know now, go into it?' If the answer is no, the reaction must not be 'Let's make another study.' The reaction must be 'What do we do now?'" Peter Drucker*

Never settle for uniform funding or across-the-board budget cuts! Let your people compete for and justify the investment of resources. Focusing your resources and capital investments *need not* mean layoffs. Increase the budgets and move staff to your well-positioned projects. Cut or eliminate budgets and retool staff in those areas that are no longer necessary. If your organization and your people keep learning and adjusting to changing realities and customer needs, no one need be a victim of strategic change.

*"Lack of planning on your part does not constitute a crisis on my part." Sign used by Peter Ueberroth during the 1984 Olympics*

Be ready to make priority resource management decisions quickly. Demand a call for “no surprises” and put a premium on early problem solving. Drive your change goals with clear deadlines and high expectations, but communicate a willingness to help by moving resources when needed. When inadequate resources exist and significant work is not being done, encourage your people to be professional pests in communicating their needs up the organization. Work together to find the best way to use your limited organizational resources. The old message was always *more with less*. Your winning message must be—*Do the right less with more*. Focus your resources where they count most. If it isn’t worth doing, don’t waste *any* resources. Be focused, be responsive, and keep everyone working smart on real priorities that *are worth doing*.

**“Every leader talks about quality results and firm deadlines, but few take the time to encourage the priority shifts and resource reallocation that are necessary to make that happen.”**

**–Terry Paulson**

*“Empowerment is not real unless it is sandwiched between mission and measure.” D. Quinn Mills*

*“There is no contradiction between creativity and executing. Indeed, the most innovative companies tend to be the most disciplined when it comes to making their numbers. They seamlessly combine cutting-edge strategies with real-time information. Fast companies understand that what gets measured really does get attention—so they pay attention to what they measure.” Bill Mayer, Fast Company*

Update and align your measurement, information and reward systems to support empowerment and strategic results. People crave critical information in the midst of change. If you don’t provide information, they will make up their own and rumors will increase. Use your line supervisors to keep your teams informed. Treat timely feedback and meaningful measurements as your *friends* and let your people get to know your *friends*. Important measurements and financial controls are liberating. They let your people focus on the winning activities that make a difference to their change mission and to the organization’s bottom line results. They help them make timely course-corrections when their performance is off the mark. Your people will win games for you when they have a reliable way to keep score. Organizations without performance measures are like pilots who are trying to fly through a storm without instruments. Good measurements keep everyone honest and prevent problems and opportunities from being swept under the rug of corporate face-saving. Measure and display *only* what is meaningful. Bureaucratic overkill is frustrating; don’t let measurement overkill demoralize your people. Finally, culture change lives or dies on dollar signs. Make sure your reward system supports strategic change.

*“The only man I know who behaves sensibly is my tailor; he takes my measures anew each time he sees me. The rest go on with their old measurements and expect me to fit them.” George Bernard Shaw*

*“I can’t stand this proliferation of paperwork. It’s useless to fight the forms. You’ve got to kill the people producing them.” Vladimir Kabaidze, Moscow*

**Where do you need to be tighter with controls? Where do you need to invest more to deliver on strategic opportunities? What measurement on your scorecard is critical in supporting and rewarding strategic change?**

## Care Enough to Confront and Use Resistance as Course-Correction Data

*"We found that the most exciting environments, that treated people very well, are also tough as nails. There is no bureaucratic mumbo-jumbo... Excellent companies provide two things simultaneously: Tough environments and very supportive environments." Thomas Peters*

*"Good employees want to be associated with good employees. One way to demoralize great employees is to surround them with people who aren't carrying their load." Ken Goldman, CFO of Siebel Systems*

*"No problem is too big or so complicated that it cannot be run away from!" Charlie Brown*

*"The search for someone to blame is always successful." Robert Half*

As we look to the future, the most exciting environments expect a lot from their teams and they offer strong support. Change cultures are built on strong accountability and clear, candid communication. Excellence must be rewarded and poor performance must not be accepted. Loyalty to an employee should never mean acceptance of consistent poor performance. If you keep all of your people in the midst of significant change, it's a near miracle or bad management. As an executive ready to invent the future, avoid avoidance. Be known as a problem solver, not a problem evader. Build an organizational culture that is open to confront *all* problems quickly.

*"A good manager doesn't try to eliminate conflict; he tries to keep it from wasting the energies of his people. If you're the boss and your people fight you openly when they think that you are wrong--that's healthy. If your people fight each other openly in your presence for what they believe in--that's healthy. But keep all the conflict eyeball to eyeball." Robert Townsend*

**"Change leaders are problem solvers not problem evaders! Don't avoid your difficult people."**

**-Terry Paulson**

Just because people resist change, doesn't mean that they are wrong. Honor resistance and search it for truths. When leaders experience resistance, too many leaders make the other person the problem. Encourage people to speak up quickly, and be ready to listen when they do. As my great uncle, Harvey Swanson, used to

say, "When one person calls you a horse's ass, don't worry. When four people do, go out and buy a saddle!" The higher you go in the organization, the more zeroes you may have to add to that number, but make sure you are known as a listening leader. When the heat is on and you're wrong, admit it quickly.

*"Never let your ego get so close to your position that when your position goes, your ego goes with it." General Colin Powell*

Increase the value of constructive conflict by building a team filled with diverse members who have a strong commitment to the team and its objectives but who are each capable of challenging each other's points of view and innovative ideas. Well handled conflict helps build clarity of vision and purpose. As you prepare for the future, make sure you honor, support and use disagreements whenever they occur. Encourage everyone to be able to disagree *without* being disagreeable.

*"The first lesson of philosophy is that we may all be mistaken." Will Durant*

At an executive level, you are challenged to influence up and across the organization as much as you are to lead your people. The fact remains that the less authority you have the more you are in sales. One of the most difficult challenges is a peer or superior with high ego needs and little background in the areas you need their support. In short, they have to be right and know nothing about what they are talking about. Your challenge is to positively impact their ego needs, feed them information that keeps them informed and find ways to involve them in ways that contribute to the success of a project. Don't avoid them; learn to work with them in support of strategic change.

**"You can tell the leaders who can't admit they're wrong. They are the same executives who when they go to a therapist wear sunglasses and pay in cash."**

**-Terry Paulson**

**What are you doing to build a problem solving not a problem avoiding culture? How do you handle influencing peers and superiors who have a high need to be right and know little about the challenges you face?**

### **Bridge Building Strategies to Increase Your Influence Batting Average**

*"Networks are very important, especially for building credibility. We have leaders, but they're not appointed. You're a leader by having followers. People have to be able to trust you, and networking becomes the way you build that trust. Once you have it, you can initiate change."*  
David Clarke, W.L. Gore & Associates

*"We teach collaborative problem-solving. In school, that's called cheating." Edward Bales*

*"Our role as leaders is not to catch people doing things wrong but to create an environment in which people can become heroes." Newt Hardie, VP at Milliken*

Tomorrow's change leaders must be able to confront and be confronted, but must also be known for their encouragement, recognition and support. Unfortunately, change brings increases in tension and demand levels, straining even good relationships. You can't expect to limit your interaction to announcing changes or confronting problems and be appreciated as a leader. Be a master bridge builder who majors in positive influence strategies. As a network-savvy practitioner, work to get results through cross-functional, and where possible, global teams built on trust, collaboration and mutual support.

*"I don't like that man. I must get to know him better." Abraham Lincoln*

Start by bridging out of your comfortable relationships to form new relationships. Make a conscious effort to nurture bonds with all the key people you must work with externally and internally. Most leaders achieve that only with people they enjoy; to be effective, bridge across lines to make diversity and coalitions work.

*"Good leaders take more than their share of the blame and less than their share of the credit. Bad leaders take more than their share of the credit and less than their share of the blame and then wonder why no one likes working with them." Ernest Archer*

Put your calendar where your mouth is; don't just talk support when your calendar and actions can show it. Do your part to create a culture of pride that recognizes the effectiveness of all of the people involved. Take the time to recognize and formally acknowledge the people who are making change work. Build a four-to-one positive to

negative contact history within your influence network. Give timely, specific recognition and learn to capitalize on listening by asking questions that will surface input from all of your major stakeholders. Make sure your questions go beyond surfacing problems to allow others to brag about what is working. Be the kind of leader who gives others more than their share of the credit and takes more than his share of the blame.

*"I'm just a plowhand from Arkansas, but I have learned how to hold a team together. How to lift some men up, how to calm down the others, until finally they've got one heartbeat together, a team. There's just three things I'd ever say: If anything goes bad, I did it. If anything goes semi-good, then we did it. If anything goes real good, then you did it. That's all it takes to get people to win football games for you." Bear Bryant*

*"People need leadership to help them maintain their focus on the tough questions. Disciplined attention is the currency of leadership." Ronald Heifetz, author of Leadership Without Easy Answers*

*"Laughter is the shortest distance between two people." Victor Borge*

While taking the challenge to invent the new good old days very seriously, don't forget to take a sense of humor along for the ride. Take your change mission seriously, but yourself lightly. Humor and laughter make great daily companions on your team's journey to excellence. Don't go through life with your car *or* your face *in park*. In fact, use your sense of humor for fun and profit. It develops good feelings and rapport and develops a positive, lighter atmosphere. Why does it work? People like to do business with people who make them laugh. Never forget that some days you're the bug, and some days you're the windshield. That's a perspective worth remembering in this challenging and changing age.

*"If you aren't having fun in your work, fix the problem before it becomes serious; ask for help if you need it. If you can't fix it and won't ask for help, please go away before you spoil the fun for the rest of us." Russ Walden*

Harnessing the all-important tension of caring enough to confront while majoring in support will allow you to be respected, not just liked. The change cultures of the future won't settle for poor performance at any level; accountability in the midst of diversity will remain a driving force. But people will also crave leaders who can evidence a corporate version of *tough love*—Hold me accountable in support of change but show me how much you care. Make sure your people experience that healthy tension from you.

**What works for you as an executive to bridge to your "difficult" people up, down and across your network?**

### **Make Change Work Starting with Yourself...**

*"Excellence isn't a sometimes thing. You have to earn it and reearn it every single day." Vince Lombardi*

No leader or organization can rest on past successes and expect to survive. The most important part of any learning experience is what you do with the information learned once you have read it. If excellence must be reearned, start with yourself. You are in for tremendous challenges *and* equally exciting opportunities. Get your people on board as together you make these the "good old days" you will tell your grandchildren about. Rest assured that you *will not* be bored! With any luck, you won't just be predicting the future;

you and your organization will be inventing it and watching others catch up with you. It's easy to think of other people who ought to be here doing the changing, but the only person you control is yourself.

*"The most important part of the meeting is immediately after. What are they going to do with it once it is over?" Walter Hailey*

**What are the three most important "Keepers" you have learned that you can target for yourself in support of strategic change?**

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