

## High Performance Leadership

**T**here is a correlation between strong and strategic leadership and high performance organizations. How do you know if you are a strong leader?

As we come out of the recession, and we are coming out of it, albeit slowly, the business model of success is changing. Most industries will not survive without changing to meet new market place demands and expectations.

My definition may be a little simpler; high performance leaders are thinking about the companies' performance tomorrow, today.

While I think most leaders agree theoretically, they are just too darn busy to step back and rethink their business model. They may even be stretched too thin just trying to deliver today's results to think about tomorrow's performance. There are a number of good reasons for that. In the end, however, the leaders that succeed find a way to make it happen.

A quote attributed to Warren Buffet is, "When the tide goes out you can see who was skinny dipping." We can all look like heroes in good times, riding the waves of success, but when we hit rough waters, most of us were not prepared.

There are four key things strong leaders do—in any economic cycle—that are strategic and yield high performance:

1. They are able to define the market space that they can succeed in; identify the target market they can best satisfy, and make money on, and don't waste valuable resources on the rest.
2. They have established a culture that they reinforce daily, that supports their vision of the kind of company they desire to be. No two companies are the same. Others may not be able to adapt Apple's

culture and get Apple's results because they are not Steve Jobs and don't think like he thinks. Culture needs to exhibit itself through the values at the company, in the selection, on-boarding, training, rewarding and recognition processes. Employees have to feel they are on the same team and working for the same results. It is what keeps

us from running "factories".

3. They have a clear strategy. Everybody knows where the company is going and their role to help the company get there. The strategy drives every single decision the company makes. Lack of strategy is one reason why only 25% of investments in growth initiatives generate any return.

4. They know how to get the job done, make things happen, implement initiatives and generate outcomes. They are good at communicating, aligning throughout the organization, allocating resources and measuring meaningful results.

The best gift you can give yourself and your

company is start tackling the four topics of market, culture, strategy and execution. Take it one step at a time. Address your habits to see what might be keeping you from realizing your potential and in turn, that of your companies. Yes, you can become a high performance leader!

## Are you a high performance leader or on your way to becoming one?

- Do you have good access to important information about your company and the marketplace?
- Do you have a clear vision for the future of your company and a plan to get there?
- Do you run your company according to that plan, investing appropriately, hiring the right skill sets for tomorrow and upgrading technology? In other words, do you budget to a plan or plan a budget?
- Do you have the right people to get you there?
- Do you spend as much time on the future as today?
- Do you limit your tomorrow by your success today? In other words, do you limit change due to current success, even though tomorrow's world may be different?
- Are you able to identify risks and minimize them with contingency planning or are you risk adverse?
- Do you fear change? And are you able to lead change?
- Have you adequately communicated your vision and expectations of others?
- Do you have measures in place that will show you moving toward your vision one step at a time?



For further information on any of these suggestions, please contact Margaret Reynolds, managing principal of Reynolds Consulting, LLC, at [mreynolds@reynolds-consulting.com](mailto:mreynolds@reynolds-consulting.com).