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**"Building Organizational Capacity to Achieve Extraordinary Results"**

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Volume 2 Issue 1

## **Will your business be among those that survive and thrive? It takes transformational leadership.**

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Welcome to our Transformational Leadership Coaching & Consulting newsletter. We develop transformational leaders and engage their organizations to deliver truly extraordinary results. We coach leaders and leadership teams to practice the skills, processes and behaviors needed to inspire individuals and teams to new levels of achievement. We will use our newsletters to describe the various aspects of transformational leadership, as well as provide tips and insights to help in your journey to grow the capability of your organization.



## **Leading & Executing Transformational Strategy**

**Four Steps for Creating Sustainable Change and Breakthrough Results**



**Note: TLCC will hold a series of 3 hour executive briefings on the topic of "Leading and Executing Transformational Strategy". Our next briefing will be Friday, June 18 from 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM in Wilmington, NC (@ the City Club). For more information, contact us at robert.gerlach@tlcc.biz**

Excellence in execution is the CEOs' number-one concern today, according to the Conference Boards latest CEO Challenge Survey (Jan. 13, 2010, Harvard Business Publishing). So what is your experience?

- Are you experiencing a greater need for massive improvements just to stay competitive?
- Are your normal improvement methods falling short of meeting competitive benchmarks?
- Are you frustrated by limited success in executing your strategic plan or strategic initiatives?

So, where have all the transformational leaders gone? Who are the leaders who will transform the hundreds of U.S. businesses that have lost or are losing their competitive vitality? In his recent book "Hot, Flat and Crowded," Pulitzer Prize winning author Thomas Friedman says, "We have lost our way in recent years because of bad habits that have weakened our society's ability and willingness to take on big challenges. We don't have the focus and persistence to take on something really big where the benefits play out over the long term".

The challenges facing our nation and our businesses are not small. Yet we persist in simply pursuing incremental goals. I can still hear leaders in corporate America telling me that goals must be reasonable and achievable. But all goals do not have to seem reasonable and be deemed achievable! In fact, every leader should have one goal that seems unreasonable and takes their breath away. That would be strategic. Strategic initiatives allow us to gain competitive advantage, which is what we as leaders are here to do

So why aren't we all implementing a strategic imperative or heroic goal? There are many good reasons, but I can think of three that stand out:

1. We don't even have a strategic or heroic goal.
2. We don't know how to lead to meet goals that seem unreasonable. We don't teach other leaders how to do that.
3. Our managing systems are not geared for maintaining focus and pace on long-term projects. Our managing systems are designed to deal with the day-to-day and to build functional accountability (which isn't a bad thing, just short sighted).



## Quotable

" There are risks and costs to a program of action. But they are far less than the long range risks and costs of comfortable inaction."

**John F. Kennedy**

## Six Steps to Setting Strategic Project Teams up for Success

*Strategic initiatives are heroic by definition. They are designed to gain competitive advantage and therefore are large enough leaps to require tapping into the collective wisdom and energy of the organization. Therefore, executing strategic Initiatives is a top down leadership process, but an inclusive and collaborative sport. Here are some guidelines for the executive team to use*

### **1. Agree on a team charter.**

The charter elements should include a simple "task" statement, a list of "deliverables" that the team is asked to produce along the way as well as a list of ground rules that shape how they are to work together and two or three critical timing milestones.

### **2. Agree on criteria for membership on the project team.**

The executive team should reach consensus on the specific skills,

I was once counseling a client to spend more time focusing on his strategic plan and he replied "You know it's pretty difficult to compose a sonata when you are in the middle of a fire drill. Every day is a fire drill around here, with a high sense of urgency, confusion and chaos. You can't soar like an eagle when you are surrounded by stampeding turkeys!" A little colorful, but I got the picture. Sometimes our day-to-day work seems like a fire drill. Urgent customer needs, urgent personnel issues, urgent cost problems, urgent equipment failures! Urgent needs will always trump the important but non-urgent. Yet, if we are going to navigate the present in a way that we arrive at our desired future, we need to be strategic in spite of the daily fire drills. The pay-offs are huge, including the fact that some of the fire drills go away forever.

Getting transformational results is not rocket science. The keys to success are basic. But, it is hard to do because it requires the discipline of changing how we lead. TLCC's process for leading and executing transformational strategy is nontraditional, but highly successful. There are four basic steps to leading and executing transformational strategy that achieves breakthrough results that are sustainable:

1. Establish a Heroic or Strategic Goal. It should transform a critical aspect of your business and it should state how much of an improvement will be achieved and by when. An example of a strategic goal would be to target a 30% growth in sales within two years.
2. Assess your Transformational Leadership capability. There has been significant research on transformational leadership the past 25 years that provides statistical and anecdotal evidence that transformational leaders get better results, and that same research reveals just how transformational leaders behave. There are unique high leverage leadership behaviors required to achieve heroic goals. You can use an evidence based 360° transformational leadership assessment that will help you identify how your behaviors match transformational leadership norms.
3. Engage a coach to help you adopt transformational leadership behaviors while working on your heroic goal. The assessment results will help you identify behavior improvement opportunities that will work best to achieve your specific goal. Your coach can observe you in action and give you valuable feedback.

Before reviewing the fourth step, let's reflect on the nature of strategic goals. Most strategic plans are not fully implemented. Heroic goals are of no value unless you implement them. The two biggest killers of implementing strategic plans are:

- Not engaging enough of the key stakeholders in the planning process, which results in limited ownership of the plan.
- Inability of leadership to maintain focus and pace over time. The day-to-day fire drills are a continuous distraction (urgent trumps important).

4. Install a separate and distinctive Strategic Leadership Process to maintain focus on the goal and to engage key stakeholders. This is where the tactical plans are developed and executed. This process needs to parallel your day-to-day managing process, must meet on a regularly scheduled basis, include the key stakeholders and be collaborative. To achieve the seemingly unreasonable, you need to tap into the collective wisdom and energy of your organization.

TLCC are experts in transformational leadership and executing strategic initiatives. Join us for a series of 3-hour executive briefings this year where we will demonstrate how to lead and execute seemingly unreasonable goals. Our next briefing will be on Friday, June 18 from 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM in Wilmington, NC (at the City Club).

Rob Gerlach  
Sr. Partner - TLCC,LLC

knowledge and perspective essential for team success

### **3. Agree on team candidates and a recruiting plan.**

The executive team should reach consensus on the employees who best satisfy the membership criteria and on who will recruit whom. Since this will probably be a cross-functional team, it is imperative that all of the executive team support the choices. Candidates should be recruited personally and given background on the origins of the effort and why they were selected.

### **4. Identify a member of the executive team to lead the project team.**

It is important that the executive team be "hard wired" to the project team(s) to preclude derailments or collisions and to assure the project team is getting full support in execution of the strategic project.

### **5. Assign a skilled process facilitator to facilitate team meetings.**

Since this strategic project is essential to the success of your organization, you can't afford to have team meetings that are ineffective and inefficient. Meetings must be planned, facilitated and end with action lists of who will do what between meetings. The team facilitator is there to help plan the meetings and then allow the leader to sit down and be a participant in the meetings, while the facilitator keeps the meeting process on track.

### **6. Use the first team meeting to build project team buy-in.**

The agenda should include:

- Project background
- What special skills, knowledge, perspective each member brings
- An opportunity to question the charter and propose modifications.
- An opportunity to decide how the team will operate.
- Contracting on what will be expected of the team

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leader, the facilitator and of each member to be successful.

- Selection of the first deliverables the team will work on.

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