

*“The behaviors of people create the outcomes of an organization. This is the mantra for change management... And driving change means bringing on other managers that can drive change... its' getting people organized to drive and effect change.”*

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### Driving Change

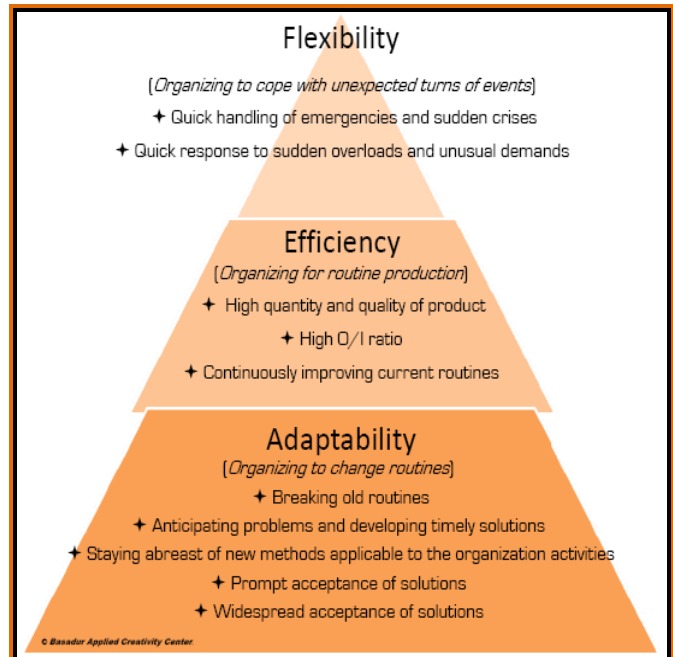
In our April '10 issue of The Coach's Column, you were promised a continuation of the article on Driving Change in this newsletter - and here we are. To recap: what is going to define leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is leadership that can inspire pursuit of change and enable resources to drive change. The article also posited that to drive change, you must 1.) Know and be able to “sell” change, 2.) Sincerely convey your passion & sense of conviction, 3) Create a culture that embraces change, and 4) Enable it to change. Problem is that a lot of people don't know how.

### More

Driving change means being surrounded by other leaders that can and will also drive change, and then understanding that Adaptability is the key to driving change (see model in next column). It's about finding new problems or challenges and addressing/solving them quickly. It means having to incessantly reinvent yourself as you're going along. In our line of work at Banks Int'l, it's also driving change towards new ways of seeing & running a business and new styles of leadership and governance.

Our own research, and that of other academic institutions and businesses, suggests that there is no shortage of managers & executives who want their organizations to be Adaptable, as characterized in the model. It's not that they don't consciously want it. They do. The problem is that they can't. And, the problem is four sided.

First, our research points to most leaders not recognizing that unconsciously and unknowingly they are keeping it from happening. That's the first side. The second side is that while they do not see it, those around them do. And now, again unconsciously & unknowingly they are modeling conflicting values, how to resist change, and how to focus on Efficiency and Flexibility (sadly at the expense of Adaptability). These are very smart people who are so driven and so on automatic, that they honestly don't see their role. Like the



popular axiom goes, “fish are the last to discover water.”

When leaders evolve to where they begin to see and accept their role in impeding change, we run into an ability obstacle. This is the third side and it is a biggie! They're not entirely clear on how to bring about the definable characteristics of Adaptability.

They don't know how to, for themselves, break old routines, let alone guide others on how to do so. They will do the very best they can, yet experience the frustration of little if any change, or change that didn't improve things much. They will then just demand change (and not see how sides one and two of this conundrum will come into play and keep real and durable change from happening). There are other characteristics of Adaptability they're not totally sure of how to change for themselves or how to help others change.

Put the first 3 sides together and what you have is a picture of cultural influence - a picture of how the culture at large responds strategically. (Flexibility and Efficiency are both tactical, while Adaptability is strategic and the future). When you add the effects of involuntarily modeled counterproductive behaviors (e.g., resistance to change) to the mix of

interpretations, assignment of motives (sometimes malicious or self-serving), and premature judgments typical of corporate cultures, as well as the lack of emotional guidance, support, and motivation for change, you get the fourth side - the culture factor. Of the biggies, the biggest.

Contrary to most leadership's wishful thinking, a culture will not always do as they're told - they'll do as they see their bosses do (most typical in classic patriarchal cultures). When they see the leaders in their organization, from maybe the CEO down to their immediate bosses not being able to break some old routines, they will also have a difficult time themselves breaking routines. When they see that potential problems that could have been averted aren't addressed until they show up (a dominant *don't-fix-it-until-broken* philosophy), they don't do that either. And it goes on and on. The ramifications are interminable.

Most executives and managers we know who want to fully and functionally achieve the state of Adaptability - and they all do - try very hard. Many have MBAs and lots of experience in their fields and in management or executive positions. But for many, they just can't seem to be able to bring about authentic and robust change to their own satisfaction. Others, once again unknowingly and unwittingly, acquiesce to the limited results of an effort & settle for mediocrity - not realizing that the result was much less than the true capacity of the organization. In many Pre Consults where we look at past change efforts, we see this.

## Back to Driving Change

Nearly every book or text I have read or studied on the subject of driving change plants the same supposition - it is leadership who drives change. I believe this to be an incomplete hypothesis. Yes, it's true that leadership is at the helm, much like the captain of a ship. But like in any efficiently run ship, it is others who pilot, or navigate, or steer, or communicate, or deliver the combined effort that propels the vessel towards its goal. People unfamiliar with the world of marine operations often ask, *"Then what's the purpose (or job) of the Captain?"* Interestingly, in business settings, employees sometimes ask, *"What do CEOs, Presidents, Chairmen, Board of Directors, etc. really do - how do they contribute if we do every-thing?"* (Sounds like Capt. purpose or job to me!)

Translating this analogy to a commercial venture environment, we can see that while the leadership may be saying *"let's change this..."*, much like the captain of a ship would say, *"let's cast off and get going"*, it needs to be others who do the piloting, navigating, steering, etc. It will be other people within the organization - not just the leadership - who will drive and power change. Driving change then means not just being surrounded by other leaders that can and will also drive change, but being surrounded by all kinds of people within the organization who will embrace & power change,

Let's not forget, however, that the trick is to get all the people, not just the leadership, to understand that Adaptability is the key to driving change. Next would be learning what all of that means, how to best do it - efficiently and effectively - and finally, how to translate it into action.

## Change: Drive It or Ride It

Your organization is going to change whether you want it to or not. You will have to react to market changes & shifts, trends, emerging competitors, technology, emerging regulatory controls, etc., if you are to survive. This is **Riding It**. And, this also needs to be a tactical imperative. But never at the expense of your strategic imperatives (delivered through Adaptability).

You can also be **Driving Change**. Set yourself apart from your competition by pursuing better Efficiency through Adaptability. Statistics suggest that your competitors are likely not doing this. And, here's the gig - get good at Adaptability, and both your Efficiency and Flexibility will help you outdistance competitors. **CAUTION**. If you focus primarily on Efficiency and Flexibility, it may not be as smooth a ride as it could be. It would be like driving on a nice paved road on wooden wheels.

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