

## **CHANGE AGENTS – OCTOBER 2007 NEWSLETTER**

### **In This Issue**

#### **Change Agents Reports**

Seven Ways to Supercharge Your Strategic Planning Process

#### **Change Agents News**

In the Press: “The Three Greatest Barriers to Organizational Change”

#### **Product Offerings**

Natural Effectiveness™ Teaming Process

#### **Change Agents Recommends**

*The Results Based Leader*

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#### **Change Agents Reports**

#### **Seven Ways to Supercharge Your Strategic Planning Process**

At this time of year, many companies look to the future and put together a Strategic Plan and/or a Business Plan for the coming year(s). For many, this has become a matter of looking at the last plan and changing the numbers to match new goals. If this is your process, you're missing a huge opportunity to build the strategic thinking and planning capability of your organization.

Whether you have a team of two, twenty, two hundred or two thousand plus, the strategic planning process provides multiple opportunities to develop employees and positively impact the bottom line. Here are a few suggestions of how to supercharge your strategic planning process and make it a vital part of your organization's success.

##### *Create Pre-Planning Teams*

Charter a team of three or four people to do advance research on industry trends, internal and external factors that will likely affect the future of your company in both positive and negative ways. Build time early in your agenda for a presentation from the team. This not only saves time in your planning session but gives those on the advance team an opportunity to think and learn from the research.

Charter a Stakeholder Audit Team. The size of this team will depend on how many stakeholders you identify. A stakeholder is a person or entity that has a “stake” in your success as a company. Stakeholders might include customers, suppliers, community leaders, etc. The job of this team is to interview these key individuals to get their input about what they need from your organization and/or how you might work more effectively together. This team will need to summarize and analyze the data they collect and bring it back to the planning team for use in the actual planning session.

Be sure to include some of your high potential non-managers on these teams so they are exposed to the process and have the opportunity to think at a higher level than their job usually demands.

See my article: Building Organizational Capability Through Effective Teaming  
[http://www.changeagentsinc.com/html/free\\_articles.html](http://www.changeagentsinc.com/html/free_articles.html)

### *Include Bargaining Unit Leaders and HR*

If you work with a bargaining unit, include them in the process. Many items become easier to negotiate when Union leaders understand the big picture and the challenges the organization is facing. Also, Union leaders bring the viewpoint of your employees to the table in a unique way that can be very helpful in designing the “people” initiatives you will need to be successful.

Make sure to invite your Human Resources Director/Manager to the table. Many companies put together a strategic plan with multiple “people” strategies without the input of the HR Department. Since most of these strategies will fall to the HR Department for implementation or at least major support, it’s in everyone’s best interest to incorporate their ideas as well as making sure the strategies are implemented “as intended.”

### *Use an Outside Facilitator*

This can either be from another part of your organization or an outside consultant. Either way, your focus should be on the actual strategic thinking and planning. Executives who try to facilitate their own strategic plans are like doctors who try to treat themselves. It’s not the best use of your professional expertise. A trained facilitator will bring out the best in each of those participating in the process, including the leader!!

### *Include a Communications Professional in the Process*

You will want the document you create to be a tool that is used throughout the year. A professional can help you simplify difficult concepts, communicate concisely and format for utility. Remember, the major purpose of the document you distribute to employees is to engage them in the goals of the organization.

### *Distribute a Copy of the Plan to Each Employee*

Make sure your first line Supervisors understand the major components of your plan and, more importantly, how they will contribute to reaching the goals of the plan. Then, have them distribute copies of the plan. Research shows that employees trust the Supervisor that they know more than upper management. So, roll out the plan but give your Supervisors the info they need to explain it.

### *Keep the Plan Alive Throughout the Year*

Include regular updates on progress toward strategic goals in your organization's communication channels. Bring the planning team back together once a quarter to review the plan and track progress. Showcase teams or individuals who are directly impacting the success of the plan in company communication vehicles. Most importantly, celebrate milestones reached along the way.

### *Use the Plan*

If your copy of your company's strategic plan doesn't have dog-eared pages and coffee stains by mid-year, you're not getting the most out of the plan. As a leader, those you interact with should be so used to seeing you with a copy of your plan that they notice when you don't mention it. And, since you are their leader, you will begin to notice that they are bringing up company goals, milestones and impacts on a more regular basis as well. This is the power of the plan. It has the potential to engage people at every level of your organization in striving to meet company goals.

You may be thinking, this is fine for larger companies but I'm an Entrepreneur and/or my company consists of only a few people. How will this work for me? It will actually work very well if you think about all those who have a "stake" in your business and engage them in the process. Ask associates, your Mastermind Group, or key individuals you respect from the networking organizations you belong to for their help in building your plan. That way you will not only build a plan, you will build relationships that energize your success.

For more information about Supercharging Your Strategic Planning Process contact:

### **Change Agents News**

**In the Press:** "The Three Greatest Barriers to Organizational Change"

The media have been very busy picking up on our press release on the three greatest barriers to organizational change. This is really creating some buzz. To read the full press release, click here [need the precise link here \(I will pick it up and insert it into the actual newsletter\)](#).

**Special Report:** A new Special Report, "Are You Sabotaging the Future of Your Company with Ineffective Organizational Change? The Five Greatest Barriers to Organizational Change and How You Can Overcome Them" has just been released.

You can download your free copy of the special report and other valuable resources at [www.changeagentsinc.com](http://www.changeagentsinc.com). Watch for more information on our programs, services and products.

## **Product Offerings**

### Natural Effectiveness™ Teaming Process

Change Agents, Inc. works within a number of businesses and other organizations to improve the effectiveness and cohesiveness of teams. The effectiveness of any team depends on the ability of the members of the team to build working relationships based on trust and respect, the freedom of team members to work from their own natural effectiveness™ and the ability of the team to focus together on the development of strategies and implementation plans that will meet assigned goals.

Whether you are creating a short-term team to accomplish certain critical results or you want to reinvigorate existing teams, our Natural Effectiveness™ Teaming Process can help.

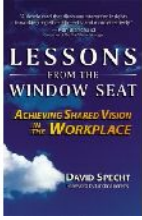
This is how a Natural Effectiveness™ Teaming Process might work:

- Each participant completes a ProScan™ survey online
- Each participant meets with team coach for a “read-back” of results
- Each participant completes pre-work material
- Full team meets with team coach for a one-day team session to review team survey results, and to build relationships and team strategies
- Sub-teams work with team coach to continue development of strategies
- Full team meets with team coach for a half-day session to review results and continue relationship building
- Sub-teams work with team coach to finalize strategies
- Full team meets with team coach for a half-day session to validate strategies and develop a communication and implementation plan
- Team coach supports team in communication and implementation of the plan as needed.

Change Agents, Inc. is committed to working with teams to improve working relationships and plan for the accomplishment of strategic goals.

If your organization or your team would like to explore the Natural Effectiveness™ Teaming Process, call 623-362-3876 or visit us online at [www.changeagentsinc.com](http://www.changeagentsinc.com).

## **Change Agents Recommends**



**Lessons from the Window Seat: Achieving Shared Vision in the Workplace**, by David Specht. Telos Publications. ISBN 0966462483, 151 pages, paperback, \$14.95.

Bob Sippel is a talented manager who thought he knew where he was going in life until he couldn't answer three simple questions posed by his wife:

1. What do you want to accomplish in the next five years?
2. What do you want from your company over the next five years?
3. What will your company need to do to survive and prosper over the next five years?

While on a business trip to corporate headquarters, determination and curiosity allow him to collect the information he needs to answer her questions. Bob is able to bridge work/life balance issues when he and his coworkers invent a process for achieving shared vision. By using their revelation, Bob is able to arrange his personal and professional values into a complementary plan of action. This process is laid out in the book, and a self-help section at the end allows the reader to undergo the process for himself or herself.