

A Transformational Leader's Axioms

THINK A CUSTOMER AHEAD

Look at where the world is going- not where it has been. Take a best guess at how markets might develop, how public expectations might change, how rules of competition might alter and how technologies might develop. Think "what if?"

CREATE AN "AS IF" WORLD

Begin to set expectations about how the organization should be operating. Expectations about the future will pull people to behave in a way that is consistent with that expectation. Act "as if" something is true and you will help create it.

MOVE PAST THE ESTABLISHED MIND SET

Be sensitive to the demands that people will have for analysis, documentation, control functions and presentation formats. Avoid confronting corporate myths and addictions initially. Change the basis of evaluation by introducing additional or alternative criteria.

STEP UP TO "CUI BONO"?

The Romans were advised to ask about any proposal: to whose advantage? Under most circumstances, a sure way to slow any innovation is to ask people to act against their own self-interest. Consider who will benefit from the changes you are proposing. Who will bear the cost of change? Do you think this is fair?

DEFLECT THE "YEAH, BUTS" AND FOCUS ON SOLUTIONS

Challenging the process brings along all the anxiety surrounding change and uncertainty. Resistance is both intellectual and emotional. Focus on solutions and a sense of control over the situation will develop, easing stress and promoting creative thinking.

ENGAGE THE WINNERS

Partner with people who can add value on a functional level and in prestige. Association with the best and the brightest can "sanctify" your cause.

LEVERAGE OFF AN ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH

Ideas need credibility. A starting point is what already has some generally accepted validation- the organization's technical expertise, relationships with suppliers, capital structure or manufacturing prowess.

WORK AROUND THE CORPORATE IMMUNIZATION SYSTEM

Get your ducks in order. Enlist associates to get as much done as possible in the shortest amount of time before going public. Acknowledge the divergence from the status quo.

TOUCH ALL THE BASES

Budgets and deadlines are as important as appeals to mission and values. Although vision makes the difference in the long run, the short run gets here first.

ALWAYS REMEMBER THE GENUINE PURPOSE OF RULES IS TO TEACH- TO TEACH PEOPLE HOW TO BEHAVE

The real purpose of rules is not to sanction or control but to teach what is expected behavior. The goal should be to have rules replaced with a commitment to a common perspective of what is right and what is wrong.

STRENGTHEN OPTIMISM SKILLS

Optimism can be practiced and strengthened. It is an antidote for the stress that can inhibit change and initiative. Optimism, reality based assurance and confidence, not only recognizes the challenge but sustains it as well.

GO DO IT, NOW!

The issue isn't about timing. It's about commitment. Begin the innovation process by renewing commitment to your organization's mission and your own aspirations.