

CHANGE NOW OR DIE LATER

By: Michael Sleppin, Paradigm Associates

Should you add a VP of CHANGE to your staff? Nutsy you say. Well let's take a closer look. Ten years ago would you have considered a comptroller...HR Officer.....IT Director, etc? Leaders must do the right things so managers can do things right that will have positive impact on positive results. What change might we be concerned about that can impact our business now and into the future?

- Government regulation/law at the state and federal level
- Skyrocketing prices for materials and energy
- Scarcity of qualified labor and managers
- No plans for developing the leadership capabilities of the next generation of company leaders or the training and development of our managers
- Succession plans for those companies where the owners need or want to cut back or retire

When facts don't fit our conceptual frame...our view of the world, we tend to reject the facts. In the work our firm has done with companies in the industry, we have found that the leaders will not take action until there is an emotional connection between them and the implication of the

problems they are dealing with. For example, it is one thing to recognize that poorly trained managers result in running up costs of a job. It is another thing to begin to understand the implications of that problem (we might go out of business...we might have a serious legal problem...we might never get business from that \$20MM/Yr. customer again et al).

Think of a health problem that you or a loved one had. Isn't it true that until the emotional impact of the illness became absolute unarguable procrastination took place? If this were 1908 and you were best buggy whip manufacturer in the state and ignored the impact of the horseless carriage on your business, you would have acted too late to save the business.

Most of us fear change, although we talk a good game. It's too easy to go into denial. Why did so many people in Germany during the 1930s remain too long? Those in the know have told me it was because many stayed in denial for too long. Companies that have not yet worked with us to improve their business results tell us things such as: "As far as I'm concerned, we have no problems that heed changing..."Yeah, it's not perfect here, but we'll be OK...We can make the changes ourselves."

The companies that do work with us tell

us, "I wish we had more and better ideas on the changes we should make...Lots of people talk about change, we're ready. "Lets begin working with you in this area of the business."

One of the best questions you can ask yourself regarding any issues you are wrestling with at your company relative to the way you are now dealing with it is to ask, "How's it working?" If you are unhappy with the answers you come up with, it's time to begin to take action.

If you want to IMPROVE A RESULT you should make POSITIVE BEHAVIOR (ACTIONS) CHANGES. The changes should be driven by specific and measurable GOALS. No results will ever change unless the daily actions change. That will never happen until ATTITUDES change. Hopefully, the culture in your company is open minded and willing to embrace change and not one where change is seen as the enemy. Don't be so busy being busy that you are run over by events. The urgent will always kill the important.

I hope this article inspires you to take a close look at the world and its impact on your business.