

THE COMPELLING JOURNEY™

A PLAYBOOK™ FOR SUSTAINABLE PERFORMANCE GROWTH

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- ▲ In order to properly plan for success, it is important to assess the current world
 - ▲ Comprehensive examination should seek contribution from all team members
 - ▲ Understanding Brand and Culture are key factors

A COMPELLING JOURNEY FOR ORGANIZATIONAL RENEWAL

Change isn't easy... Over two-thirds of all transformation initiatives fail to achieve their intended goal; many fail entirely. Nevertheless, organizations that wish to thrive need to find the way through.

Level Three has created a process that has proved itself over time. As mentioned previously, it is akin to mounting a major climbing expedition. The team leadership decides which peak they intend to reach. They must gather information and supplies, create a plan, engage in the necessary training, energize those around them that the effort is worthwhile and then make the trek to the summit. My business partners and I act as sherpas, providing guidance and encouragement along the way. It is a worthwhile endeavor, and the view when they reach the summit is always breathtaking.



There are three major components in this process: **The first part is The Compelling Journey™.** It models the traditional Hero's Challenge. In virtually every major culture globally, there are stories and legends that paint a picture in which the hero must surmount a major test by going into the unknown, solving the problems presented and returning, triumphant and transformed.

If someone undertakes a journey, there must first be a jumping-off point. **For organizations, this begins with understanding the "Current World in which We Operate."** For many, this may seem elementary, dismissing it as "Oh, we already do that." Nevertheless, this should be an exhaustive examination that helps establish a baseline from which the journey can begin. This should involve an Appreciative Inquiry into the organization and its operations. **That is, what are those things that we do well? And what are the things that we need to do better?** Senior leaders should involve their team members in gathering this information. We typically send these requests around to each functional area so that the responses can be gathered in anticipation of a meeting of the leadership team launching this process.

The information gathered becomes even richer when customers and vendors are solicited to contribute their views on the organization and its products. Wherever possible, it is important to understand how the organization's brand is perceived. The promise that a company makes to its consumers is wrapped up within its brand. This becomes very important when we move to the next phase.



A second level of information gathering should also include a comprehensive

assessment of the organization's culture. At Level Three, we use a survey process that incorporates a current view of the behaviors team members believe they are expected to display and contrast it against an identical survey that seeks to understand what behaviors are ideally preferred within the organization. A deeper dive includes similar diagnostics on the leaders themselves to gauge the impact that each has on the existence of the current culture.

With these two data sets in hand, we then seek to understand what the organization considers success looks like. It is very useful to help create an image of what it looks like "when the picture has been fixed properly." **Similar to brainstorming, this blue-sky session should be conducted without regard for obstacles, which frequently limit the thinking of the participants.** The more vivid and detailed the picture can be constructed, the better.

The information about the brand can now be compared against its actual culture, what the customer actually experiences. Leaders can then see how well they perform against their promise. It is in seeing, accepting and appreciating the gap between what the organization wants to be and what it currently is that creates the opportunity for growth.

When these data gathering sessions conclude, the foundation for a successful transformation has been laid. From here, the organization and its leaders have a clear understanding of their jumping-off point for The Compelling Journey™. **With this information in hand, the leadership team can proceed to develop their Call to Action, the next stop on the voyage.**