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COLLABORATION HEALTH CARE

ALIGNING IDEAS WITH EXECUTION TO IMPROVE HEALTH CARE TODAY



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Let's All Keep Dreaming

It's hard to believe that we're already nearing the half-way point for 2008. We trust that your strategic plans are moving ahead full-throttle and you are on your way toward achieving the goals you have set both for yourself and your organizations.

2008 has been a challenging year for all of us so far. Our country is going through some difficult times on a number of fronts. Running a successful business operation doesn't seem to be getting any easier no matter what industry you are in. Especially in health care, it seems like the challenges we are facing can become overwhelming. But, when you look for them in the right mind-set, these are the times to uncover new opportunities to pursue in improving the way health care is delivered for all of us. Challenges become opportunities instead of barriers.

These are the times to keep your goals, focus, and mission in front of you all the time. And, never lose the passion in what you're doing. These are the times to look for the opportunities and pursue them. These are the times to explore these opportunities (Blue Ocean Thinking) and take action instead of becoming complacent or getting sucked into the negativity that seems to be surrounding us every day. It's time to pursue our missions and passions with a renewed optimism and excitement. This is what creates innovation and change. And, there is no better time to take action than now.

The Excitement and Passion of Pursuing Big Hairy Audacious Goals

Negative energy and feelings of victimization can be contagious. Have you ever been surrounded by extremely negative people or been in a meeting or event filled with anxiousness or stress where you suddenly found yourself feeling the same way- even when you were excited and optimistic when you arrived? It can happen more frequently than you think. And, many times you don't even know the change is happening to you.

We've worked with a client in a business transformation project that viewed itself as being the victim of all the wrongs the world had to offer. Granted, the organization was going through some tough times and a certain amount of anxiousness and stress was expected. But, over time the negativity became the prominent emotion exhibited by its leadership. The leaders determined that the best way to guarantee survival was to protect what it had and hope the environment would change so they could go back to the "good old days".

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Some BHAG Thoughts

Big Hairy Audacious Goals (BHAG) aren't the incremental steps we normally think about in the annual strategic planning exercise. These are 10-30 year "visions" that align an organization or an individual with a focused direction for the future. Jim Collins states, "BHAGs shouldn't be a sure bet- perhaps only 50-70% probability of success- but the organization must believe- we can do it anyway." Successful organizations have BHAGs (whether formalized or not) and they put all of their energy and resources into achieving them.

Collins lists four basic types of BHAG formats used by successful companies. We hope this provides you with some ideas and thoughts to formulate your own and to lead you to exploring new opportunities in the years ahead:

Target BHAGs can be quantitative or qualitative; Become a \$125 billion company by the year 2000 (Wal-Mart, 1990)

Common-enemy BHAGs involve focusing on beating a common enemy- a David and Goliath BHAG; We will crush, squash, slaughter Yamaha (Honda, 1970s)

Role-model BHAGs are particularly effective for up-and-coming organizations with bright prospects; Become the Harvard of the West (Stanford University, 1940s)

Internal transformation BHAGs tend to be effective in old or large organizations in need of internal transformation; Become #1 or #2 in every market we serve and revolutionize this company to have the strength of a big company combined with the leanness and agility of a small company (General Electric, 1980s)

*Built to Last; Collins, Porros, HarperBusiness; 1994

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Excitement of Pursuing BHAGs (con't)

No matter what we did, or what we said, we could not get the organization to recognize or appreciate the opportunities that were available to them or explore the ideas that would help them to better achieve the mission they intended to pursue. (Remember- we only advise- it's up to the leadership to take action). Meetings continued to be filled with negativity, bickering, and feelings of victimization. Over time, we began to see their negativity spill-over into the way we were approaching our own work, and our work with them. We weren't having as much fun as we were before and we were starting to act like them. Their behavior started to impact our own values and the way we approached the project. We needed to make some adjustments to our own perspectives to get back on track. And, we did.

In his book "Built to Last", Jim Collins popularized the concept of setting "Big Hairy Audacious Goals" as a characteristic he found in studying successful organizations. Collins wrote, "A true BHAG is clear and compelling, serves as a unifying focal point of effort, and acts as a clear catalyst for team spirit." BHAGs cover a wide span of time and aren't always a sure bet. But, the organization (or the individual) must believe- we can do it anyway".

We've got our own BHAG within our own company. The principles we established with our vision of a Collaborative Health Care system (you can find them on our web site www.collaborationhealthcare.com) is our BHAG that provides us with the vision of what we believe our health care system is going require in the future. We realize this is a huge BHAG and can seem overwhelming at times. But, it sets the direction for our work and focuses our energy into trying to make a difference with our clients and with ourselves each day.

BHAGs require passion, emotion, and optimism as there will always be challenges to face and obstacles to overcome. And, as we've found through our work with clients, "you can't manufacture passion or motivate people to feel passionate." (Good to Great) Passion comes from a heart-felt, deep, and authentic excitement about your work and your purpose.

As we've experienced, it's easy to get sucked into the negativity other project and try to just make the obvious decisions necessary to continue to operate at the status-quo and simply survive. It's much more difficult to make the commitment to establish the

aggressive goals (both personally and professionally) that stretch the imagination and make a bigger impact on ourselves and our organizations.

BHAGs open up a whole new world of excitement, opportunity, and challenges. We hope you have your own BHAG- it's a lot more fun to try to change the world with new ideas and excitement than to just be a passive participant waiting for the world to return to the "good old days". Because you may find yourself waiting for a long time.

Think About It:

"Great vision without great people is irrelevant"
Jim Collins, Good to Great

"We have a philosophy and strategy, when times are tough, you build market share"
AG Lafley, Proctor and Gamble

"The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that our aim is too low and we reach it."
Michelangelo

Check-Out our Website in the near future to Join Our "Collaboration Network" And Become Part of Our Ongoing Effort to Improve Relationships, Dialogue, and Collaboration Throughout Our Health Care System