



The 5 Steps of Creating a Thriving Organization

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Over the last four weeks I've been asked by three executives how during times of significant market disruption they can move away from being reactive and simply surviving to proactive and actively thriving. My answer is not always what executives want to hear.

If you want an organizational transformation it starts with you as a leader undergoing an individual transformation first. It doesn't start with the market settling into a less dynamic state. It doesn't start with your employees jumping on the proverbial thriving bandwagon. It starts with you as a leader committing to thriving in the face of employees, vendors and customers content to complain and blame external factors.

Thriving requires leaders embrace five transformational leadership strategies.

#1. Get real. Change is not going to slow down and it's not going to magically disappear. This is the new world of work and leaders and their teams must become highly adaptive and welcome change as oppose to resist it.

Getting real means having real conversations about how change is perceived and responded to, and how an organizations collective response to adversity and change either helps or hurts performance. In reality, change is not the problem. It is our individual response to change that inhibits us from thriving. Thriving cannot happen without getting real.

#2. Get clear. My most successful clients have a clear and compelling purpose for themselves as leaders as well as for their team and organization. As a consultant and coach to senior executives I help them state their purpose in terms that are not simply financial metrics, but are rooted in an idea, hope or aspiration that captures the hearts and minds of everyone involved.

For example, one of my healthcare clients has a leadership purpose that states, "I create cultures where every single employee is engaged in creating the extraordinary in patient care and service." Her purpose



propels her and her team to engage employees in striving for the extraordinary regardless of what's happening around them. Without this level of clarity she and her team would be buffeted by the winds of change as opposed to setting a course towards thriving.

#3. Get focused. For leaders and employees to thrive there must be a compelling future along with a roadmap with clear directions. Without a roadmap employees feel as though they are driving in fog. They have a tight grip on the wheel, have pulled themselves forward and have their foot on brake in the hopes of seeing what lies ahead. Roadmaps provide clarity as to the role employee's play in achieving the leaders purpose. Without the clear direction that roadmaps provide you will have false starts and heightened anxiety.

#4. Get mental. The single greatest factor of high performing individuals, teams and organizations is their mindset...what happens in between their ears. It's not the corporate strategy, it's not the compensation plan, nor is it the market segments they're pursuing. It is what each leader, team member and employee chooses to focus on, to believe, and to create for themselves and for others.

If leaders want to create a culture where employees and customers can thrive the leaders number one focus is to help employees master their mindset. Mindset is the greatest accelerator of success I've ever seen and used, and those leaders who build a supreme self-confidence in their employees are the most successful by far. Not only are they successful professionally, but they also live a more rewarding and enriching personal life as well.

#5. Get personal. 80% of the executives I coach and consultant with do not praise their employees enough. It is not because they are evil, wicked, bad and nasty executives. It is because the scope of their work has become so demanding that the task and technical side of their work overwhelms the people side. There are two things executives can do in this situation.



1. Groom their calendar in order to find five to ten percent of discretionary time. Without added time there is little likelihood the executive will be able to shift their focus to recognizing people for being successful
2. Communicate to employees that they are valued and where their work is delivering added value to clients and the company.

Executives know that when employees feel valued, heard and appreciated they are more engaged with their work and perform at higher levels. They also know that employees who feel engaged are capable and open to jettisoning survival type thinking and embracing thriving thinking.

Is your culture thriving or surviving? More importantly, are you as a leader thriving or surviving? If your answer is surviving then the one person who needs to change first is you.

Hugh Blane is President of Claris Consulting. He is a nationally recognized as the Talent Alchemist hired to convert human potential into accelerated business results. A subject-matter expert in leadership, team performance, and influence, Hugh Blane is a senior-level consultant who has worked with thousands of people in a wide variety of organizations including Pepperdine and Stanford University, Swedish Medical Center, Microsoft, Starbucks, Spacelabs Medical, KPMG and Costco.