

Ch1 | Vivid Vision

Effectiveness Audit

This brief audit will help determine how well your organization is doing on the items outlined in this chapter. It is essential that you are honest in your scoring. This is not an exercise to get the highest score; it is a diagnostic tool to discover areas that need focus and improvement. On a scale of 1 to 10, with **1 being strongly disagree** and **10 being strongly agree**, how would you score the following statements?

1. We have a clear, vivid and compelling vision that is extremely well-communicated throughout our entire organization _____

2. Our organization has a deeply-held set of guiding principles/core values that drives every aspect of how we do business _____

3. We do not allow anyone to consistently violate the values and remain employed in this organization _____

4. There is a strong and focused shared sense of direction throughout the entire organization _____

5. Everyone in this company understands exactly why this organization exists and what we are trying to accomplish _____

6. People throughout the organization are inspired by our mission and vision _____

Audit Scoring Key

- 9-10 indicates a strength in your organization.
- 7-8 is a good score but has room for improvement.
- 5-6 is an area of concern – this score should be improved. If it drops, it could lead to serious issues.
- 3-4 is a danger zone and requires attention and resources to get
- 1-2 is an emergency and should be addressed immediately.

Ch1 | *Vivid Vision*

Turning Ideas Into Action

Here are suggestions you can implement immediately. Some of them might work perfectly for you; others will need some adjustment and customization. Read them carefully and start thinking about how you can make them work for you in your organization.

- 1.** If you do not already have them, create mission/vision/values statements. This can be done independently by the leader of the organization or by a committee of key people who are enthusiastic about working on this

Project or you can solicit feedback from the entire organization. Typically, it is best to get as much feedback as possible from various stakeholders and then have two or three people create a draft document to be circulated for feedback. It is important to let people have a say in the process so that they feel that they have ownership in the final document and will be much more committed to the mission/vision/values.
- 2.** If you have mission/vision/values statements in place, survey your employees to see if they know/understand the statements and if they see them as relevant and resonant in the current organization. The only way these statements can be effective is if people honestly believe in them and strive every day to live them.
- 3.** Survey your customers to gather their feelings and attitudes about your mission/vision/values. Do they resonate with your customers as the kind of business they want to support and believe that you are? In your customers' eyes, is your organization living your stated mission/vision/values?
- 4.** Develop a specific, measurable, and comprehensive communications plan for ensuring that the mission/vision/values are effectively communicated throughout all levels of the organization and to key stakeholders. Measure the success of this program, through surveys and one-on-one meetings, at least twice a year.
- 5.** Create a formal reward/recognition program for employees who live the values and support the mission and vision. They can be things like, employee of the month award, employee of the year award, a special parking space, a day off, a cash bonus, a small gift certificate, flex time, a donation to the employee's favorite charity, a plaque or award, a handwritten note from the CEO thanking the employee for their dedication and commitment to the mission/vision/values – the options are endless. The idea is to reward the employees with something they value and do so publicly and sincerely.
- 6.** Find innovative ways to tie your mission/vision/values with community outreach, charitable support, and sustainable business practices.
- 7.** Refuse to tolerate any violation of the values. Make it clear that prudent business risk-taking or failing at something new or challenging is absolutely acceptable; it is even rewarded. But violating one of the core values is not acceptable.

Ch1 | *Vivid Vision*

Things to Think About and Discuss

It is important to give the following questions serious thought. Be very honest with yourself and think your answers through in detail. You might also find it valuable to gather several people from your organization to discuss the questions as a group, exploring how each of you now answer the same questions differently. Opposing points of view and alternative ideas are critical to developing quality answers.

1. What is the mission of our organization? Why do we exist? What is the noble purpose we are fulfilling?
2. Who in society would suffer, other than our employees, if our organization ceased to exist?
3. What is the vision for our organization? What are we trying to build? Where would we like to see this company in 5, 10, 20 years?
4. What are the core values of our organization? What are our most deeply held beliefs about the way we want to behave in his organization?
5. What are our rules about excellence, teamwork, quality, customer focus, professionalism, communication, accountability, corporate culture, and corporate responsibility?
6. How do we want our organization to be viewed from the outside? What words would we like our customers to use when describing our company? What feelings and emotions would we like our various stakeholders to have about our company?
7. What sort of a legacy do we want to leave in the communities where we work?

Ch1 | *Vivid Vision*

M/V/V Communication Checklist

The mission, vision, and values (M/V/V) can be communicated in a number of ways;

- Display in posters/plaques/banners
- Create T-shirts, hats, pens, key chains, screen savers, mouse pads and buttons with the M/V/V statements
- Publish them in the company newsletter/company blog
- Promote them in a speech or article from senior executives, managers, or customers.
- Circulate stories about how employees exemplify M/V/V
- Print M/V/V on the agenda and discuss at the opening of meetings
- Make sure the M/V/V are included as part of all strategic/operational/tactical plans
- Talk about them in all-hands or town hall meetings
- Use the M/V/V as themes for national, sales, and management meetings
- Create formal and informal recognition programs to reward people who exemplify the M/V/V
- From time to time, message about the M/V/V to all employees on their voicemail or through e-mail
- Create a committee that surveys employees and keeps the M/V/V fresh and relevant
- Bring in customers once or twice a year to talk to employees about how the company's M/V/V have touched them and made their lives better

Always remember that all of this is useless if you do not actually communicate the mission, vision, and values throughout the entire organization. The truth is, if you've created a noble mission, a compelling vision, and a set of deeply held values, you should be excited to tell everyone about them. Communicating the vision should never feel like a chore; it should be motivating and inspiring to share your feelings and excitement about the future of the company. Plaques, speeches and banners are nice, but passion is what gets people on board and makes things happen.

Ch2 *Best People*

Effectiveness Audit

This brief audit will help determine how well your organization is doing on the items outlined in this chapter. It is essential that you are honest in your scoring. This is not an exercise to get the highest score; it is a diagnostic tool to discover areas that need focus and improvement. On a scale of 1 to 10, with **1 being strongly disagree** and **10 being strongly agree**, how would you score the following statements?

1. Finding top talent is a major focus of our organization _____
2. We have a robust program/process in place for identifying and recruiting highly talented people _____
3. We have a thorough and well-thought-out interviewing process _____
4. We have the kind of corporate culture that attracts top talent _____
5. Our organization is a fun place to work with a supportive, atmosphere _____
6. Our employees are highly engaged in making our company successful _____
7. We have loyal and strongly engaged customers _____
8. Our people take great pride in our organization and in the work we do _____
9. We have a culture that is highly respectful, embraces diversity, and treats people fairly _____
10. We have a strong training and development program that helps people build the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed _____
11. There is a high-level of open, honest, transparent communication throughout the entire organization _____
12. People are given the direction, resources, and support they need to accomplish their tasks and are empowered to do their best work _____

Audit Scoring Key

- 9-10 indicates a strength in your organization.
- 7-8 is a good score but has room for improvement.
- 5-6 is an area of concern – this score should be improved. If it drops, it could lead to serious issues.
- 3-4 is a danger zone and requires attention and resources to get
- 1-2 is an emergency and should be addressed immediately.

Ch2 | *Best People*

Turning Ideas Into Action

Here are suggestions you can implement immediately. Some of them might work perfectly for you; others will need some adjustment and customization. Read them carefully and start thinking about how you can make them work for you in your organization.

1. If one does not exist, create a systematic process for finding, recruiting, interviewing, and hiring the most talented people you can find.
2. Make sure anyone involved in the interviewing process has had ample training in how to conduct effective interviews.
3. Direct and empower a key HR person to become a "Talent Czar."
4. Create a competency model that clearly identifies the characteristics, skills, abilities, knowledge, and attitudes you are looking for in both current and future employees.
5. Conduct a survey to assess the current culture of your organization and the level of engagement of your employees.
6. Create a formal and informal recognition and rewards program to ensure that employees feel appreciated for the work they do.
7. Establish a committee to develop innovative ways to make your workplace more fun, supportive, and friendly.
8. Encourage managers to have an open door policy, make more time to meet with their people, and practice MBWA (management by walking around).
9. Whether you send small groups of employees to skills training, ask your top performers to teach in-house training sessions or create an internal "university" for advanced executive education. Make training and development a top priority across all layers of your organization.

Ch2 | *Best People*

Things to Think About and Discuss

It is important to give the following questions serious thought. Be very honest with yourself and think your answers through in detail. You might also find it valuable to gather several people from your organization to discuss the questions as a group, exploring how each of you now answer the same questions differently. Opposing points of view and alternative ideas are critical to developing quality answers.

1. What sort of an impact would it have on your organization if you truly became a talent magnet?
2. What is standing in the way of attracting top talent to your organization right now?
3. How would you describe the current culture of your organization?
4. What is the best attribute of your current corporate culture?
5. What is the worst attribute of your current corporate culture?
6. How do you think your customers (internal or external) currently view your organization?
7. How would you describe the leadership style that permeates your organization? (Command & control, empowerment, micro-management, people focused, money focused, lead by example, do as I say / not as I do, fair and reasonable, aggressive and demanding, etc.)
8. Why do you think respect has become such an important issue for employees today?
9. Explain what it is about your organization and the work you do that would cause your employees to feel that their work was genuinely meaningful and important?
10. Do you think that the majority of employees in your organization are proud of where they work and the work they do? If so, why? If not, why not?

Ch3 | *Robust Communication*

Turning Ideas Into Action

Here are suggestions you can implement immediately. Some of them might work perfectly for you; others will need some adjustment and customization. Read them carefully and start thinking about how you can make them work for you in your organization.

1. Invest in advanced interpersonal communications skills training for key managers and leaders in your organization.
2. Create a lending library of books and training DVDs on communication skills for all employees to access.
3. Use articles and white papers to introduce ideas and topics into the conversation within your organization. In this way, if people are uncomfortable with the ideas presented, they can attack the article instead of each other, but at least the topic is presented for discussion.
4. Pick one critically important issue that is currently “un-discussable” and find the courage to put it on the agenda for your next meeting.
5. When someone in the organization delivers uncomfortable or negative news to you, respond in this manner, “Thank you very, very much for bringing this to my attention. It is important that I know about information like this as fast as possible. I am very unhappy to hear about the situation, but I am extremely pleased that you feel comfortable to tell me about it.” In this way, you shift from fixing blame to fixing the problem.
6. Establish a written set of “communications ground rules” that can be used to facilitate more open, honest, and frank discussions. Here is an example of what a set of ground rules might look like:
 - Honesty is the best policy, always tell the truth
 - Honesty = safety. The truth will not hurt you
 - Be tough on ideas but not on people. No personal attacks -- ever
 - It is your job to ask questions and challenge assumptions
 - Don't beat around the bush, communicate in a straightforward yet respectful way
 - Keep it short and simple, stay on topic and follow the agenda
 - Strive for transparency, share as much information as you possibly can
 - If you have a concern or question, make it known
 - We are all on the same team, the goal is for only the best ideas to survive

Ch3 | *Robust Communication*

Interpersonal Communications Effectiveness Audit

This brief audit will help determine how well your organization is doing on the items outlined in this chapter. It is essential that you are honest in your scoring. This is not an exercise to get the highest score; it is a diagnostic tool to discover areas that need focus and improvement. On a scale of 1 to 10, with **1 being strongly disagree** and **10 being strongly agree**, how would you score the following statements?

1. I attend very closely to the body language signals I send when communicating with others _____
2. When communicating with others, I watch their body language for signals of interest, attention, and understanding _____
3. I am a highly attentive listener and focus deeply on not only what my counterpart is saying but also on emotions behind the words _____
4. I am careful to look for cues indicating my counterparts preferred sensory mode of receiving information and then flex my style to deliver my communication in the way that is most comfortable for them _____
5. I am adept at using both logic and emotion to express my ideas and connect with my counterpart _____
6. I listen carefully for ambiguous words or words that I do not understand and then politely ask my counterpart to clearly define what they are trying to express to me _____
7. I listen carefully for emotionally charged words that indicate anger, confusion, frustration, or disapproval and politely ask my counterpart to help me understand what they are trying to express to me _____
8. I am skilled at effectively handling difficult or confrontational conversations _____
9. I am skilled at focusing on facts and real information and seldom allow myself to tell upsetting or stressful stories about situations I do not fully understand _____
10. I am skilled at remaining calm, composed, and focused in even the most difficult and challenging situations _____

Audit Scoring Key

- 9-10 indicates a strength in your organization.
- 7-8 is a good score but has room for improvement.
- 5-6 is an area of concern – this score should be improved. If it drops, it could lead to serious issues.
- 3-4 is a danger zone and requires attention and resources to get
- 1-2 is an emergency and should be addressed immediately.

Ch3 | Robust Communication

Organizational Communications Effectiveness Audit

This brief audit will help determine how well your organization is doing on the items outlined in this chapter. It is essential that you are honest in you scoring. This is not an exercise to get the highest score; it is a diagnostic tool to discover areas that need focus and improvement. On a scale of 1 to 10, with **1 being strongly disagree** and **10 being strongly agree**, how would you score the following statements?

1. We have a high degree of open, honest communication throughout our entire organization _____
2. People in our organization talk in a straightforward and direct way, telling the truth with compassion _____
3. People in our organization are courageous in their communications and not afraid to put even the most uncomfortable or awkward information out on the table for discussion in a respectful way. _____
4. The communications environment in our organization is very safe; you can introduce any relevant issue or discuss topics related to the organization without fear of reprisal or retribution _____
5. We have an intellectually rigorous communication style where people are encouraged to openly question and challenge ideas _____
6. Regardless of how much we might challenge or question ideas, our communication always remains Respectful. _____
7. There is a high degree of transparency throughout our entire organization _____
8. Critical business information is shared freely throughout the company _____

Audit Scoring Key

- 9-10 indicates a strength in your organization.
- 7-8 is a good score but has room for improvement.
- 5-6 is an area of concern – this score should be improved. If it drops, it could lead to serious issues.
- 3-4 is a danger zone and requires attention and resources to get
- 1-2 is an emergency and should be addressed immediately.

Ch3 | Robust Communication

Things to Think About and Discuss

It is important to give the following questions serious thought. Be very honest with yourself and think your answers through in detail. You might also find it valuable to gather several people from your organization to discuss the questions as a group, exploring how each of you now answer the same questions differently. Opposing points of view and alternative ideas are critical to developing quality answers.

1. How does the current level of organizational communication impact your business? Is it helping or hurting your company's performance?
2. In what areas of your organization do you need more transparency and information sharing?
3. Describe how people are currently treated when they deliver negative or uncomfortable news. Is that productive? What are the ramifications?
4. Describe how people in your organization currently deal with conflict. Is that productive? What are the ramifications?
5. How well do you communicate with outside stakeholders: customers, shareholders, vendors, suppliers, and partners? Is that productive? What are the ramifications?

Ch4 | *Sense of Urgency*

The Four-step Self-improvement Plan

When someone on my team is struggling, and standard coaching, motivation, and training are not successful in turning around their performance, I would use this four-step process for creating a very specific, clear, quantifiable, and measurable performance improvement plan.

The power in this approach is getting the employee to state in their own words specifically how they will improve their performance over a specific period of time. What makes it so effective is that because the improvement plan is written by the employee, it is exceedingly difficult for them to claim at a later date that they did not understand what was expected of them or what the ramifications of failing to meet those expectations are.

When an employee is not meeting standards or delivering the required results, ask them to fill out the following four memos. Make sure they understand it is essential they include as much specific, quantifiable, measurable information as possible, so it is crystal clear exactly what they will do differently and what they need from you in order to deliver the results they promise. Once you receive the four memos from the employee, work together to negotiate the finer points and clarify anything that is ambiguous. Once you both agree on the content of the memos, you and the employee sign each of them as a clear commitment that you will work to deliver what is required of you in each of the four memos.

Schedule a brief meeting each week with the employee to see where they stand on each memo. The first memo is what they promised to deliver, so you can discuss how they are improving and what results they are achieving. The second memo outlines what they need from you in order to successfully achieve the results promised. At this point you can verify you have given them the resources, support, equipment, and help they need to successfully deliver on memo number one (results). Memo number three states what the employee expects as a reward if they successfully complete the goals in memo number one. Example, a raise, flex time, better parking, more comp time, or just keeping their job. Lastly, memo number four outlines what the negative ramifications are if you deliver everything on a memo number two (resources) and the employee does not deliver what they promised in memo number one (results). It is not uncommon for employee's list termination as a result of not achieving their goals.

It is my experience that the individual will either get to work right away to dramatically improve their performance, or within a matter of a month or two they realize, despite you have given them everything. requested in memo number two (resources), they are unable to deliver what they promise in memo number one (results), and soon decide is best to resign.

Self-improvement Plan

Memo One:

Deliverables

In as much detail as possible, please outline specifically what changes/results you will deliver over the next four months. It is critical that you make the deliverables as measurable, quantifiable and observable as possible so it is clear exactly what you promised to deliver and what changes you will make. Think this through, make sure your goals are challenging, but realistic and totally unambiguous so when we review your progress in a few months from now there is no confusion as to whether you have achieved your goals or not.

Memo Two:

Required Resources

Based on the goals for improvement you listed in memo number one, what are the resources, support, help, training and equipment that you need (that you do not currently have) to successfully achieve your goals? I want to help set you up for success, so please let me know what I can do to make sure you have everything you need to keep the your promises listed in memo number one.

Memo Three:

Rewards

If you are able to successfully deliver everything promised in memo number one, what should your reward be?

Memo Four:

Ramifications

If the organization delivers all of the resources and support we agreed upon in memo number two, and you do not deliver on your promises/goals in memo number one, what should the ramifications be?

Ch4 | *Sense of Urgency*

Effectiveness Audit

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1. People throughout our organization exhibit a strong sense of urgency _____
2. We have a clear, well-communicated direction that allows people to make decisions quickly on key priorities _____
3. There is a free flow of information across the organization to help people make good decisions quickly _____
4. Everyone in our organization understands what the top priorities for action are _____
5. Everyone in our organization understands what to say “no” to _____
6. We have an organization that is superb at focus, discipline, and action _____
7. There is very little bureaucracy, red tape, or politics in our organization _____
8. Hierarchy or turf guarding is not prevalent within our organization _____
9. Our organization is excellent at making good decisions quickly _____
10. Our organization has an effective process for making team-based decisions _____
11. When we reach consensus on a team-based decision, we never have problems with people on that team sharing negative things about the result _____
12. We support and reward people that have a bias for action _____
13. We have an organizational culture where it is safe to take prudent business risks _____

Ch4 | *Sense of Urgency*

Effectiveness Audit

Audit Scoring Key

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- 7-8 is a good score but has room for improvement.
- 5-6 is an area of concern – this score should be improved. If it drops, it could lead to serious issues.
- 3-4 is a danger zone and requires attention and resources to get
- 1-2 is an emergency and should be addressed immediately.

Ch4 | *Sense of Urgency*

Turning Ideas Into Action

Here are suggestions you can implement immediately. Some of them might work perfectly for you; others will need some adjustment and customization. Read them carefully and start thinking about how you can make them work for you in your organization.

- 1.** Develop multiple ways to encourage, support, and communicate the need for the entire organization to embrace a strong sense of urgency.
- 2.** Clearly communicate the direction and key priorities of the organization so people understand exactly what they should focus on.
- 3.** Clearly communicate what is not a priority, clients you don't want to serve, markets you do not want to compete for, projects that are not a priority. Create a culture where people understand what they should walk away from and say no to.
- 4.** Create a document that outlines the nine steps of effective team decision-making and utilize it in meetings where teams have to make decisions.
- 5.** Establish an advisory panel of customers, colleagues, and talented people in your community to share advice and guidance.
- 6.** Establish clear and aggressive timetables for accomplishing major priorities to ensure people understand fast action is critical to organizational success.
- 7.** Establish a committee to review all current processes, systems, and procedure. Look for ways to reduce bureaucracy, red tape, and anything that inhibits agility and quick decision-making.

Ch4 | *Sense of Urgency*

Things to Think About and Discuss

It is important to give the following questions serious thought. Be very honest with yourself and think your answers through in detail. You might also find it valuable to gather several people from your organization to discuss the questions as a group, exploring how each of you now answer the same questions differently. Opposing points of view and alternative ideas are critical to developing quality answers.

1. What are five specific things you can do immediately to reduce the bureaucracy in your organization?
2. What are five specific things you can do immediately to reduce the hierarchy in your organization?
3. What steps can you take to roll out Four-Level Decision making across your organization?
4. What three things can your organization do now to reward people who proactively ask for responsibility, have a sense of urgency, and a bias for action?
5. Who are the individuals that inhibit fast action taking within your organization? The people who use hierarchy, politics, and red tape to slow down the process? What can you do immediately to deal decisively with them and encourage adoption of a sense of urgency and fast action?
6. Who can you bring into your informal network as a mentor, colleague, or advisor to help you make superb decisions even faster?

Ch5 | Disciplined Execution

Effectiveness Audit

This brief audit will help determine how well your organization is doing on the items outlined in this chapter. It is essential that you are honest in your scoring. This is not an exercise to get the highest score; it is a diagnostic tool to discover areas that need focus and improvement. On a scale of 1 to 10, with **1 being strongly disagree** and **10 being strongly agree**, how would you score the following statements?

1. Our organization is highly effective in the execution of important initiatives _____
2. The key leaders in our organization set an example of disciplined execution _____
3. Every major initiative within our organization is translated into a S.M.A.R.T. goal _____
4. Every major initiative in our organization has a firm due date and a clear owner who is 100% accountable to deliver the desired results _____
5. There is a high-level of mutual accountability throughout our organization to effectively execute key initiatives _____
6. Our organization ensures all major projects and initiatives are aligned _____
7. We set realistic goals that everyone feels are aggressive or progressive but achievable _____
8. We have superb systems and processes to ensure we execute on important projects and initiatives _____
9. Our organization does a superior job of communicating the main strategies everyone should focus on throughout the organization _____
10. Our organization is highly flexible and adjusts our strategies to changes in the marketplace when necessary _____
11. We have a culture that aggressively pursues continuous innovation _____
12. We have a culture that strongly supports educated risk taking and rewards employees for innovation and creativity _____
13. We have a robust praise and celebration system that identifies the unique motivators of individual employees and rewards appropriately for demonstrating superb execution _____
14. We have an organizational culture that refuses to tolerate mediocrity and deals decisively with those who do not demonstrate disciplined execution and accountability _____

Ch5 | *Disciplined Execution*

Effectiveness Audit

Audit Scoring Key

9-10 indicates a strength in your organization.

7-8 is a good score but has room for improvement.

5-6 is an area of concern – this score should be improved. If it drops, it could lead to serious issues.

3-4 is a danger zone and requires attention and resources to get

1-2 is an emergency and should be addressed immediately.

Ch5 | *Disciplined Execution*

Turning Ideas Into Action

Here are suggestions you can implement immediately. Some of them might work perfectly for you; others will need some adjustment and customization. Read them carefully and start thinking about how you can make them work for you in your organization.

- 1.** Conduct a financial analysis of lost revenues and the opportunity cost that poor execution has on your business. Examples are re-work, missed deadlines, poor quality, lost customers, missed opportunities, holding up other departments, etc. Post those numbers and begin a discussion throughout the organization about lack cost the entire business and what everyone feels should be done about it?
- 2.** Take the nine steps I've outlined in this chapter and customize to your organization, then begin to use them at the start of every major initiative to ensure that your team follows a step-by-step process for flawless operational execution.
- 3.** Undertake a benchmarking project to measure the effectiveness of your organization against your key competitors and best-in-class to determine precisely where your organization needs to improve.
- 4.** Hold a management meeting or off-site retreat to review all projects and initiatives and ensure they are fully aligned throughout the organization.
- 5.** Create a "guiding coalition" across your organization to act as champions for disciplined execution and higher levels of accountability. Challenge them to be an example of the behaviors you expect from your teams and encourage them to be cheerleaders for Urgency + Discipline.

Ch5 | *Disciplined Execution*

Things to Think About and Discuss

It is important to give the following questions serious thought. Be very honest with yourself and think your answers through in detail. You might also find it valuable to gather several people from your organization to discuss the questions as a group, exploring how each of you now answer the same questions differently. Opposing points of view and alternative ideas are critical to developing quality answers.

1. What percentage of the time do you feel your organization executes your major objectives effectively?
2. What are two or three key projects in your organization that were never successfully implemented?
3. What do you believe the impact has been to your organization because of an inability to execute on some of your major strategies?
4. Can you think of any place in your organization where strategies and priorities are not aligned? If so, what are they, and what has the impact of this misalignment been to the organization?
5. Could your organization give more training and support to enable people to be more effective at execution?
6. What are several new and innovative ways that you can reward employees who are excellent at delivering results?
7. What are several new and innovative ways you can foster more accountability throughout your culture in order to hold people accountable when they fail to execute effectively?

Ch6 | *Extreme Customer Focus*

Effectiveness Audit

This brief audit will help determine how well your organization is doing on the items outlined in this chapter. It is essential that you are honest in your scoring. This is not an exercise to get the highest score; it is a diagnostic tool to discover areas that need focus and improvement. On a scale of 1 to 10, with **1 being strongly disagree** and **10 being strongly agree**, how would you score the following statements?

1. Our organization is highly effective at executing all of our important initiatives _____
2. Our leadership believes strongly that giving customers a consistently superior experience will lead to profitable growth _____
3. Customer-focused employee behaviors are recognized and generously rewarded _____
4. We have an engaging and inspiring customer service vision _____
5. Our entire business is organized around delivering consistently superior customer service _____
6. We do an excellent job of “owning the voice of the customer” _____
7. Customer feedback is used to drive continuous improvement of our customer service delivery _____
8. We have a real commitment to delivering high levels of customer service and refuse to tolerate anything less than superior customer service _____
9. In this organization, we set and enforce very high standards of performance _____
10. We continuously measure customer satisfaction and engagement _____
11. Maintaining very high levels of customer engagement and satisfaction is a top priority in our organization _____
12. We have identified the critical few Moments of Truth that are essential to delivering consistently superior customer service in our business _____
13. We have detailed and extremely thorough systems and processes to ensure a flawless delivery of our critical touchpoints each and every time they interact with the customer _____

14. Our frontline, customer-facing employees receive ample training, support, and resources to allow them to successfully deliver superb customer service _____

Ch6 | Extreme Customer Focus

Effectiveness Audit

Audit Scoring Key

A score of 9-10 indicates strength in your organization.

A score of 7-8 is a good score but has room for improvement.

A score of 5-6 is an area of concern – this score needs to be brought up because if it heads in the other direction, it could lead to serious issues.

A score of 3-4 is in the danger zone and requires attention and resources to get it moving up the scale quickly.

A score of 1-2 is an emergency and should be dealt with immediately.

Ch6 | *Extreme Customer Focus*

Turning Ideas Into Action

Here are suggestions you can implement immediately. Some of them might work perfectly for you; others will need some adjustment and customization. Read them carefully and start thinking about how you can make them work for you in your organization.

Here is a short checklist for how to create a culture of extreme customer focus.

- 1. Create a customer service vision.** Much like creating a vision statement to direct the organization, create a clear and compelling “customer service vision” that describes the level of service your organization aspires to deliver.
- 2. Infuse your entire organization with the Voice of the Customer (VOC).** Create strong, trusting relationships with your customers. Solicit feedback, communicate that feedback throughout the entire organization, and then take action on the feedback your customers have given you.
- 3. Become an expert on delivering superior customer service.** Learn everything you can about delivering great customer service. Adopt the best ideas, benchmark against the top performers, share that information across your organization. Make learning about and improving customer service a core competency of your company.
- 4. Turn every employee into a customer service evangelists.** Make serving the customer (both external and internal) the number one job of every employee in the organization. Empower them with the tools, training, equipment, and support to deliver excellent service consistently. Reward and praise those who deliver above and beyond the call of duty and deal quickly and effectively with employees who do not embrace the service values.
- 5. Destroy barriers that stand in the way of delivering superior service to the customer.** Look at systems, policies, procedures, reports, and rules. Wipe out anything that creates roadblocks or frustrations in the effort to delight and amaze the customer.
- 6. Measure and communicate.** Create a clear, specific, and well-thought-out and over-communicated program for systematically collecting and quickly communicating the most important customer service delivery measurements to the people who can implement them. Make it easy for your people to win.
- 7. Walk the talk.** In every level of the organization. Starting at the top, must be a living example of your service strategy. If the leadership of your organization does not deliver excellent service to their internal customers—promptly returning phone calls, showing up on time for meetings, being well-prepared, and acting professionally, there is absolutely no hope for your front-line people to deliver great service. All employees must demonstrate an obsession for delivering consistent superior customer service inside and outside of the company.

Ch6 | *Extreme Customer Focus*

Things to Think About and Discuss

It is important to give the following questions serious thought. Be very honest with yourself and think your answers through in detail. You might also find it valuable to gather several people from your organization to discuss the questions as a group, exploring how each of you now answer the same questions differently. Opposing points of view and alternative ideas are critical to developing quality answers.

1. Look at your competitors: where does the level of customer service you deliver rank in comparison to what they offer?
2. What do you believe are the top three to five *Moments of Truth* in your customer service delivery chain?
3. What are five new and innovative ways you can improve the level of service you deliver immediately?
4. What are five new and innovative ways your organization can sure hire people with a positive, service-oriented, can-do attitude?
5. What are the top three companies you admire most to deliver superior customer service? What is it about them that makes their customer service so spectacular?
6. What must you change inside when your organization create a culture of extreme customer focus?