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*All leadership is example.
Anything else is coercion.*

Consulting & Coaching

Leading From Resonance™

Creating A Rapid Response Culture™

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The uber-competitive, turbulent markets of the 21st Century Economy - "Econ21" - require enterprises with Rapid Response Cultures™, organizations so agile that they are "always in tune with the markets they serve." Such agility requires fully engaged employees who enthusiastically flow with the change that keeps the organization's systems and products in-tune with the ever-mutating mercurial markets.

It is the employees' Engaged Enthusiasm - their Discretionary Energy - along with their ability to learn, unlearn, and re-learn new roles, new systems, and new technology that determines the long-term success and prosperity of the business. It is this Discretionary Energy that manifests as the organization's Culture.

Traditionally, Culture is defined as "a system of shared beliefs, values, behaviors, attitudes, customs and artifacts of a community." This is an abstract, intellectual definition; it does not consider the reality of experience. The Culture in which we live is real: it shapes how we think, feel and behave through its system of rewards and punishments. So in our natural effort to avoid pain and find pleasure, *our experience of the culture is our most successful way of thinking, feeling and behaving within the community.*

From the perspective of our individual experience, the culture is not some set of abstract values and beliefs. The reality is that it is "our most successful way of thinking, feeling and behaving within the community." Just as the culture defines one's experience, that experience defines one's culture, they are identical and inseparable!

For example, when the working environment supports innovation, creativity and risk taking, then the employees "think, feel and behave" accordingly. Conversely, when the working environment supports win/lose competitive acrimony, negativity or bureaucratic, CYA behavior, then the employees "think, feel and behave" accordingly. It is clear that the 21st Century Global Economy is forcing business leaders to create working environments very different than those considered successful just a few years ago:

When the leaders cultivate Resonant Relationships™ with the employees, the employees' Infectious Enthusiasm - their Discretionary Energy - is easily focused on the mission, vision, values and goals of the organization. This is a Resonant Culture™, one that is creative and innovative is meeting the expectations of the market. It is a Rapid Response Culture™ that is "always in tune with the markets it serves."

However, current research shows that over 60% of the employees are not engaged and another 17% are actively disengaged in their jobs! These are Dissonant Cultures, ones that are un-productive, non-competitive and not exceeding the expectations of their customers. These are cultures where the employee's most successful way of thinking, feeling and behaving reflects the acrimony and negativity of the working environment. This type of behavior is very pervasive and tenacious. Any behavior contrary to the rules is pun-



Eagles don't flock. You find them one at a time.

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ished. Many of these organizations, in all business sectors, will soon be washed away in the tsunami of the 21st Century Economy.

Here is the Cultural Paradox: Management cannot *directly* control the Organization's Culture! Management cannot *directly* control how employees will "think, feel, and behave", and any inclination to do so only creates destructive distrust and resentment! Management can only control the Working Environment, the conditions in which the employees work. The Organization's Culture is the employees' response to the Working Environment management creates.

Leading From Resonance™ is the mastery of this indirect control of the organization's culture. "Resonance" occurs when "everyone is operating on the same frequency." It requires a Values & Goals management philosophy. It only occurs when the Value Structure of the individuals -- i.e. their life purpose, values, vision, and goals -- and the *actual* Value Structure of the organization are comfortably compatible. A climate of honesty, openness, and trust pervades the environment. When the Values of the organization and those of the employees are congruent, then Resonant Relationships™ and a Rapid Response Culture™ naturally evolve.

Conversely, "Dissonance" is the absence of Resonance. Dissonance occurs "where there is little harmony and even less honesty, openness, and trust." Specifically, the relationships between the employees and their immediate managers are not resonant; they are not "operating on the same frequency." Dissonance does not require open conflict; everyone may be "very professional" and behave in appropriate ways, but there is little real connection or trust. The organization's *stated* Value Structure and its *actual* Value Structure as experienced by the employees are not in alignment.

Creating the Working Environment that sustains a Rapid Response Culture™ of fully-engaged employees who enthusiastically exceed the customers' expectations is not complicated. It involves "leverage." "Leverage is overcoming resistance at one point by applying force at some other point."

There are only four points of leverage on the working environment that will elicit the desired cultural response. The Resonant Leader masterfully directs management's energy to these Four Points of Cultural Leverage:

- The behavior management models. This is the most influential factor in developing a working environment that sustains a High Functioning Culture,
- The investment management makes in the education and development of its employees. Job security is now a function of "long-term employability", not "long-term employment." Employees whose talents are continually being developed so that they know they are easily employable elsewhere, are the most enthusiastic and loyal of all and least likely to leave.
- The data management chooses to collect, interpret, and report as measures of individual and organizational performance. It is these measurements that define what aspects of the enterprise management regards as Primary Causes.

Of course every business must produce a profit. However, profitability is only the *effect* of management's attention to Primary Causes. A primary cause is any activity for which people (or technology) are employed to perform because it contributes to the long-term profitability of the enterprise.

For example, high quality Customer Service enhancing customer loyalty is a primary cause. The data management chooses to collect on its Customer Service activity, and how that data is interpreted and reported, will determine the contribution that Customer Service makes towards the profits and long-term viability of the business.

It is easy for management to collect abundant operational data and become overwhelmed by it. Unless data effectively measures a relevant primary cause, it must not be collected. Collecting irrelevant data is counter-productive to a Rapid Response Culture™.

- The behaviors management rewards. The organization will attract and retain those whose natural style, personal mission and values, produce behaviors that most closely match the behaviors management rewards. For example, if management appears to reward irresponsible or uncooperative behavior, then it will get considerably more of that behavior. Conversely, if management appears to reward responsible and cooperative behavior, then it will get more of that behavior.

Management ignores these Four Points of Cultural Leverage at its peril. Customers no longer buy a product; they buy a “satisfying experience” whether it is a meal, a shirt, a ski vacation, a car or a home. Customers will purchase that satisfying experience from anyone in the world who meets their requirements for quality, price, and *immediate* availability. Only those organizations whose employees *enthusiastically* exceed the customer’s expectations will capture the business.

If management chooses to ignore these Four Points of Cultural leverage, it will not be fully trusted, or willingly followed. It will experience low employee loyalty and high turnover. It will focus its resources on treating symptoms rather than dealing with causes and finally, it will be rewarding unprofitable and undesirable behavior. Indifferent attention to any of these Four Points undermines Engaged Enthusiasm and dampens Discretionary Energy. When the talented employees become disengaged, they “fire the boss,” look for a new job and move on.

In our 21st Century Economy - Econ21 - **the Organizational Culture, *more than any other measure of executive leader-ship*, will determine who succeeds and who fails.** It is the culture that nurtures a following of loyal customers or drives them away. It is the culture that attracts and holds fully engaged, enthusiastic employees or drives them away. It is the culture that creates reliable suppliers who will be there in a crisis, or have gone away. For better or worse, it is the culture that defines the organization’s Brand, reputation and status in the market.

At the end of the day: ***the organization is its culture.*** This is the only path to market leadership in the open, competitive markets of Econ21 -- the 21st Century Economy.

The most powerful and effective way for management to shape a Rapid Response Culture™ is to understand how Resonant Relationships™ build a Resonant Culture™ leading to a Rapid Response Culture™. These concepts are the core of our leadership model: Leading From Resonance™.

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