

# LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS

For Winning Leaders and Companies



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Chairman and CEO

## What Area Within Your Organization Do You Wish Was Performing Better?

Most of us have areas within our organization that concern us. Sometimes it's just a hunch, a feeling, our intuition or our voice-of-experience nagging at us to take a deeper look into what is and what is not really going on.

As experienced leaders, we know that there's typically a problem to be found in situations such as these and if we wait for the financials to deteriorate, it will be too late to make a smooth recovery. We know that we need to take responsible and timely action in order to keep our performance improving or our credibility will suffer with those to whom we are accountable.

Even the best leaders have their challenges. In a recent "best practices" review of 12 competitors, the top performer was not first in any single area, was in the bottom-half against four measures and was in the bottom-quartile in two of these. Speak with a leader of any of the great institutions today and they can quickly point out ten problematic areas faster than they can define a similar number of their strengths. We shouldn't feel guilty if we've got a few problems -- we are in excellent company given today's rapidly changing environment. Feel sorry instead for the poor bloke who is riding high and will never see it coming until it's too late to do something about it. There's more than one reason why so many acquisitions are taking place these days.

The hard part about sensing that we have a problem is doing something about it. I haven't spoken to a leader in the past two years who isn't overcommitted and overworked. Lean organizations have done wonderful things to our cost structures but we no longer have capacity in stand-by-mode to address many of the issues we are now experiencing. Fur-

thermore, we find that many of the root-cause issues we find today require more than a simple directive to fix. They tend to be urgent and complex, yet critical to the success of the organization and to the leader, and require a comprehensive change process if we are to effectively recover from them.

leadership team willing to demand the results required to win. This might sound easy, yet it is the greatest weakness I find in leaders today. We must define, communicate, set the expectation that an exceptional level of performance will be achieved and furthermore, never waiver from this view. In our wish to be humane, empathetic, empowering and understanding, this can easily be forgotten. Is not a leader without a cause simply a manager, and can we any longer afford this behavior?

Beyond conviction, few leaders have experience in mobilization, which in this context means the structure and process of taking a large group of individuals from one set of beliefs and expectations, to a new level of thinking

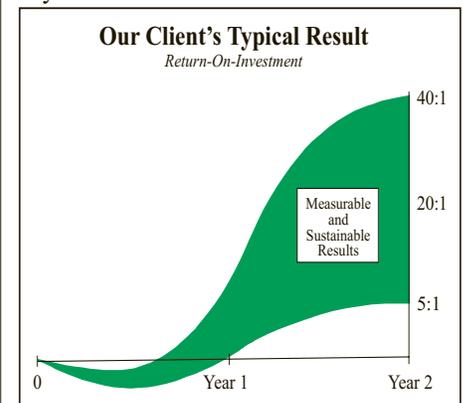
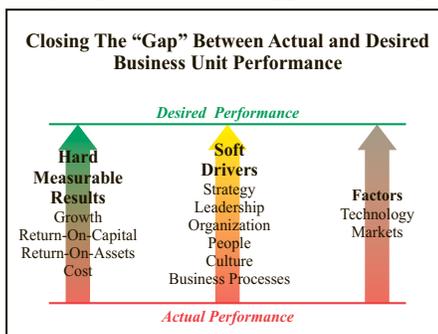
and accountabilities that yields an improved level of performance. Our followers could reasonably be anticipated to respond, "what gives you the right to expect something of us that we have never done before?" It's a great question and one we need answer very carefully. To be "best-in-class," we should have gone beyond all others. We must also provide our organization with the right tools and capabilities that will allow us to get to a level of performance where we have not gone before -- a reasonably difficult assignment for any leader.



Mobilization skills and capabilities can add exciting new alternatives to a leader's portfolio of competitive options

Although it can sometimes seem overwhelming to a busy leader, we must *diagnose* our situation before we begin to think about appropriate solutions. The greatest success comes from taking a broad view of the situation, one which is the proverbial "mile wide and an inch deep." This gives us a chance to collect all of the variables, not just the obvious one or two. Inevitably, the greatest insights come from areas where you least expect them, and a wide approach captures all opportunities.

Most leaders and companies are good at analysis. It's typically not difficult to understand the underlying limitations once a review has begun. Recapturing the value that is being lost is the tough part. It takes all the components of a good change management process and the strength of conviction of a



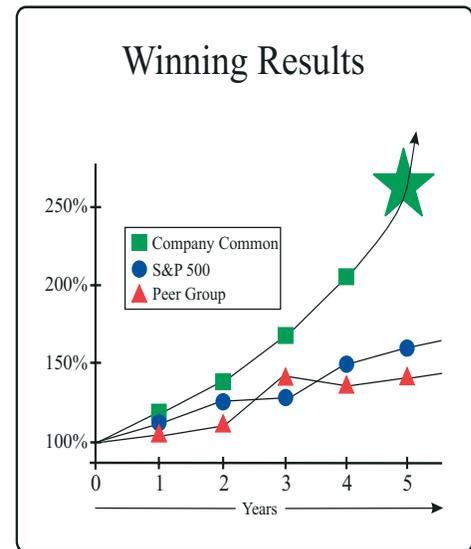
## William W. Rutherford and Associates

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**W**illiam W. Rutherford and Associates believes in helping successful leaders of well-managed companies achieve improvements in their competitive position. We understand the many factors that make improvements increasingly difficult in today's world: global competition, maturing products and services, organizational complexity, rapidly changing marketplace dynamics and sourcing options and the growing impact of technology. Company performance options that our clients have only begun to consider are becoming a basic requirement for their on-going viability.

Today's leaders typically know those areas critical to their success. They want to do what is required to significantly improve their organization's performance and affect cultural change. Past efforts to design and implement strategies to realize this vision have often been less successful than expected. Internal organizational issues, personal agendas and inadequate skills and capabilities have been problematic. In some cases employees lack of varied industry and "outside-their-function" experience further contribute to the challenge of making meaningful progress.

**Our Approach:** At *William W. Rutherford and Associates* we start with the leader's desired improvement and build a customized approach to achieve it. "Measurable, sustainable results and improved competitive position are a must" is a frequent comment. "We need a new, more robust approach" is another. Leaders tell us that with our assistance they make faster, more significant progress in today's increasingly competitive world. They say that we have "energized their organizations for achievement" and "substantially reduced the time required to successfully attain these results" and "created the environment for accelerated growth and learning." Effective improvement initiatives are a lasting and rewarding leadership decision.



### William W. Rutherford and Associates provides leaders with:

- The attainment of significant, measurable and sustainable goals.
- Strategic and operational achievements leading to business performance breakthroughs.
- Organizational learning, tools, skills, measures and the confidence to accelerate future gains in competitiveness.
- A sustainable legacy of success for their businesses and stakeholders.

*William W. Rutherford and Associates* works together with leaders and their organizations to make otherwise difficult company, industry and market demands achievable. Experience has shown that both tangible and intangible benefits are needed to accomplish the new level of business performance needed to "win" in this environment.

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Helping Leaders Improve Their Company's Performance