



Collective Intelligence Solutions

Helping People Think Together Better

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One Mistake Leaders Make

By Robert Bystrom and Ham Hayes

A common mistake among leaders we have observed is that changes in circumstances require them to reinvent their organization and upgrade the way they do business and they fail to do so. Not fully capable of handling the new situation, we have seen leaders revert to making decisions based on expediency, politics or emotional reaction. The systems they built to handle the past probably worked for the past. Today, however, there is more information, more complexity, less concept-to-market time and less room for error.

The cost of the inability to meet the increased velocity of change could be market position, customer satisfaction, product relevance or company viability. Internally, the cost could be loss of confidence, loss of key people, communication breakdowns and overruns.

If you have an organization which can keep pace with or anticipate shifts in the marketplace, you can retain customers and key personnel, maintain market position, solve complex problems and most likely reduce errors.

The question of how your organization can respond effectively to the new dynamics comes down to how you can improve the thinking capacity of your organization. Current market conditions affect performance at all levels of the organization and require faster, clearer collaboration, communication and coordination. True, team members need to be technically more capable of handling their responsibilities; but they must also be more able to *think together as a unified, coherent team*, committed to the success of the whole.

A high-end boutique hotel was managing to keep afloat by everyone stretching to the max. In order to move back from the edge, the owners learned how to include their entire team, from managers to maintenance, in developing solutions to problems normally addressed by the management staff alone. In addition to solving their most complex problem quickly—how to create time for the owner to do more marketing—they developed a team of people excited about being where they—as co-creators—made a difference. By everyone sharing the purpose and working from a more inclusive view of the entire operation, they were more dedicated to the overall success than simply performing their niche functions adequately. For example, with no assignment from her supervisor, the young head of housekeeping took the initiative to write a

manual for temporary housekeepers because she saw it would ease the workflow and reduce the time her supervisor had to spend doing training. This cascaded to the supervisor being able take on some of the owner's duties and thus free up time for more marketing.

The staff of the hotel learned a set of skills associated with thinking and performing coherently. With less stress and more attention, they look and act like a well coordinated team, enjoying and dedicated to what they do, and capable of responding more effectively to large and small fluctuations in their business.

A critical element which made this transformation possible is the owner's commitment to continuous improvement. When she was introduced to our Question Driven Leadership™, she recognized an opportunity to take her business where she had always hoped it could go, i.e. a team of talented people who loved working together to produce the finest possible experience for their guests.

Good leaders are looking for fundamental solutions. Is your company capable of responding to the increased velocity of change? Question Driven Leadership is a system for developing team thinking. We can help your team generate more useful ideas in a shorter period of time and improve performance at all levels.

Please visit our website at www.CollectiveIntelligenceSolutions.com, send us an email or give us a call at 360-319-1936 for more information.
