

Reinventing Your Organization

No business model lasts forever. What will your organization look like in 5, 10 and 15 years? What would you like it to look like? Rather than just accept what 'lady luck' brings your way, why not create the future that you want for yourself and your organization?

We pirates knew how to reinvent ourselves and our businesses. Consider the following:

- Francis Drake was both an English privateer (or legalized pirate) and the first explorer to circle the globe.
- Enos Collins, a Nova Scotia privateer became a prominent business man and a partner in the first bank in Nova Scotia.
- Captain Peter Eastman, once the leader of the world's largest pirate fleet based in Newfoundland became a French nobleman.

Below are three Pirate Leadership Principles to adopt to reinvent your organization:

1) Get On Board

Get your leaders together to do some creative strategic thinking involving the following steps:

- Undertake a SWOT Analysis to identify your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in each market that you serve or would like to serve. As part of your SWOT analysis, explore the following key sources of opportunities:
 - What we know
 - What we know we do not know
 - What we do not even know that we do not know
- Clearly identify your core skills. (What you do best and do on a daily basis that is of benefit to your customers.)
- Clarify which markets you want to serve in the future. Identify and describe what markets you currently serve, including how you serve each market and your competitive advantages and disadvantages in each market. To do this, look at yourself and your competitors through your customers' eyes. Explore other business concepts and markets where you might use your core skills to profitably serve customers.
- Review and clarify your mission statement to crystallize your purpose as an organization.
- Set a few bold long term objectives that you want to achieve. Be prepared to annually set specific goals to measure your ongoing success in fulfilling your purpose.

- Review and update your strategy or game plan for successfully fulfilling your purpose in your chosen business. Focus on the following
 - What traditions, practices to throw overboard
 - What to carry / do less of in the future
 - What to carry / do more of in the future
 - What you have never done before but should do in the future
- Develop Action Plans to implement your chosen strategies, clearly setting out what must be done, by whom, and by when.

2) Stay the Course

Commit to meet regularly to confirm everyone's commitment to the decisions arrived at during your strategic planning sessions. Review progress and assure that everyone is staying the course or implementing the chosen plan. This is an essential aspect of leadership. Insufficient effort here will mean that may revert back to their old way of doing things.

3) Share the Treasures

Early pirate captains learned that the more treasures they shared, the more treasures they found. Since the days of the earliest pirate captains, we have learned that it takes more than money. Once people have money, they want more than money. Be creative in developing fun ways to recognize and reward successful implementation of your new business plan. A word to the wise, nothing beats recognition and praise and the feeling of being a member of a team with important work to do.

The outcome of applying the three Pirate Leadership Principles outlined above should include the following:

- A clearer and more widely understood basis for your future success.
- A clear plan to best capitalize on what business you are really in.
- A more focused management team.
- A more profitable future.

Aye me hearties, here's wishing ye smooth sailing and rich treasures in your reinvented future!