

Change

“You don’t have to like change to take advantage of it.” (Seth Godin)

Change

“In down economies, the only thing that’s going to change things is changing things...If you’re not happy with what you’ve got, what radical changes are you willing to make to change what you’re getting? In my experience, not much. But that doesn’t mean you can’t start now.” (Seth Godin blog, 02-19-09)

Which parts are you skipping?

“The top of the mountain is rarely the best part. You can watch ‘the good parts’ of a baseball game in about six minutes. The web has become a giant highlights reel... We can skim really fast now. This is a problem for marketers, because it means that if they don’t make the good parts easily findable and accessible (and bold and loud and memorable) then the whole product becomes invisible.

“As consumers of information, though, I wonder if the best parts are really the best parts...the parts you miss are there for a reason.

“Real change is rarely caused by the good parts. Real change and impact and joy come from the foundation and the transitions and the little messages that sneak in when you least expect them. The highlights of the baseball game are highlights largely because the rest of the game got you ready for them.” (Seth Godin blog, 02-10-09)

Sprint!

“The best way to overcome your fear of creativity, brainstorming, intelligent risk taking or navigating a tricky situation might be to sprint. When we sprint, all the internal dialogue falls away and we just go as fast as we possibly can. When you’re sprinting you don’t feel that sore knee and you don’t worry that the ground isn’t perfectly level. You just run.

“You can’t sprint forever. That’s what makes it sprinting. The brevity of the event is a key part of why it works.... You can’t spring every day but it’s probably a good idea to spring regularly.” (Seth Godin blog, 02-09-09)

The power of an algorithm

“In business, if you lock down ideas, make them difficult to change and spread and have impact, you fail. If you accept the fact that change is real, that there is competition for your ideas and that amplifying the good stuff works, you can grow and thrive... Your organization (and your career) either *embraces* change and turmoil and sudden shifts in the rules or you *fear* it. In times of rapid change (that would be now), embracing the algorithm of the evolution of ideas and systems is a significant competitive advantage.” (Seth Godin blog, 02-12-09)

Music vs. the music industry

“The music industry is really focused on the ‘industry’ part and not so much on the ‘music’ part. This is the greatest moment in the history of music if your dream is to distribute as much music as possible.... If your focus is on the industry part...it’s horrible.

“I define a tribe as a group of people sharing a common culture, a goal, a mission, probably a leader. There are tribes of people...who are connected because they want to remake the music industry...The important distinction here is that music labels used to be in the business of grabbing shelf space, on the radio and in the record store. Now, the music industry needs to realign and be in the business of finding and connecting and leading groups of people who want to follow a musician and connect with the other people who want to do the same...” (Seth Godin blog, 02-13-09)

Your organization's adaptive capacity: "Your ability to change in response to changed circumstances (survival) and in pursuit of enhanced results (creation)" ("Making Change: How to Build Adaptive Capacity," Carl Sussman, *Nonprofit Quarterly*, Winter 2003)

Adaptive capacity is the "skill to take the initiative in making adjustments for improved performance, relevance and impact. Fundamentally, it is the ability to respond to and instigate change. The importance of this aptitude for change grows as organizations appreciate the breadth, complexity and dynamism of their organizational ambitions and operating environments."

"Organizations need to be both sturdy and resilient, cultivating both stability-endowing and change-promoting capacities as complementary, not competing ideals...And homogeneity cause insularity."

Four qualities of adaptive organizations:

- External focus: "Acutely focused on the dynamism (rapidly changing external conditions) and complexity (the many forces operating simultaneously that affect you) that exist in your operating environment." With this systems thinking approach, organizations monitor the external environment, find points of leverage, and adapt.
- Network connectedness: "Perhaps the fullest realization of organizational potential occurs when nonprofits occupying their special niches, either by conscious design such as through strategic alliances or simply through the aggregation of independent efforts, create the potential for system-level effects that advance their missions more effectively than would be possible in isolation."
- Inquisitiveness: Learning organizations, an essential part of systems thinking, are constantly gathering information and "distilling lessons" that affect decision-making and change. Curiosity rules and conversation – stimulated through cage-rattling questions – reinforces learning and promotes change.
- Innovation: Survival learning is essential. But creative or generative learning (from Peter Senge, learning organization guru) is the capacity to create and implement new ideas.

Leading strategic change: "It's important to be stubborn on the vision and flexible on the details..." ("The Institutional Yes," an interview with Jeff Bezos, *Harvard Business Review*, October 2007)

Cultural viewpoint at Amazon: "First, we are willing to plant seeds and wait a long time for them to turn into trees... We're not always asking ourselves what's going to happen in the next quarter..."

Things that won't change: "For our business, most of them turn out to be customer insights... what's important to the customers.... Another thing that we believe is pretty fundamental is that the world is getting increasingly transparent – that information perfection is on the rise. If you believe that, it becomes strategically smart to align yourself with the customer. You think about marketing differently.... Information perfection and customer obsession.

Errors of omission, the biggest strategic mistakes: "The times when companies were in a position to notice something and act on it, had the skills and competencies or could have acquired them, and yet failed to do so... Maximize the number of experiences you can do per given unit of time... and reducing the cost of experiments."

Mistakes: "We focus on defect reduction and execution. It's one of the reasons that we have been successful for our customers... When you are inexperienced with disciplined process management, you initially think that it's equivalent to bureaucracy. But effective process is not bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is senseless process..."

"What can you do today to create a pocket of greatness, despite the brutal facts of your environment?" (Jim Collins, *Good to Great and the Social Sectors*)

"Every institution has its unique set of irrational and difficult constraints, yet some make a leap while others facing the same environmental challenges do not. This is perhaps the single most important point in all of *Good to Great*. Greatness is not a function of circumstance. Greatness, it turns out, is largely a matter of conscious choice, and discipline."