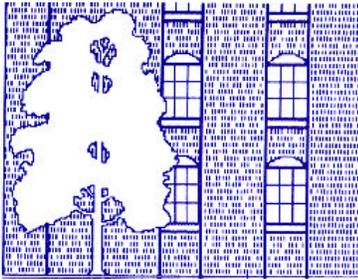


High Performance Organizations

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Collective Wisdom... Fresh Ideas

The Challenge of High Performance

Executives want their company or agency to strive to be a 'high performance' organization. While there are some common themes in achieving high performance — we shall come to them later in this paper — for the most part, this means different things to each company.

Each company operates on its own industry's playing field where the rules of competition are unique and the laws of success, to the extent we know them, can also be different. Moreover, each company has its own criteria of success, and an implicit or explicit success formula or strategy for succeeding. Hence, each entity has its own special challenge in terms of what it has to be good at doing, and what it has to do to perform at a high level.

Consequently, the requirements or agenda for high performance is somewhat unique to each firm.

Strangely enough most companies address these issues when their performance is low. Too often, in these circumstances, we find that people see the enemy as lying within the organization between its units. The competitive realities of our times turn too many organizations inward. Instead, the whole organization should be committed to meeting its customer service mission and its financial performance mandate.

Articulating the Challenge

The problem is how to articulate that desire of being a high performer? How do you assess what is missing and what is needed? These questions are also at the root of many executives' interest in addressing corporate culture. However, that challenge needs some concrete and pragmatic focus.

Creating High Performance

The Characteristics of High Performance

We believe this effort can be made pragmatic and comprehensible by focusing on the characteristics of high performance. Following, we outline the five characteristics of high performance organizations.

- 1. Focused on Performance of Key Results**
 - A focus and common direction on meeting its customers' needs.
 - A consistent understanding of its results in concrete, measurable terms.
 - An ability to set priorities and follow through.

Organization & Change Management

2. Productivity

- A continuous search and assessment of whether activities and resources add value in terms of customer-oriented service results.
- Economical acquisition and use of resources.
- Constant attention to putting sufficient resources into areas yielding high paybacks.

3. Responsiveness & Adaptiveness

- An ability to problem-solve and respond to events which do not fit the mold.
- Feedback from the real world that authentically challenges conventional wisdom.

4. Entrepreneurship

- Proactively identifying the needs of customers and stakeholders, and finding ways to respond.
- People look for and the organization prizes initiatives and experiments that uncover better ways to improve results.

5. Teamwork & Communications

- People throughout the organization have a common sense of goals in concrete terms.
- People understand their personal accountability for results as a team member, but care about and have pride in the success of their team.
- Cooperation exists both horizontally and vertically — 'they pass the puck well!'

Berkeley brings innovative management ideas and thinking for executives to apply and use.

Sustaining High Performance

Tailoring the Five Characteristics

Of course, these characteristics of high performance must be tailored somewhat to the circumstances and realities of each business. Yet, they act as a valuable starting point.

The Balance Between Creating & Sustaining High Performance

There are subtle differences between creating high performance and sustaining high performance. A brief note can only introduce this topic. As practitioners in business break new ground in leading their companies, management research continues to learn new lessons. Academics and reflective practitioners are now investigating how our organizations learn to learn, or develop the competence to renew and thus sustain its high performance.

It seems that the first two characteristics create high performance, but frequently drive out the third and fourth characteristics. We are now coming to a stronger realization that the fifth characteristic, teamwork, provides the crucible for re-inventing the ways to be a high performance organization and, hence, to sustain success.

Becoming a Leader in Your Field

Taken together, a company that can infuse the characteristics of high performance and can focus with dedication on the requirements of customer service will clearly become the best in its field.

As consultants, we help clients define these requirements for their businesses and work with the management team to develop directions for organizational and cultural change that will create high performance.

Berkeley supports senior management through organizational transitions, and helps create the conditions for sustaining future success.





Berkeley supports senior management to lead their organizations through strategic transitions to create the capacity for sustained successful performance. Supporting this mission, Berkeley's practice includes strategy development & planning, organization design, change management, outcome management, and leadership feedback and development.

Formed in 1986, Berkeley Consulting Group, a Canadian partnership, has a full time staff of 5 consultants and support staff in our Toronto office. The office supports our affiliate Berkeley Feedback & Development Inc. and its associate in London England and Berkeley's network of twelve consulting associates in Ontario.

Berkeley's philosophy and consulting approach is captured in the phrase, **Collective Wisdom...Fresh Ideas.** Berkeley's core competence lies in its ability to bring seasoned associates together as a team, to use leading edge methods applied to the client's strategic challenges so that results are delivered with cost-effective use of consulting dollars and management time.

- Our consultants are knowledgeable and experienced in their industry or part of the public sector.
- Our teams are formed to fit the client's needs and not just to utilize available junior staff.
- We think about each project on its own merits and avoid simplistic black-box answers.
- We combine sound analysis and thinking with effective process to promote implementation.

To keep 'fresh' and broaden our network, Berkeley has linkages with other organizations. For over a decade, we have worked with the Rensselaerville Institute (TRI), a non-profit organization in New York that is a leading edge player in public sector results and outcome management. We also have close links with academic learning centres, since Berkeley's Managing Partner is an Adjunct Professor of Strategic Management at Schulich School of Business (York University).

