

Action Map

A Template for leaders who are serious about driving change

Most organizational change efforts fail. The calls to action issued by many leaders create more confusion than focus, more work versus different work, some ‘new talk’, but no ‘new walk.’

The good news is that most employees want to do things *better*. But they don’t want to do *more* things as a way of chasing ‘better.’ So they look to their leadership to specify in behavioral terms what ‘better’ is, and how yesterday’s priorities or standards have been adjusted.

Make no mistake about it. **If it’s everything (that needs to be better), then it’s nothing (that will be better).** And if nothing is sanctioned to fall off the plate, then nothing new will stay on the plate. And employee morale will certainly plummet.

The purpose of this template is to help leaders *make and articulate* the tough priority decisions at the outset. They need to study, make, and communicate the strategic decisions that convey: “we are focusing on THIS, and not THAT”. When those tough calls are made early, people throughout the organization can re-prioritize their time to deliver on THIS and not THAT.

There are **5 key elements** that require crystal clarity before issuing the “let’s be better” rallying cry. And there are few devices more concrete and clear than a side by side comparison where both sides represent viable, but distinctively different choices.

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Today’s <u>direction/priorities</u>	vs	Yesterday’s direction/priorities
Today’s defining <u>behaviors</u>		Yesterday’s defining behaviors
New <u>investments</u> (<i>time/people/resources</i>)		Released investments
Today’s <u>measures/targets</u> for success		Yesterday’s measures/targets for success
Today’s <u>rewards</u> for driving new success		Yesterday’s rewards

Here is what motivated employees wonder when a call to action is issued:

THE NEW DIRECTION

vs

THE OLD DIRECTION

THE NEW BEHAVIORS

vs

THE OLD BEHAVIORS

THE NEW INVESTMENT

vs

THE OLD INVESTMENT

TIME/PEOPLE/RESOURCES

THE NEW MEASURES/TARGETS for SUCCESS

vs

THE OLD MEASURES/TARGETS for business as usual

THE NEW REWARDS

vs

THE OLD REWARDS

Organizational Direction

This is the 'what' and 'why' of 'the better'.

- What is the new course and how will we know that we have achieved something new or better?
- Why are we changing courses at all and why now?
- What would happen if we did nothing?
- Did we had a measurable problem that needed to be fixed or there is an emerging opportunity that should be leveraged?
- What would happen if we did nothing?
- What organizational imperatives are staying the same given this new direction?
- What priorities from yesterday should no longer be addressed?

Key Behaviors

If work is to be done differently, then some behaviors will need to stop and some behaviors will need to start (otherwise, we will just be doing 'more').

- How is the new direction behaviorally different than the former direction?
- What are the defining new behaviors or practices that will take us to 'better'?
- What are the old practices/behaviors that work against the new direction?
- What are the old practices/behaviors that are irrelevant to this new direction?
- What should people start/stop/continue doing and why?
- What are the expected challenges associated with not doing things the old way (or stopping certain practices/behaviors)...and for whom?
- What are the expected challenges with doing things the new way?
- What kind of reinforcement /support/problem-solving resources will exist for people having difficulty (but not in motivation) for doing new things (for if it were as easy as: 'just do it' we have already wasted too much time planning...)

Investments

If there's new economic 'skin in the game', then the cry for change is more likely to be seen as a serious priority for the organization.

- What are the economic stakes in the ground associated with this new direction?
- What are the new people/processes/projects associated with this new direction?
- What are the projects/investments that are being stopped?

Success

We measure the things we consider most important to a business. If you can't measure it, you can't manage it, improve it, or brag about it.

- Therefore, what are the metrics of success for this new direction?
- How, when and by whom will measurements be made and the results communicated?
- Are there specific targets?
- Are they attached to external commitments or accountabilities?
- What are key milestones?
- What will progress look like?
- What will lack of progress/success look like?

Rewards

Given the business truism "things get done that get rewarded", it is critical to have tangible shifts in the reward processes to incent the new, and disinct the old.

- What adjustments to the reward structure have been put in place to reflect the new expectations?
- What is failure in this effort and what are the associated consequences?

Action Map

Create a side-by-side comparison of the headlines for this change:

	Today's Headlines	Yesterday's Headlines
<p>Organizational Direction</p> <p>This is the 'what' and 'why' of 'the better'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>What is the new course and why are we changing it now?</i> ▪ <i>Is it a problem that needs to be fixed or an opportunity that should be leveraged?</i> ▪ <i>What would happen if we did nothing?</i> ▪ <i>How do we know we should do anything at all and that we should do it now?</i> ▪ <i>What organizational imperatives are staying the same given this new direction?</i> 	<p>Direction/Priorities:</p>	
<p>Key Behaviors</p> <p>If work is to be done differently, then some behaviors will need to stop and some behaviors will need to start (otherwise, we will just be doing 'more').</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>How is the new direction behaviorally different than the former direction?</i> ▪ <i>What are the key new behaviors or practices that will take us to 'better'?</i> ▪ <i>What are the old practices/behaviors that work against the new direction?</i> ▪ <i>What are the old practices/behaviors that are irrelevant to this new direction?</i> ▪ <i>What should people start/stop/continue doing and why?</i> ▪ <i>What are the expected challenges associated with not doing things the old way (or stopping certain practices/behaviors)...and for whom?</i> ▪ <i>What are the expected challenges with doing things the new way?</i> ▪ <i>What kind of reinforcement /support/problem-solving resources will exist for people having difficulty (but not in motivation) for doing new things (for if it were as easy as: 'just do it' we have already wasted too much time planning...)</i> 	<p>Defining Behaviors:</p>	<p>© 2003 Dr. Laurie Anderson</p>

Action Map, continued

	Today's Headlines	Yesterday's Headlines
<p>Success</p> <p>The things we measure in business appear most important for if you can't measure it, you can't manage it, you can't improve it, you can't brag about it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Therefore, what are the metrics of success for this new direction?</i> ▪ <i>How, when and by whom will measurements be made and the results communicated?</i> ▪ <i>Are there specific targets?</i> ▪ <i>Are they attached to external commitments or accountabilities?</i> ▪ <i>What are key milestones?</i> ▪ <i>What will progress look like?</i> ▪ <i>What will lack of progress/success look like?</i> 	<p>Metrics for Success:</p>	
<p>Investments</p> <p>If there's new economic 'skin in the game', then the cry for change is more likely to be seen as a serious priority for the organization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>What then are the economic stakes in the ground associated with this new direction?</i> ▪ <i>What are the new people/processes/projects associated with this new direction?</i> ▪ <i>What are the projects that are being stopped?</i> 	<p>Investments:</p>	
<p>Reward</p> <p>Given the business truism "things get done that get rewarded", it is critical to have tangible shifts in the reward processes to incent the new, and disincen the old.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>What adjustments to the reward structure have been put in place to reflect the new expectations?</i> ▪ <i>What is failure in this effort and what are the associated consequences?</i> 	<p>Rewards:</p>	