



Change and Transformation of Organizations

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Clients often ask me, “How are we to know if we need to change?” I reply by asking them four questions.

First, are you currently dissatisfied with what you are doing? In order for any of us to change organizationally, we must first assess our current position with regard to profits, customers, employees, and stakeholders. Before any change can take affect, the organization must become dissatisfied with what they are currently doing and begin to seek a better way.

Second, do you have an idea what the future will look like when you make the change? The organization needs to make a change only when it will cause a positive impact upon the organization obviously. This most often may be the result of a strategic planning offsite retreat. During this retreat, members of the assessment team are asked to define the future and decide IF what they are currently doing is leading to the predestined future or leading away from it.

The third question may be the most difficult. What are you willing to do to make the new future a reality? This most often will involve training and research of competitors. The competitors issue and what they are doing is essential but understanding organizational capacity (what can we actually do with our facility and people) may be the most important issue to articulate. Sometimes the greatest limitation on an organization is the people and the need to constantly and purposely raise the gene pool.

Lastly, if the three questions are answered, one final question remains and must be addressed affirmatively. Will you as an organization pay the price for the new future? This may require resources specifically targeted and allocated toward making the new and better future a reality.

I work a great deal with organizations and their decision to adopt the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. All four questions are critical to being able to address adoption and implementation of these systematic criteria which will lead to significant improvements in organizational performance. Are you really ready to change?

Change is good (and necessary). Use the Criteria for self-assessments – the award is secondary.