It All Comes Down To Performance

• While it may seem that…
  – Assessing risk
  – Strategic planning
  – Cost reduction
  – Finding and developing resources
  – Innovation
  – Execution
  – Effective marketing
  – Or what ever else you can say…

• Is the most critical issue,

• They are all dependent on someone’s or some group’s performance
What Is Breakthrough Performance?

• Action, and thus results, that are unprecedented or unpredictable given the historical trends
The Drift
Breakthrough Is Beyond the Predictable

Results

High

Low

Past

Present

Future

Time

Strong “drift” of the past

Breakthrough results

Predictable results
• “Insanity is doing the same thing, over and over again, but expecting different results”

How Do Breakthrough Performers Act?

• They declare the impossible to be possible and share the vision until others buy in
• They are unstoppable in the face of no agreement, breakdowns, problems, and interruptions
• They take responsibility for things that others can’t imagine being responsible for
• They know that only action impacts results and are unafraid to act
A Perspective to Improve Performance

• An organization is a network of conversations
  – People speaking and listening

• Simply put, nothing can get done in an organization without people speaking and listening

• When work is effective, you can observe a well managed and integrated set of conversations
Speaking and Listening That Weaken Performance

- Circumstances beyond our control
- What’s made us successful in the past will make us successful in the future
- Recurrent complaining
- Gossip, leaks, and mistrust
Conversations That Improve Performance

• Declarations of Possibility

• Breakthrough Requests

• Breakthrough Promises
Historically, every breakthrough, that was not an accident started with one person or a small group of people declaring the impossible, possible.

Historically, this declaration is made without evidence or agreement.

Typically, this declaration describes an inspiring and ‘impossible’ future.
“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has”

– Margaret Mead

Exercise: What is impossible in your company or market, that would be a breakthrough, if it were possible or if it actually happened?
Gaining Support For The Possibility

• You can’t produce a breakthrough by yourself.

• Sharing your declaration of possibility creates the wider network of support that is necessary:

“The more you push the water away, the more it returns”

– CEO of Mitr Phol

• Understanding the concerns of your constituencies make your sharing more effective.

Exercise: To accomplish your breakthrough, from which constituencies do you need support? What concerns might they have?
Making Breakthrough Promises

• If you stop after declaring possibility, you become a “windbag.”
• Conversations that produce action is the next step.
• A promise is the best type of conversation to get yourself into action, including scheduling time to act.
• Powerful promises:
  – Produce what is wanted and needed, not what’s predictable
  – Are specific and measurable
  – Have a ‘by when’
  – Have a ‘how’
  – Have a ‘why’
  – Are made to others than yourself
• Exercises: Given your possibility, what is wanted and needed, that you are willing to promise?
Making Breakthrough Requests

• A request is the best type of conversation to get other people into action.

• The spectrum of requests go from light suggestions to strong demands.

• The hallmark of a request is the ability to say no.

• Powerful requests:
  – Aren’t limited by risk, what can be done or will be accepted
  – Have a ‘who, what, how, by when, and why’
  – Have two people committed—the requestor and the promisor

• Exercise: What do you need to accomplish your possibility? Who will you ask and by when?
Nothing Works Without Integrity

• The foundation for conversations that improve performance is Integrity.

• Not to be confused with Morality, Ethics or Legality.

• Dictionary definition:
  – State of being complete, unbroken, unimpaired, workable condition
  – Bicycle wheel

• Integrity in a conversation is honoring your word.
  – If you are committed to increasing performance, you won’t always keep your work, but you can ALWAYS honor it.
Nothing Works Without Integrity

• Honoring your word in a conversation:
  – Say what you will do or will not do
  – What is expected of you in organizations is your word, unless you say otherwise
  – Keep your word, on time, or...
  – Let people know, as soon as you know, you won’t keep your word
  – Say whether you will keep this word in the future or not
  – Take responsibility for the consequences of not keeping your word and ‘clean up the mess’
  – Give your word again

• This maintains the integrity and workability of your word.

• Extra Credit!!!! - Where do you need to restore the integrity of your word?
In Closing

- Thank you for the invitation to speak
- Thank you for your kind and generous listening