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Leading adaptive change by harnessing the power of positive deviance

Brian Leavy

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Frankly, if I could have chosen not to tackle the IBM culture head-on, I probably wouldn't have. For one thing, my bias coming in was towards strategy, analysis and measurement. I'd already been successful with those, and like anyone, I was inclined to stick with what had worked for me earlier in my career . . . In comparison, changing the attitude and behavior of hundreds of thousands of people is very, very hard to accomplish . . . you can't mandate it, can't engineer it. What you can do is create the conditions for transformation. You can provide the incentives. You can define the marketplace realities and goals. But then you have to trust. In fact, in the end, management doesn't change the culture. Management invites the workforce itself to change the culture – Louis V. Gerstner, Jr.[1]

Two of the most spectacular corporate turnarounds over the last two decades were led by Lou Gerstner at IBM and Carlos Ghosn at Nissan.[2] Each company had come within a whisker of bankruptcy before the necessary change strategies were implemented that set them on the road to recovery.

In both cases, two aspects of their revivals stood out. The first was the difficulty that each company had in coming to terms with its impending demise. The signs of decline were highly visible to most industry analysts, along with the outlines of what needed to be done, yet each company reached the brink before finding the urgency and resolve to face up to its difficulties. The second is that the turnaround, when it came, was largely accomplished by people and resources already within each company.[3] What these two elements of the IBM and Nissan turnarounds indicate more generally is that:

- Organizations find it difficult to recognize that certain types of challenges are not fully amenable to top-down programs and solutions alone.
- The capacity to solve some of the most intractable challenges facing any type of organization often lies dormant within, awaiting the right kind of approach and leadership process to fully liberate it.[4]

Three recent books offer new tools and valuable insights, some of them drawn from dramatic societal changes, to help corporate executives deal more effectively with both issues (see "Masterclass reading list").

The Practice of Adaptive Leadership addresses one of the primary reasons that organizations are slow to recognize the need for fundamental change, which the authors believe is the failure to distinguish between adaptive and technical challenges. *The Power of Positive Deviance* presents an innovative collective approach to addressing adaptive challenges, and *High Commitment, High Performance* highlights the importance of integrating top-down and bottom-up approaches to corporate transformation efforts.

Masterclass reading list

The Power of Positive Deviance – How Unlikely Innovators Solve the World's Toughest Problems by Richard Pascale, Jerry Sternin and Monique Sternin (Harvard Business Press, 2010, 194 pp.).

The Practice of Adaptive Leadership – Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World by Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow and Marty Linsky (Harvard Business Press, 2009, 297 pp.).

High Commitment, High Performance – How to Build a Resilient Organization for Sustained Advantage by Michael Beer (Jossey-Bass, 2009, 332 pp.).

Adaptive versus technical challenges

According to Ronald Heifetz and his co-authors, the “most common cause of failure in leadership” comes from “treating adaptive challenges as if they were technical problems.”[5] A technical problem, as they define it, is one that “can be resolved through the application of authoritative expertise and through the organization's current structures, procedures, and ways of doing things.” In contrast, an adaptive challenge is one that can “only be addressed through changes in people's priorities, beliefs, habits and loyalties.”

The difficulty is that many problems do not “come neatly packaged as either ‘technical’ or ‘adaptive.’” Take the example of someone needing heart surgery. The technical problem can be addressed using the expert knowledge of the surgeon and supporting it with appropriate medication. However, it is “easier to fix the heart than it is to change it,” so no technical solution can release the patient “from his own responsibility for changing the habits of a lifetime,” such as smoking, lack of regular exercise, inappropriate diet and poor work-life balance. The doctor is therefore also faced with “the leadership task of mobilizing the patient to make critical behavioral changes,” while the patient faces the “adaptive work of figuring out which specific changes to make and how to incorporate them into his daily life.”

In organizational life at times of crisis, leaders come under pressure to provide a solution to relieve their followers' distress. However, when the challenge is primarily an adaptive one, only the people themselves can provide the answer, and the job of the leader is to help them adapt, often against their will, especially in the early stages of a change process. This requires a fundamentally different way of thinking about the leadership role. Unlike authoritative leadership, adaptive leadership “is not about meeting or exceeding” the expectations of a group, but about “challenging some of those expectations,” questioning the status quo, “raising a taboo issue,” “pointing out contradictions between what people say they value and what they actually value,” and managing their discomfort and anxiety productively[6] (see figure 2-4, “The productive zone of disequilibrium”).

Transforming a badly misaligned organization usually involves requiring people to absorb some degree of discomfort and loss as a necessary stimulus to the search for new solutions in what is essentially a process of social learning, so adaptive leaders need to have the emotional strength to cope the inevitable pressures involved. They also need to be able to

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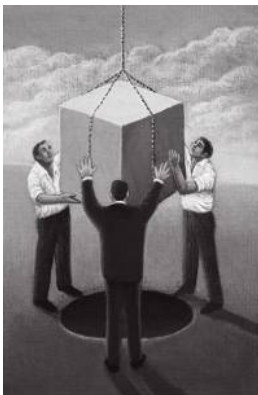
fashion a process that facilitates the organization or community in generating its own fresh options, embedding the learning and moving on.[7] This requires courage, confidence in the ability of your group to find a way, and not too many pre-conceptions, because typically “there is no clear, linear path” to the solution of an adaptive problem, and the ultimate resolution might turn out to be “very different from what you first imagined.”[8]

The power of positive deviance

One powerful practical approach to the challenge of adaptive change is based on the concept of “positive deviance.” In *The Power of Positive Deviance*, by management guru Richard Pascale and social innovators Jerry and Monique Sternin, the authors explain how the husband-wife team first adopted this idea and later refined it through application to a variety of complex social problems, with impressive results.[9, 10, 11] The approach is based on the premise that, within communities facing an adaptive challenge:

- Solutions to seemingly intractable problems often “already exist.”
- They have been discovered “by members of the community themselves.”[12]
- Innovators can find an alternative way, even though they “share the same constraints and barriers that others do.”

However, uncovering these deviant behaviors – that is, individual learning breakthroughs – and translating them into “collective learning” is quite a formidable adaptive challenge. One great advantage of such solutions is that they draw on constructive community knowledge and practices, making them less vulnerable to cultural rejection.



Malnutrition in Vietnam – the formative positive deviance project

The formative application took place in Vietnam in 1990, when about 65 percent of all Vietnamese children under the age of 5 were malnourished. The *Save the Children* foundation was invited by the government to develop a nutrition program. The NGO recruited Jerry Sternin to head the project, effectively aided by his wife, Monique. The resources needed to operate traditional “supplemental feeding programs” were not available. So the Sternins needed a strategy that would “enable the villagers to somehow solve the problem for themselves.” It was this constraint that led them to consider the relatively obscure concept of positive deviance (PD).[13]

They chose a particularly poor area with high rates of malnutrition, as their pilot site. They outlined the idea behind the PD approach to the village leaders and members of all established community networks and explained why “the villagers would have to assume major responsibility for the initiative.” The team quickly came to realize that the best people to manage such a program were those “passionate enough about the mission to self-select.” In subsequent PD projects, the freedom to opt-in or opt-out was preserved as a core principle.[14]

The next step was to ask the villagers the “somersault question,” the one that focuses on what is going right rather than wrong: “Were there any well-nourished children among the very poorest hamlets?” There were! This was an “aha” moment because the answer confirmed that it was possible for children from the poorest of backgrounds to flourish.

The stage was now set for the “inquiry phase.” The team needed to be able to “identify common practices” before being in a position to clearly “distinguish what the positive deviants were doing that was different.”

The team learned the importance of direct observation, because positive deviants (PDs) are often not aware that they are doing something different.[15] In this case, a number of small but crucial deviations were surfaced:

“Uncovering these positive deviant behaviors – that is, individual learning breakthroughs – and translating them into ‘collective learning’ is quite a formidable adaptive challenge.”

- In every instance, PD parents were collecting tiny shrimps and crabs from the rice paddies and adding them to their children’s rice, along with the greens from sweet potato tops.
- PD parents applied stricter hand hygiene regimes before and during meals.
- PD families fed their children the same daily amount, but more frequently in smaller portions, which turned out to be more efficient in extracting nourishment.

The next challenge was to disseminate these insights. The initial instinct was to “tell” the community. A remark of one of the volunteers helped the team recognize that what it needed to do “was create an opportunity for people to practice, rather than simply know about, the successful PD behaviors the villagers had discovered.”[16] The program that emerged involved mothers of malnourished children coming to a neighbor’s house, where they practiced cooking new recipes and learned to apply some basic sanitation and child care practices. Anticipating that many villagers might revert back to old ways once the program ended, the team decided to make bringing their own ingredients a precondition for individuals to participate, especially the small shrimps and crabs, which had to be collected from paddy fields, a behavior that would have to become daily routine if the social learning was going to endure. This insight that it is often “easier to act your way into a new way of thinking than to think your way into a new way of acting” went on to become a further guiding principle of the PD approach.

Having succeeded beyond expectations with the pilot, the next challenge was “to demonstrate that success could be replicated elsewhere.” The team insisted on a fresh inquiry in each new case because it had become clear that “the process of self-discovery was every bit as important as the actual behaviors uncovered.”[17] The problem of how to scale up such program remained formidable, and the answer emerged in the form of something they called a “living university,”[18] providing the opportunity for visiting teams to study “live,” and almost simultaneously, existing programs at different phases of the PD process, before returning to their regions to launch similar programs. Through this model of expansion, over the following seven years an estimated 50,000 children were successfully rehabilitated.

Since this initial project, the PD approach has shown itself to be effective in a wide variety of seemingly intractable challenges, from the reduction of teenage prostitution in East Java and the social reintegration of alienated girl soldiers in Uganda, to the elimination of MRSA in the Veterans Administration Hospital in Pittsburgh and the reversal of chronic sales underperformance at Merck, Mexico.

Enabling truth to speak to power

In the case of malnutrition in Vietnam, everyone recognized the problem, but in tackling some of the more culturally sensitive issues featured in *The Power of Positive Deviance*, the first step often involved finding a way to help the community concerned to recognize and openly acknowledge that it had a problem in the first place, “making it safe to learn.” On the face of it, the challenge of change in the corporate world might seem quite far removed from such concerns and difficulties. However, the ability to choreograph complex conversations

Positive deviance at Genentech: a missed opportunity

In 2003, Genentech, introduced Xolair, a breakthrough injectable therapy for many chronic asthma sufferers. Despite its pharmacological superiority, however, sales remained well below expectations. Analysis then revealed two outliers among the national salesforce of nearly two hundred and fifty sales reps who were selling twenty times more Xolair than their peers – classic positive deviants.

Further analysis revealed what the key differences were. Genentech's principal market is cancer medicine, and chemotherapy is primarily administered by the relevant specialists using infusion protocols (delivery of the medication through IV drip), requiring infusion rooms, infusion couches, and infusion nurses. This kind of operation is not common among allergists and pediatricians, the target clientele for Xolair, which must be injected in a clinical setting.

The two positive deviants had grasped the full significance of this difference, and they morphed their role from traditional salespeople into change agents. They saw their main focus as helping the relevant specialists meet the adaptive challenge of expanding their clinical repertoires and changing their office cultures.

Genentech management at first had difficulty acknowledging what was producing the significant difference in performance, because the approach of the deviants represented too marked a departure from their "tried-and-trusted" orthodox sales methods. They then tried to disseminate the new insight to the rest of the sales-force using a traditional best-practices roll-out (a technical solution to what remained an adaptive challenge). The result was lukewarm acceptance of the new approach and only modest improvement in market penetration.

(Adapted from "The standard model at Genentech" in *The Power of Positive Deviance*.)

is one of the distinctive characteristics attributed to resilient organizations by Michael Beer in his recent book, *High Commitment, High Performance*.^[19]

As Beer sees it, resilient organizations are built around three main pillars essential for sustained effectiveness: performance alignment, psychological alignment and learning and change. He also identifies "six core barriers" inhibiting greater organizational effectiveness:

- Conflicting priorities, unclear strategy, or unclear values.
- An ineffective senior team.
- Top-down or *laissez-faire* leadership.
- Poor horizontal coordination and communication.
- Inadequate leadership development and paucity of down-the-line leaders.
- Poor vertical communication.

These he labels "silent killers" because though typically "known to most key employees," senior teams will rarely acknowledge and face up to them.

To Beer, a key requirement in overcoming these barriers is the creation of a learning and governance system that enables "iterative, honest, collective, and public conversations about the state of the business and organizational system." Over the past two decades, he and his associates have developed and refined a methodology called the Strategic Fitness Process (SFP), which many organizations have adopted.^[20]

An SFP needs careful structuring. The basic format involves the leadership team setting up a task force of up to eight of its best managers to "collect data and engage the organization in a conversation," and data collected in this way makes it hard for leaders to walk away from the findings. Task force members are empowered to interview a representative sample of the "pivotal people in all parts of the organization," picked by themselves, and the inquiry focuses primarily on substantial issues of "company strengths and barriers to the implementation of strategy."

Of course, there are many potential concerns to be addressed in setting up such a process. Will the respondents be totally open with their interviewers? Will task force members pull their

punches when they report back? Will they lose their credibility if nothing is done with the feedback? Experience shows that most such fears can be allayed, if the leadership clearly signals that it is totally committed to the spirit of the exercise and eager to get the unvarnished truth. It also helps if the crucial feedback session is carefully choreographed right down to agreed rules of engagement and an optimum seating arrangement.[21]

Blending top-down and bottom-up – Theory E and Theory O

While grass-roots programs like positive deviance are particularly suited to adaptive rather than technical problems, most change challenges tend to come as a mix of both, as noted earlier. This is certainly the case in corporate transformations.

As Michael Beer sees it, corporate change programs traditionally tend to cluster into two archetypal strategies, Theory E and Theory O.[22] The first is typically top-down, primarily concerned with “creating economic value” and focused on the technical elements of change such as restructuring and rationalization. The second strategy is more bottom-up and adaptive, concerned with “developing organizational capabilities” and focused on bringing about lasting changes in attitudes, behaviors and corporate culture. Neither, according to Beer, is optimal on its own. Pure E strategies tend to undermine experimentation, the “essence of successful change,” and limit the opportunity for “leadership development,” while pure O strategies can be “too slow” given investor expectations, and result in “isolated islands of change” that fail to scale effectively into full organizational renewal.

Two cases from the same industry illustrate this viewpoint. In 1994, Scott Paper “embarked on a journey of change,” led by Al “Chainsaw” Dunlap, who implemented classic Theory E restructuring, laying-off 42 percent of the workforce, streamlining the business portfolio, closing down unprofitable plants, and imposing a strict efficiency regime. After several years he was able to sell the firm to Kimberly Clark for three times its value at the time he became CEO, netting personal compensation of over \$100M. It later emerged that the business he sold was one whose organizational capability and human assets “had been depleted.”

In contrast, at Champion International, a company in the same core business as Scott, CEO Andrew Stigler had embarked on a long and patient Theory O journey in the early 1980s, to “build an effective high-commitment organization.” Stigler began by encouraging “low profile changes at the company’s periphery,” developing a new manufacturing plant designed around “principles of cross-functional, self-managed teams,” and then promoted the migration of these new ideas and practices to the core through inclusive processes. While plant productivity, union-management relationships, and customer and employee satisfaction all improved “remarkably,” necessary changes in corporate structure, systems and business portfolio were too slow to materialize, undermining the overall impact on shareholder value. In 1999, the company was sold at only one-and-a-half times its market capitalization in 1981.

According to Beer, the transformation to a high engagement, high performance company requires the ability to integrate both E and O strategies. This is not an easy thing to do, because of the inherent tensions that exist between the two orientations.[23] However, it can

“The positive deviance approach has shown itself to be effective in a wide variety of seemingly intractable challenges ... elimination of MRSA in the Veterans Administration Hospital in Pittsburgh and the reversal of chronic sales underperformance at Merck, Mexico.”

be done, using many of the insights reflected in all three of books on the “Masterclass reading list.”

One of the most striking examples is the case of Asda, the UK retailing company under the leadership of CEO Archie Norman from 1991-99, which went from being a business rapidly running out of cash to one that was saleable to Wal-Mart for over eight times its 1991 value.

According to Beer, implementing E and O strategies in an integrated manner requires leadership willing to enter “uncomfortable emotional . . . interpersonal territory” in order to be able to manage with authenticity the “human toll” typically inflicted by an E-type restructuring strategy. This involves the productive management of anxiety and disequilibrium that are among the most essential skills in the adaptive leadership and positive deviance repertoires. In the end, it was Norman’s willingness and ability to enter this territory that gave him the political latitude to implement difficult E-type measures, while still retaining the trust and credibility to fully engage the grass-roots in building the collective learning capability so essential to securing the company’s full transformation to a high commitment, high performance organization.[24]

Notes

1. Gerstner, L.V. (2003), *Who Says Elephants Can't Dance?*, New York: Harper Business.
2. Gerstner, L.V. (2003), already cited.
Ghosn, C. and Ries, P. (2005), *Shift: Inside Nissan's Historic Revival*, New York: Doubleday.
3. Ghosn took only 20 handpicked “catalysts” with him to help spearhead the Nissan revival – the two most senior were Patrick Pelata and Thierry Moulouquet, to oversee product development and finance respectively. He told all 20: “Nissan’s people are going to revive the company, and we’re here to help.” Gerstner’s orientation was similar: “The company was brimming with talented people who had unique expertise . . . I just had to find the teammates who were ready to try to do things a different way”.
4. An interesting parallel is Michelangelo’s approach to sculpture. He always visualized himself not as sculpting a figure into the stone, but as liberating a figure out of it: “I saw an angel in the marble and carved until I set him free.”
5. Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow and Marty Linsky are partners of Cambridge Leadership Associates. Heifetz is also the founder of the Center for Public Leadership at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, where Linsky is also a faculty member. The theory of adaptive leadership was first developed by Heifetz in *Leadership without Easy Answers*, Cambridge MA: Belknap Press, 1994.
6. In *Leadership without Easy Answers*, Ron Heifetz drew an interesting contrast between President Lyndon Johnson’s leadership approach to the Civil Rights issue and his approach to Vietnam. In the first case, Johnson delivered a masterly example of adaptive leadership skills in action, especially the productive management of disequilibrium. In the second, he tried to treat an adaptive challenge as a purely technical problem, with terrible consequences for both him and his country.

When 600 peaceful Civil Rights marchers were brutally attacked by racist police in Alabama, on Sunday March 7th, 1965, cheered on by a crowd of onlookers shouting “Git ‘em! Git ‘em!”, TV viewers across the United States were appalled, and when civil rights leaders reaffirmed their determination to stage further marches to highlight their campaign for the right to vote, the president came under enormous pressure to protect the marchers. Johnson’s refusal to send federal troops in straight away meant that Americans had to endure a further week of tension. Johnson had held firm for two reasons. One was his wish to avoid any confusion of the issue into one of state rights versus federal rights, so he held out until Governor Wallace publicly requested federal help. More crucially, he recognized that the distress being caused to the average American was helping to ripen the issue – fixing their attention onto the unpalatable fact that there was still a serious gap between the values they espoused and reality on the ground. Premature intervention would have protected the protestors’ right to march, but deflected the nation’s attention from their real cause, the right to vote. With attention heightened and the polity still primed, he took the opportunity to introduce the strongest civil rights legislation that the country was ready to bear, and in his televised speech to the nation asking support for the bill, he

reminded his fellow Americans across the nation that: "There is no Negro problem. There is no Southern problem. There is no Northern problem. There is only an American problem. And we are met here tonight – not as Democrats or Republicans – we are met as Americans to solve that problem."

Contrast this with his leadership in the case of Vietnam. In treating it as a "technical problem" only, and in trying to provide his own solution, rather than engage the country in open and honest dialogue about the war aims and their merits, he allowed it to become in the public's mind, "Mr Johnson's War," and it cost him his presidency and his "Great Society" dream.

7. The principles of adaptive leadership have been neatly distilled as follows:

- (i) Get on the Balcony ("Business leaders have to be able to view patterns as if they were on a balcony. It does them no good to be swept up in the field of action. Leaders have to see a context for change or create one.") – a prerequisite for the other 5 steps.
- (ii) Identify the adaptive challenge.
- (iii) Regulate Distress.
- (iv) Maintain disciplined attention.
- (v) Give the work back to the people (at a rate they can absorb).
- (vi) Protect voices of leadership from below.

For more, see Heifetz, R.A. and Laurie, D.L. (2001), "The work of leadership", *Harvard Business Review*, December, pp. 131-140. For the particular relevance of the perspective in the current downturn, see also, Heifetz, R.A., Grashow, A. and Linsky, M. (2009), "Leadership in a (permanent) crisis", *Harvard Business Review*, July-August, pp.62-69. See also Heifetz, R.A. and Linsky, M. (2002), "A survival guide for leaders", *Harvard Business Review*, June, pp. 65-74, for some guidance on how leaders might go about coping with the inevitable personal strains associated with leading in adaptive change contexts.

- 8. Significantly, both Lou Gerstner and Carlos Ghosn felt it important to let their new colleagues know from the outset that they were coming to IBM and Nissan with no pre-conceptions, signaling their intention to find a way out of the crisis together. Both also made it clear that, while difficult changes would have to be made, there would be a place for everyone willing to give the change process a chance.
- 9. Richard Pascale is a writer, a global business consultant and an Associate Fellow of the Said Business School at Oxford University. Monique and the late Jerry Sternin (1938-2008) pioneered and successfully applied the positive deviance approach in many organizations and countries worldwide. Monique is the Director of the Positive Deviance Initiative at Tufts University. The series of in-depth cases featured in the book are each narrated by the author most associated with the particular application of the positive deviance process (for example, Jerry with the Vietnam and MRSA projects, Monique in the case of female circumcision in Egypt and Richard in the Merck, Mexico application. The authors explicitly acknowledge their conceptual debt to the adaptive leadership perspective of Heifetz and colleagues, and offer the PD process as "a tool for adaptive work".
- 10. Important new refinements of the PD approach emerged in subsequent projects, helping to extend both the range and power of its potential application. For example, where months could be taken to complete all of the PD phases sequentially in the Vietnamese case, the need for time compression in a modern health care context required the volunteer team to find an effective way to combine the diagnostic and action phases in the case of the Veterans Hospital in Pittsburgh. Application in this setting also highlighted the potential of a community-driven inquiry process to come up with new solutions ("latent positive deviance") as well as uncover existing uncommon practices, enhancing the overall potency of the PD approach.
- 11. The success stories with the PD approach to date include:
 - 65-80% reduction in childhood malnutrition in 22 Vietnamese provinces.
 - 30-50% reduction in childhood malnutrition in communities across 41 countries worldwide.
 - 30-60% reduction in the transmissions of antibiotic resistant bacteria (MRSA) in 3 US hospitals.
 - 50% increase in primary school retention in participating schools in Misiones Province, Argentina.
 - 30% reduction in girl trafficking in East Java.
 - 1000s of female circumcisions averted in Egypt

In 2008, the *New York Times* included “positive deviance” in its annual “Year in Ideas” selections, citing that the translation of this idea into practice has “altered the lives of millions on the planet.”

12. See also, Pascale, R.T. and Sternin, J. (2005), “Your company’s secret change agents”, *Harvard Business Review*, May, pp. 73-81.
13. The term positive deviance had been around for some time, but was mainly applied to describe statistical outliers. It was first used in the nutrition literature by Marian Zeitlin of Tufts University, but while she and her colleagues recognized the phenomenon in their study, Zeitlin, M., Ghassemi H. and Mansour, M. (1990), *Positive Deviance in Child Nutrition with Emphasis on Psychosocial and Behavioral Aspects and Implications for Development*, Tokyo: United Nations University, they did not develop it into a strategy for change.
14. This principle was preserved even in applications within hierarchical organizations like Merck and the Veterans Administration Hospital. In both of these cases more traditional, top-down, programs had been tried, but none had worked. As Dr Jon Lloyd, the senior physician that invited Jerry Sternin to help him in the latter case, exclaimed, hospital staff knew what to do, “yet they just weren’t doing it”, underlining that the process of effective ‘social learning’ involves more than technical knowledge. Here, the authors highlight the important distinction between “learning about” (based on the intellect) and “learning to be” (which shapes identity, and is anchored in a social system). Information “has a social life, and unless new insights are embedded in the social system, they evaporate,” because learning to be “creeps up on us through social interactions and practice – not cognition.”
15. Positive deviants often “don’t know what they know” of significance and their innovations tend to remain “invisible in plain sight” until the kind of approach developed here is used to harness them.
16. The villager volunteer’s remark was: “A thousand hearings aren’t worth one seeing, and a thousand seeings aren’t worth one doing.”
17. Simply trying to transfer the PD insights from the first community to others as “best practice” solutions will undermine the sense of ownership that develops through a community’s own discovery of potential PD solutions within its midst. It also tends to undermine the degree of “social learning” which is necessary for the solution to be sustainable, and it robs the community of the opportunity to develop a collective confidence in its ability to solve its own problems (build its adaptive capability). In *Seizing the White Space* (Boston: Harvard Business Press 2010), Mark Johnson also graphically describes this larger “empowerment” dividend in his account of the Hindustan Unilever “Shatki Ammas” (strength mothers) female micro-entrepreneurship project across rural India, a project that “made the Ammas more than Avon ladies; it gave them increased social stature because they provided an important benefit to the village,” one of the entrepreneurs remarking that: “People have touched my feet, an honor reserved for elders only.”
18. This idea was originally inspired by a remark made by a visiting Unicef representative. “Transfixed” by what he was hearing from the mothers who had participated in the original program, he said that he had never learned so much in such a short space of time, it was like a “living university.”
19. Michael Beer is Cahners-Rabb Professor of Business Administration, Emeritus at Harvard Business School and chairman of TruePoint, a research-based consultancy. Beer is the author/coauthor of nine books including the award-winning *The Critical Path to Corporate Renewal* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1990, with Russell A. Eisenstat and Bert Spector).
20. The initial Strategic Fitness Process (SFP) was developed by Michael Beer and Russell Eisenstat for Becton Dickinson in 1990. Since then “nearly three hundred different organizations at the corporate, business and operating level have employed SFP.”
21. The seating arrangement has the task force sitting in a circle in a “fishbowl fashion,” with the senior leadership team sitting on their periphery, taking notes. “The task force simply discusses the issues it identified – it doesn’t recommend solutions, and it doesn’t deliver a written report”. The senior team are “not allowed to interrupt or challenge the task force,” though they can ask questions for clarification, and they are also encouraged, as they listen, to recognize “that ‘perceptions are facts’ in shaping behavior and determining effectiveness of strategy implementation.” For more on the SFP and its “choreography”, see also, Beer, M. and Eisenstat, R.A. (2004), “How to have an honest conversation about your business strategy”, *Harvard Business Review*, February, pp. 82-89.

22. E = Economic Value; O = Organizational Capability. For more on Theory E and Theory O see also, Beer, M. and Nohria, N. (2000), "Cracking the code of change", *Harvard Business Review*, May-June, pp. 133-141.
23. Because of these tensions, organizations over their histories often implement E and O strategies in sequence, usually under different leadership, because it is very difficult for most restructuring specialists to retain the trust and credibility needed to then pursue the more patience and experimental work of organizational capability building. In terms of implementing them in sequence, E followed by O is more likely to succeed (Jack Welch at GE, for example) than O followed by E (which perhaps cost Cary Fiorina her job at HP and, for many, brought the curtain down on the "HP Way").
24. Norman signaled his intention to pursue an integrated E/O strategy from the outset, and clearly recognized the nature of the challenge involved: "Today is Day Zero in our recovery program. This business is in poor shape and must change sharply in order to survive. Incremental change is not enough. There are no sacred cows and nothing that can't be examined. Our number one objective is to secure value for our shareholders and secure the trading future of the business. I am not coming in with any magical solutions. I intend to spend the next few weeks listening and forming ideas for our precise direction. We need a culture built around common ideas and goals that include listening, learning, and speed of response, from the stores upwards. There will be management reorganization. My objective is to establish clear lines of communication, and build one team." The approaches of Gerstner and Ghosn, also seeking to implement integrated E and O strategies were quite similar to Norman's.

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