

Title:

Creating Breakthroughs

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Summary:

"The world we've made, as a result of the level of thinking we have done thus far, creates problems we cannot solve at the same level of thinking" - Albert Einstein

Runaway success is never based on incremental improvement. I know this is a very bold statement, but bold statements and even bolder results are what breakthroughs are all about. What about in your company - what would constitute a breakthrough? Would you like to increase overall productivity by 40%? Of course ...

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Article Body:

"The world we've made, as a result of the level of thinking we have done thus far, creates problems we cannot solve at the same level of thinking" - Albert Einstein

Runaway success is never based on incremental improvement. I know this is a very bold statement, but bold statements and even bolder results are what breakthroughs are all about. What about in your company - what would constitute a breakthrough? Would you like to increase overall productivity by 40%? Of course you would! But would you commit to it? What about expanding sales by 50% - in one quarter! Or cultivating a completely new distribution channel - in two months! Sound impossible? Breakthrough results always "seem" impossible at the time you commit to them. If they seemed reasonable, they wouldn't qualify as breakthroughs.

Breakthroughs share the following characteristics:

1) The results are not predictable based on your past performance. If you routinely increase revenues a handsome 20% per year, a 50% increase would be a breakthrough. Developing a new product or service in 3 months would be a

breakthrough if it normally takes you six.

2) You commit to the results, in advance, without knowing how to accomplish them, and without a plan. This is the exact opposite of "let's study this" syndrome.

3) And finally, they define outcomes which are concrete and measurable, and lead to a new level of performance. By virtue of its accomplishment, a breakthrough will stretch and grow the capabilities of your company.

Critical Success Tip

The "secret" to producing breakthrough results is putting the cart before the horse. Standard organizational decision making says "What do we need, what are we capable of, and how can we use our capabilities to produce what we need?" Breakthrough thinking says "What are we committed to, we believe in the possibility of that commitment, and what can we do next?"

Think for a moment about creating a breakthrough in how you respond to client requests. Instead of "going back and thinking about it", breakthroughs require you to first commit to your client, then figure it out and take action. This may seem distasteful, even weird - our culture holds strong taboos against making promises we can't keep. And if you couple this with a common fear of failure...you will resist making bold promises and you will not produce breakthroughs.

Critical Success Tip

Try anything and fail faster! Don't worry about whether it's going to work or not. If it seems like it can work, if it might produce the results you want, do it! In fact, the more things you implement, the more unworkable approaches you discover and get out of the way, the quicker you are likely to find a solution which yields the breakthrough. Also, a willingness to implement wild, even crazy, nontraditional approaches can produce results in record time. Remember, we are not talking about problems which need incremental solutions - you already know how to do these. Take the things you do that work, and make them better, or do more of them. But, as the author Rita Mae Brown wrote, "Insanity is when you keep doing the same things expecting different results". By definition, you don't know how to produce a breakthrough, so get busy and fail faster.

Bold Promises and Action

There are four steps to creating breakthroughs.

- 1) Ask yourself the question: "What important "thing" - which I currently think is impossible - would I commit to, right now, if I actually believed it would be possible to accomplish?"
- 2) Make a bold promise which commits you to the accomplishment of that "thing". Make sure your promise (your commitment) is specific, measurable, and has a completion date. Also - this is critical - go public with your commitment. Tell concerned people, like your entire organization, your investors, or your customers.
- 3) Invent ways to deliver on your commitment, and spring into action.
- 4) Keep going until you're done...a major breakthrough is just inches away.

Critical Success Tip

The magic to using the breakthrough technology is this: Make bold promises, publicly. Then, stay in action...do the next thing...find out if it worked...then do the next thing...find out if that worked, and so on. These steps are all driven by that crazy, breakthrough commitment you made. .