

LEAD WITH THE FUTURE — LEAVE THE PAST BEHIND

BY BRUCE ZIMMER

In a new era of technology and innovation, companies seeking change requires fully engaging breakthrough thinking for breakthrough results. When the paradigm shift that can only come from true transformational change is the focus, that ability to create a new future becomes critical.

What can have a dramatically negative impact on this transformation? As in life, the answer may be basic human nature. We're wired to watch out for our own survival. Changes that threaten our environment can lead to a fear of the process and holding on to past behaviors that have been successful. This survival mechanism can perpetuate itself, unnoticed by all.

A vital step of effective change management starts with identifying the behavior that results in business as usual, leading to minor, predictable improvements. At Insigniam, we refer to this as "the drift." The "drift" is the ever-present flow that determines the constant direction of an enterprise. It won't take you to a new future, it just gives you more of the past.

Consider an alternate path to a breakthrough with the Merlin process: creating a bridge from the desired future to the present reality by working backwards. Start with painting a picture that captures the essence of winning in the future. Then build a path backward from that future. While using that future picture, ask the question, "What outcomes did we produce that were precursors to this future? It's a brain twister, but the outcomes will be very different than the drift.

Executive leadership should point toward a bold future while realigning the corporate culture to remove obstacles from traditional modes of thinking. Address the source of people's behaviors and actions and implement change that they embrace, rather than avoid. Learning from the future instead of the past creates a lasting platform for transformation.

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