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Stakeholder Engagement
Using Soft Skills

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STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
16th Edition 2016

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Ethical Business Update

is an online magazine with a strong heritage in the fields of ethics, governance, corporate responsibility and socially responsible investing. Now available only on the web, but soon will be published and will be available for monthly subscription.

The mission of Ethical Business Update? Now, as then - is "to promote ethical business practices, to serve that growing community of professionals and individuals striving to work and invest in responsible ways."

We believe this is not only how to guarantee a future f or all, but makes good business sense.

A lot has changed in the more than two decades, ethics and governance have emerged as front-page news and lead agenda items in corporate board rooms and the halls of Congress.

Good corporate citizenship is now studied, advocated and sometimes practiced. Sustainability has become a goal f or well-meaning small businesses as well as many of the Fortune 500.

Whether that represents real progress is open to debate. The continuing fallout from the recent economic and financial crises is a constant reminder that many systems are not working. There's plenty to discuss. Ethical Business Update aims to serve as a guide.


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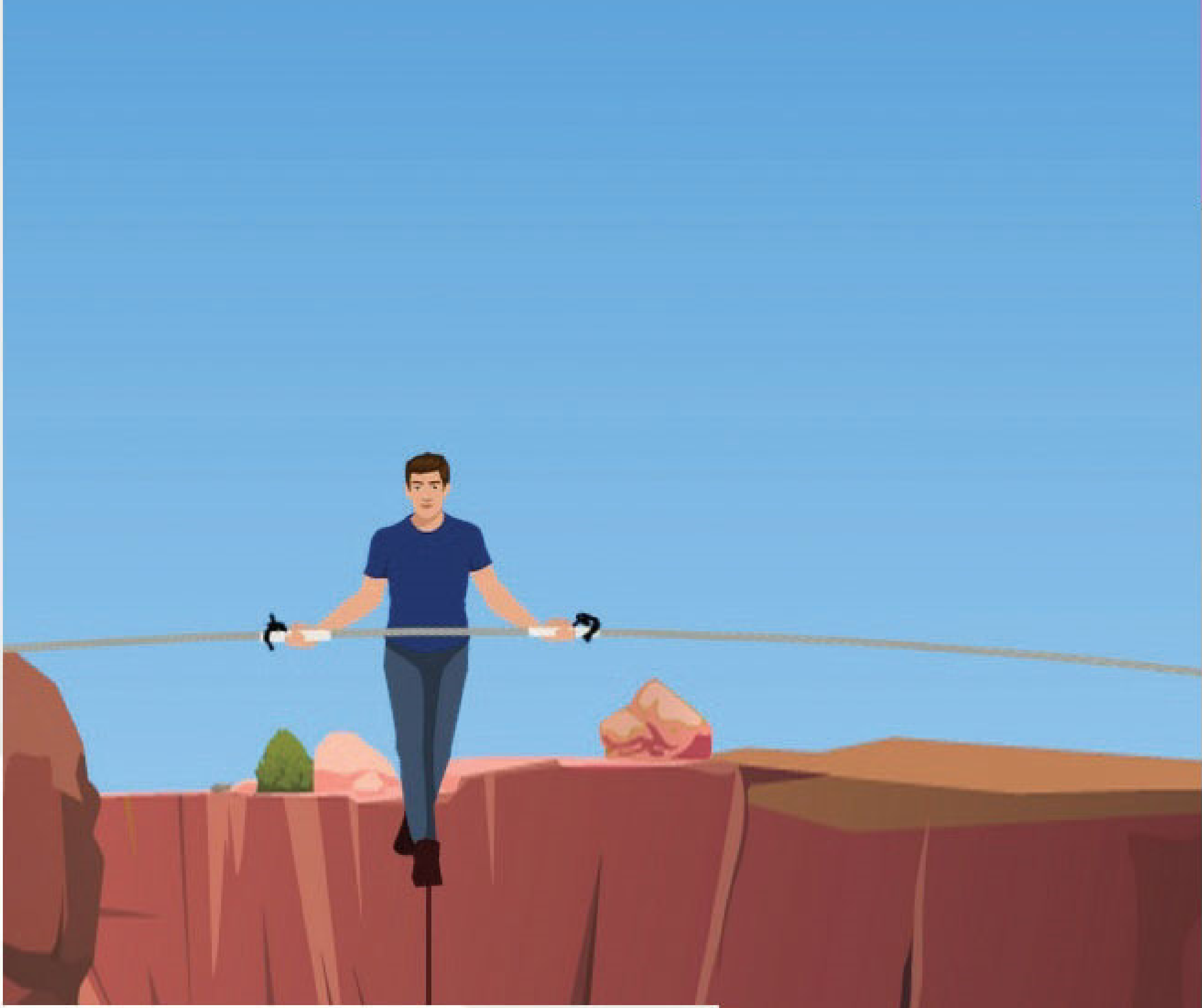

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
16th Edition **2016**

Stakeholder
Engagement Using Soft Skills

By: Vyom bharadwaj

Stakeholders (according to the PMBOK® Guide) are any individuals or groups who will be impacted by or have an impact on the project. Stakeholders include people in the role of customer, sponsor, and/or business representative; as well as the project manager, the development team, any vendors involved in the project; and other people in the organization affected by the project work or its results, including the product's end users.

It is absolutely essential to engage stakeholders for any Agile project's success. Effective communication and stakeholder engagement are critical to ensure that the team develops what is expected and asked by the customer. In Agile projects, a Scrum team or the ScrumMaster should use and develop the necessary soft skills to interact and effectively work with the stakeholders. Here, we discuss two major soft skills: active listening and conflict resolution. The Agile coach implements conflict resolution within the teams.

Active listening

Active listening is hearing what someone is really trying to convey rather than just hearing the words they are speaking. On Agile projects, we need to listen for the message, not just the strings of words spoken. It is a skill that can be improved by practice. There are three levels of active listening.

Level 1: Internal listening. Internal listening occurs when we listen to the works of the speaker through our own perspectives.

Level 2: Global listening. The approach taken at this level is in addition to Level 2, adding a higher level of awareness to pick up the subtle physical and environmental indicators. The listener also understands the body language of the speaker.

Level 3: Focused Listening. By focused listening, we let go of our own thoughts and put ourselves in the mind of the speaker. We look for emotional indicators in the speaker's words and pauses, in their voices and tones, and in their facial expressions, and look for more information about how the person feels about what they are describing.

Conflict resolution

Conflict is an inevitable part of the work. Whenever people work together, there are differences of opinion and competing interests. However, some degree of conflict within the team is healthy to ensure that the ideas are sufficiently tested before they are adopted. Creating an environment in which people can use conflict constructively is a key part of successfully engaging stakeholders on a project.

Identifying the conflict stage can help us determine what actions we should take or what tools or techniques may work in given situation.

There are five levels of conflicts, as described below.

Level 1: Problem to solve. The language of the team is generally open-hearted, constructive, open and fact-based. There is information-sharing and collaboration among the team.

Level 2: Disagreement. The language starts to include self-protection. It is guarded and open to interpretation. Personal protection trumps collaboration.

Level 3: Contest. Team members use distorted language. Winning trumps resolving. Language within the team includes personal attacks.

Level 4: Crusade. The conflict becomes more ideological and polarized. Protecting one's own group becomes the focus.

Level 5: World war. The language is fully combative. The opposing team members rarely speak to each other; i.e., little or no language is exchanged.

To conclude, poor soft skills can quickly demoralize a technically strong team. A team and its members who effectively use soft skills can optimize stakeholder engagement and achieve amazing results.

ESSA's Success
Requires Stakeholder Engagement

By: Martin J. Blank & Kent McGuire

The Every Student Succeeds Act returns significant management authority over K-12 education to the state and local school district levels. While the details for implementing this new federal law, known as ESSA, are still falling into place, this is a time in which garnering input from everyone with a stake in the law is key.

ESSA does not explicitly reference stakeholder engagement, but it is crucial, in our view, to its successful implementation. We are pleased that the Council of Chief State School Officers is encouraging its members to craft processes to listen carefully and respond to the wide array of groups with a stake in our education system. Grassroots organizing entities and a wide range of advocacy groups and service organizations want their voices heard in the state, local, and school planning mandated by ESSA. There wasn't much widespread engagement in national education law when the law's predecessor, the No Child Left Behind Act, was adopted by Congress in 2001. So how do we increase the likelihood that we have genuine engagement this time around?

One of the challenges is figuring out what genuine stakeholder engagement means. The more widely accepted definition of "stakeholder engagement" is the process by which an organization involves people who may be affected by the decisions it makes or can influence the implementation of its decisions. But Margaret Wheatley, the renowned leadership and management expert, put it differently with her first principle for growing healthy communities: "People will support what they create."

Thinking about stakeholder engagement in this way is pivotal to moving beyond the narrow accountability provisions of No Child Left Behind, a law which assumed that educators alone could ensure that every young person thrived. Genuine engagement broadens the constituency for public education to include a much wider range of people and organizations, some of whom we enumerate below. If we want support for effective implementation of ESSA and shared responsibility for ensuring that all students succeed, we need a much broader view of stakeholder engagement than we have experienced in the past.

Policymakers, administrators, and educators at all levels need to create opportunities for people and organizations that are both supportive and critical of public education to participate in ESSA. Planning should be seen not as the domain of a single group of individuals sitting around a table, but as a dynamic process that intentionally engages diverse stakeholders whose views are really listened to and considered from multiple perspectives.

Here are four principles to guide stakeholder engagement:

Inclusion. Engage a wide range of people and organizations with a stake in education to recognize the value of diverse perspectives.

Accessibility. Make it easy for people to participate, to understand what is happening, and to be heard.

Sustainability. See stakeholder engagement as a continuous process involving ongoing dialogue—not as a one-time proposition.

Focus on results. Use engagement as a steppingstone toward building long-term partnerships that can help school systems get results that matter—from improved attendance and school climate to more extensive parent and student engagement.

Which groups should be engaged in ESSA implementation?

Educators. The new law is most specific about the importance of involving educators, explicitly naming teachers, principals, school leaders, paraprofessionals, specialized instructional-support personnel, charter school leaders, and administrators.

Parents. The law also requires parent voice. School leaders will want to include well-established organizations like the PTA to engage parents affiliated with education advocacy groups, parent-leadership programs, and disability groups. The key is finding organizations or groups that help parents develop the skills to communicate their concerns and interests while also providing the necessary support to keep their constituents well informed.

Students. At the secondary school level, young people must have a voice in ESSA planning. Look for students who are involved in youth-organizing initiatives or have participated in programs that teach them leadership skills. Listening to recent high school graduates as well as high school dropouts will also yield important information.

Community-based organizations. Affiliates of national groups like the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the YMCA, 4-H, and Metropolitan Family Services with grassroots expertise in youth development and family support have valuable relationships with immigrants, English-language learners, and children and families of color.

Faith-based institutions. Churches, synagogues, and mosques are filled with caring adults who can help address young people's basic needs, such as hunger and a lack of books at home, and serve as tutors and mentors.

Colleges and universities. These institutions offer the expertise from within their schools of education, as well as opportunities for student internships, needs assessments, and action research that can address specific school and community issues such as food deserts and student mobility.

Municipal leaders. These individuals have bully pulpits and often control programs serving youths and their families, which could better align the work of public agencies—physical and mental health, child welfare, and juvenile justice—that they finance.

SGX to Make
Sustainability Reporting mandatory

By: Vaidehi Shah and Jessica Cheam

SGX to make
sustainability reporting mandatory

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Singapore-listed companies will have to publish sustainability reports in the near future, announced SGX CEO Magnus Bocker, as the exchange embarks on a one-year exercise to study which guidelines to adopt.

In a move that will affect a large swathe of companies in Singapore, local bourse Singapore Exchange (SGX) will be making it mandatory for all listed companies to publish sustainability reports.

Giving the keynote address at the annual International Singapore Compact CSR Summit on Friday, SGX chief executive Magnus Bocker said the exchange is embarking on a one year study to determine what guidelines should be adopted for these reports, which disclose a company's economic, environmental and social impacts.

Bocker told Eco-Business that implementation of these guidelines will take place over a couple of years after industry feedback has been gathered in this one-year consultation exercise. This means companies - about 800 are listed on SGX - should be expected to comply with this mandatory requirement by 2017 or 2018.

He noted that since SGX launched voluntary guidelines for sustainability reporting in 2011, take-up by companies has been "frankly, very slow," with only a handful of companies embarking on such activities.

Companies who had not yet taken up sustainability reporting often explained that they were waiting for the Exchange to "get serious and make the first move," said Bocker.

"We will take a leading role… and we will make it the rule," he told a 200-strong audience at the summit held at the Marina Bay Sands Expo & Convention Centre.

> "We'd like to invite all companies to work with us to shape what these new sustainability guidelines should look like," he said.

Junice Yeo, director of sustainability consultancy Corporate Citizenship's Southeast Asia office, stressed that the year ahead would be crucial in shaping the corporate sustainability agenda among Singapore companies.

> “Hopefully by the same time next year, SGX will have a clear set of guidelines and timeframe to help companies break through the glass ceiling of sustainability reporting,” she told Eco-Business.

Bocker’s comments come as sustainability and corporate responsibility have been rising on the global agenda.

Speaking at the summit a day earlier, Dr Noeleen Heyzer, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, noted that civil society, governments and investors have been demanding greater transparency from global businesses and “pushed CSR from the margins to the boardrooms of corporations”.

> “Asian businesses are beginning to realise that long-term profit and sustainability depends on how smartly they invest in the society which they are a part of and the environment that sustains them,” she said.

Bocker also noted that for Singapore, sustainability reporting was not just a domestic issue, but one that could affect the city state’s global economic performance.

“Many investors that come to Singapore ask questions about sustainability reporting,” he said. “Global investors will only invest in companies in this part of the world if they see that companies are reporting honestly.”

> “Therefore, sustainability reporting is not just an issue for local markets, but one that affects our standing in the global financial system. This is why our market needs to collectively take a step upward,” he said.

For companies whose engagement with CSR was still superficial or non-existent, Bocker cautioned that “investors are more likely to sell companies that are not green, so while sustainability reporting is an opportunity for green companies to showcase their effort on a global stage, it is also a threat to companies that are not sustainable.”

“But transparency will no doubt drive improvement,” he predicted.

China, Taiwan, and Malaysia are among some countries in Asia where bourses already require listed companies to publish sustainability reports in some form.

Industry reactions

Complying with mandatory reporting requirements may seem like a mammoth task for companies that have not done so in the past, but companies should not be afraid – the process may not be as painful as they fear, said Yeo.

"Some companies may initially struggle to grapple with what sustainability reporting entails. This is normal when starting out," she said.

> "They may need some training and external support at the beginning, but they may also be surprised at how much of the data from their current corporate processes – for example, human resources or environmental health and safety (EHS) monitoring – can be incorporated systematically into their sustainability reports,"
>
> she added.

A company that needs no introduction to sustainability reporting is SGX-listed property developer City Developments Limited (CDL). The company has voluntarily published an annual sustainability report since 2008, and in 2012 became the first Singapore developer to receive the Global Reporting Initiative's (GRI) Level A+ rating, which indicates a very high level of compliance with GRI's recommended guidelines for sustainability reporting.

CDL's chief sustainability officer Esther An welcomed Bocker's announcement as a move to push the sustainability agenda forward, and added that CDL "has been a firm proponent of corporate sustainability reporting to track, measure and improve on our environmental and social performance".

"Reporting has helped us to identify material issues that impact our business, close-in on our gaps, seek new growth opportunities and strengthen risk management," said An.

Getting a head start on sustainability reporting also meant that the firm's operations had been relatively unaffected by the increasing environmental regulations introduced in the construction industry, she added.

For firms that are just embarking on sustainability reporting, Jenny Costelloe, founder of CSR consulting firm Skylark Advisory, offered this advice: "Companies should not get hung up on which framework to use for their sustainability reporting, but simply ensure that their reports are honest, present material data, and share the company's strategy for managing sustainability concerns in the long term."

> "Practicing sustainability is ultimately more important than reporting it,"
>
> she said.

What Will
'Revolutionize' Sustainability Reporting in 2016 and Beyond?

By: Jessica Lyons Hardcastle

Major players in the corporate reporting field joined forces this week to help businesses navigate the complex sustainability reporting landscape.

In a move that they say will "revolutionize" reporting, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), the Climate Disclosure Standards Board (CDSB) and Ecodesk created the Reporting Exchange, a freely available, multi-lingual, global sustainability reporting knowledge platform. This platform will provide businesses with relevant reporting information at the national, regional and international level, the partners say.

Using a crowdsourcing model, the Reporting Exchange will identify the reporting regulations, rules, policies, practices, initiatives, standards, codes and guidance which make up the reporting landscape as it evolves over time. It will be available in open beta format at the end of 2016, allowing public users to share their feedback before the platform's planned global release in mid-2017.

Changing Expectations

Rodney Irwin, managing director of the Redefining Value Program, says the new platform is a response to changes in what consumers, investors and other stakeholders expect and demand from corporations.

> "We've seen that the changing expectations of corporate performance and transparency have catalyzed activity around corporate sustainability reporting creating an increasingly complex and fragmented reporting landscape which is difficult for business to navigate," Irwin says. "We hope the Reporting Exchange will help clarify this space."

"We're seeing that many organizations are looking for more precise ways to measure and report on their sustainability efforts," says Brian Sansoni, vice president of sustainability initiatives, American Cleaning Institute. "I think we'll see an increased use of materiality assessments, which identify and categorize the top concerns of company stakeholders and leaders. They really can help companies identify their key risks and opportunities and better inform their business strategies."

Internal and External Benefits

Better-informed business strategies translate into cost savings and revenue increases. And, as a recent Harvard Business Review article pointed out, effective sustainability reporting can make good companies become “great” businesses, providing both internal and external benefits.

The internal benefits of sustainability reporting include gaining an increased understanding of risks and opportunities within your company, which not only helps the company to operate more efficiently and streamline costs, it also helps it to develop strategic, long-term environmental health and safety initiatives and policies.

External benefits of consistently publishing a sustainability report include building trust and reputation through transparent reporting, which in turn helps to increase brand loyalty.

Streamlining Reporting

Jane Stevensen, CDSB managing director, says the Reporting Exchange aims to fix this problem by enhancing and consolidating corporate disclosure of sustainability performance and promoting integrated management reporting. “Driving consistency sits at the core of everything we do,” Stevensen says.

“The explosion of reporting practice is a natural reaction to the drive for change, and to address the challenge for companies to be accountable for their impacts on the economy, society and the environment whilst creating value for all stakeholders,” Stevensen says. “However, unresolved tensions in corporate sustainability reporting practice can produce variation in the quantity and quality of information, which in turn undermines its usefulness for decision making by company boards and investors.”

Measuring Value Beyond Financial Capital

In another effort to help companies streamline reporting and produce more useful reports, the Global Reporting Initiative’s Sustainability and Reporting 2025 project looks at future trends in sustainability reporting.

> “ The value of companies will be measured through a wide range of indicators expressing value creation and destruction of, not only financial capital, but also human and social capital,” Arbex says. “Consequently, the content of reports in the next decade will be focused and show strategic commitment to tackle the challenges society will be facing. Reports will be in digital format and tagging of information will allow stakeholders easier access and comparison of data. ”

This will benefit stakeholders, Arbex says, by giving them greater insight into companies' decision-making processes. But businesses can benefit from these trends, too, "if they recognize and embed them in their strategic planning and governance models," she says. "Companies that are transparent, coherent and interactive in their communications, will be able to build trust and reputation."

Push for Integrated Reporting

A report published earlier this year by consultancy Black Sun surveyed more than 350 CEOs, CFOs and COOs from across the globe and found that only 25 percent of respondents are confident that their current reporting meets the information needs of investors and other external stakeholders.

The study also found 91 percent felt that the connectivity of financial and non-financial information would help to effectively identify and manage company risks, with 89 percent agreeing it would help to present a more forward-looking, long-term view of performance.

The International Integrated Reporting Council says this report signals a shift toward integrated reporting; some 28 percent of companies survey said they currently incorporate levels of integrated reporting into the process.

In May, IIRC alongside the other biggest global names in corporate reporting — CDP, GRI, CDSB, the Financial Accounting Standards Board, IASB, ISO and SASB — published a landscape map that provides a snapshot of a comparison of their frameworks, standards and related requirements through the lens of integrated reporting as part of an initiative designed to respond to market calls for greater coherence, consistency and comparability between frameworks, standards and related requirements.

> "Let us be clear that Integrated Reporting is all about understanding how an organization is creating value over time by articulating the strategy and business model," says Jonathan Labrey, IIRC chief strategy officer says. "In a sense you could say that Integrated Reporting is changing the current reporting cycle from accounting for the financial outcome, or accounting for its impact on society, to accounting for the whole business."

2016
Welcome to the Year of Social Business Strategy

By: Vanessa DiMauro

2016: Welcome to the Year of Social Business Strategy

By: Vanessa DiMauro

Back in 2010, I sounded like Henny Penny. Instead of telling people, “The sky is falling!” I was telling them, “Social media isn’t just about marketing – it will impact all parts of your business!”

Back then, to help my clients think strategically about social, I worked with Palladium Group (founders of the Balanced Scorecard) to develop a Social Business Strategy Map. We based the map on my experience developing strategic frameworks for more than 30 companies. Our goal was to ensure that companies were aligning their strategies with their operations. Some forward-looking CMOs got on board – but mostly, companies just weren’t ready to frame this emerging field in a larger business context.

Today, CMOs are squarely at the helm of their companies’ social business initiatives.

Fast forward to 2016. CMOs are now well acquainted with social media’s organizational impact. They’re no longer using it as a mere broadcast marketing mechanism. They’re leveraging social media across the enterprise – to serve customers, inform product and service innovations, reduce costs, and boost shareholder value.

As the market has matured, I have adapted and refined our Social Business Strategy Map to reflect the new insights I’ve gained through helping hundreds of organizations become social businesses.

Whether your organization is large or small, B2B or B2C, product or service focused, it is critical that you develop a social business strategy that is aligned with your operations. Here’s how this map helps you do that:

• Shareholder and customer value

When social media was in a more experimental mode, marketers tended to use it as a broadcast or marketing opportunity, and didn’t really understand or pay attention to the impact that social media has on shareholder and customer value.

Savvy marketers now realize that they must dedicate the same level of rigor and planning to their social strategy as they would to an innovation project or a new business line.

Start with a hard look at how your organization generates shareholder and customer value. For example, if social business will help your organization deliver customer value by making you “easy to do business with” and create shareholder value by “lowering operating costs” or “increasing the speed of innovation” then you’ve found a sweet spot where you should focus your social business efforts.

• Internal and operational value

Once you have locked down your shareholder value and the customer value propositions, the heavy lifting begins. Marketers must look at the internal and operational value that social media can deliver using four key steps:

Define social business goals to support business goals

Too often, organizations jump into the deep end of the social business pool in a rush to get up to speed competitively. Be sure to look before you leap. Not every organization is built to undertake an enormous transformation effort to become a social business. Your organization may want to dip its toe into the water by using social media to support and augment certain areas.

You don't want to open a can of worms in terms of visible exchange and interactivity if you don't know what your risks and challenges are and how you are going to manage them. For instance, an organization that is not strong in customer care in general probably shouldn't forge into social customer care initiatives. Doing so will shine a spotlight on where their weaknesses lie.

Ready your organization by aligning your social business goals with your business goals. Then, look at your processes and fix the problems before you move forward. Remember the golden rule: social is in service of the business and not a silo!

Tap audience insight to drive product and service innovation

When it comes time to innovate, listening to your target audiences is the most important thing you can do. Why? Say it with me again: social media is not a broadcast mechanism. If you use your existing CRM data to understand what makes your customers tick, you have an opportunity to focus on supporting and engaging these people more intensively.

Do your research to identify where your core constituency is aggregating. Hint: It's not at the top of a Google search on your company's name. Your target audience is having important conversations in smaller, niche arenas. So dig deep to find the influencer communities where you can listen to and interact with your most important current and prospective customers.

Let's say you're a car company. There are many "motor head" communities where deep information and insight is being shared among expert practitioners. For example, while the obvious hashtag #lexus on Twitter is useful for general fans and consumers, there is a longstanding and vibrant discussion going on at #lexusRCF about the power, torque ratio, and drag coefficient of the cars' spoilers. Now that's where you'll find a passionate group of consumers!

Once you've identified who you want to reach, and where you can reach them, then define what you hope to get from that interaction: Is it testimonials? Better understanding of their issues and problems? Better support for a product or service?

Establish an implementation plan

When you have established who you want to serve and in what ways, then your implementation plan becomes critical.

Often, when I work with marketers and CMOs within enterprises, their social business efforts lie on top of their "day jobs" without any additional time or resources. And, there's often an imbalance between what the anticipated outcomes are for social programs and the amount of effort and attention that needs to be put into them.

If you want ROI from your social business initiatives you need a real, robust, refined implementation plan that answers the tough questions: Who owns the program? What are they going to do? Over what period of time? In what ways? And, of course, what is it going to cost?

This implementation plan must take the form of a detailed project plan – complete with deadlines and contingencies. No fuzzy dates and squishy scopes allowed.

Govern, measure, and refine

The ability to connect the data you gather through social channels back to the core business and shareholder value is the most important thing you can do. But that's the Achilles heel in most measurement efforts. Truckloads of social business data is generated, but we still struggle to apply the insight.

For example, it's not uncommon for marketing to interact with a broad base of customers – and to have fabulous insight into their wants and needs. But, because marketing is disconnected from product development, this insight doesn't get translated into new product releases or service offerings. That's a fail.

We're facing a unique time in social business governance – driven by the agile nature and low price point of the social business applications that organizations are investing in. These days, marketing has a greater spend than IT, and marketing is beginning to make social business investments that are duplicative, not aligned with company standards, and not integrated with the IT backbone. That results in a widening gap between marketing and IT – and a negative impact on the business.

The bottom line? For social business initiatives to succeed, there has to be closer collaboration between marketing and IT – with a clear focus on serving the lines of business.

Learning and growth

At the end of the day, social business is all about human processes. The ability to translate raw data into actionable results that impact the bottom line requires new skills and new rules. If your people aren't on board with and educated to deliver against your social business initiatives, then a massive breakdown can occur.

Ask yourself, "Are we ready for this and what do we need to get ready?" Is your staff equipped to deliver on what is being asked of them as digital professionals? If not, what do they need to grow their skills? Since social is a fast moving industry, training and education cannot be a one-and-done scenario. It will require an ongoing commitment to learning. Remember that social business expertise can be found in all pockets of the organization. Look to the knowledge workers and millennials who are native to collaboration.

As we enter 2016, strategy is more important than ever.

In our quest for speed and agility, we are bypassing critical steps in creating solid business architectures. Paradoxically, by slowing down the process – and focusing on integrated strategies – we can actually make our companies more agile. We can create infrastructures that improve quality, speed times to market, lower costs, and reduce duplicative efforts.

Fiscal Year 2016

Corporate Strategy

Digital transformation is changing business at unprecedented speeds and companies have no choice but to adopt digitalization to survive. Our powerful combination of leading technology, the OpenText Cloud, proven business strategy of acquisitions augmented by organic growth, great people and an extreme customer focus makes us indelibly poised to capture the digitalization opportunity.

Helping the world's leading brands digitalize their business, both on- and off-premise, our business strategy of intelligent growth is showing bright-line success as evidenced by our strong FY15 performance.

As efficient capital allocators, we look to maximize shareholder return. Mergers and acquisitions remain core to our growth and our focus on acquiring value-based assets remains unchanged.

The Company is centered on five operating pillars to drive growth and expansion in FY16:

Pillar 1: Expanding EIM market leadership by focusing on new customer wins, install-base management through new programs, competitive replacements, industry awareness and delivering our most significant release in the history of the company code-named, "Blue Carbon."

Pillar 2: Expanding focus on cloud services, both on-premise and off. Cloud is about new customers and new revenues and is a long-term growth opportunity for FY16 and beyond.

Pillar 3: Analytics. This is a new and exciting area for the company enabled by our acquisition of Actuate in January 2015. Actuate is now integrated into Content Suite to drive install-base sales and will soon be hosted within the OpenText Cloud providing customers with a new analytics-as-a-service application.

Pillar 4: Strengthening our Go-To-Market. In our Cloud, we are focused on capturing total life-time value from our customers, utilizing partners who add incremental value and delivering the world's only complete and integrated EIM cloud service. In FY16 we're expanding our long-standing partnership with SAP with a commercial bridge between our business networks, allowing SAP and Ariba customers to leverage the value of the OpenText VAN and Managed Services.

Pillar 5: Financial Performance. Enabled by our OpenText Intelligent Growth System (OTIGS), we're focused on delivering to our top and bottom line goals. For FY16, as a percent of total revenues, we are raising our annual business target model for recurring revenues, cloud revenues and gradually lowering license and professional services revenues. For non-GAAP operating margin, we are raising our target range for FY16, now 30 to 34%, while providing a longer-term aspirational goal of 34% to 38%.

We finished FY15 with strong performance as an organization aligned and focused to deliver on our FY16 pillars for growth and performance.

The Next Revolution in Supply Chain Management

By: Steve Banker

The Next
Revolution in Supply Chain Management

By: Steve Banker

I've been researching and writing about supply chain management for 20 years. I've seen a goodly number of "revolutions" in SCM.

In the first revolution, the concept of supply chain, as opposed to logistics, was put forth. Constraint based optimization tools for the extended supply chain were developed to support the new philosophy. As this was going on, Lean and Six Sigma approaches to improving capabilities, not just at the factory level, but in other internal departments, as well as across the supplier and 3PL base, were gaining in strength.

It took a while, but it was recognized technology was not enough. The key process in SCM is the sales and operations planning (S&OP) process that balances supply with demand intelligently. S&OP itself is going through a second rev and we now talk about integrated business planning (IBP), a form of S&OP that is more closely aligned with finance. A related "revolution" that improves the demand half of S&OP is based on the concept of demand driven supply chains; this is the idea that it is important to not just create a forecast based on historical shipments, but having real visibility to demand at the point of sale to improve demand management.

In recent years, the topic of supply chain risk management has emerged and new processes and ideas have begun to be codified and turned into a distinct discipline. An emerging topic is supply chain sustainability; and indeed in many corporate social responsibility reports the topics of both supply chain risk management and sustainability are addressed.

Even as work remains to be done in the previous revolutions, I think I'm beginning to see the emergence of a new revolution based on a new generation of supply chain control towers. Here is what I think will be included in this new approach.

Enhanced risk management capabilities in the control tower. Minutes after a major catastrophe or impactful but less severe event occurs, a company should be able to draw a perimeter around an event epicenter and answer the following questions: What suppliers are included inside the perimeter? What components do I source from them? What products do they go in? Which customers will be impacted? What is my revenue at risk?

Quick corrective actions designed to rebalance supply and demand as profitably and quickly as is possible. These corrective actions will be based on prebuilt playbooks, supply and demand simulation, and the use of social network collaboration.

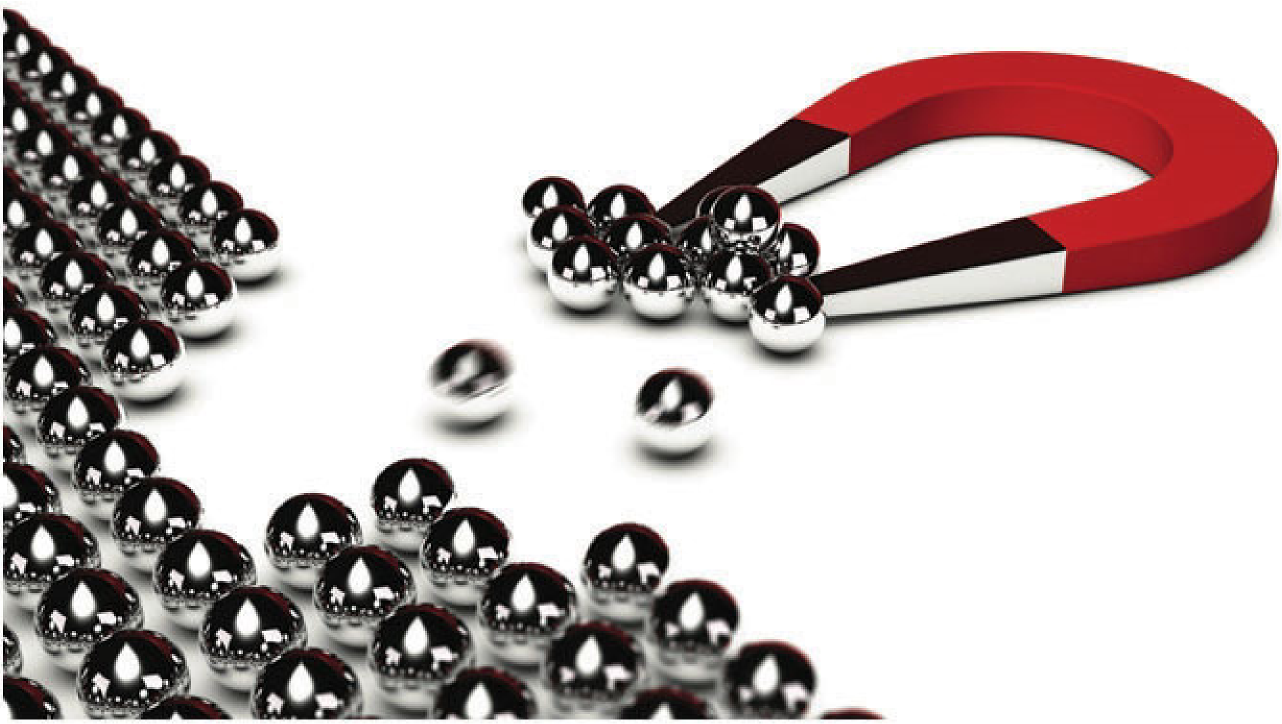
The technologies needed to support this include:

1. Granular track and trace based upon a many-to-many, public cloud architecture that is built with common network master data. Further, far more types of sensor data will be used to provide visibility and there will be less reliance on EDI.

2. A new generation of more powerful supply chain applications.

3. New methods of handling Big Data, real time analytics, and better technologies for visualizing data.

Today, I am aware of only a few very large companies with advanced supply chain capabilities moving down the road I've described. Further, at present, you can't go to one supplier and get all the pieces you need to build the kind of advanced control tower I have described, although one major supplier shares this vision. But it is my hypothesis, that this is the next revolution in supply chain management.



Three ways CEOs can improve the supply chain

By: Christoph Glatzel, Alex Niemeyer, and Johannes Röhren

CEOs increasingly view the supply chain as a critical point of competitive differentiation. Here's how to make it better.

In recent decades, companies in sectors from automotive and high tech to retail and consumer packaged goods have come to realize that their supply chain is much more than the cost of getting products into customers' hands. These companies understand that it is the supply chain that translates corporate strategy into day-to-day interactions both within and beyond the organization. Ultimately, it is the supply chain that satisfies or disappoints their customers. These companies also use a broader definition of the supply chain—one that includes planning, information sharing, and value-adding activities, from raw material to final distribution, rather than just logistics.

Leading companies have made strategic investments in their supply-chain capabilities and set up efficient and effective organizations that overcome cross-functional silos. By outperforming the overall level of maturity in their sectors, they have been able to disrupt them, as Amazon has done in retail, for example. These companies have redefined their customers' expectations of service and their ability to bring innovation to the market, turning their excellence in supply-chain execution into a powerful source of competitive advantage.

Critically, the very best companies continue to evolve and reinvent their supply chains, even if they have already achieved a leading position in their industry. By doing so, they are able to manage risks; respond to changes in the economic, technological, and competitive environment; and exploit new opportunities more effectively than their competitors.

A CEO priority

Senior executives tell us that supply-chain issues are increasingly demanding their attention. Yet achieving supply-chain excellence is getting harder. Production and distribution networks are increasingly complex and global, and their effective operation is vital for profitability and resilience. At the same time, risks across the supply chain have increased, and improved transparency is critical to the coordination of effective responses. Making those supply chains work at their best requires tight cross-functional coordination and the right decisions and trade-offs across the organization (see sidebar, "What CEOs should ask about the supply chain"). More important, however, the right supply-chain capabilities are playing a critical role in allowing companies to exploit emerging opportunities to boost growth and improve profitability.

Three examples illustrate the difference supply-chain excellence can make.

One leading company in consumer packaged goods uses its supply chain to manage input-price volatility. It has created multiple recipes and supply chains for a core brand of cleaning products. Depending on the current prices of ingredients, it switches between these recipes and supply chains, allowing it to hedge against increasingly volatile raw-material prices.

A major cosmetics company has created a dedicated high-speed supply chain for new products. This supply chain, which provides incentive only on time to market and product-launch excellence, allows the company to get the latest trends into the hands of consumers before its competitors, while its conventional supply-chain segment controls costs for products with steadier demand.

Or take the fast-growing online retail market that is transforming consumer expectations of delivery time and product availability. In China, the online retail market for consumer electronics provides an example. Companies such as Suning Appliance and GOME Electrical Appliances, the two leading players, provide delivery within hours to consumers in larger cities. Such speed has become a competitive necessity, since consumers increasingly order the same item from several retailers, take the one that is delivered first, and reject the later arrivals.

Three powerful interventions

If these examples demonstrate anything, it is the variety of ways that supply-chain execution can drive business performance. In our work helping companies to transform their supply-chain performance, however, we have identified three actions that senior leaders can take to maximize the potential of their own organizations' supply chains.

Differentiate your supply-chain and corporate strategies

Whether the strategy of your business is superior service, product innovation, or cost leadership, ensure your supply chain is helping to deliver the key points of that strategy. Bring together leaders from across your business to define the supply chain that will work for you—and make sure they provide the data your organization must deliver. Marketing should tell you what your customers value most from your service, how those needs vary among customers, and what will differentiate you from your competitors. Your commercial functions have to identify which customers justify the cost of the highest service and which would be better served using a more standardized approach. Together, your supply-chain and product-development functions can find ways to create innovative products that suit the needs of all those customer groups while keeping overall costs under control.

Create a modern, end-to-end supply-chain organization

The times of managing the supply chain in separate tiers is over. Sophisticated data analysis enables companies to manage supply chains end to end and, in industries such as retail, almost in real time. Appoint a single leader with responsibility for end-to-end performance and for delivering improvement projects across tiers and traditional functions such as marketing, manufacturing, and procurement. Make sure your supply-chain organization combines operational excellence with strong analytical capabilities and data-driven, cross-functional decision making. Create analytical teams to support decision making and identify hidden risks and opportunities in unstructured data. Ensure your IT function is supporting them with nimble applications and platforms that enable collaboration and analytical decision making.

Set performance standards for the entire organization

Give incentive to your supply-chain organization to work in ways that deliver the most value for your business while protecting against its biggest risks. That means using more than the traditional metrics of cost, service, and capital. The right key performance indicators depend strongly on the needs of the business, the product, and the market segment: the cost of production for value players, the stability of supply for staples and critical products, agility in volatile markets with fluctuating demand, and launch excellence for new products are essential. If a metric doesn't matter in your business, don't misdirect the organization by using it.

The best companies have transformed their supply chains with time, investment, and sustained top-management attention. What are you doing to turn your supply chain into a powerful source of competitive advantage?

Huawei Prepares for Robot Overlords and Communication with *the Dead*

COMMUNICATION & REPORTING
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Huawei Prepares for Robot Overlords and Communication with the Dead

By: Bloomberg News

Chinese technology giant Huawei is preparing for a world where people live forever, dead relatives linger on in computers and robots try to kill humans.

Huawei is best known as one of the world's largest producers of broadband network equipment and smartphones. But Kevin Ho, president of its handset product line, told the CES Asia conference in Shanghai on Wednesday the company used science fiction movies like "The Matrix" to envision future trends and new business ideas.

“Hunger, poverty, disease or even death may not be a problem by 2035, or 25 years from now,” he said. “In the future you may be able to purchase computing capacity to serve as a surrogate, to pass the baton from the physical world to the digital world.”

He described a future where children could use apps like WeChat to interact with dead grandparents, thanks to the ability to download human consciousness into computers. All of these technologies would require huge amounts of data storage, which in turn could generate business for Huawei, he added.

Ho also referred to a scene in "The Matrix" where a character downloads the ability to fly a helicopter.

> “That kind of data download volume exceeds current levels,” he said. “In the future storage will need to exceed 15,000 Zettabytes so this is a huge increase.”

Post-Human Society

In Silicon Valley, high-tech companies like Google have discussed long-term planning for a post-human society, while Calico and venture capitalist Peter Thiel have both raised the prospect of immortality. SpaceX founder Elon Musk has long held the goal of transporting humanity to colonies on other planets.

But it is rare for established Chinese technology firms like Huawei to make business preparations based on the intangible possibilities facing the species. Ho said science fiction films helped spur his team to consider new product lines.

“A lot of science fiction has prompted me to have this type of thinking – in science fiction we’ve seen some terrible worlds where technology destroys human society,” he said. Ho described a film in which a character — apparently an AI persona — absorbs ideas from books then launches an attack on humanity. “There’s a very interesting film where Mr Wong has a task of downloading books, he also has a task of printing books and later he kills human beings. Therefore we need better safety technology.

> “We need authentication, better tech protection and remote defense – we are developing all of these now.”

Can Your
Employees Really Speak Freely?

By: James R. Detert & Ethan R. Burris

Chances are, your employees are withholding valuable intelligence from you. Maybe it's about a project that's gone off track or a manager who's behaving badly. Or maybe they're not sharing their thoughts on ways the business could grow its sales or improve operations. No matter how open you are as a manager, our research shows, many of your people are more likely to keep mum than to question initiatives or suggest new ideas at work.

This is true even if, like most leaders, you believe you have an open-door policy. (In our years of studying employee "voice" and advising organizations, we've never heard anyone say, "I have a closed-door policy.") Think about it: How often do employees come to you, on your turf, to tell you the unvarnished truth simply because you've encouraged them to do so? The reality is, they worry—rightly or not—that you'll take their comments personally, or that they'll come across as disrespectful know-it-alls.

Leaders use a variety of tools to get people to speak up, like "climate" surveys and all-staff feedback sessions. Many of these efforts focus on improving communication up and down the hierarchy. But they usually fall short, regardless of good intentions, for two key reasons:

A fear of consequences (embarrassment, isolation, low performance ratings, lost promotions, and even firing) and a sense of futility (the belief that saying something won't make a difference, so why bother?). Here, we'll look at how leaders' misguided attempts to promote candor fail to address—and sometimes stir up—those feelings. We'll also discuss tactics that are much more effective.

The Fear Factor

It doesn't take a tyrannical boss to inspire fear within an organization. Nor does it matter if an unsettling event like a restructuring or a takeover happened long ago. Once people become afraid to speak their minds, they'll keep justifying their silence with explanations like "That's the way our culture is—you don't disagree with your boss."

Without realizing it, leaders tend to make the problem worse with the following practices:

Relying on anonymous feedback.

The promise of anonymity is a common way to encourage frank input. Suggestion boxes, whistle-blowing hotlines, ombudspeople, 360-degree assessments, and satisfaction surveys all serve this purpose. Here's the logic: If no one knows who said what, no repercussions will follow, so people can be forthright about any topic.

This line of reasoning has three flaws.

First, allowing employees to remain unidentified actually underscores the risks of speaking up—and reinforces people's fears. The subtext is "It's not safe to share your views openly in this organization. So we've created other channels to get the information we need."

Second, anonymity can set off a witch hunt. That was a theme at oneFortune 500 company we studied. When employees provided negative feedback through hotlines, suggestion boxes, and such, some bosses demanded to know "Who said this?!" People in other organizations had similar experiences. Many told us that they go to libraries and coffee shops and use public computers to complete online employee surveys—because they worry they'll be tracked through their IP addresses otherwise. One man said he wouldn't even report a problem to an ombudsperson. When asked why, he countered, "Who pays his salary?"

Third and perhaps most important, it can be difficult to address issues while protecting the identity of the people who raised them. Reporting in a survey that a manager acts abusively, incompetently, or in racist or sexist ways won't do any good unless HR or an ombudsperson can assess the extent of the problem, explore the causes, and develop recommendations. That means interviews need to be conducted, stories corroborated, and additional data collected—all of which involve talking to the person who has accused the manager of wrongdoing. And if a complaint refers to a specific incident, it's often quite clear to the manager which person filed it.

Issuing general invitations to come forward.

Open doors and attitudes are simply too passive. People still have to approach you to initiate a conversation, and that's intimidating.

In a U.S.-based call center at a Fortune 500 insurance company, for example, frontline employees had a very nice manager who expressed interest and even took action when people raised issues. Yet call center staffers hardly ever brought him script problems, ideas for improving efficiency, or suggestions for cross-selling. Why not? Because his office was on another floor, and getting to him involved walking through four closeddoors and past three secretaries. The hundreds of employees under him almost never saw him, so they didn't feel they knew him and weren't comfortable approaching him.

With anonymity, the subtext is "It's not safe to share your views openly."

"But my people come tell me things," you may be thinking. Fair enough, though there may be other things they aren't coming to you about—issues that feel less safe. In particular, if you closely identify with an initiative, they'll probably withhold constructive criticism about it, assuming you'll take it personally.

A study we've run with hundreds of managers and professionals from different countries bears this out. In it, one group of randomly assigned respondents are asked to imagine they're on a multifunctional team developing a new product. They're told that the project keeps hitting major technical problems and that they ought to recommend ending it before it becomes a disaster. A second group are told the same thing but get one additional piece of information: Their boss has invested a lot of time in the project. Individuals in this group are significantly less likely to speak up, we've found. As one pointed out, frankness might wound or provoke the boss. "The old saying is 'Don't kill the messenger,'" he added, "but usually the messenger gets killed."

Sending signals that you're in charge.

Whether you realize it or not, you're probably conveying your power through subtle cues (social psychologist Richard Hackman called them "ambient stimuli"). This can cause employees to clam up.

When someone ventures into your office, do you lean back in your chair with your arms clasped behind your head? You may think you're setting a relaxed tone, but you're really displaying dominance. (The posture makes you look bigger, a tactic animals and humans use to warn away others.) Are you sitting behind a big oak desk, in an expensive ergonomic chair, while your employee sits in a much smaller, cheaper, less comfortable one? Despite your good intentions ("Come on in!"), you're inadvertently telling him to watch his step around you.

We've seen the effects of subtle power cues in many organizations. The COO of one large hospital in Texas told us a story about a prominent emergency room physician. For years this doctor had an excellent safety record and was well regarded among colleagues for delivering high-quality care. Yet he routinely received low scores on patient satisfaction. Although his diagnoses were accurate and his treatments effective, patients never felt comfortable with him. When his nurse pointed out this was causing them to withhold diagnostically important information, he finally understood what a problem it was.

With some prodding from the COO, the doctor made one simple change: He sat in a chair when making rounds, so he could talk to patients face-to-face rather than stand over them in their beds. Though his conversations were still brief and his bedside manner virtually nonexistent, sitting down made a world of difference. It seemed to convey that he took more time with people and cared about them, even though his other behavior changed very little. The next month, his patient satisfaction scores soared.

Failing to model free expression.

When leaders themselves aren't vocal, their employees take note. One of us saw this while serving as an external researcher on a task force of senior managers at a large science-driven company. Charged with understanding the causes of employee silence and then proposing solutions, the task force conducted more than 200 interviews across many sites and at all levels. But when it came time to present the findings to the CEO and the division presidents, the task force members failed to report how often they had heard about top management's candor-inhibiting behavior.

Sure enough, the top team approved a relatively toothless set of recommendations and called it a day. Imagine how that felt to those 200 people who were interviewed (and the thousands more who had filled out the survey that led to the task force). Even speaking up about speaking up had proved futile. As more than one employee had predicted, senior people couldn't be trusted to talk about the proverbial elephant in the room (in this case, top managers' negative behavior). So why would others in the organization conclude that voicing concerns was worth their time?

If you don't share what you hear from below with your higher-ups, without excessive filtering or sugarcoating, your employees will stop wasting their own breath. The same thing is likely to happen if they see you sitting silently in meetings when they know you've got a mental list of problems or ideas that you could be raising. Formal power comes with an expectation that you'll be the voice of your subordinates and take action on their behalf. Failure to do so is a big demotivator.

Being unclear about the input you want.

Leaders are most responsive to ideas that support their own agendas. That's actually not a bad thing—they need to focus on their priorities to be effective. But they also have a hard time admitting that they're not interested in an idea, which results in "pseudoparticipation"—going through the motions of listening, with little intention of following up. They compound this problem by sending out vague calls for employee feedback—asking for a "single best idea" on a survey, for instance, or inviting people to speak up in meetings about whatever is on their minds.

If you cast that wide a net, what you reel in might not mesh with what you're trying to accomplish. We've found this discrepancy in service and health care settings: When asked what they'd like to improve, frontline employees tend to focus on customer satisfaction, while their managers are looking for ways to boost sales and reduce transaction times (in call centers) or to increase efficiency and protect against legal liability (in hospitals). If you don't specify the kind of input you're seeking, you may end up discarding most of what people tell you—and send the message that it's useless for them to contribute ideas. Frustration is inevitable.

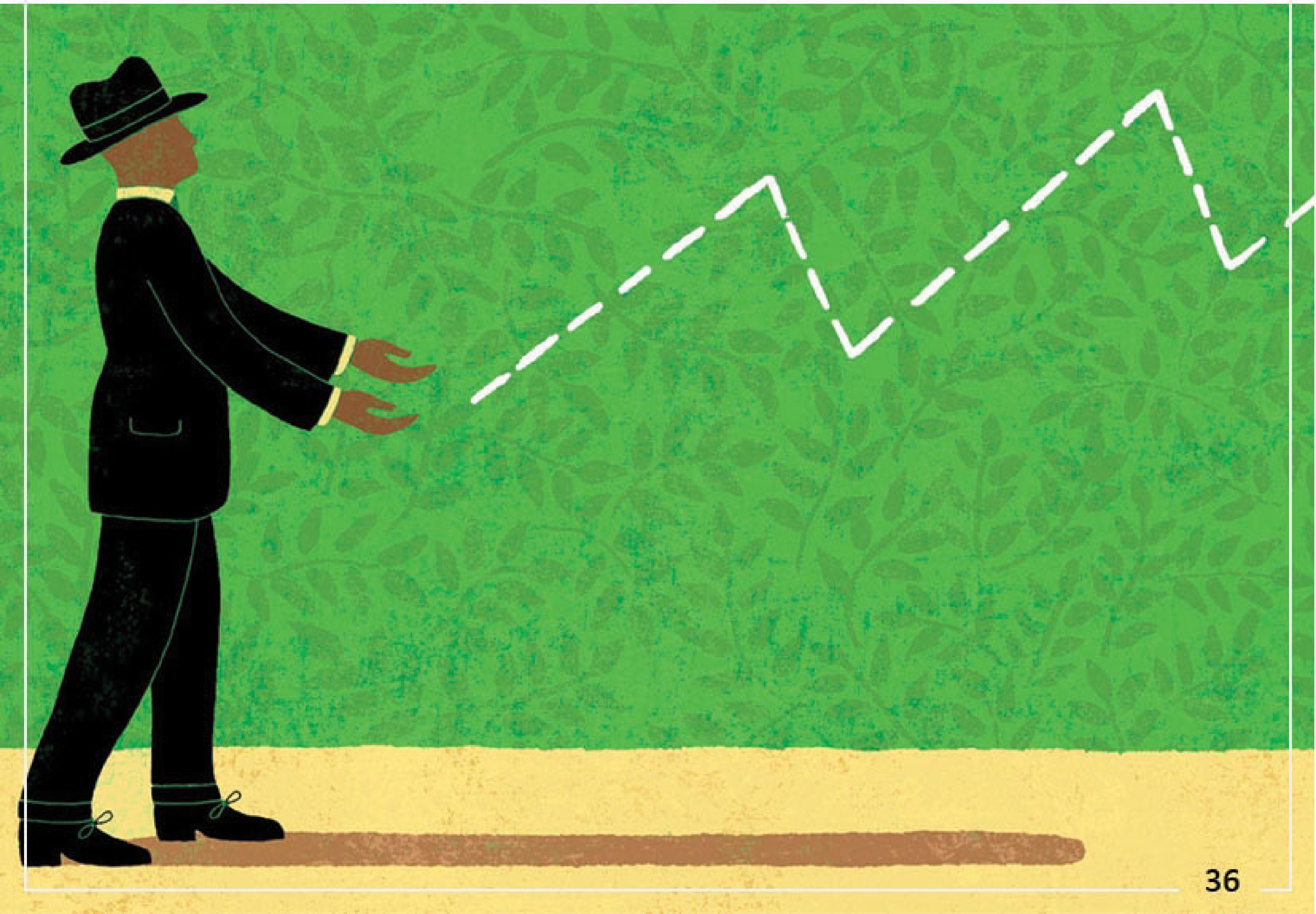
Some leaders spend millions collecting ideas but then never really review them.

When leaders take on new roles or join new organizations, they often, as part of a "listening tour," conduct surveys or individual interviews to hear from employees about possibilities and problems. This can make a lot of sense if you have time to synthesize the information and then take action. But it can backfire if you don't. Suppose you're a new manager brought in to lead an expansion into a new region. You already have your marching orders. Holding a series of open-ended meetings so that people can tell you about all the other things they wish you'd do or fix isn't going to change your main path. It's a waste of everyone's time.

Providing no resources to address issues.

In our consulting work, we've seen leaders in higher education, financial services, retail, and other contexts who spent thousands or millions of dollars collecting ideas but then didn't allocate a single employee to read through the data, much less design a systematic evaluation process. Sometimes we transcribed and analyzed the ideas according to their level of creativity, feasibility, and apparent overall value, only to learn that senior leaders had no intention of holding people accountable for implementing the suggested improvements. Or the company's leaders simply said they were too strapped to fund any new projects.

Devoting resources to collecting ideas without making commitments, financial and otherwise, to see at least some of them to fruition can only lead to a sense that employee input will change nothing.



A History
of snowfall on Greenland, **hidden in ancient** *leaf waxes*

A history of snowfall on Greenland, hidden in ancient leaf waxes

By: Jason Briner

The history of Greenland's snowfall is chronicled in an unlikely place: the remains of aquatic plants that died long ago, collecting at the bottom of lakes in horizontal layers that document the passing years.

Using this ancient record, scientists are attempting to reconstruct how Arctic precipitation fluctuated over the past several millennia, potentially influencing the size of the Greenland Ice Sheet as the Earth warmed and cooled.

An early study in this field finds that snowfall at one key location in western Greenland may have intensified from 6,000 to 4,000 years ago, a period when the planet's Northern Hemisphere was warmer than it is today.

While more research needs to be done to draw conclusions about ancient precipitation patterns across Greenland, the new results are consistent with the hypothesis that global warming could drive increasing Arctic snowfall -- a trend that would slow the shrinkage of the Greenland Ice Sheet and, ultimately, affect the pace at which sea levels rise.

"As the Arctic gets warmer, there is a vigorous scientific debate about how stable the Greenland Ice Sheet will be. How quickly will it lose mass?" says lead researcher Elizabeth Thomas, PhD, an assistant professor of geology in the University at Buffalo College of Arts and Sciences who completed much of the study as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

"Climate models and observations suggest that as temperatures rise, snowfall over Greenland could increase as sea ice melts and larger areas of the ocean are exposed for evaporation. This would slow the decline of the ice sheet, because snow would add to its mass," Thomas says. "Our findings are consistent with this hypothesis. We see evidence that the ratio of snow to rain was unusually high from 6,000 to 4,000 years ago, which is what you would expect to see if sea ice loss causes snowfall to increase in the region."

The research was published on May 23 in Geophysical Research Letters, a journal of the American Geophysical Union.

Aquatic plant leaf waxes as a record of snowfall

Thomas' research looks to understand how precipitation changed in the past, with an eye toward better predicting how modern warming will affect the Earth.

"We are using the past to see what might happen in the future," she says.

Aquatic leaf waxes are a relatively new tool for completing this work. They reveal information about the seasonality of precipitation -- how amounts of ancient summer rain compared to amounts of ancient winter snow.

To understand how aquatic leaf waxes function as a historical record, you need to know a little about aquatic plants. In the Arctic, these organisms survive on lake water, and use hydrogen atoms from this water to produce wax coatings on leaves.

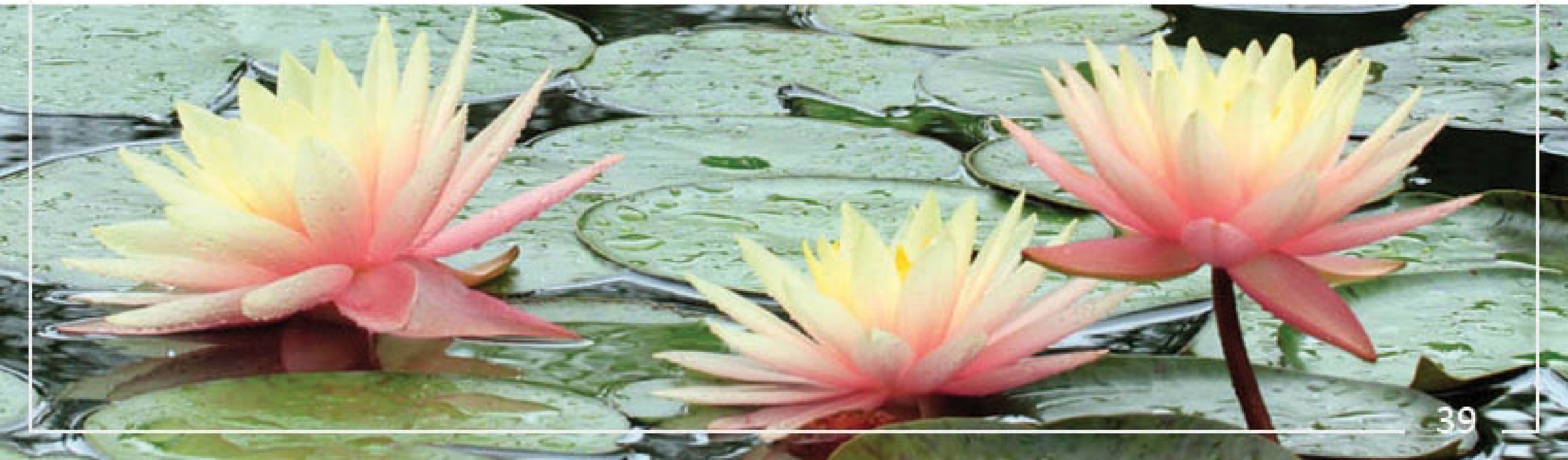
These hydrogen atoms are the key to studying precipitation: In years when the ratio of summer rain to winter snow in a region is high, lake water and aquatic leaf waxes end up containing high levels of a rare form of hydrogen called deuterium, which is heavier than "normal" hydrogen. (This is because summer rain holds more deuterium than winter snowfall.)

In contrast, in years when snow is relatively abundant, aquatic plants start producing waxes with less deuterium.

This is what Thomas and her colleagues saw when they extracted a long, cylindrical sediment sample from a lake bottom in western Greenland. The mud contains ancient leaf waxes, with the oldest at the base of the column and the youngest at the top.

By dating and analyzing thin slices of the sample, the team determined that aquatic leaf waxes had low levels of deuterium from 6,000 to 4,000 years ago.

This is exactly what researchers would expect to see if the warm temperatures of that time had fueled sea ice loss, leading to increased Arctic snowfall and a decline in deuterium in lakes, Thomas said. She acknowledged that it's possible that a drop in summer rainfall accounted for the changes in deuterium, but says a rise in winter snowfall is the more likely explanation, as scientists have found independent evidence that the region was wetter 6,000 to 4,000 years ago.



New Solar Plants

Generate Floating Green Power

By: ERICA GOODE

An expanse of blue solar panels stretches across part of the Yamakura Dam reservoir in Japan's Chiba Prefecture.

In two years, if construction goes as planned, 50,904 panels will float atop the reservoir, generating an estimated 16,170 megawatt hours annually, enough electricity to power almost 5,000 homes, according toKyocera, the company building the solar plant.

The project, once completed, will be the largest installation of its kind in the world. But floating solar arrays are becoming more popular, with installations already operating in Australia and the United States, and more planned or under construction.

The growing interest is driven in part by huge growth in the solar market in recent years as the cost of the technology has dropped quickly.

Floating solar arrays — they are often referred to as "floatovoltaics," a term trademarked by one company — also have advantages over solar plants on land, their proponents say. Renting or buying land is more expensive, and there are fewer regulations for structures built on reservoirs, water treatment ponds and other bodies of water not used for recreation. Unlike most land-based solar plants, floating arrays can also be hidden from public view, a factor in the nonprofit Sonoma Clean Power Company's decision to pursue the technology.

"Sonoma County boasts some of the most beautiful rolling hills, and people don't want to see them covered by solar panels," said Rebecca Simonson, a senior power analyst for the renewable energy developer, which has signed purchasing agreements for floating solar arrays to be built on six treated water ponds in the county. The solar panels, she said, would not be visible from the road.

The floating arrays have other assets. They help keep water from evaporating, making the technology attractive in drought-plagued areas, and restrict algae blooms. And they are more efficient than land-based panels, because water cools the panels.

"The efficiencies are what motivated us to look at this," said Rajesh Nellore, the chief executive of Infratech Industries, which has completed the first section of a floating solar plant in Jamestown, Australia, that will eventually cover five water treatment basins. The installation, which went into operation last year, is constructed so that it generates up to 57 percent more energy than a rooftop solar plant. (The finished plant is expected to generate up to 20 percent more energy than a land-based array.)

The panels are specially coated to prevent corrosion, and set on a tracking system that moves them to maximize sunlight during the course of a day. The company is working on a similar project in Holtville, a small city in Southern California, which has suffered fromyears of drought.

challenges. Floating panels, for example, can face stiffer wind than land-based arrays. But he said the biggest obstacle he faced was convincing government water agencies that the floating technology served their interests.

"It's limited by what incentives there are and what the government wants," Mr. Nellore said. He noted that in Los Angeles, the Water Department covered a reservoir with $34.5 million worth of black plastic balls to slow evaporation; floating solar panels might have served the same purpose and also generated energy.

Kyocera, for its part, turned to floating panels because solar power has become so popular in Japan that big tracts of land for typical panel setups are hard to come by, said a spokeswoman, Natsuki Doi. She added that construction time and labor for a floating array was far less than for a land-based installation.

The Far Niente winery in Oakville, Calif., was an early adopter of floating solar panels, placing 994 on pontoons over an irrigation pond in 2008. Greg Allen, a winemaker at Far Niente who is a mechanical engineer by training, said the company was interested in solar power and wanted to eliminate 100 percent of their energy costs.

Utility rebates and tax credits helped defray some of the $4.2 million cost for the floating array, which took two and a half years to design and build, and another 1,302 solar panels installed on land. The system is expected to pay for itself by 2020 or sooner, Mr. Allen said.

The 3-foot-by-5-foot solar panels on the pond are mounted on 130 foam-filled plastic pontoons made from drainpipes.

"We were nervous about a lot of things when we got into the project," Mr. Allen said. But putting the panels on water saved vineyard space, and the floating system, combined with a solar array on land, generates up to 477 kilowatts of electricity at peak production.

At least one other winery has followed suit, and Mr. Allen said Far Niente had received visitors from India, China, Singapore and New South Wales who are interested in the technology.

Inhabitants of the pond seem unperturbed, he added.

"The fish are happy, the frog

10 Simple Resolutions *that Will* *Boost Your* Career in 2016

By: Robin Madell

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Resolutions That Will Boost Your Career in 2016

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It's not too late to get a fresh start on better work habits and a more strategic approach to advancement.

With the holiday hoopla behind us, it's common to feel an energy drop looking at the year ahead. You may feel worried about tackling everything on your plate, or unsure of how you will reach your ultimate career goals.

Instead of succumbing to discouragement, use the start of the new year to get intentional about what you want to achieve in your position and industry. These 10 resolutions are straightforward enough to start tackling today, and will make a significant difference in your career prospects and job satisfaction over time.

1. Learn to unplug. Digital fasting is not a new concept, but it's one that bears repeating. Planning blocks of time to go offline from your smartphone, social media and email can help restore your balance and focus. Temporary disconnection from your devices allows you to tune in to other things that are important to your career, such as face-to-face communication and undistracted lunch breaks with people who can help you advance to the next level.

2. Get better at salary negotiation. Many professionals – even those who are great at their jobs – leave money on the table by failing to maximize their negotiating power. To avoid being one of them, resolve this year to approach salary negotiation more strategically. Whether you're applying for a new position or seeking a raise in your current one, you should always do industry research before negotiating to find out average salaries for specific jobs. That way you can make an accurate case for your value. It's also important to leverage techniques, such as staying quiet and confident after you make your request, rather than following up too soon or lowering your initial number.

3. Avoid misuse of social media. You can damage your professional credibility by misusing Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn – whether you do so while in the office or after hours. Don't assume that comments you make on Facebook are private since search engines can link back to your timeline through the site's default settings. Don't overshare in your tweets or posts. You can show some personality, but be discriminating about what you choose to share. If a job search is part of your career plan, use keywords on your LinkedIn profile to help recruiters and hiring managers find you.

4. Manage yourself, not your time. Time management can be elusive since poor work habits can foil your best efforts to rein in the clock. Instead, work on managing your own expectations about how much you can reasonably accomplish in one day. You can also resolve to get better about how you manage your boundaries for accepting new projects. And resolve to multitask less so that you can complete one project before starting another one.

5. Get more done in the morning. A smart start to your day can help make you more productive all week long. Instead of letting those precious morning hours disappear into the void of your email inbox, tackle your three most important work-related tasks first. Choose projects that take the most mental energy to complete. Save easier items, such as returning calls and reviewing emails, for later in the day when you are mentally tired.

6. Understand that busier isn't better. Many professionals equate being busy with being successful. But the fact is that what you are doing is more important than that you are constantly doing something. Pull back from frenetic efforts to check things off your to-do list. Start saying "no" to busywork that doesn't help further your career goals.

7. Sink your time-sucks. What wastes your time in the office? Your bad habits may be different than those of your co-workers, so it's important to recognize what's draining energy from your top priorities. Whether it's non-work-related social networking, mismanagement of incoming messages or planning meetings without agendas, you can get a lot more done each day when you avoid common time-wasters.

8. Avoid toxic people. You often can't control who you work with, but you can learn to set limits on how much time you spend with difficult personalities at work. Be on the lookout for constant complainers and those who are perpetually negative and dissatisfied. Associating too closely with these types can affect how others in the office see you. Also beware of office bullies, who can be difficult to identify unless you recognize red flags. If you are not receiving credit for your work, targeted by others for character traits you can't change or being aggressively managed, you may need guidance from human resources.

9. Reveal less to your colleagues. There's a fine line between getting to know your colleagues and oversharing. Err on the side of caution and avoid discussing controversial topics with colleagues, since you can easily offend someone who has a different opinion. You should also avoid sharing negative feelings about your job or those you work with, whether on social media or in confidence to a boss or co-worker. And reserve comments and complaints about your health, relationship and family problems for confidants outside the office.

10. Recognize when you've outgrown your job. Sticking around too long in a job that you've outgrown is a recipe for career stagnation. Be on the lookout for warning signs that suggest it's time for a change, such as feeling under-challenged, overlooked or unhappy. If you've discussed these concerns with your boss and not found support, be ready to seek new opportunities, either within or outside your company. At the end of the day, you need to be the biggest proponent for your own career advancement and take concrete steps to reach your goals.

The Top 4 Skills

New Graduates Need to Improve

By: Hannah Morgan

In the 2016 Workforce-Skills Preparedness Report, done jointly by PayScale, Inc., a compensation data and software provider, and Future Workplace, an executive development firm, the takeaway stat is that 87 percent of new college graduates feel well-prepared for their job upon graduation. Yet, only about half of the managers surveyed felt that their employees who recently graduated from college were well-prepared for the workforce. These are the top four skills you should focus on improving if you want to fall into the latter group, along with some tips on how to do it.

Improve your writing. You may have written papers in college, but those papers are not the same as business writing. Concisely communicating through email with co-workers, managers, clients and customers is different. Roughly 44 percent of managers cited writing proficiency as the top skill lacking in their new-graduate hires. To improve your writing skills, remember the basic rule of communication. You are writing for your audience. Your brief message should revolve around their needs, wants and priorities. The best way to do this is to address the five w's: who, what, where, when and why. You may also need to include the answer to how in your written communication. By no means is this easy. There are apps like Grammarly and Hemingway App to help spiff up your writing. You might want to consider enlisting help from a mentor. The best tip to improve your writing skills is to read and write more, so dedicate time to do these activities.

Improve your public speaking. Public speaking is one of the most feared and disliked activities, but don't let this get in your way of success. This was the second-ranked skill employers were disappointed in. Public speaking isn't just speaking in front of a large audience. It includes communicating during meetings as well. If you get nervous speaking in front of people, start by outlining the key points you want to make. Don't write a word-for-word script. You're likely to forget some lines. Instead, create bullet points you can easily reference if you need to. Pay special attention to what you will say at the start and end of your presentation, because those are the parts your audience is most likely to remember. And don't try to wing it. Build your confidence by practicing out loud in front of a mirror or record it on your smartphone. You may want to identify a mentor to provide you with meaningful feedback.

Learn how to analyze data. If you haven't had the opportunity to analyze data using software like Excel, Tableau, Python or R, you will need to. This ability ranked third in the top skills managers found lacking. Data is everywhere and impacts almost every role in an organization, from accounting to customer service. There are lots of free online courses you can take that will teach you how to use some of these data analysis software tools. You may need to take initiative and ask to work on a special project to develop these skills if your daily job doesn't often require you to interact with data.

Become a critical thinker. About 60 percent of employers said critical thinking and problem solving skills were the top soft skills lacking among new college-graduate employees. How you manage a crisis or respond to conflict could be a measure of these skills. Since you are relatively inexperienced at handling business scenarios, you'll need some guidance. Fixing some of these problems in the workplace is not necessarily intuitive. Tap a mentor and ask for help evaluating solutions to some of the situations you've handled in the past. Read articles and case studies and create your own step-by-step resolutions, which should improve your critical thinking.

One final thought. Maintain the mindset of a life-long learner and continue to update skills and learn new things throughout your career.