



Are You Ready to Assess Your SUCCESS?

Most of us have learned how to craft evidence-based performance measures. These include goals, objectives and action plans, which are stated in both quantitative and qualitative terms, include deadlines and are carefully monitored. But “how to” knowledge isn’t enough. You need to carefully assess the commitment level of your organization regarding the process of implementing evidence-based performance measures. To make that assessment, you’ll need to consider the costs involved in doing so. I don’t refer here to monetary costs, but to the emotional costs—and they are significant.

As you have likely already discerned, the implementation of evidence-based performance measures involves intense scrutiny...and implicit in the imposition of scrutiny is the expectation of change. Neither of these necessary precursors to the implementation of evidence-based performance measures will be popular. So let’s examine specifically what you’re signing up for if you move forward with implementation.

Regarding scrutiny, there are five fundamental “Truths” worthy of reflection in determining your organizational readiness for a Metrics-Based Management program. Assess yourself and your organization as you read through these. How ready are you to permit the scrutiny that is attendant to evidence-based performance measures?

Truth #1:

The more you need scrutiny, the less you want it. Being put under a microscope is tough enough; if you know your performance is less than optimal, scrutiny becomes excruciating and can bring out the worst in

our behavior. The admonishment here is that if you wait to submit to scrutiny until you really need it, it’ll be exponentially more painful.

Truth #2:

The more successful you become, the less you feel you need scrutiny. In sharing this truth, there is not intention to diminish the reader’s success to date. Instead, the intention is to invite your focus away from how good you are at the moment, and focus instead on how good you could be “if...”. The admonishment here is that you never allow yourself to feel cocky.

**Truth #3:**

The more our colleagues need scrutiny, the less willing we are to provide it.

Underneath this unwillingness to provide scrutiny for others is that you're too hard or too soft. If you're too hard, you're apathetic about the success of others and are unwilling to take the time to provide learning to your colleagues. If you're too soft, you have a discomfort with confronting and fear that the recipient will not welcome your counsel. In either case, the admonishment here is that organizational success is a shared result, requiring of both the weak and the strong the fiduciary responsibility of providing constructive feedback to one another.

Truth #4:

The more you resist scrutiny, the more at risk you become.

Scrutiny imposes boundaries, clarifies expectations, provides the parameters within which we need to function to be successful in a given organization and identifies the boundaries beyond which we are at greater risk. In application, scrutiny functions like a fence does for a beloved pet. The admonishment here is that even though you can probably dig under or jump over your scrutiny fences, you'll do so at significantly greater risk of becoming road kill!

Truth #5:

The more you resist scrutiny, the more comfortable you will be.

Implicit in the imposition of scrutiny is the expectation of change. Scrutiny reveals what "isn't" that should be and what "is" that shouldn't be. Scrutiny illuminates that which is out of alignment and demands action to re-establish alignment. The admonishment here is that you cannot subordinate scrutiny to the maintenance of comfort; instead, subordinate comfort to the maintenance of scrutiny.

Remember, not only is considerable discomfort attendant to each of the above five "truths," but each of the above five truths also implies the need for change, in response to which you should expect to encounter both resistance and resentment. Neutralizing the emotionalism attendant to these dual

concepts will require commitment, courage and a willingness to subordinate "comfort" to the pain of meaningful, substantive growth. A few thoughts that may help you manage the growing pains are offered below.

The Dual Duel

Comfort cannot be the yardstick by which we measure success--whether personally or organizationally. "Comfort" simply isn't how we as professionals get to the top of our game, and it's not how we lead our organizations to peak performance. Indeed, the more we mature, the more we realize that it is the very antithesis of comfort that produces success.

An openness to scrutiny, better yet a welcoming of it, along with a willingness to change despite the attendant discomforts, affords a state of being that few professionals and few organizations enjoy with any degree of longevity: the state of alignment. Consistent scrutiny produces consistent alignment. The act of consistent scrutiny forces into your "line of sight" that which is out of alignment—a state of awareness that is a necessary precursor to re-alignment efforts.

Although the tedium required to attain alignment is indeed extreme, that tedium is temporary, and the benefits of being in a "state of alignment" more than offset the requisite organizational endurance.

In conclusion, my petition is that you be a willing, alert participant in an ongoing duel with the dual concepts of scrutiny and change. Yes, it's consistent with human nature to resist scrutiny and change, but resist your resistance! Because in your submission to constant scrutiny, in your submission to change, is your best you...your best organization...your best results.

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