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Is Your Business Stuck? Moving Forward, Keys to Building Your Business



***Prafulla C. Pande** is a business coach, who advises and coaches CEOs, boards and executives on issues relating to leadership development, strategy formulation and execution. He helps organizations manage change and get to the next level through a combination of his personal experiences in business development and the tools of the CEO Advantage™. Praf is an authorized licensee of the CEO Advantage™.*



***Christopher A. Elias** has been involved in strategic planning and team dynamics throughout his career. Focused primarily on leadership, team functionality, strategic planning and strategic execution, his clients have had great success related to better execution of their goals, including better team environments, more accountability, better sales and higher profits. He is a certified facilitator and licensed to provide the process and tools known as The CEO Advantage™.*

Businesses are like human beings. They are born, they live, they grow... then some get stuck and die. Great businesses understand these stages and prepare to deal with inevitable challenges. But this does not happen naturally. Business leaders must look for signals that indicate a particular stage, and act accordingly.

How can you sense if your business is stuck or about to get stuck?

- Flow of creative ideas has stopped and no new ideas come from the executive team.
- Decisions are beginning to be made at the wrong levels: the old fashioned command and control structure is set well in place.
- Increasing confusion exists about individual roles and responsibilities: no one knows who is truly accountable.
- Increasing resistance is building to change within the organization.
- Employees exhibit indifferent attitude and the can-do spirit has eroded.
- Reward systems are losing their charm and value.
- Products and services are beginning to be viewed as commodities.
- Repeat business has started to decline.
- Financial indicators are showing stagnation or declining. Even worse, those that are in control of this only want to attack the symptoms and not address the true root causes.

If you see one or more of these signs within your company, you may be at a barrier that can stop your company's growth. Businesses, large and small, get stuck from time-to-time. Being stuck means that the business is stagnant, declining or just not moving forward as fast as it should.

The key to surviving is to recognize this stage and implement steps to re-energize the firm. To do this, firm leadership should focus on three key areas: organizational clarity, creation of alignment and building cohesive effective teams.

Recognition of New Members

Jason Carpenter

Director of Business Development
Classic Engineering, LLC

Coreen Paul

Director, Commercial/Retail
NORR, LLC

Michelle Yaremchuk

Marketing Assistant
Soil and Materials Engineers, Inc.

Molly McFarland

Marketing Coordinator
Hobbs+Black Associates Inc.

Latricia Giddens

Team Leader - Support Services
NTH Consultants Ltd.

Jill Cruppenink

Senior Marketing Coordinator
SSOE Inc.

Ryan Dunning

Principal
Civil & Environmental Consultants Inc.

Mike Jordan

Business Development
Atwell-Hicks

New CPSM Study Group Forming

Kicking off in August, this group will meet every two weeks at Giffels Webster's office in Rochester Hills to prepare for the CPSM exam, slated for November.

For more information on becoming a Certified Professional Services Marketer, go to www.smps.org and click on "certification." To join the study group, contact Sheila Monohon at 248.852.3100 / smonohon@giffelswebster.com.

Congratulations to Jodie Wright of Rowe Incorporated – the newest CPSM in Michigan!

(continued from page 1)

Clarity

When businesses are small, information moves easily within the organization. With growth comes complexity and often deterioration of communication. Good clarity requires good communication. Hence when communication deteriorates, clarity deteriorates with it. But why is clarity so important? With clarity, everyone knows where the organization is going and how their individual roles and responsibilities contribute to the overall purpose and mission of the organization. When clarity lacks, organizations get stuck.

Alignment

As the companies grow, one of the first inconsistencies that can occur is improper hiring; that is, hiring people who are not aligned to the core values of the organization. Typically, when companies hire individuals, they mostly look for skills and some personality fit. If growth is fast, the selection moves towards skills only, and a mismatch can occur between personal values and the firm's core values. This misalignment affects the performance of the team. To avoid getting stuck, an organization must be clear about its core values and hire (and retain) only people who have a significant alignment to those core values.

Team Dynamics

Trust is the foundation of every team. Without a high level of trust, teams will not deliver desired results and will eventually fall apart. One of the first things that a leader must do is to evaluate the core values of each team member and assess the areas of mismatch. In addition, team members must spend time getting to know each other better so they know what to truly expect out of each other. Taking time on a regular basis to talk about areas of individual invulnerability is a great way to build trust. If the team has difficulty in this area, an outside facilitator may be able to get this started.

In his book "Mastering the Rockefeller Habits"; Verne Harnish talks about the barriers to growth. He states that every business faces barriers at various stages of evolution. The question is not whether your business will hit these brick walls, the question is when. By promoting clarity, alignment and trust, organizations can significantly minimize the affects of barriers that cause businesses to get stuck.

*Learn more about
Breaking Business Barriers
at the Fall Plante & Moran/SMPS
Executive Series Program!*

October 11 • 7:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
Plante & Moran's Southfield Office

For more information and to register, go to www.smps-mi.org
and click on Events.

Message from the President



*Leslie M. Kusek
President,
SMPS Michigan*

Building business means different things to different firms: more revenue, more profits, more project wins, more offices, more staff, more services - or maybe just survival.

SMPS Michigan is offering programs this year to help three types of marketing professionals tackle the challenges that our firms face as they build business.

Talking Shop Series: in addition to the Art of Storytelling in September, two full-day sessions are planned in November and February to enhance the critical skills of our marketing coordinators and managers and improve results from internal initiatives.

Business Development Series: these discussions provide market insights and build client development skills to improve results from external initiatives. After our kick off program featuring the Art of Storytelling, we will examine the healthcare market, check in on developments in Detroit and learn about success stories in geographic expansion.

Plante & Moran / SMPS Executive Series: SMPS and Plante & Moran have partnered to facilitate conversations that help principals create more effective firms. Our focus this year is to explore barriers to growth and the pulse of business in the Great Lakes Region.

SMPS Michigan is also offering a new resource to help small and mid-sized firms grow. We have teamed with strategic business coaches Praf Pande and Chris Elias (see lead article) to kick off a roundtable series based on the philosophy of CEO Advantage, a unique process that allows experienced coaches to engage with the leaders of organizations to help them translate their vision into execution and results. The process helps executives focus on long-term strategy, strategic execution, and team and organizational health – all potential barriers to growth. You will have the opportunity to meet these coaches at a mini-bootcamp during our October event. The CEO roundtables will launch afterwards in the fall.

Where do you jump in? This year, we are offering program packages for the Talking Shop Series and the Executive Series. All of the details follow. I believe we have structured a program year that will deliver results – don't miss the opportunity to take advantage of the tremendous resources that SMPS Michigan is bringing to your backyard!

Have questions or suggestions? Please feel free to contact me at leslie@LMKconsulting.com or 248.722.4178. I'd love to hear from you!

P.S. **Be sure to check out our new Wine & Cheese Webinars** too, starting November 1 at PCIA's offices in Brighton – first up is **"Be a Business Development Rockstar."**

SPECIAL PROGRAM SERIES PRICING!

3 Talking Shops
(Sept., Nov., Feb.):
\$300 for members/\$400 for non-members

2 Executive Series
(Oct. and April):
\$125 for members/\$150 for non-members

Note: The packages can be shared among different people from the same firm.

SMPS Michigan Announces New Sponsorship Opportunities

SMPS has a full program year planned. We would like to offer you the opportunity to benefit from these events and our organization through numerous sponsorship opportunities, including corporate sponsorships, program sponsorships and an online vendor directory. With your sponsorship of SMPS Michigan and active participation and involvement, our organization will connect you to new contacts and clients, increase your sales and visibility, and provide lasting branding results through supporting a worthy professional organization.

Visit our website at www.smeps-mi.org and click on Sponsorship for full details or contact Marisa Nedock at 248.436.5512 or marisa.nedock@bartonmalow.com.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 13, 2007

**Building Business by
Storytelling**

3 5

October 11, 2007

**Executive Series:
Barriers to Growth**

2 3 6

November 8, 2007

**Proposals/Coaching
Presentation Teams**

3 4

December 2007

Happy Holidays!
*Note: Look for our annual silent
auction at the June Pinnacle
Awards Program!*

January 2008

**Client Panel: What's
With Detroit?**

1 2 3

February 14, 2008

**Design & Construction
Bootcamp**

1 2 3 4 5 6

March 2008

**Client Panel:
Healthcare on Steroids**

1 2 3

April 17, 2008

**Executive Series:
Achieving Economic
Success in Michigan**

1 3 6

May 2008

**Geographic Expansion:
Lessons Learned**

3 6

June 2008

**Pinnacle Awards/
Silent Auction**

2 5

New This Year:
Wine & Cheese Webinars!
November 1, 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Be a BD Rockstar, hosted by
Professional Concepts Insurance Agency

Other Dates to be determined.

Domains of Practice

1 *MARKETING RESEARCH*

2 *MARKETING PLAN*

3 *CLIENT AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT*

4 *SOQS / PROPOSALS*

5 *PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITY*

6 *INFORMATION, RESOURCE, & ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT*

Pinnacle Awards Honor Outstanding Marketing Professionals

On Thursday, June 14, 2007, SMPS Michigan hosted its second annual Pinnacle Awards program at Andiamo Riverfront in Detroit, Michigan. Located in the GM Renaissance Center Wintergarden, Andiamo was the perfect venue for members and non-members to network and enjoy Andiamo's renowned food.

The event recognized excellence in marketing and communications within the following categories: Website, Newsletter, Feature Writing, Internal / Employee Communication, and Direct Mail. Members and non-members had the opportunity to view award boards submitted by 2006 and 2007 entrants, which were displayed around the room. The event came to a close with the highly anticipated announcement of the 2007 award winners:

2007 PINNACLE AWARD WINNERS

Newsletter-External:
CLARK CONSTRUCTION

Website:
TESTING ENGINEERS & CONSULTANTS

Feature Writing:
BARTON MALOW COMPANY

Direct Mail:
JJR, LLC

Internal /Employee Communication:
BARTON MALOW

Brand Awareness:
NBS

In addition, Sheryl Maibach, FSMPS, VP & Chief Marketing Officer for Barton Malow Company, was awarded with the SMPS-MI Honor Award. The award, which is considered the chapter's highest form of recognition, is given as an expression of gratitude for distinguished service to the chapter.

Congratulations to all Pinnacle Award winners!



Linda Black from Testing Engineers & Consultants accepts Best Website award from Dana Galvin, Pinnacle Awards Chair.



Donna Jakubowicz accepts awards for Feature Writing and Internal Employee Communications for Barton Malow Company.



Clark Construction Company is a repeat winner - recognized in 2006 and 2007 for Best External Newsletter. Shown here is Karen Kelly from Clark Construction with husband Garrett, and Sandra Alford, PB America.



SMPS Honor Award Recipients: Dennis King, 2006; and Sheryl Maibach, 2007.

Register Now for the September Program: Building Business by Storytelling

Join us at SMPS Michigan's luncheon program September 13th. Register through www.smeps-mi.org.

Every business has stories to tell. Telling them well is a powerful marketing tool.

Learn how to build business on a solid story structure with a:

- Strong cast of characters
- Dramatic narrative arc
- Satisfying resolution
- Memorable takeaway

Let compelling storytelling help write your happy ending.

Connie Dickinson will present this program. She is president of DickinsonGroup, a Chicago-based marketing and public relations agency

focusing on the built environment. She has nearly 30 years' experience in creating long- and short-range marketing and public-awareness campaigns for diverse clients including commercial and residential real-estate developers, architects, engineers and contractors. The firm has significant experience in bringing new developments and whole new communities to market, effectively repositioning iconic properties, and dealing effectively with industry-related crises.

Dickinson also has worked closely with startups and companies new to the Chicago market, helping them set objectives, develop and implement comprehensive marketing plans, and establish themselves with key media. Partnering with each client to achieve its strategic business objectives, she

has established long-term client relationships, some dating from DickinsonGroup's inception. Before launching the firm in 1992, Dickinson served for five years as marketing vice president for Chicago-based Stein & Company, now Mesirow Stein. A former English teacher, she has a reverence for the written word that has become a hallmark of her company.

LOCATION:

City Lights Stage, Inc.
679 E. Mandoline
Madison Heights, MI 48071
Phone: 248.589.9000
www.clstage.com

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Go to www.smeps-mi.org and click on Sponsorship for more information!

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