



# Facilitating Growth

By Mark D. Sauter, author, *Bringing Meaning into Monday™*

*“... failure to navigate the rapid changes brought about in the marketplace may be a warning to all the businesses, institutions, and nation-states that are facing inevitable, even predictable, changes but lack the leadership, flexibility, and imagination to adapt – not because they are not smart or aware, but because the speed of change is simply overwhelming them.”*

Thomas L. Friedman, Author  
*The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*

Organizations, profit and non-profit, are being challenged from multiple fronts. They are finding it extremely difficult to keep up, much less grow. In their quest to diversify many organizations have built cost and complexity into their infrastructure. And, as their business matures and profit margins shrink, these same investments may be preventing innovation and growth. What customers once valued, and what organizations built their infrastructure around, may be no longer relevant.

## Good People – Wrong Things

Many organizations have lost sight of the value they provide customers and how to do it efficiently. During periods of success, emphasis shifted inward toward capturing growth, making money, and managing costs. This, albeit not intentionally, caused organizations to lose sight of the evolving needs of their customers and/or internal clients. As a result, people may be working hard but possibly on the wrong things.

People who attempt to be everything to everybody tend to spread themselves so thin they eventually wear down. The same can be said for organizations. In order to direct attention toward the highest valued and most profitable work, organizations must become skilled at differentiating importance and separating needs from wants, high priorities from lesser ones.

Previously pleased recipients – customers or coworkers – are expecting new, bigger, faster and cheaper alternatives. The world is not static. Customers' and coworkers' needs and priorities will continue to evolve; therefore, organizations and individuals must be adept at evolving with them.

Attempting to respond and fulfill the needs of customers and/or fellow coworkers is creating internal challenges, chaos to some extent. Front-office personnel (those people in direct contact with

customers and/or internal clients) are frequently frustrated with their own organizations inability to respond to what customers want. While at the same time back-office personnel are frustrated by the front-office's inability to provide directional clarity and focus on the right customers and their highest priorities.

For purposes here, and at the risk of oversimplification, customer and/or coworker needs and priorities can be categorized in the following ways: offering new things, improving the ease and quality of current things; and finally, reducing the cost of using or acquiring current things. When defined this way, delivering value extends well beyond providing high quality and cost effective products and services and, in actuality, encompasses *how* business is conducted.

Successful organizations, to facilitate growth, make it a priority to understand the needs and priorities of their customers: what they value and what they don't. By so doing, they improve the effectiveness in which they serve them and, in addition, provide their employees with improved line of sight relative to how they individually and collectively contribute value.

Excitement and motivation for work increases the more people have a clearer understanding of how their efforts provide value to others. They will identify creative ways to optimize and generate additional value ... if they know where to focus. People have much more to give in terms of creativity and heart, yet many organizations struggle with unleashing their full potential. *Bringing Meaning into Monday™* offers a process that can help organizations achieve it.

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