

The Accountability Revolution continues!
Mark Samuel's monthly guide to accountability-based results
August 2001

Achieve Success By Planning For Failure

Greetings!

This month I've been thinking a lot about our human frailties and how they affect the way we do business. We all make mistakes and "drop the ball" from time to time, and there's not much we can do to change that fact. What we can control is whether or not we factor mistakes and failures into our plans for our organizations.

I'm talking about "proactive recovery." Other organized groups—like theater companies, baseball teams and military units—insist on having contingency plans in place in case of failure. Why can't we in the business world do the same? I can think of several solid reasons why a company should create a proactive recovery plan. For instance:

- **It overcomes "analysis paralysis."** Focusing on perfection is one of the great diseases of modern organizations. We plan until the plan is "perfect" and we don't make decisions until we're sure the decision is the "right" one to make. In the process we eliminate the safety to make mistakes, take risks and break away from the status quo.
- **It saves time—and money.** Clients often tell me that they don't have time to create a recovery system. I tell them they don't have time not to. The fact is your customers don't have time for things to go wrong with your business! If you stall or break down for too long, they may go to one of your competitors. But if you have a good recovery plan in place—if you have your resources mobilized—they may not even notice the glitch.
- **It improves morale by serving as a safety net.** When a boss hands a plan off to his or her employees, the employees feel that they will be blamed if something goes wrong. This creates fear, which leads to stress, which leads to low morale. But when you implement proactive recovery, you're saying, "We know this plan isn't perfect." When it becomes safe to make a mistake, the "blame game" goes out the window and morale goes up.

Remember, we're all pioneers. We exist in a state of constant change. Business moves much faster than it did fifty years ago, and we cannot anticipate the terrain we may run into tomorrow. Therefore, it makes little sense to pretend we've got "the perfect plan." Proactive recovery is a way of ensuring that when problems occur—and they will—we'll be able to stay in the game, rather than forfeiting it altogether.

Now I'd like to take a moment to introduce you to someone we expect to have a profound "impact" (pun intended!) on our lives and, hopefully, yours.

Richard L. Murphy is the new CEO of IMPAQ. He comes to us from Organizational Dynamics, Incorporated, one of the two international management consulting and training companies of which he was a founder. Throughout his long and diverse career he has worked with top Fortune 500 companies in the U.S., Europe, Middle East and Asia Pacific. He even lived in Singapore for a number of years.

We are certain that Richard's global perspective will extend the geographical reach and effectiveness of not only our firm, but of our clients as well. Readers, I hope you will join me in offering a very warm welcome to Richard Murphy. Please feel free to call him or drop him a note. Let's all work together toward a bright and prosperous future!

Mark Samuel, President
IMPAQ Corporation

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