

Best Practices in Leading The Global Workforce

Case 12

Verizon Dominicana – Empowering Leadership Teams

By Mark Sobol and Jorge Ivan Ramirez

At Verizon Dominicana, a strategic business transformation process has created an environment in which local leadership teams are empowered to develop themselves and their workforces. The result has been a resource-readiness and competitive advantage that delivers positive financial results for the corporation in any economic environment.

INTRODUCTION

Verizon Communications is a Fortune 10 company and one of the world's leading providers of communications services, with approximately \$68 billion in revenues and 221,000 employees as of 2004. Verizon Dominicana is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Verizon International, a division of Verizon Communications. As the leading provider of communication services in the Dominican Republic, Verizon Dominicana provides a full range of services including cellular, wireline, voice, data, internet access, call centers and long distance.

Verizon Dominicana had been a very successful company with a reputation for delivering solid results. However, the close of the year 2000 began a period of dramatic change in the Dominican Republic. The emerging challenges appeared to be insurmountable, and completely outside the control of the organization. Verizon Dominicana found itself in an increasingly volatile and potentially devastating environment.

New Business Challenges: Economic, Technological, and Regulatory

The Dominican Republic was experiencing a major economic crisis. From 1992 to 2000, the country's economy had grown. Real GDP growth had exceeded 7% per year from 1998 through 2000

and was the envy of Latin American economies. However, after 2000, the economy moved into a downward spiral. There was massive devaluation and high inflation which reached 80% and 43% respectively from the middle of 2003 to the middle of 2004. The economic challenges alone forced several companies within the country into bankruptcy.

At the same time, the telecommunications industry faced significant changes in technology and the challenges of technological convergence. The impact of these technological evolutions could not have been greater than in a developing country facing such economic turmoil.

As in other parts of the world, other changes –in the regulatory environment--brought new competitors to the scene. Prior to 2000, Verizon Dominicana had only one competitor. Then two new competitors moved into the market. In a country as small as the Dominican Republic, this competition threatened serious impact.

Verizon's Successful Response

Amidst these business challenges, a great company emerged. Verizon Dominicana not only continued to achieve its financial objectives (increasing revenue despite 80% devaluation); it also increased market share and dramatically reduced churn rates. In 2003, the organization achieved employee satisfaction ratings of 85% and also began to receive external recognition for its success. In 2004, Verizon Dominicana was recognized as #9 in the top 25 Best Employers in all of Latin America in a study by Hewitt & Associates and *The America Economia Magazine*.

How does Verizon Dominicana continue to deliver great results year after year while being subject to such tremendous external pressures? What strategies have emerged? What is the secret of this organization?

In such a tumultuous economic environment and rapidly evolving industry, the key success factor for this organization has become the people within the company and the manner in which they work together. By engaging all of the employees with the vision and strategic direction of the company, Verizon Dominicana not only survived against all odds, but continues to deliver positive results. A well-designed and well-orchestrated strategic planning process became the roadmap for a business transformation. It brought the leadership, management team, and employees together, which ultimately

allowed the company to go through economic chaos with a minimum of damage and a significant amount of success.

The process used to navigate through this unpredictable environment delivered results beyond mere survival. What has emerged is a stronger, faster, and more flexible organization, fully engaged at every level. Not merely “words on a wall”, at Verizon Dominicana the vision became a living thing, a fire kept alive by the people, a high purpose spelling out the advantages they provide to their customers, community and employees alike.

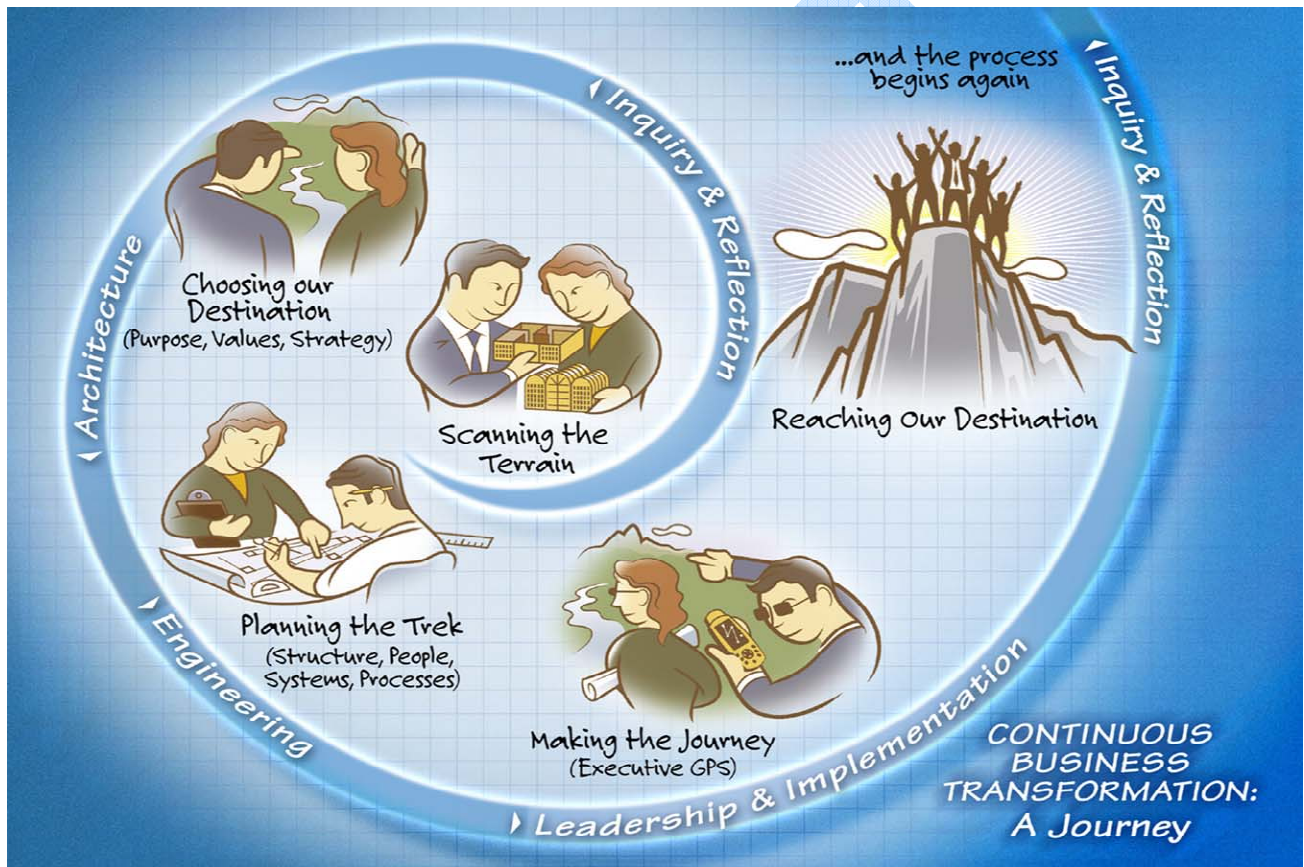
A Journey of Continuous Business Transformation

Traditionally, Verizon Dominicana had conducted an annual strategic planning process. Each year, a new five-year strategic plan was established and presented by the executive team to Verizon International. A facilitating consultant would be brought in and, over the course of three days, a plan would be assembled.

The process had its shortcomings. Three days of facilitated planning did not allow for the development of an understanding comprehensive enough to result in an executable plan which would be fully embraced by the organization. Further, the 12-month planning cycle did not allow enough time to fully implement the strategy or to analyze and respond to its effectiveness. Previous strategic plans had delivered disappointing results because they had not been fully implemented and did not achieve consensus throughout the siloed functions of the organization. Year after year, the organization was burdened with layer upon layer of “projects,” some implemented and many not. The sheer volume of accumulated projects proved to be a significant drag on resources and a source of great dissatisfaction among management and employees.

In the face of the emerging business challenges, it was time to create a well-designed, fully supported, masterfully executed process that would deliver measurable economic value. To survive in its challenging environment, Verizon Dominicana needed a roadmap that was solid enough to deliver results, but fluid enough to allow change to permeate the organization and spur its evolution. Looking to the past was no longer an option. The environment was too different, and old approaches were becoming less effective. In many ways, the successes of the past had become the company’s greatest enemies for the future.

Against this backdrop, in 2003 a business transformation process was adopted that centered on the simple illustration shown in Figure 12.1. The Continuous Business Transformation Process was designed to be an emergent one, organic in nature, that would develop Verizon Dominicana's capacity for change while simultaneously delivering significant results in what was fast becoming a more complex and difficult operating environment. The new process allowed the executive leadership team to initiate a strategic plan that centered on the people involved and that engaged the entire organization in a way that had never before been accomplished.



To describe what happened, we will use the language of the model.

INQUIRY AND REFLECTION – SCANNING THE TERRAIN

The transformation process began with a phase of inquiry and reflection. The organizational development consultant scheduled two environmental scanning sessions where all of the members of the executive leadership team (whose members hailed from such diverse parts of the world as the Dominican

Republic, Colombia, Mexico, Italy, and Argentina) would review together the competitive landscape and macroeconomic environments.

The goal of these sessions was to give this multi-national leadership team the opportunity to clearly identify and agree upon both the challenges facing the organization and how it could best respond. Perhaps more importantly, the goal of the consultant was to begin to develop the executive team in a way that would build a stronger internal resource for change and self-directed organizational development--one that relied on itself, rather than on an externally dictated process.

Aligning Concerns and Themes

Before the two environmental scanning sessions took place, each of the members of the executive leadership team met individually with the consultant. During these individual sessions, each member had the opportunity to contribute his or her own ideas, concerns, and hopes for the organization. The consultant then used this information to lay the foundation for the group sessions. Knowing the ideas and input of each of the individual members, the consultant was able to create a forum for knowledge-sharing and collaboration.

Emerging from the individual interviews were high level themes that became the agenda for the first group session. During the first group session, the consultant shared these patterns with the team. The group began to see its present state in similar ways, and with this common foundation it began to move ahead.

Allowing Diversity and Inclusion

While building strong alignment among the leadership team, the process simultaneously allowed for a new level of diversity and inclusion. The consultant modeled a very collaborative and respectful style throughout each individual and group session, which set the tone for the team. During the sessions, the differences and strengths that each member brought were openly recognized and respected. This brought a new level of acceptance and alignment to the group.

By allowing individual thoughts and honoring diversity among the team, the team became stronger, smarter, and generally better. This was a different kind of alignment than the company had sought before--one that drew on the strengths of each member and the collective wisdom of the group.

A Clearer View for the Team

The new collaborative environment gave the team the power to act in a more effective manner as leaders and as architects of the future of the organization. From this vantage point, the team could see much more clearly. It could see the organization from different perspectives and through the eyes of the other departments. With this wider view, it could effectively scan the terrain, obtain a clear picture of where the company was in relation to its surroundings, and the challenges it must rise to meet. It became very apparent what needed to be focused on in order to be successful in the next five years. At this point team members had successfully evolved from implementers of tactics to designers of strategy.

ARCHITECTURE – CHOOSING A DESTINATION

From its new common ground, the executive team chose a destination by collectively reflecting on the following and other areas of inquiry:

- Where did Verizon Dominicana want to go?
- Where would it stand in relation to its competitors?
- How would it overcome any economic impact?
- What would it stand for, and how would it communicate that vision?

The executive team's group scanning sessions became the forum for these conversations and a time to assess the climate surrounding the organization. Open discussions were facilitated and the team began to examine closely what it would take to truly transform the organization.

Waves of Inquiry

What emerged as a result of the early sessions were eight key topics, including such things as a high performance workforce, customer-focused organization, market leadership, cost leadership, and network evolution. They became the centerpiece of the new strategic planning/business transformation process. Subsequently, topics would be launched with the following question:

Are there specific actions we can take today to prepare for these future potential changes in the composition of our marketplace?

The executive team determined that it would be critical to have a comprehensive understanding of each of the topics before any strategic planning was done. As a team, they decided they would take the time to explore each topic in depth. They determined that rather than the traditional 3-day planning

meeting, they would approach their planning process through a series of “waves”--small meetings held over several months, each focusing on one of the eight topic and making that topic a “wave of inquiry.” This process would give them the time, information and knowledge to make the most effective decisions they could make.

Best Practices and White Papers

The executive team reached out to the external environment and into the organization itself to become more knowledgeable about each topic or “wave.” A schedule was created for a next level of sessions designed to be forums for learning through the discussion of a specific “wave”. Subject matter experts were enlisted. The role of educating the executive team was assigned to various directors who wrote white papers for distribution to the team members a week in advance of each meeting. These white papers provided a wealth of knowledge, looking at best practices not just in the Dominican Republic, not just in the industry, but globally, tackling questions like the following:

- What are the benchmarks in managing human resources?
- What is the best practice for distribution?
- What challenges lie ahead in network evolution?
- What are the theoretical models for the development of a high-performance workforce?

Over the next seven months, the team worked through each of the waves. It read targeted research and explored the issues fully enough to understand underlying principles as well as implications. These kinds of conversations had never occurred before at Dominicana, and with dialogue came a deeper knowledge of the entire organization and the environment around it. The collective intelligence of the team soared, and silo mentalities dissipated. Better still, this new way of seeing the organization began to have a positive effect outside the executive team.

Consensus and Alignment through Small Agreements

With this process, the entire team had access to the same information and a new level of understanding, which allowed for better decision-making and strategy. As a group, the team looked at what was coming, why it was important, and how the competition was responding. Unlike typical strategic planning in which each part of the business presents its objectives to the group, the entire group was

involved in the analysis of each business issue. This group of tacticians became a team of strategists. The silos were broken down and the entire team was armed with knowledge and insight.

Significant inquiry and reflection occurred; the team understood implications and made decisions. The team conducted deep conceptual discussions and synthesized the resulting ideas. This process developed a strong sense of ownership and deep commitment within the group. Each session resulted in a series of “small agreements” which included the development of specific conclusions and recommendations. Over time, these small agreements multiplied in number and eventually evolved to become the “big decisions” that, in prior years, the executives had attempted to make in three days or less. They were now able to make better strategic choices because they had more accurate and comprehensive knowledge about their environment, the organization and themselves.

Emerging Business Objectives

Once the leadership team had a clear understanding of the terrain around the organization and had made its small agreements, it became obvious how best to picture what the organization wanted to represent within its terrain. To thrive in this environment, what were the key enablers? What would be required of the company? Of the leadership team? Of employees? And how would success be measured?

Three key new qualities emerged: customer focus, employee engagement, and a new broad leadership style.

A Customer-Focused Organization. The company had begun the process of shifting from a *product management* focus to a *customer management* focus. In the past, the company was seen as a collection of silos; different lines of business (wireline and cellular telephony, data/internet, and long distance). Each line of business was seen as a different unit. However, the company was now shifting to position the customer as its primary focus. Services that were previously viewed as *business lines* were now seen as *customer solutions*.

Rather than segmenting the product lines, the company segmented its customer base. It based this segmentation on a life-time value model. Now the customer was at the center and products were viewed as solutions to the customer. This shift meant a change in the entire structure of the organization. What had been a very vertical approach was evolving into a process approach.

Employee Engagement. Customer satisfaction was central, but the goal was to go beyond that to customer loyalty. Delivering the kind of service and satisfaction that would lead to customer loyalty required the full engagement of every level of the organization.

The executive leadership team came to believe that the only way to fully engage the employees in organizational change was to directly involve them in the process of its development. They further believed that as employees were engaged in creating possibilities for strategic change, they needed to be intimately involved in implementing the resulting changes.

Some organizations avoid this, believing it only slows down a process that has historically been solely within the scope of an executive team. However, the Dominicana leadership team believed differently: while this process of collaboration would mean going slower initially, it ultimately would result in going faster and further as an organization. Now with the entire organization fully engaged, it has become much easier to implement change quickly and thoroughly.

A New Leadership Style. A new leadership style evolved within Verizon Dominicana. The executive leadership became more open and informal in order to engage people at all levels of the organization. Ongoing development was required to ensure the leaders were effective role models for the rest of the company. “Walking the talk” became one of the most important behaviors of the leaders. This was a different leadership style for the organization. There was more leadership accountability, and the executive team committed itself to personal and professional improvement.

Each member of the executive team was assessed to determine personal strengths and opportunities for development. 360-degree measurements were implemented to incorporate the perspective of peers and direct reports. Individual improvement plans were created and implemented, including an ongoing coaching process with the consultant. Groups of feedback providers were established for each executive to provide ongoing coaching from others within the organization. This in turn established a “coaching culture” within the executive team which furthered not only the development of the team, but the many teams that reported to it.

The result was an open, collaborative environment that became the foundation for a new connection between the leadership and the rest of the organization.

ENGINEERING – PLANNING THE TREK

With the destination clearly defined--and to avoid the fate of many other strategic change processes--a detailed process was engineered to ensure that the business and leadership objectives would be attained. The trek ahead was well planned to ensure its execution and the organization's full engagement. Implications for structure, culture, systems, processes, leadership, and people needed to be understood and incorporated into the plan. While the executive team had set the first level objectives and guiding principles, the way forward was not yet finalized. It became critical to have the insight from and buy-in of the next layers of the organization.

Engaging Broader Levels of Leaders

What followed involved the next level of leadership, which consisted of approximately 50 directors and managers of the organization. Together with the executive team, these individuals were gathered at the Dominican beach resort of Hamaca. There the executive team presented its view of the future and outlined the key objectives which had been identified as a result of the sessions focused on the "waves of inquiry."

A relaxed environment was created to help the participants see that leadership was committed to change and creativity, and especially to thinking outside the box. The resort ballroom was set as a street scene lined with different "cafés". With music and food in abundance, each café focused on one of the waves. In this setting the discussions continued. The participants circulated among the cafés where they were free to provide their ideas and insights in relation to each.

Next, the feedback of the participants was incorporated and embedded into the way forward. This phase was critical because it allowed each participant to feel like part of the solution. Each person felt valued, heard and more connected to the executive team and the whole of the organization. For example, with customer care leadership becoming more aware of network objectives and vice versa, siloed thinking and actions at this secondary level began to fall away.

A few months later, the top 250 members of the organization were brought together for an ambitious 4-day leadership development workshop. The participants included executives, directors, and managers. The entire executive leadership team participated in presenting the vision and the newly

established business objectives. Participants were provided with tools that would support them in moving forward with the vision.

The intent of the workshop was to strengthen the capability of each person to think and lead from a strategic mindset; knowing how to lead their part of the organization to achieve strategic objectives in a way that strengthened organizational commitment, adaptability, and capability. The workshop achieved the following goals for the group:

- Understanding what it takes to successfully implement strategy
- Understanding the objectives, values & projects
- Understanding how to create a climate for successful implementation
- Understanding how each area within the organization dynamically influences and ultimately affects the success of the strategic objectives—and how to foster alignment
- Making a plan ready for action
- Creating space to win—generating personal and team energy, focus and stamina
- Encouraging follow-through and fostering accountability
- Developing your leadership to effectively lead your group through to a successful implementation

This workshop had a profound, positive effect on the company's broad management team. Now armed with the outcomes of this session, they were not only *motivated*, but *equipped* to move forward. They knew they had the support of leadership and that they could express their concerns and needs openly with positive support and response.

The last session ended with a song being sung spontaneously by all 250 participants. For the first time, the management team of the organization was aligned and inspired simultaneously. Everyone understood his or her role. Rather than having a plan dictated to them, they felt involved, united, and engaged—moving forward together.

LEADERSHIP AND IMPLEMENTATION – MAKING THE JOURNEY

The workshop and roll-out of the vision were just the beginning. The executive leadership team was committed to execution. It would not be enough to have a great plan if it was not executable. With this in mind, the number of objectives was purposely limited so as not to overwhelm the organization and

to help assure successful implementation. These objectives became known as “the vital few”. To each were attached clear key performance indicators. These were established so no one would ever have to ask, “How will we know if we are there?” This ability to create clear objectives and to outline the small steps required to deliver those results became a significant strength for the organization.

Key Elements of Execution

Executing the company’s new plans has depended on four key elements: frontline engagement, new levels of communication, follow-through overseen by a project management office, and ongoing leadership development.

Frontline Engagement. The first phase of implementation started with the front line. With increasing customer loyalty as a key initiative, steps were taken first with those interacting with the customer. Frontline employees were assessed for their capabilities from a technical and behavioral point of view. Any developmental needs that were identified were addressed to ensure these individuals could perform their jobs effectively. Training was provided to those who needed training and those individuals who did not have the aptitude and attitude to effectively serve in the frontline were replaced or moved.

This strategic direction was clearly communicated to the entire organization. These actions demonstrated that the company was serious about customer satisfaction as a key differentiator in the market. The organization understood the driving force behind the actions and was already committed to the end-result. This commitment made implementation a much smoother process.

Communication. The company constantly communicates its strategic direction, vision and objectives to all employees. Significant time and resources are spent to see that every employee knows what the company is trying to accomplish, why, and how day-to-day work is related to achieving the objectives. This ensures that each person can see his or her contribution.

The executive team reaches out to other levels of the organization directly as well. Videoconferencing is used on a regular basis to connect the people on the front line with the executive team. Questions can be asked directly of the executive team and open, candid communication is welcomed. The President of Verizon International also visits in person several times each year to stay visible and connected.

The Follow-Through Role of Project Management. Another key element of execution was the development of a project management office. A centralized office reports directly to the president of the company and participates in all executive team meetings. Initiatives that have a significant, positive impact on the success of the strategic plan are formally sanctioned as projects, and a project scope and matrix are developed. Measures of success are determined and the appropriate people are assigned to the project.

The team leading the project employs a follow-through process which enhances execution of business objectives by providing managers and their teams with monthly reminders to update progress on performance goals. Managers and their direct reports are able to efficiently track and record progress, and analyze results. The open sharing of goals and progress updates promotes visible accountability and provides an effective platform for performance management and organizational learning.

Every area is measured on an ongoing basis. All of the key performance indicators are reviewed-some daily, some weekly, and some quarterly. For example, internal variables affecting customer satisfaction are measured every week. Gaps are identified, and matching customer expectations with the company's performance is a constant objective.

Ongoing Leadership Development. Verizon Dominicana is committed to developing a high performance workforce. At many levels of the company working in teams is now a top priority, and the company's goal is to benchmark this workforce with any company in the world, not just in the Dominican Republic. To compete in today's global market, a world class workforce is critical.

To that end, ongoing leadership development is a critical tool. Effective communication and execution cannot continue without the ongoing commitment of the executive leadership team. The behavior of the team is an example for the rest of the organization. When leadership behavior is consistent with an organization's objectives and values, the rest of the organization follows suit.

At Verizon Dominicana, a culture of coaching has emerged. Each individual on the executive team has a specific development plan, and coaching is the tool used for ensuring the individual plans are implemented. Selected employees and peers continuously provide feedback on leadership behavior and insights into how the leader can improve. In addition, every quarter, the executive team meets to assess the quality execution and follow-through on the objectives and results of initiatives according to plan.

The Rewards of Execution

Within two years of the implementation of this business transformation process, measurable results were becoming visible at Verizon Dominicana in terms of increases in market share and satisfaction; investment; and credibility.

Increased Market Share and Satisfaction. The following statistics illustrate:

- Market share for wireless service has increased from 42% to 48% and continues to climb.
- Wire line market share is approaching a solid 85%.
- Internet market share is up to 90%.
- In two years, churn rates in Post Paid Wireless have been dramatically reduced from 3% to a range of 1.5% to 2%.
- The company's employee satisfaction rating of 85% is now a benchmark in Latin America.
- Customer Satisfaction (customers who rate the service as excellent—top box) has increased to 61% from 54% two years ago.
- EBITDA margin (margin of earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization) was reaching levels of 46% to 49% at the middle of 2004.

Increased Investment. Verizon International invests an average of \$200 million in this market each year. When investors see that Verizon Dominicana continues to advance despite the economic crisis, they do not hesitate to invest. Strong financial results are critical to continuing to engage investors to increase resources in countries like the Dominican Republic.

Increased Credibility. It is a challenge for a part of a large corporation to adapt the overall corporate strategy to its local market. The Dominican Republic is very dependent on the U.S. economy. People see the Verizon brand on television. Many people have family living in the U.S. However, the market in the Dominican Republic is very different. How can you translate the corporate strategy of Verizon into a market that is so vastly different?

The success of Verizon Dominicana elicits the confidence and the resources from Verizon International that allows the former to continually adapt the corporate mission and vision of Verizon International to the local market. Verizon Dominicana has created a link between both markets and both

companies. There is no sense of local versus international, but rather of companies working together toward common goals.

INQUIRY AND REFLECTION – REACHING OUR DESTINATION

In today's world, business transformation is a continuous process, an ongoing cycle without beginning or end. Verizon Dominicana is still in the midst of its implementation, but it is also already looking at itself again and asking the same questions it initially asked:

- Where are we in our marketplace?
- What is working?
- What needs to be improved?
- Is there anything new to consider?
- What are we learning?

There is now a perpetual process of inquiry and reflection. This emergent process has required a certain amount of flexibility from everyone involved. Rather than relying on a planning process that only occurs every 12 months, the organization has started a continuous conversation that connects the company to its world.

Verizon Dominicana understands that today it more closely resembles an organism than a manufacturing line. Moving from "organization as machine" to "organization as living thing" is a significant transformation. A tree does not switch itself on and off. It does not have to stop and plan for its next growth spurt. Instead it's an ongoing moment by moment response to the conditions around it (heat, water, soil) and within. Verizon Dominicana has started a process that enables an organic level of responsiveness.

Most organizations haven't figured out how to stay this aware, but those that do so achieve a significant competitive advantage in today's changing environment: an increased ability to compete on speed.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Every transformation begins with the motivation and engagement of the people in the company.** Designing objectives and direction is relatively easy, but obtaining commitment in the decision-making process makes the quality of implementation so much better. Important issues such

as cost management become easier to manage because the team is motivated to maximize the dollars spent and to do what it can to protect the company and the vision to which everyone is committed.

2. **Learning to trust the principle of emergence is empowering.** In the beginning, it was uncomfortable to start this process without clear beginnings and endings, but the results have been so much greater than could have been anticipated. Letting go of old ways and allowing new answers to emerge was very empowering. It's important to continually ask questions that allow the emergence of new ideas: What else do we need to do? What needs to be adjusted? How can we better meet the needs of our customers?
3. **Drawing on the resources of an entire leadership team and embracing all contributions opens many new doors.** A leader has much to gain and learn from the team. The days of the all-knowing charismatic leader are over. No longer can the lone genius hope to lead organizations of significant size and complexity without the power of the team. Team IQ rises when all members are working together to understand what they see and how they will respond. To provide people the freedom to work together, express their ideas and create results that are "theirs" is amazing. It is the key to developing a high performance team that has the potential to move the organization to greater heights. Functional expertise alone is not the key to long-term success. True long-term success is about raising the awareness of the team and enhancing its capacity to develop the organization; this changes everything.

SUMMARY

Sudden economic, technological, and regulatory challenges in its environment around the year 2000 threatened to close out the success of Verizon Dominicana, a telecommunications subsidiary of Verizon International providing communication services in the Dominican Republic. In an unpredictable and suddenly much more competitive environment, the company sought consultation from a firm that provided organizational management and executive coaching resources.

The starting point for change was a decision to set aside a former, quickly conducted annual strategy planning process in favor of a longer-term, more open-ended process of self-examination. The

company began a “journey” of Continuous Business Transformation, the heart of which was a willingness to approach its problems as a team of executive leaders, rather than as sundry leaders addressing various siloed concerns.

Beginning with a period of facilitated team-building, company leaders shared their concerns, aligned their themes, and established an environment in which the multi-nationally diverse members of the team could communicate and see more clearly. This enabled the team to begin to inquire, reflect, and “scan the terrain” in which the company now needed to operate.

A second stage centered on arriving at a new architecture for the company, expressed in terms of “choosing a destination” based on extensive research into challenges, benchmarks, and best practice possibilities. Through this process the leadership team laid out several major objectives, including a new executive leadership style in which teamwork would continue.

With the broad destination defined, the executive team began a process of organizational engineering, “planning the trek,” engaging subordinate levels of leadership. It first gathered 50 directors and managers into the vision, then workshopped out to a wider circle of 250 company leaders. In a third stage of the transformation, “making the journey,” the leadership began to implement new strategies with four main considerations in mind: frontline engagement in a spirit of teamwork, communication, follow-through on project management, and ongoing leadership development. Within two years of the start of implementation, Verizon Dominicana recorded successes in terms of increased market share, along with increased credibility and increased investment from the parent company.

In a fourth stage of the transformation, the leadership team returned to inquiry and reflection, now viewing “reaching our destination” as a continuing cyclical process.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Mark Sobol, MA, is an expert in organizational development and an executive coach. He has gained international recognition from his work with executives of major corporations engaged in the design, engineering, and leadership of strategic change as they merge, acquire, launch new businesses, or transition to a new direction for their future. Working for over 23 years throughout North and South America, the Caribbean, United Kingdom, Europe, and Asia, Sobol has been part of numerous strategic

change initiatives across the globe as organizations establish new directions and move to turn strategy into action. His website is www.marksobol.com.

Jorge Iván Ramírez has more than 25 years experience in the Telecommunications Industry. He has been President and CEO of Verizon Dominicana since November, 2000. Additionally, he is President of the American Chamber of Commerce in the Dominican Republic, member of the Board of Directors of CONEP (Consejo Nacional Empresas Privadas), and ASIEX (Asociación de Empresas de Inversión Extranjera). Since June of 1999 and until his designation as President and CEO of Verizon Dominicana, Ramírez was President of Diveo de Colombia, a telecommunications company (CLEC) engaged in digital connectivity operations. Ramírez is a native of Medellín, Colombia.

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