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Ringling Doorbells Without Howitzers

By Brent Filson

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Summary: Reducing costs through wholesale layoffs may provide quick hits on balance sheets, but its clumsy blows can disrupt operations. Brent Filson shows operations leaders a surprisingly more effective way to achieve cost reductions as well as enhanced efficiencies.

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Many operations leaders have been there, done that with re-engineering. And they report, in effect, that the process is like ringing a doorbell with a howitzer shell.

Reducing costs through wholesale layoffs ostensibly tied to ultimate results provides quick hits on balance sheets, but its clumsy blows can raise hell with operations.

Operational results can be achieved consistently with precision and power not when people are taken out of the organization but instead put back in.

"Putting people in" doesn't mean adding headcount but instead putting people into the mix of vital factors that contribute to operations results — having power with people, not over people.

Just as we're supposed to use only a fraction of our brains' capabilities, so I'm convinced, working with businesses in major industries, that few organizations come close to achieving their potential operational results.

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That's because many operations leaders ignore one of the most important aspects of operational effectiveness: the human heart.

When I speak of the heart, I speak of that intuitive, emotional, feeling aspect of all of us.

No question: It's not just technology and equipment that drives operational success. It's employees. Clearly, they must be skilled and knowledgeable, but they also must be emotionally committed to their work. They must be motivated.

Yet most operational strategies and programs focus on rational not emotional/motivational considerations and so let great opportunities slip away.

To understand how quantum leaps in results can be achieved, far beyond re-engineering's capabilities, let's view operations three big drivers ----- cost-reduction, productivity and efficiency -- in terms of motivational factors.

Cost-reduction: Operations founder when they fail to achieve continuous cost-reductions. A leader of a world manufacturing organization told me, "One of my most tenacious leadership challenges is motivating employees to never stop getting costs out of our plants and processes."

Lesson: Cost-reduction is a leadership issue. It's an issue in which leaders don't order people to do a job but motivate those people to want to do the job. It's in the realm of want to that significant cost reductions take place.

Action: Institute comprehensive strategies, processes, and measurements that focus on having employees be ardently committed to getting continuous cost reductions, and those reductions will far outpace the ones achieved through re-engineering.

Productivity: Clearly, productivity isn't about doing things simply faster but also better. To speed up and be more productive, employees must slow down, reconsider their situation, reevaluate their education and training, then take new action. Only employees who have a strong emotional commitment to their jobs do well in that sequence of actions.

Lesson: Fifteen minutes before shift change, a machine starts to break down. The motivated operator will stay with that machine until its fixed or he will at least get a repair process under way. On the other hand, the less-than-motivated operator will punch out and let the next shift operator take care of the problem. Incidents like these are common and cost countless billions of dollars in lost productivity.

Action: Develop operational systems that are woven into the very driving force of productivity: the heartfelt convictions of the rank-and-file.

Efficiency: Businesses cannot compete well simply by selling what they make. Instead, they have to make what they sell. Which means that operations must be closely connected to the sell, the customer. And because customer needs change rapidly, operations must change with them or risk making inefficiency an institution.

Lesson: Efficiency begins in one place: with small-unit leadership, the leadership of the supervisors and front-line managers. In trying to realize operating efficiencies, top leaders often get jammed up in small-unit leader meat-grinders. Top leaders can usually persuade their direct reports to participate in the changes needed to make efficiencies happen.

However, the far more important task is to persuade the small-unit leaders to champion those changes. Small-unit leaders, who don't buy-in, can and will make mincemeat of any operational program.

Action: Get small-unit leaders to champion your changes at the beginning of the change process to insure that those changes take root.

In summary: When driving cost-reductions, productivity and efficiency, avoid the re-engineering reflex of ringing doorbells by rolling up cannons. Instead, roll out simple, precise strategies tied to the heartfelt needs of skilled employees — then let them get the big results.

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The author of 23 books, Brent Filson's recent books are, **THE LEADERSHIP TALK: THE GREATEST LEADERSHIP TOOL** and **101 WAYS TO GIVE GREAT LEADERSHIP TALKS**. He has worked with thousands of leaders worldwide during the past 20 years helping them achieve sizable increases in hard, measured results. Sign up for his free leadership e-zine and get a free guide, "49 Ways To Turn Action Into Results," at www.actionleadership.com

Which Ring Tones Can I Get For My Phone?

By Mike Yeager

Ring tones are simply a computer program stored in your cell phone's memory and with most phones, you can change it. You can have a unique sound that only you want. Here's the deal on ring tones – you get the cooler sounding rings on the newer, more expensive phones. For example, if you have an old Nokia phone, it can play a monophonic ring tone, which means simple tunes with one sound. But the newer phones can handle polyphonic ring tones. They can play several sounds at the same time, giving the ringing quality a more pleasing sound.

Ring tones can be customized the way your phone rings, from a popular song to a classical hit. Find a ring tones that you like. Don't be stuck with the standard ring sounds that come with your phone. Everybody has those! Stand out with your favorite song or band you love. Once you find a ring tone you like, you have to get it on your phone. Most people just upload the ring tone to their phone with a data cable or they can send it to themselves with a simple phone call.

Ring tones of your new favorite song do serve some purpose, of course — it lets you distinguish your own phone's ring from other phones ringing around you. It's incredibly easy to find and add a song you

like and load it up.

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