

## Sabotaging Growth – Preventive Primer

### CONTEXT

Organizations often find it surprising when they're growth plans are stymied by internal acts of sabotage.

On reflection, these acts are seldom committed intentionally. Rather, they are committed when the NEW goals, objectives, mission and vision of the business are not communicated properly and often.

Growth, for most businesses, is imperative. Without it, organizations stumble and eventually die. Many companies pursue growth by creating 'separate' strategies between the current business (ie customers, markets, products) and the growth business. The objectives are well-intentioned because maintaining the existing business usually requires a different set of skills and activities.

### What Happens?

What happens? – In identifying the business strategy, executives sometimes lose sight of 'Positioning' the importance of growth to the whole organization.

- ❖ **Jealousy:** Feelings of being forgotten children. The 'existing' and stable business feels like they've been left out and all the attention is given to the new 'kids' on the block.
- ❖ **More Work:** New business is usually thrown into the current organization and represents 'more work' for the current team. Until the new business takes shape, the internal support staff usually has to handle these new tasks.
- ❖ **What am I Getting Paid to Do:** Staff sometimes feel as if they have to decide which work is more important. They know and understand why they're getting compensated. Most organizations fail to include the new business in the roles and responsibilities of the existing staff members. As a result, they see no financial benefit in doing this work.
- ❖ **What Should I do First:** Under pressure, employees will almost always, complete the tasks that fall under their direct jurisdiction. As a result, new projects will get shuffled to the side, or get unattended to until tensions have been created. The downside is that new clients therefore feel unappreciated or, worse, feel that their new supplier can't meet its commitments.



## The REMEDY

The remedy, of course, lies in complete and open communication to the business.

- ❖ **Importance of Growth:** Have a communications meeting and outline the new business strategy. Communicate that this new strategy will take time and that there may be failures along the way. Communicate that this new strategy will strengthen the overall business and therefore provide for greater security and opportunity for the existing employees.
- ❖ **How it Fits:** Outline how the new business strategy will fit into the business. Outline expectations of the entire team and what will be expected of everyone initially. People might be called upon for extra support initially and their feedback will be appreciated.
- ❖ **Collective Responsibilities:** Outline that there might be some additional pressures through the growth phase as new customers come forward. Stress that there might be new opportunities for existing personnel if the new division takes off which therefore creates a growth path for existing and long term employees.
- ❖ **Monthly Updates:** Although there might not be any 'sales' initially to announce, outlining the growth in new prospects, the sales pipeline, even losses will help people understand and appreciate the work effort being carried out.
- ❖ **Who's Involved:** Introduce the new team. Make sure that everyone understands who they are and how they can support these individuals. Most important so that when people call in, they are treated as part of the overall team and not outsiders.
- ❖ **Highlight Successes on Both Sides:** Important to profile wins of both teams: existing team and new team. Often, management gets caught up in the excitement of the new business and forgets to applaud the old team. It's important to continue to give credit to those who are still managing the existing business. Usually, this team is responsible for funding the development of the new business.

