



Provocative Proposition

Igniting Champions

Organizations typically profile prospective employees and leaders for a number of vital characteristics – business acumen, management capability, interpersonal skills. Rarely, if ever, do they look for the organizational equivalent to “a spark”.

Rarely do they look for that natural born catalyst. Someone who can initiate great amounts of growth through people. Someone who can see through the bureaucracy and decide what must be done, right now.

Organizations need catalysts now, more than ever. With most employees paralyzed, or at least demoralized by the current economic situation, organizations must tap into a catalyst’s natural abilities and kick-start the road to recovery.

Chemical Reaction

In tough times, catalysts are what you need. Just as importantly, in great times you are also wise to seek out and listen to your catalysts.

Catalysts are wired differently. They understand what it takes to achieve an organization’s growth target, and how to get around roadblocks that may get in the way. The role of the catalyst is to speed up a process that must happen within an organization.

The organization knows what must change, what they must do to reach their target, however it takes a catalyst to cut through the analysis, and bureaucracy to get the process started – now.

Mental Models

Trapped. You can’t do it. There are too many constraints. Bureaucracy, corporate policies, you name it. There is no way you can reach your new, higher targets with this impossible number of constraints. This attitude may be all in your head!

In many cases, organizations teach - or better yet brainwash - managers into believing they cannot take control of the organization and make the changes necessary to achieve long-term substantial growth. In the organization’s eyes, the key is to minimize risk and maximize control. In other words, maintain the

status quo.

As a catalyst you need to see through this trap. If you spend the time and energy (sweat equity), and if you can build a sound business case to achieve the company's goals, you will get the permission you need. As a catalyst, you can change the company.

Keys to Becoming the Catalyst in your Organization

The good news is that catalysts can be profiled. Here are some of the traits they exhibit:

Dominance – As a catalyst you are likely frustrated with the here and now, and are always looking for the next big thing. Catalysts are also very task focused. If the growth target is “meaty” enough, a catalyst will get to work on it immediately.

Influence – Catalysts know that they can't do this alone. You must influence others in the organization to get on board with you, and pursue this new approach together.

Steadfastness – While this trait is important, it may become secondary when there is a major change process underway. Do not be shackled by your organization's past, understand its importance, but don't be constrained by it.

Conscientiousness – Choose uncharted waters for your change plans, learn as you go and don't let rules and regulations get in the way.