

TRANSCENDING PARADOX: MOVEMENT AS A MEANS FOR SUSTAINING HIGH PERFORMANCE

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INTRODUCTION: A STUDY OF SUSTAINED HIGH PERFORMANCE

All things change, nothing is extinguished.... There is nothing in the whole world which is permanent. Everything flows onward; all things are brought into being with a changing nature; the ages themselves glide by in constant movement. (Ovid)

As Ovid said, “There is nothing in the whole world which is permanent.” It is this very premise that frames the discoveries in this paper and the compelling paradox it raises. The research discussed herein began with the simple question: *what supports the sustainability of high performance?* The findings suggest the sustainability of high performance is not a permanent state to be achieved, i.e., sustaining is not about maintaining. Rather, the paradox uncovered offers that sustaining is about being, as Ovid asserts, “in constant movement.”

This idea of sustainability as movement is predicated on the ability of organizational members to move beyond the typical experience of paradox as an impediment to progress. By holding three critical “movements” – *agile/consistency*, *informative/inquiry*, and *collective/individualism* – as active

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polarities, the organizations in the study were able to transcend paradox and take active steps to continuous achievement in outperforming their peers. The study reveals powerful stories of care and service, of the profound grace of human capacity, and of clear actions taken to create significant results. All of this was achieved in an environment of great volatility, which is perhaps why the need to not only be in movement but also capitalize on that movement is critical to success.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A New Environment of Change

The challenge of change in organizations has been a central point of dialogue in organization science from its very beginning. Yet, the need to address the issue of change has become more and more apparent in an age of “permanent whitewater” (Marshak, 1993; Vaill, 1989; Weisbord, 2004) in which information, technology, markets, and people are emerging and advancing at breakneck speed (Beer, 2001; Marshak, 2002). The challenge of change has significant implications for the field of organization development (OD) itself. While by its early definitions, OD represented a process of planned change (Porras & Bradford, 2004; Weisbord, 2004), the shift to an environment of constant change calls for new models by which change is addressed in organizations. The world no longer moves in incremental steps, but rather in significant leaps that call for new modes of effecting change.

The English statesman, David Lloyd George, once said, “*Don’t be afraid to take a big step if one is indicated. You can’t cross a chasm in two small jumps.*” The simple significance of this thought perhaps best captures one of the greatest challenges facing today’s organizations. If organizations become complacent or stationary for too long, it is inevitable that the chasm will continue to widen and our ability to reach the other side will quickly diminish. To remain in shape to make these leaps requires the development of organizational agility (Shafer, 2001) and the need for organizations to be in constant movement.

The shift to an environment of constant change calls for new models and processes by which change is addressed in organizations. The organization that will succeed in this new environment is one that plays the role of destabilizer (Drucker, 1995), meaning it focuses on using knowledge in the moment to guide its actions. The organization for this century must be built to thrive in an environment of continuous change, not simply based on

continuous as evolutionary (Porras & Robertson, 1992; Weick & Quinn, 1999) or incremental, but as continuous and transformational.

Woodman (1993) addressed this very issue, warning us to look at the issue of OD and change with a wider lens. He asserted OD's founders built the field to do "BIG OD"; what he described as second-order transformations at the level of strategy and culture. BIG OD is system-wide change and has no beginning or end, but rather provides a "way of managing complex organizations so that they are able to survive in a world of constant change" (p. 72). He raises the potential that change itself is paradoxical, suggesting it is both transformational and continuous, and emphasizing that managing this dynamic tension should be the rallying cause and "battle cry" of all OD practitioners. Woodman summarizes his point in a simple, yet powerfully integrative statement, "Organization development means (and still means) creating adaptive organizations capable of repeatedly transforming and reinventing themselves" (Woodman, 1993, p. 73). This is a model of change predicated on dynamic movement, not simply change management.

Marshak (2004) supports this notion suggesting the need to build organizations capable of continuous whole-system change. He adds that "the emphasis...be on creating and maintaining capability rather than arriving at some preferred or planned end state" (Marshak, 2004, p. 16). We need to look for new language to help us move beyond the embedded assumptions we currently hold in thinking about change as there is still a strong tendency for organizations to strive for a state of permanence, order, and stability. This reinforces the paradox that to sustain actually calls for us to be in movement and places the concept of paradox itself at the heart of this study of sustaining high performance.

This needed shift in the discourse of change calls for a new way of talking, from static to dynamic and from descriptive to active. Lawler and Worley (2006) suggest that this "new" language is at the core of the *built to change* organization. These organizations do not search for the strategy, but are continuously strategizing. They do not attempt to find the organization design, but rather remain in an ongoing process of organizing. As the data revealed, the sustaining high performers had just such an active and dynamic discourse.

In an increasingly complex world, organizations built on traditional assumptions of stability, equilibrium, alignment and predictability will, more and more, be out of touch and ineffective. Pursuing the latest management fad that is sold as a way to make organizations more efficient, more agile, more reengineered, or more whatever doesn't address the fundamental need for organizations to change more quickly and effectively. (Lawler & Worley, 2006, p. 283)

The speed with which organizations are now called to change is becoming legend (Barczak, Smith, & Wilemon, 1987) and in many ways is ultimately about a continued state of becoming (Kofman & Senge, 1993; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). It requires the abandonment of past practices (Friedman, 2005), the changing of core processes, and retuning of cultural commitments (Nutt & Backoff, 1997). While addressing the nature of organizations as complex and dynamic systems, these complicated phenomena and the contradictions (paradoxes) they raise are ignored as incongruent, inconsistent, and therefore are often overlooked (Quinn & Cameron, 1988). Underlying this is the tendency in management theory to want to reduce these tensions and reconcile potential paradox. Yet, it is in this body of literature, on “irreconcilable” organizational tensions – on paradox itself – where the core concepts for this study are found and where a fundamental contribution to organization theory can be made.

The Perspective of Paradox

Why is it that organization theorists should be concerned with the issues of paradox? What insights does it offer to the understanding of organizations that are not available or have not been available though the existing “nonparadoxical” perspectives? For us, the answer to these questions is quite simple: *paradoxes are important because they reflect the underlying tensions that generate and energize organizational change* (italics added)...A focus on paradox, therefore, moves us away from the concept of organizations as static systems coping with problematic environmental fluctuations through deviation counteracting processes to a concept of organizations as continually dynamic systems that carry the seeds of change within themselves. (Ford & Backoff, 1988, p. 82)

In examining the idea that sustainability itself may actually be grounded in action or movement, we are called to examine the very paradoxical nature of organizations themselves. Many writers have identified the importance of paradox in understanding the complexity of organizational performance (Cameron, 1986; Cameron & Quinn, 1988; Marsh & Macalpine, 1999; Pascale, 1990; Peters & Waterman, 1982). Yet paradox as a concept unto itself continues to carry a stigma in current management thinking. Much of the focus of contemporary theory construction is still biased toward the side of permanence, order, and stability (Poole & Van de Ven, 1989). Little has been addressed in looking at the tensions or oppositions (paradoxes) in organizations. Investigations of complex organizational phenomena continue to focus on linear solutions and equilibrium, either ignoring contradictions or identifying one polarity as good and the other bad in order to resolve the

issue (Quinn & Cameron, 1988). This suggests there is still a general discomfort with the idea of, and feeling experienced when facing, paradox.

This avoidance of, and attempt to, resolve paradox seems common to organizational thinking. While acknowledging paradox exists, many continue to suggest it is something to be “managed” (Morgan, 1997; Peters & Waterman, 1982) or “addressed” (Van de Ven & Poole, 1988). In contrast, as paradox has become more prevalent in organizational studies (Lewis, 2000; Poole & Van de Ven, 1989; Quinn, 1988; Quinn & Cameron, 1988), it has also emerged as an effective means to explore what is taking place in organizations (Luscher, Lewis, & Ingram, 2006).

In recognizing paradox we are exposed to, and can more effectively explore, the complexity and ambiguity of organizational life (Cameron & Quinn, 1988). In developing a model for sustaining high performance, paradox presents a powerful means to get at the dynamic factors involved and can serve as a viable path to developing theory (Poole & Van de Ven, 1989). In looking for organizational tensions, we can stimulate the development of broader and more interesting (Bartunek, Rynes, & Ireland, 2006; Davis, 1971) theoretical concepts.

While understanding paradox does not solve problems (Luscher et al., 2006), it creates the potential for new possibilities. The presence of paradox and the tensions raised by their duality creates the potential for action and energizes organizational change (Ford & Backoff, 1988). This supports the ongoing nature of action and continuous movement as a means for creating new opportunities. If we deny the presence of paradox in favor of a stable or consistent framework we in essence restrict the very movement, and therefore the progress, an organization can make.

If realities are constructed (as is suggested), paradox is a function of how construction is accomplished, and the dualities of paradox provide the energy for change, then it is possible to bring about organizational change through the creation of paradox... It is the creation of paradoxical tension which serves as the basis for change. (Ford & Backoff, 1988, p. 114)

Morgan (1997) suggests successfully managing change in organizations requires the ability to deal with the “contradictory tensions” of paradox. The perspective that tensions are contradictory could stand in the way of change. He dubs this the “inevitable struggle of opposites,” adding to lead successful change; managers must be skilled in managing the tensions that arise.

Poole and Van de Ven also suggest the importance of taking on this struggle of opposites, identifying how certain perceptions of and reactions to

paradox, can stand in the way of building sound theory (Poole & Van de Ven, 1989; Van de Ven & Poole, 1988).

If unacknowledged and unresolved, a paradox can drive theorists to emphasize one pole over the other, in an attempt to maintain an elusive consistency. Organization and management theorists have not been immune to this tendency. Most efforts to build theories of organization change have emphasized either action or structure, stability or change, external or internal causality, and have subordinated the other terms. In part, this tendency to deny the existence of paradox may be due to the common quest to achieve coherent, consistent, and parsimonious theories. But this quest often appears to minimize appreciation of the paradoxes inherent in human beings and their social institutions. (Van de Ven & Poole, 1988, p. 21)

Even with the recognition that paradox is part of organizational life and in the face of many who suggest it is in paradox that we find the potential for the greatest outcomes, there still seems to be a tendency toward the resolution of paradox versus living in the paradox in search of new “truths” (Van de Ven & Poole, 1988). To find these truths and capitalize on paradox, Fiol (2002) suggests that organizations must use “the inherent tensions to one’s advantage rather than ignoring or resolving them” (p. 655). She too asserts the tendency of research to avoid or look for a means to resolve these tensions versus exploring how to use them.

While the literature identifies the existence of paradox as an unavoidable part of organizational life, it also suggests that much of the effort in organizations today is focused on reducing paradoxical situations. Lewis (2000) provides an alternative perspective, suggesting rather than attempting to reduce the tension of paradox or rationalize its existence we should use paradox to generate insight and change. She believes that the linear models under which we tend to frame organizational action do a great disservice to the complex organizations today. We cannot turn from paradox and suppress the tensions paradox may reveal.

Lewis discusses three means by which researchers have chosen to address paradox. The first, *acceptance*, is the freedom to live with a paradox, allowing it to exist not as a source of conflict, but acknowledging it as part of organizational life. The second, *confrontation*, is as it suggests, taking on a paradox with the intention of shifting its presence and ultimately reducing the tension it brings. The third, Lewis suggests is *transcendence*, which represents the “capacity to think paradoxically” (Lewis, 2000, p. 764). This is a reframing of thinking that incorporates paradox in an organization’s “way of being.” Rather than seen as contradictory to action, the tensions associated with paradox are experienced as complementary. Transcendence is not the removal of paradox. It is changing the way in

which it is experienced from a potential impediment to a potent and powerful force.

While it is widely recognized that the paradoxes found in organizational life are unavoidable, little has been offered on how organizational change and paradox actually allow for the sustainability of organization vitality and performance. This exploration into what supports the sustainability of performance is grounded in these two very items – paradox and change – and leads us to the critical intersection between them. The literature has provided a grounding in change and a suggestion that BIG OD – continuous, transformational change – has a significant position in exploring what effects organizations today. The literature also expresses the unavoidable challenges paradox poses, as the prevailing tendencies are to manage paradox versus use it as a constructive part of organizational life. Only in Lewis' (2000) suggestion that paradox can be transcended, do we begin to explore a new way to experience and exist with paradox as the regular element of organizational life it is. If sustainability is paradoxically juxtaposed with movement, the possibility for looking at how we lead change and strive for performance outcomes in organizations can be fundamentally impacted. Lewis perhaps summed this up best and begins to frame the potential for an emerging theory in her conclusion.

The rising intricacy, ambiguity, and diversity of organizations place a premium on researchers' abilities to think paradoxically: to live and even thrive within the plurality and changes of organizational life and help practitioners do likewise. Building this capacity requires confronting our own defenses – the desire to over rationalize and oversimplify the complications of organizational life – and learning to explore the natural ebb and flow of tensions. (2000, p. 774)

Paradoxes both energize change and move us beyond the view of organizations as static systems to the potential of movement itself (Ford & Backoff, 1988). If we deny the presence of paradox or are simply stopped by it, we restrict the very movement an organization can make. Ultimately it is in transcending paradox (Lewis, 2000; Pascale, 1990) through which we discover the potential for the sustaining of organizational performance.

THE RESEARCH JOURNEY

An Initial Exploration and Emerging Question

This paper finds its roots in research initially conducted in 2005 at Healthco (a large hospital company) that was focused on determining the key drivers

of business performance. The central questions of the inquiry were what was it that had some facilities rise and stay above the rest; what could we learn from them; and how could we help others achieve the same outcomes? It was believed that performance characteristics could be identified from these “high-performing facilities” and shared among other facilities in the company. (High performers were identified as those facilities that were in the top quartile of all Healthco facilities and/or trending to the top quartile in four core measures – employee engagement, turnover, patient satisfaction, and productivity – as well as outperforming the company in outcomes measures including quality and financial performance.) This foundational study identified seven central characteristics including visionary leadership, consistent and effective communication, selecting for fit and providing ongoing development of staff, maintaining an agile and open culture, ensuring service is job one, supporting constant recognition and community involvement, and creating solid relationships (Wolf, 2008).

In continuing to monitor the performance of the original 12 facilities from the initial inquiry over an extended period from 2002 to 2007, it was discovered that 9 continued to meet the selection criteria established in determining “high performers” and outperformed Healthco on a number of measures. Over that period, these “sustaining” facilities averaged over seven percentage points higher in employee engagement score, over four points lower in turnover percentage, and over five percentage points higher in margin performance. While the qualitative findings in the study discussed below paint a compelling picture about what took place within the organizations sustaining high performance, it is this extended look at the quantitative data that substantiates the validity and reinforces the impact of the findings. It also supports why the question about sustainability has significantly bigger implications than simply new theoretical considerations. Not only do sustaining high performers impact the people they touch, they also impact the critical measures of business success.

The extended data coupled with the ability to identify both “sustaining” and “nonsustaining” (those no longer meeting the original criteria) facilities raised an interesting set of questions. Perhaps it was not just “having” characteristics that caused “high performance,” but rather was it possible that the characteristics initially discovered were merely manifestations of a more significant cause driving and sustaining performance. Why did certain facilities continue to thrive while others did not? What allowed these facilities to outperform the remainder of the organization over this extended period of time? And ultimately, the central question of this study: *what supports the sustainability of high performance?*

Methodology

The study followed a qualitative approach (Cresswell, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It was grounded in the ideas of generative theory (Gergen, 1978), which closely aligns with this exploration of potentially paradoxical concepts. Instead of substantiating “truth,” generative theory looks to “unseat the comfortable truths of wide acceptance” (Gergen, p. 1357).

The study was based on 41 interviews conducted at 12 different hospital locations: the 9 “sustaining” and 3 “nonsustaining” facilities. Interviews at the sustaining facilities were held with the CEO, longest tenured executive, longest tenured staff member, a director or manager with tenure from at least 2000 and a staff member with tenure from at least 2000. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview protocol (Rubin & Rubin, 2005), digitally recorded and transcribed resulting in almost 900 pages of data.

Using the conventions of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), a comprehensive coding process was conducted including open and axial coding, and outcomes were confirmed via a multi-rater validation. The findings were then compared with those of four research partners to enrich the interpretive process. Once codes were identified (over 1200 raw codes initially) a review of the data was conducted to categorize and identify key themes. The initial code count was reduced to 128 initial categories, which were then grouped into 24 supercategories capturing the main concepts developed in the study. The supercategories were consolidated into 10 key themes. After additional review, the 10 themes were refined into 3 core concepts, representing 3 active polarities – the 3 movements of sustaining high performance – within the subject facilities.

FINDINGS

The findings in this study were drawn from hundreds of stories shared by participants in the hospitals studied. While this paper cannot share every story told, it touches on the compelling and powerful messages they conveyed as represented by the three movements of sustaining high performance uncovered in this study. Each movement is comprised of three key actions (Table 1) that represent what the sustaining high performers revealed as critical to their ability to achieve ongoing performance. The movements and key actions are not items to simply check off. They are actions that must be

Table 1. The Three Movements and Nine Key Actions in Sustaining High Performance (Wolf, 2009).

| Movement | Key Actions |
|--------------------------|--|
| Agile/consistency | Acting with clarity of purpose Going above and beyond Challenging the status quo |
| Informative/inquiry | Caring about our people Seeking input and sharing information Walking the talk |
| Collective individualism | Committing to who Connecting and caring Acting with ownership and autonomy |

taken on relentlessly day after day. Sustaining performance is a never-ending journey that requires great stamina, resolve, and a commitment to these fundamentals.

Agile/Consistency

The first movement, *agile/consistency*, represents the culture, or consciousness, of the organization. It appeared in the data almost 600 times. The stories related to this finding talk about the sustaining high-performing facilities “acting with a clarity in purpose,” i.e., a determination and resolute focus on a desired result. They also tell of these facilities balancing this focus with a strong willingness to “challenge the status quo” with a commitment to positive change and continuous improvement. These items were found in the data on almost 400 occasions. *Agile/consistency* represents both a focus on purpose and a balanced commitment to progress that provide people the ability to move toward moments of anxiety, but without fear. This movement represents the capacity to engage in organization efforts and participate in guiding organizational outcomes not as contradictory to purpose, but rather as contributing to cause.

The data provide us insight to a precarious, but potentially important balance. At one end is the need for consistency in organizations as seen in many of the responses of participants who stated “we have clear shared expectations,” a “common commitment to purpose,” and “we all focus on the same goals.” At the other is the need for agility to address the challenges

of a rapidly changing world. The recognition of this shows up across the data in phrases such as “we change what needs to be changed,” “we make changes quickly,” and “we are willing to change as required to be better.” This dynamic tension presents itself in the recognition over and over that these facilities are clear about who they are, but realize that the world may call them to adapt at any given moment. The third element that comprises the movement *agile/consistency* is tied directly to the last phrase shared above “as required to be better.” The theme of “going above and beyond,” which appears almost 200 times in the data, presents that potential balancing point where focus on purpose and a commitment to progress meet.

The first of three key actions under *agile/consistency* is *acting with clarity of purpose*. The data showed these organizations to have a strong sense of collective self and organizational pride supported by a sense of personal connection to the organization and the contributions people could make. This is supported by the second key action, *going above and beyond*, which represents the ability of individuals to do what it takes to create peak experiences for customers and for one another. One CEO annually challenges his staff to list what achievements they will strive for in the year ahead. The goals, such as “Best Place to Work,” “Magnet Status,” and “Baldrige” are taken on as critical commitments aligned with the purpose of the organization. This is reflected in the significant number of times participants referred to their facility as striving “to be the best.” The third key action is *challenging the status quo*. The ability to challenge the status quo is reinforced by an environment that supports people’s efforts to try new things. Most importantly it is the ability to do so with the knowledge that mistakes are not career-ending, but rather the discoveries they lead to (positive or negative) are seen as organizational gifts. This belief, that it is far better to fail trying than not to do at all, represents the very idea of movement. Following a consistently clear purpose, while maintaining the agility to alter course, trying new ideas and taking on new endeavors is one key movement in sustaining performance.

An example of *agile/consistency* can be seen in the following story, where acting on needs and making appropriate changes trumped long committee-based decision-making processes. The nurse was able to distinguish what made her current facility a sustaining high performer versus her “frustrating” experiences at a previous hospital. What is also provided in this story is an insight shared throughout the data; that “challenging the status quo” is not about change for the sake of change. It seems in situation after situation, as exemplified below, the sought-after changes were aligned with the purpose of the facility.

One of the things that attracted me to come here to begin with was that I was frustrated at my previous hospital by the fact that in order to get something changed or to do something you had to submit it to this committee. Then it went to this committee and that committee. Our CEO here told me if you need to change it, do it, if it works fine, if it doesn't that's okay too, you tried. If we need something for patient care that improves patient care, you don't have to justify it. I don't even have to tell her what it is, I just tell her what I need and she says well get it. If it's for patient care, for staff, if it is improvement related, we don't have to go through committees or submit a financial statement on why it's important. That was very frustrating at the other facilities, you want to change a process and six months later they may agree to go ahead and let you change. But [our CEO] is like well do it. Everybody knows that, if we want to try something we can, as long as it's for the right reason.

Another interesting takeaway from this story has appeared across the data and is woven into all three movements. It is both the freedom to make decisions on needed change and also the freedom to make mistakes –“if it works fine, if it doesn't that's okay too, you tried.” The CEO the subject described also made a comment to this effect during her interview telling me she would rather her people challenge what they do to make it better and mess it up (not too bad of course), than leave things as they are and never achieve their purpose.

This willingness to step up and take on what needs to happen sits at the very balance of *agile/consistency* – where “acting with clarity of purpose” is balanced by “challenging the status quo.” In holding this paradox throughout the data, respondents said, “we are ready to change” and “we can make changes quickly.” One participant noted, “Our facility is a work in progress.” This simple statement perhaps is one the most powerful elements of this entire movement. That though rooted in principle, and committed in direction and purpose, these organizations report in the data that standing still is simply a definition for falling behind.

In comparison, in one of the nonsustainers, a long-tenured leader tells of feeling he has his “hands tied” and does not have the ability to make decisions. This has a significant impact on the ability to have either clarity in purpose or challenge the status quo. The idea in this example that they “would have done things differently,” but in essence were unable to, shows how *agile/consistency* was stopped before it could even take root.

Yeah, well the problem is that from where I sit leadership doesn't always get to make the decisions...so I think if you look at what we do here, would we have done some things differently or maybe a different way? Yeah, I think we would have. Does that lead to some sense of not following through? Yeah, I think so, because I think what ends up happening is we want to do it a certain way and [instead we are told] I'd like to see you do it like this...We're not as independent as we used to be and we can't make our own decisions like we used to.

This statement exemplifies the very fragile nature of *agile/consistency* in these organizations. You can see that while identified as a high performer in the initial study, the manager talks about having a greater sense of autonomy in leadership and the ability to make decisions. Now, identified as a nonsustainer, “we can’t make our own decisions like we used to.” This limitation in the culture of the organization contracts an individual’s ability to strive above and beyond or challenge the status quo. If it is these actions that support the movement needed to sustain high performance, you can begin to see how easy it is to falter.

Informative/Inquiry

The second movement, *informative/inquiry*, represents the important influence of leadership in sustaining organization performance. It was represented in the data over 500 times. The stories representing *informative/inquiry* express the impact of leadership at all levels of the organization. In particular it touches on the critical balance of two key components. The first, a willingness to inform and share critical information, or as one subject said, “they’re willing to share the good, the bad and the ugly”; the second, an openness to inquire, which is different than simply “listening.” This sense of inquiry was represented in the data over 150 times. As some participants defined it, it is the accessibility to leadership and the active gathering of input that brings leaders closer to their people. One interviewee said with great pride that “they actually listen,” while another expressed that leadership truly “wants to hear from people.”

This effort to both actively seek and share information appeared in the data not simply in standard examples such as rounding or an open-door policy, but rather as clear and sometimes very unique efforts of leaders at all levels to engage with and show they care about their people. This idea of caring expressed by leadership showed up over 120 times in the data. As one executive shared, “I have to walk the talk.” In the end, the data seem to suggest that it is a very personal and intentional action of building strong relationships.

While this movement focuses on the critical role of leadership in sustaining high performance, it is not directed simply at leadership traits or styles such as “transformational” or “visionary.” Rather, this movement suggests it is the constancy of actions from leadership at all levels in the organization that has the most significant impact, not the consistency of individual. One of the most resilient of the sustaining organizations in the

study had a change in CEO two times over the course of the six years examined, yet maintained their results. Leadership is not necessarily about the individual, but rather about how the fundamentals of leadership are applied throughout the organization.

The first key action is *caring about people*, which focuses on sincere interest in and respect for people across the organization. This fundamental action carries great weight in supporting the engagement of people in supporting performance. The second action, *seeking input and sharing information*, is more than delivering communication. It represents the consistent effort to reach out to people in the organization for their ideas, concerns, and contributions. Most critical as the data suggested is the informal communication process in which leadership invests the time to personally connect with people, while gathering a broad collection of information from people across the organization. The third key action is *walking the talk*. This may be the core of effective leadership in sustaining high performance. The data suggested that the impact of leaders doing what they say, of living their words through their actions captures the very essence of the simple yet powerful nature of the movements in sustaining high performance. It is in walking the talk that commitment is realized and respect is delivered. It is also where commitment to and respect for leadership is earned. Leadership action has a significant impact in generating the outcomes of sustained performance.

An example of *informative/inquiry* can be seen in the following story told by a longest tenured executive. It is just one example of many from the data in which leadership has had influence through their actions outside of the administrative suite or director's office. In this story, the CEO shows up to work the night shift. In fact, he and his executive team have a commitment with the facility to work rotating shifts throughout the year. In this example we see how walking the talk provides the opportunity for *informative/inquiry* to be realized. The commitment this story expresses is about leadership not just being visible, but about turning visibility into input, and input into results.

There's simple little things like when [our CEO came in to work] the night shift, he went into the ICU and said hey, how's it going, what do you guys need? We need a microwave. The next day he orders a microwave. How simple, but guess what, how timely was that? They want a microwave, get a microwave and get it in there today. That's a simple example. The ER still talks about the time that he pushed patients down to the room [when he worked a shift in the ER], where he actually said okay, here I am, can you help us move this patient? The CEO of the hospital moving the patient... that is walking the talk.

As this subject says, “that is walking the talk” and perhaps in some ways this concept touches on the core “mechanics” of this movement, walking and talking. The data seem to suggest that we need to be cautious in not accepting the concept of “walking the talk” as simply being visible. The data also seem to show us that what is most appreciated is when leaders engage with their people as a person first, meet them where they work, hear from them where they hurt, and share with them what is critical to move the organization forward.

The differences found in the nonsustainers are exemplified in the following story shared by one facility director. While he makes an effort to connect with his team, he follows this with the fact that “you always hear the administration never comes up.” This lack of visibility and the resulting inability to either inform or inquire, make this movement nearly impossible to implement in these facilities.

One positive in the example is that amongst nonsustainers, there seems to be an intentional effort to address this challenge and turn these perceptions around. This action probably springs from the roots of high performance, which remain embedded in the organization from the period of the original study. If properly nurtured, these roots may provide the opportunity for sustained high performance to reestablish itself in the future.

I know on my unit it helps that I do spend time getting to know them, you always hear that administration never comes up, they don't know us, so on this last survey one of the problems my staff had still was on communication, and that one I jumped on in a staff meeting and said okay, here's your problem that you all have that I can't fix, you have to tell me what this problem is. I said is it a communication problem from the floor level, from me, or are you still talking about administration? And it was administration. I said well, the first thing we're going to do then is every month for our staff meeting we're going to invite somebody different to come to the meeting that you can talk to and get to know, because we do have some people who have been here a fairly short time, we've got a new CFO, and our CNO has been here about a year now, so it just takes a little while, especially on the night shifts, to think they know everybody.

This example still unveils a challenge this facility faces in comparison to what the data reveal about the sustaining high performers. In the subject facilities, leadership, especially at the senior level, was the catalyst and driver of communication. Yet, in the situation described above, it is the department leader who has to reach up to engage the executive leadership in opening lines of communication. Until the administration begins an active effort of outreach to both inform and inquire, the sustainability of high performance for this facility will remain out of reach.

Collective/Individualism

The third movement, *collective/individualism*, represents the powerful element of people in the organizations. It was found in the interviews on almost 800 occasions. The stories related to this finding tell of the accomplishments of strong individual contributors. They expand on these accomplishments as not just an individual achievement, but as exponential successes resulting from the strong collaboration among members of the organization, both across departmental boundaries and spanning the organizational hierarchy. The data provides story after story of both the strengths of the individuals that comprise a facility and the synergy of excellence generated by the connection of these individuals with one another.

This movement represents the polarities of ensuring the right people are part of your organization; people who are aligned with, understand, and are committed to the organization's purpose and direction; people who can serve as strong individual contributors, but who also recognize that in spite of individual strength they can most effectively contribute by using their individual strength in powerfully collaborating across individual and organizational boundaries. This engages us in the systemic perspective of organizations that while they represent a collection of individuals, it is the organization that provides the framework for accomplishment. The idea of collaboration does not diminish individual contribution, but rather expands organizational capability.

This movement is grounded in the fundamental human principles of caring and commitment, directed not only at the organization and its customers but also with great focus on colleagues. The three themes comprising this concept include *committing to who*, *acting with ownership and autonomy*, and *connecting and caring*. The concept of caring appeared in the interviews almost 350 times. Commitment itself appeared just under 300 times, while ownership and autonomy appeared almost 200 times.

The first key action, *committing to who*, is grounded in the idea of getting the right people on board, but it is not only the attraction and acquisition of talent. It also takes us to the next level of our commitment to each of those individuals with an investment in developmental opportunities. *Connecting and caring* is the next key action and is about providing the opportunity for people in the organization to connect with one another, weave a network (that many in the study referred to as "family") that is supportive even in the face of critical work demands. This action is about ensuring someone's basic needs are met, not as mandatory management action, but rather from a groundswell of collegial support. This is not to suggest that every

individual will embrace one another in any organizational setting, but the data shows sustaining high performance is solidly grounded on the level of care shown for and among people across the organization, from outreach in moments of crisis to celebrations in moments of joy. The support for and encouragement of personal connection has a profound effect on the sustaining of performance. The last of the key actions is *acting with ownership and autonomy*. This is the freedom and ability of members of the organization to make significant decisions at the point of contact. These actions come from people who feel they are not at risk for doing the wrong thing and given the opportunity continuously do what is right. Decision hierarchies may be necessary for significant expenditures or fundamental strategy shifts, but providing the space for individuals to make contributions through their daily interactions and individual decisions without the fear of retribution or punishment plays a significant role in supporting the movement of *collective/individualism* and its role in sustaining high performance.

An example of *collective/individualism* in action is seen on this final story. It shares the actions of the nurse that exemplify both personal ownership and a freedom to act without the need for “permission.” This autonomy literally takes this nurse far from her unit and in essence alters her role from nurse to valet as she strives to provide the best possible experience for this patient.

This is a story about one of my nurses. She had a patient that was elderly and he had parked in building C, we're in A, and she said to him where did you park? He said I'm out at building C. She said let me push you in the wheelchair over there. So she pushed him way over to building C and she got to the bottom floor and she said now, where's your car? He said it's in the back row. Okay. She pushed him all the way up the hill, all the way to the back row, and she found that the people next to him had parked so close to him that he couldn't get in there with his walker. So she had to leave him locked in the chair, get in his car, back his car out, and then help him get in the car. I thought, you know, that is [our hospital].

This story presents a powerful metaphor of continuing to stretch beyond the boundaries individuals oftentimes feel in their roles, whether by organizational constraints or by the self-imposed thought, “that is not my responsibility.” The untold portion of this story, as expressed by the subject sharing this experience, is about what occurred when the nurse returned to the unit after a longer than expected absence. As she began to relay her story to her peers, rather than finger pointing or blaming for her absence, there was collective laughter at the never-ending journey she took on behalf of one of their patients.

As the interviewee shared, “This is an example of the type of facility we want to be. It is what we have been taught and encouraged to do.” While there was probably not a formal protocol for taking a patient to his car at the far reaches of the parking lot, let alone pulling his car out of a space to provide easier access, the nurse in the story acted within the “boundaries” of the type of facility they wanted to be. The story provides a glimpse at how a sense of ownership can link with the freedom to act, and in this case provided the nurse the opportunity to have a powerful impact on this patient far beyond direct care. I can only imagine later that day, the elderly gentleman sitting with his family or friends telling the incredible story of the personal nurse/valet service he received. The autonomy and ownership exemplified by this individual had ripple effects well beyond the boundaries of her “job” that day. It exemplifies that the right individual connected to the right sense of commitment to the whole is a critical element in sustaining high performance.

In contrast, an example from a nonsustaining facility paints quite a different picture. A manager describes a situation in which nurses do not get up to respond to call lights due to the belief of “that’s not my patient.” The story presents conflicts with the very notion of both strong contributors, exemplified in people’s unwillingness to act, and collaboration, as it is evident that the individuals are only committed to doing what is specifically assigned to them.

A lot of times, patients, when they call out to the desk and they need something, there will be three people sitting there, but that’s not their patient, so they don’t get up. I said the patient doesn’t know why you’re not getting up. If you’re sitting then you need to be answering call lights, because these are all our patients.

While a simple story, it serves as a powerful example of how the actions of *collective/individualism* can easily fall by the wayside in one simple moment. The nurses in the example are just “sitting there” because “that’s not their patient.” The story provides an example of how people’s perspective on their role (*committing to who*), may be linked to these individuals choosing not to *act with ownership or autonomy* to address the situation, and in doing so, potentially misses the mark of *connecting and caring* for one another and even more so for the patients in need. This example shows how fragile the nature of *collective/individualism* is and how easily it can be derailed.

This overview of findings presents the central themes discovered through the voices of people across the facilities in the study. While only a sampling of the stories are shared here, those supporting the three movements signify a consistency in commitment, clarity in purpose, and a focus on action that

is reflective of the importance of dynamic movement versus static characteristics. The stories of the nonsustainers paint an even more critical picture, one that expresses the truly fragile nature of sustaining high performance. The movements and key actions discovered represent an active picture of daily life in these facilities. We also see that if we falter on any one, if we become stagnant in our commitment and action, that it is far too easy to slip backwards. The data ultimately suggest constancy in focus and a commitment to action that leads to sustaining. They also offer that it is not one movement alone, but their connected nature that supports these facilities' ability to face the paradox of sustainability as movement and distinguish themselves as sustaining high performers.

DISCUSSION

The Importance of Paradox

In reflecting on the findings of the question, *what supports the sustainability of high performance*, I am struck by the powerful simplicity of the theoretical potential revealed in the data. One may be hard pressed to call the individual components of the findings in this research "unique" if each of them were to stand alone. Yet the findings suggest that in the act of sustaining they do not stand alone. Rather it is in the paradoxical nature of the movements through which the potential for a new conversation on change and sustaining performance emerges.

High performance is not a fixed state to be achieved by following a certain "recipe" (Quinn, 1988) or even an end itself (Pascale, 1990). Quinn (1988) suggests instead, "excellence is a paradoxical phenomenon that emerges under conditions of uncertainty and creative tension" (p. 12). Cameron (1986) contends that to be effective an organization must possess attributes that are "simultaneously contradictory." Without tensions between simultaneous opposites, unproductive "schismogenesis" occurs (a process of self-reinforcement where one action/attribute perpetuates itself and becomes extreme and dysfunctional). Paradox, on the other hand, calls for mutually exclusive opposites (e.g., strong individuals and powerful collaboration as found in *collective-individualism*), not those that are mutually reinforcing (e.g., dominance and submission). Can it be then that paradox itself provides the tension deemed critical to organization performance?

Janstch (1975), as cited in Ford and Backoff (1988), stresses that the potential for action itself is realized in the tensions created by the opposing

ends of paradox. Eisenhardt (2000) adds that vibrant organizations drive change and performance by their ability to simultaneously hold the two states in a paradox. She asserts that this action is not simply finding a “bland halfway point” between the two extremes, but rather it is being in constant flux in exploring and capitalizing on this creative tension. This movement, the pursuit of simultaneous contradiction, counters the extreme outcomes of schismogenesis and can serve in supporting organizational effectiveness (Cameron, 1986) and performance.

A Metaphor of Movement

There is more than one way to live in a world of paradox (Smith & Berg, 1987). While stuckness is often the fate faced by groups, there is also the potential that efforts to engage in coexisting opposites will lead to movement. Smith and Berg (1987) define movement as “the exploration of new ground [and] the leaving of old patterns” (p. 215). This definition returns us to some of the very fundamentals organizations face today; the nature and pace of change in today’s world requires a continuous, transformational (Marshak, 2002, 2004; Woodman, 1993) capability. Accepting this, the exploring of new ground and leaving old patterns is not just a “nice” thing to do, it is the necessary thing to do in order to compete and sustain performance in this environment. With this, the concept of movement emerges as a critical component for the sustaining of performance.

The question then is how is movement achieved? Smith and Berg (1987) suggest this results from one thing – living within paradox.

By staying within the paradox, by immersing oneself in the opposing forces, it becomes possible to discover the link between them, the framework that gives meaning to apparent contradictions in the experience. The discovery...of the link provides the release essential for group movement (p. 215).

While Smith and Berg’s thoughts focus on group life, I would suggest that these principles show up in a much more significant manner in the core consciousness, representative actions and determined leadership of organizations sustaining performance. The three movements themselves represent not just a way of being for an organization looking to sustain performance, but they encompass the central actions organizations can take to move performance forward.

So how does an organization ensure the transformation of these movements from potential roadblocks to a pathway to sustained success?

I suggest it comes down to the ability of an organization to reframe the paradoxes they face, experiencing them as complementary polarities, as continuums of good organizational behavior, which contribute to success. This starts with the simple choice of being in movement. Yet it calls for one more step in facing paradox, which is found in the ability to reframe it, create a new consciousness in action, and move toward the transcendence (Lewis, 2000; Pascale, 1990; Schumacher, 1977) of paradox itself.

Transcending Paradox: Beyond Contradiction to Continuum

The “paramount attribute characterizing organizations that have the capacity to adapt successfully (to turbulent times) is the presence of paradox” (Cameron, 1986, p. 545). It also is this adaptive capacity that is fundamental to achieving high performance. Cameron’s statement in some ways seems contradictory in its own right, in that to adapt organizations actually need to acknowledge and capitalize on the presence of paradox, yet paradox continues to be seen by many as a significant impediment to progress.

Perhaps the simplest step the sustaining high performers take is recognizing the very paradoxes that frame the actions they take. They seem to understand that organizations are, at their core, dynamic entities that live in a world wrought with paradox. The sustainers’ very willingness to be in motion and take on simultaneous, complementary actions holds the key to sustaining success. This is the act of transcendence (Lewis, 2000; Pascale, 1990).

The concept of transcendence has significant implications in looking at how organizations sustain high performance. It brings us back to our earlier discussion that high performance is not a state to be achieved, but a perpetual movement. It is the willingness to be in action and to take on levels of broader consciousness. Pascale (1990) offers a challenge to the management principles of the day, warning of the complacency of organizations in today’s business environment. He suggests that with operational excellence seemingly an end unto itself, organizations have the tendency to believe they have achieved and in essence stop moving. He believes the biggest challenge we potentially face is the tendency upon reaching perceived achievement to set and stand fast with the status quo that helped us to achieve success. This too contradicts the reality of the turbulent environments we face.

Organizations today often find themselves stuck trying to repeat the one solution that helped them achieve desired results in the past. The “answer”

replaces action, and eventually stuckness overcomes movement. If organizations are unwilling to move to keep pace with the constant change we face, it is easy to see how sustaining success would be virtually impossible. The challenge for organizations is to have the willingness to take the bold step into the fray, to address paradox head on, and in doing so transcend its potential drag and thrive in its potential. It is through the ability to transcend (Pascale, 1990) paradox that unleashes the creative possibility found within paradox itself. In transcending paradox the tensions of opposites shift from dualities (either/or) to polarities (ends of a continuum). Interactions shift from “either/or,” to “and/also,” moving beyond static state to dynamic tension. But how do we make this shift?

Pascale suggests a simple path to reaching this transcendent capacity, asserting the potential rests in our imagination. This is a powerful and profound suggestion; that fundamentally our challenge in organizations has been a failure of imagination. For example, until the four-minute mile barrier was surpassed, we did not have the belief it was possible.

This idea of *transcendent consciousness* allows organizations to make the choice of moving toward either a state of stability (a convergent solution that restricts capacity) or a mindset of dynamic tension, which is the capability of a system to absorb change and effectively adapt. This is reflected by the continuous, transformational “state” of change that sustaining high performers have purposefully chosen.

Paradox lives and moves in this realm; it is the art of balancing opposites in such a way that they do not cancel each other but shoot sparks of light across their points of polarity. It looks at our desperate either/ors and tells us they are really both/ands – that life is larger than any of our concepts and can, if we let it, embrace our contradictions. (Mary Morrison cited in Smith & Berg, 1987, p. 3)

The idea of *transcending* paradox shifts the thinking from that of convergent problem solving to a reframing of the inherent tensions. Instead, contradictions become complementary and integrated polarities. The link between potentially opposing forces allows for dynamic movement and an oscillation between two continuous poles (Smith & Berg, 1987) – the ebb and flow between polarities. Ford and Backoff (1988) suggest, “the steering of a viable course requires that opposites...be balanced dynamically, rather than hold to one side or the other” (p. 88). This supports the findings that in continually balancing agility and consistency, collectivism and individuality, and informing and inquiring these organizations take on sustaining itself as movement.

Can we then say that sustaining itself is about movement? I would suggest we must.

Thus being long lasting does not mean being in a fixed or definitive state. Being fixed and definitive, a thing cannot last long. The way to be constant is to change according to circumstance. (I Ch'eng as translated by Chan, cited by Marshak, 1993, p. 402)

A MODEL FOR SUSTAINING HIGH PERFORMANCE

In framing a model for sustaining high performance, we first ground it in an understanding of the power of an almost unconscious, continuous, transformational (Marshak, 1993; Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996; Weick & Quinn, 1999; Woodman, 1993), and morphogenic (Marshak, 2004) change process. We incorporate an understanding of the relational nature of humanness (Gergen, 1999; Gergen & Walter, 1998; Homans, 1951/1992) and dynamic balance (Bertalanffy, 1950; Evans, 1992; Guerra, 2005; Katz & Kahn, 1966; Smith & Berg, 1987), and include the recognition of unity in polarity (Durlabhji, 2004; Karcher, 1999; Marshak, 1993; Sun, 1999).

The result is the connection of the three central movements, *collective/individualism*, *agile/consistency*, and *informative/inquiry*, as individual polarities linked in a state of dynamic balancing and ongoing interaction.

As represented in the model (Fig. 1), each movement maintains the unity of its own "trilarity" of key actions, while contributing to the overall whole. Each part of the model represents movement and the continuous balancing of polarities. As the data show, the power of *collective/individualism* (people) enables strong individuals to interact and collaborate in powerful ways. The strength of *agile/consistency* (culture) provides unwavering purpose and the ability to rapidly respond in a moment's notice. The reach of *informative/inquiry* (leadership) supports an internal dialogue that not only informs, but continually learns and supports the very ability of its counterparts to operate most effectively.

Central to the model is that the movements coexist and are in a mode of continuous action. While at times one movement or another may ebb and flow, it is only together that they are effective in sustaining high performance. It is through the very complementary nature of the movements and the interconnectedness of their individual contributions that the system gets its power and the potential exists for the sustaining of performance.

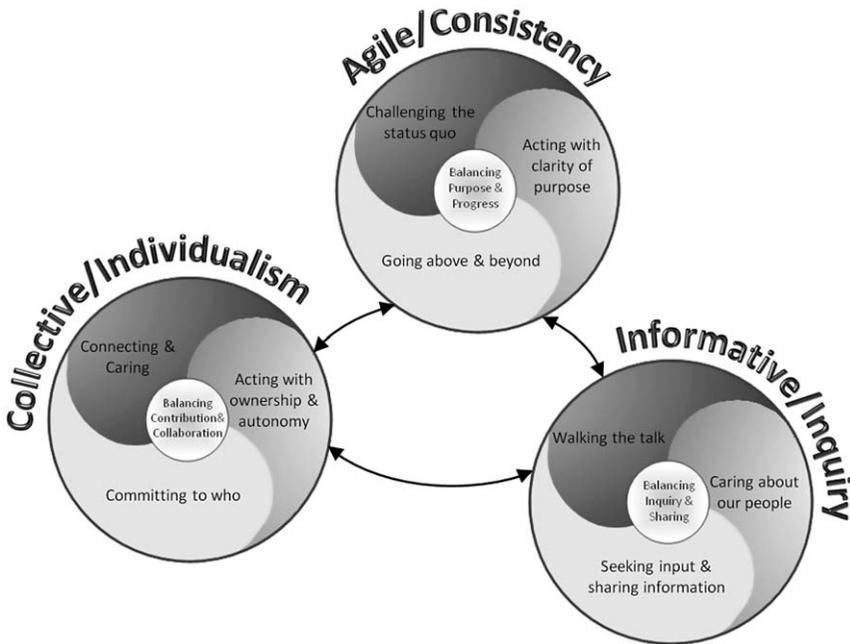


Fig. 1. A Model for the Sustaining of High Performance (Wolf, 2009).

The model is grounded in the challenges posed by paradox in organizations and is supported by the potential that there is more that can be accomplished than simply managing paradox. If we shift perspective and begin to look at these extremes, not as contradictory impediments, but as polar complements, we reframe the ability for organizations to address these seemingly conflicting issues.

This represents a shift in organizational consciousness, driven by a focus on key actions. Transcending paradox is about a willingness to be in a state of continuous balancing and disequilibrium. The elements of the model, the three movements of sustaining high performance, provide a framework of possibility for organizations to do just that. As one hospital CEO injected, this is not “*rocket science*”; it is rather about intentional action and the willingness to maintain focus on the key actions found in the data as part of what the organization does every day.

When we transcend a paradox there is often a quality of obviousness that produces a shock of recognition. No longer held captive by the old way of thinking, we are liberated

to see things we have known all along, but couldn't assemble into a useful model for action. (Pascale, 1990, p. 110)

It is true some could say this model represents things we have known of organizations, management, and leadership for some time. While on the surface it would be hard to argue, those holding that frame of reference should be cautious before setting off again on the trail of checklists and shallow assumptions. As the research suggests, there is a significant distinction between establishing a set of "successful" characteristics and actually taking action to ensure the three movements flourish in an organization. The process requires an intentional choice, an unwavering focus, and a lasting commitment. As the literature framed and the data exemplified, to be in movement toward sustaining performance is a never-ending journey requiring hard work on the part of every member of the organization.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

In returning to an important commitment of this study – making the findings accessible and relevant to practice, we are posed with the dilemma of translating a theoretical framework to potential for action. A key consideration in discussing implications for practice is the realization that while providing critical steps in the process, this information is more than a simple checklist of activities. It is imperative that the implementation of these items be part of a comprehensive organizational strategy that is in movement on all key actions. As one facility CEO noted, it takes "*unbelievable courage*" to be willing to put these seemingly paradoxical ideas in motion.

The general tendency of organizations will continue to focus on reducing tension and to drive linear cause and effect problem solving. Getting in to action around transcending paradox and moving toward sustaining high performance requires a bold leap in the face of these deep-seeded tendencies. While dynamic tensions will always exist, we must resist the desire to remove, manage, or avoid them. Instead what is required is a commitment to and focus on continuous action in each of the three movements.

Using the movements as a guiding framework, the key actions themselves can serve as core steps an organization can take on the road to sustaining performance. The data pulled from the stories also revealed a collection

of simple actions that can help spark an organizational journey toward transcending paradox. These suggestions are offered to provoke thought and catalyze action.

Collective/Individualism

- People are introduced to and sign off on behavioral standards as part of the hiring process.
- Strong orientation and on-boarding processes are put in place to ensure new employees are quickly integrated into the organizational culture.
- Positive cross-departmental and interpersonal communications are required and reinforced.
- Space is provided for social interaction both formally and informally to create strong intra-staff connections, support relationships, and build trust.
- Broad cross-sections of people are involved in both solving critical problems and planning for longer-term solutions.
- Opportunities to take ownership for outcomes are provided and parameters for making decisions are established at all levels of the organization.
- People are made aware of what resources exist across the organization that can assist in accomplishing goals.

Agile/Consistency

- Clear organizational mission in place that guides the daily actions and decisions of the organization.
- People can easily see the connection of their role to the organizational mission and understand how the contributions they make support both purpose and goals.
- Performance is not measured simply by achieving goals, but rather by efforts to exceed them.
- Problems are addressed as they occur in real time by the people necessary to resolve the issue.
- Organization structure is not an excuse for inaction and the need for control and/or organizational politics are not impediments to expediency.
- An environment of “risk-taking” is encouraged by consistently supporting and recognizing efforts, rather than punishing failures.

- Current processes are seen as dynamic, malleable, and replaceable at the moment that new ideas and/or better ways of doing things emerge.
- Service is not just an initiative, it is a way of being; it is simple and focused and is not only about caring for the “customer” but also exemplified in caring for colleagues and peers.

Informative/Inquiry

- Leaders perform consistent rounding (walking the floors and engaging employees in the work environment) and show a clear and continuous presence (versus “management by fly-by”).
- Employee input is sought and encouraged, both individually and through formal employee groups. More than just an “open door” policy, this is meeting employees where they are, in the units, halls, cafeterias, etc., and engaging in what matters most to them.
- An environment of openness is reinforced ensuring feedback can be delivered to leadership without fear of punishment or retribution.
- There is a commitment to sharing both good and bad news, reinforcing employees’ knowledge of, ownership in, and accountability for the organization.
- Leaders engage employees in the work environment expressing appreciation and gaining understanding by taking on employee roles, e.g., unit secretary, transporter, etc., or working different shifts than “normal” work hours.
- Personal connections are made with employees through the use of notes and other direct communications both in moments of celebration and moments of hardship.
- Leaders consistently close the loop with employees, communicating actions taken in the facility and exemplifying a commitment to follow through in formal meetings such as town halls and department meetings.

While moving purposefully toward paradox and balancing the chaos in the midst of polarities may sound potentially intimidating, perhaps it should be the consideration of the consequences of not doing so that should be the true motivating factor. In a world where, as discussed above, the pace of change is now the pulse of organizational life, the ability of an organization to hold tensions as creative opportunities versus impediments to progress

will be vital. The subject facilities provide simple yet powerful examples of what is required and the outcomes are painted in story after story shared by staff at all levels of what they have been able to accomplish. Thanks to the discovery of these organizations' rigorous efforts and unwavering commitments beyond basic action plans and performance checklists, the implications for practice can be significant. It all comes down to the courageous choice to act.

CONCLUSION

In discovering the three movements at the heart of sustaining high performance, it is not suggested that the concepts are unique in their own right. Rather, it is in the willingness to hold them in dynamic tension through which the power of sustainability as movement is realized. In transcending paradox, organizations accept the wholeness that each of these concepts and their key actions represent and comfortably find that space in balancing polarities that keeps them forever moving. It is an idea that rises directly from the chaotic nature of the world in which we live today. As discussed at the outset of this work, change now simply "is." It is our choice to accept it. "There is nothing in the whole world that is permanent ... the ages themselves glide by in constant movement" (Ovid).

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