

Misalignment costs Money

■ I have this dream about my business.

In my dream, the organization moves like geese in perfect formation. The flow of our game is seamless. Getting the cash to flow isn't a struggle. We never have to worry about money to meet payroll.

Everybody hits sales goals. Production errors are minimal. Prospects are lining up to say "yes" to our proposals.

Now, we all know that our businesses will never be in perfect alignment. People are never in perfect formation, and circumstances are never in perfect harmony. Cars get out of alignment. So does an enterprise. I suppose it's one of those facts of life, a reality we must learn to accept.

Misalignment is dangerous only if we let it go on for too long. You know what it's like when you drive too long on tires that are out of alignment. The car is pulling to the right, and it's time to take it in for service.

Believe me, it's less painful and less costly to stay in alignment than it is to get in alignment after an accumulation of neglect. As business owners, one of our jobs is to become so attuned to the flow of our organizations that we feel the misalignment before the tread wears thin.

Step by step, here's how to bring your organization into alignment:

Step 1: Take a gut check – do you know your priorities? What are the three most important things that will bring you success when they are done well? Are your priorities aligned with your vision? Name the priorities that will move you closer to your vision and goals.

Step 2: Identify the metrics that will tell you whether you're achieving your priority goals. What

are the critical measurable facets for your business? Start by looking at the balance sheet for metrics that range from cash flow to retained earnings.

Step 3: Assign each metric to a leader in charge who will be accountable for achieving it.

Step 4: Revisit and rewrite the roles of your leaders. Be specific about priorities for each role. Otherwise, your leaders are simply engaged in activities, and when the numbers aren't right at the end of the month, everyone shrugs and looks for someone else to blame.

Step 5: Monitor it – weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually.

Step 6: Account and take action. If you aren't hitting the numbers, something has to change. I'm not suggesting that we throw around blame. I'm talking about deciding as a team what must be done to create success.

When the business is humming again, when things are running as smooth as silk, sit back and appreciate the moment. But don't get too comfortable. The bumps in the road today will surely knock the business back out of alignment tomorrow. That's reality.

Wealth Builders understand that alignment occurs when an enterprise is focused on the right behaviors to achieve the right results. They link misalignment to the squandering of the limited resources of time, money and people. With our clients, we use a process of Think-Execute-Account to achieve alignment.

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