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STRATEGY ON THE GO!

HOW TO

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT

AT THE SAME TIME!

PRESENTED BY

LARRY ROBBIN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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larry@larryrobbin.com www.LarryRobbin.com

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and Turn Your Program Challenges Into Success Stories Now!**

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WHAT THIS WORKSHOP IS ABOUT

- 1. We will learn about the evolution of the development process in the private sector in order to understand the changes they have made and are making to improve the planning and implementation of new products and services to see how we can apply those to our workforce development new services development processes.**
- 2. We will learn how businesses and other sectors have streamlined their development processes. We will examine the traditional workforce development new initiative start up process to identify places where time is wasted so we can come to implementation in less time.**
- 3. We will learn how to quickly evaluate the new initiatives when they are implemented so we can make improvements in them as soon as possible.**
- 4. We will work collectively to come up with ways to improve the development, implementation and perpetual improvement processes for our new initiatives so we can better serve job seeker and business customers.**

BEST PRACTICES

NAME	THEIR POINTER
YOUR NAME	ONE BEST PRACTICE WE USE OR I THINK PEOPLE SHOULD USE TO MAKE PLANNING OR IMPLEMENTING NEW INITIATIVES THE MOST SUCCESSFUL IS

THE EVOLUTION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR PROCESSES FOR DEVELOPING NEW THINGS FOR CUSTOMERS

- 1. For many decades businesses made an “educated” guess about what would sell to their customers. They really did not talk to their customers.**
- 2. As customer’s tastes became more difficult to predict, businesses realized they needed more information from them and they started using surveys and asking people questions.**

In the 1920’s George Gallup and Daniel Startch pioneered surveys about what was effective advertising and what consumers wanted. While surveys were helpful, they lacked the ability to collect subtle and nuanced information from consumers and many times they were proved wrong.

- 2. In the 1940’s, Ernest Dichter, a Viennese psychologist and marketing expert developed the idea of focus groups to help guide the process of new product and service development. He actually created the term focus group.**

- 3. Dichter believed that engaging customers in group conversations would reveal deeper opinions and more qualitative ideas than surveys and that this information could guide product development and sales. He was very successful and his focus group approach led to the success of the Barbie Doll, Betty Crocker brands and improved car sales.**
- 4. By the 60's, Dichter's focus group research fell out of favor and was replaced by market research studies. The rise of computer analysis swung research to more quantitative analytical approaches that observed and analyzed customer behavior.**
- 5. The focus group made a comeback in the early 1990's when businesses found limitations in data analytics. Many types of organizations began to realize, while data was important in analyzing user behavior, it did not engage the user in a dialogue that would help with the product development and improvement process.**
- 6. This understanding led to the private sector's use of Participatory Design and then to User Centered Design, which eventually evolved into Human Centered Design. All of these relied heavily on focus groups as a key part of the process.**

- 7. But problems emerged with the reliance on focus groups. Examples began to emerge about them not being accurate in predicting success.**
- 8. For example, politicians collectively spend billions hiring companies with extensive expertise with focus groups to help them get elected. But even when they closely follow the advice of the focus groups, only one candidate for each position is elected.**
- 9. According to Harvard professor Gerald Zaltman as cited in his book, How Customers Think, 80% percent of things that are brought to market based on focus groups are not successful.**

For example, TV networks make extensive use of focus groups to decide what new programs to offer. In spite of this process, around 76% of the new shows that were blessed by focus groups do not make it to the next season!

Many new products and services that have been market researched extensively have failed. This includes New Coke, Google Glass, Samsung Galaxy 7, Microsoft Vista and many others.

The entertainment and fashion industries collect an immense amount of data to try and predict consumer tastes. They are wrong more often than they are right!

- 10. One of the most successful companies, Apple computer does not use focus groups. Jonathan Ive, Apple's Senior Vice President of Industrial Design, says,**

"Focus groups just ensure that you don't offend anyone, and produce bland inoffensive products. They do not disrupt the market enough."

Steve Jobs said, "It's really hard to design products with input from focus groups. A lot of times, people don't know what they want until you show it to them."

- 11. Henry Ford said, "If I developed my product based on what my customers said they wanted, I would have focused my energy on breeding a faster horse."**

**WHAT ARE THINGS TO THINK ABOUT FROM
THIS INFORMATION THAT MIGHT BE
HELPFUL AS WE DEVELOP NEW INITIATIVES?**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

**WHAT CAN WE DO TO MAKE THE WAY
WE GATHER INFORMATION FROM
FOCUS GROUPS, SURVEYS, INTERVIEWS
AND ANALYZING DATA MORE EFFECTIVE?**

THE PROBLEM	THE SOLUTION
People leading focus groups may not have been trained to do it.	Watch YouTube videos, See if any business partners use focus groups and get their help.

HOW THE PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROCESS HAS CHANGED

- 1. More business people began to realize that customer behavior was very difficult to predict. In some ways, in spite of all of our progress we were often not doing better than making the educated guesses of the 1930's.**
- 2. There were two reactions to this dilemma. One was that companies worked to improve their ability to learn from their customers. Some of them did it by finding ways to make focus groups work better. They improved how they chose people, what questions were asked, they trained focus group facilitators and learned better ways to evaluate responses.**

They also improved what data analytics they gathered, who they gathered them from, when they gathered them and how they collected them to reduce the risk of bad predictions.

- 3. The second reaction was to realize that the real test was bringing things to market and learning from what happened in the market place.**

Business people acknowledged that while they could learn a lot about what they thought people would like, customer behavior would often be unpredictable and surprise them.

As one executive put it, “The only focus group and data that ultimately really counts is the focus group of the marketplace and the data that comes from it.”

Companies responded to this new reality by shortening the customer research phase, going to market earlier and becoming very fast and nimble at making improvements and redesigning things based on customer behavior in the marketplace.

PRIVATE SECTOR WAYS OF WORKING

The old way of working

Market research and design time -----

----- **Delivering to the marketplace.**

The new way of working

Market research and design time -----

**Delivering to the marketplace and instantly
doing ongoing research about customer
satisfaction to quickly redesign and improve.**

THIS IS STRATEGY ON THE GO!

HOW NEW INITIATIVES ARE DEVELOPED IN THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM

**Meetings... Meetings... Meetings... Meetings...
Meetings... Meetings... Meetings... Meetings...
Wait to get partners on board and then wait
some more.....
Over do analysis and get to paralysis.....
Get Mous – a life’s work!.....
Meetings... Meetings... Meetings... Meetings...
Meetings... Meetings... Meetings... Meetings...
Focus groups Talk...Talk...Don’t act just talk!
Plan...Plan...Plan...Plan...Plan...Plan...
Rethink...Rethink...Rethink...Rethink...
Duplicate effort...Duplicate effort...
Meetings... Meetings... Meetings... Meetings...
Meetings... Meetings... Meetings... Meetings...
Everyone does not agree – go back to the
beginning!
Then implement (hopefully!).
We’re done Yea!!!!
Except we find out it doesn’t work as planned!
How can that be? We did so much planning!!**

SOME OF THE DIFFERENCES

These are generalizations and are not true of every business or workforce organization.

PRIVATE SECTOR	WORKFORCE
Fast, nimble and welcomes change	Slow and reluctant to change
Speed is a very high value	Speed is of no value and does not drive the process
Not tradition bound	Very tradition bound
Willing to take risks	Risk adverse
Believes that customer behavior is to some extent unpredictable	Believes that customer behavior is predictable
Implementation is the beginning of learning The faster we can implement the sooner we can learn what does and does not work	Implementation is the end of learning Initiatives often become set in stone after implementation.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO SPEED UP THE DEVELOPMENT PHASE OF NEW INITIATIVES?

- 1. Do research to avoid reinventing the wheel, spending time on the wrong things and to focus your process.**
 - A. If your organization is a member of any workforce development organizations, ask them about best practices for your initiative. See if you can post a call for best practice information on their LinkedIn or Facebook.**
 - B. Go online to some places you might not traditionally look at.**

YouTube

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Industry Associations

National Center on Homelessness and Employment

National Reentry Resource Center

National Youth Employment Coalition

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Corporation for a Skilled Workforce

US Chamber of Commerce

Office of Family Assistance

Society for Human Resource Management

- C. If this is a new population initiative, talk with staff that serve that population even if they are not workforce providers.**

See if some of your staff and management can volunteer in the organization to learn more about the population and how to serve them. Learn from the population themselves – they are the teachers and experts!

- D. For employer related initiatives, make sure to talk with recently retired employers to get their input. They have the wisdom and time to help. They also often have connections in companies that can help with your new initiative.**

- F. Do an analysis of the development process that you traditionally use to look for things are taking too much time. Become familiar with “lean practices” and apply them to your program development process.**

LEAN PERSPECTIVES

Wasted seconds lead to wasted minutes

Wasted minutes lead to wasted hours

Wasted hours lead to wasted days

Wasted days lead to wasted weeks

Wasted weeks lead to wasted months

Wasted months lead to wasted years!

- 1. Objectively figure out what actually needs to happen to get the work done.**
- 2. Remove inefficiencies and waste.**
- 3. Keep removing inefficiencies and waste.**

“If I was given six hours to chop down a tree instead of working on the tree for six hours, I would spend the first hour or so sharpening the axe as much as possible and then I would only need one more hour to cut down the tree.”

“Don’t equate being busy with efficiency. The two have nothing to do with each other.”

“The most useless thing is doing something efficiently that should not be done at all in the first place.”

“The tradition of doing things is the enemy of innovation and efficiency.”

**WHAT THINGS SLOW DOWN OUR
DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND
HOW DO YOU SPEED THEM UP?**

SLOWS US DOWN	HOW TO SPEED IT UP
Too many meetings	

IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 1. Can you do a pilot to see what works?**
- 2. Be realistic about metrics. They should get better over time. For each metric try to predict what outcomes you should have at each level.**
Outstanding outcomes = greatly exceeds our goals
Excellent outcomes = goes over our goals
Good outcome = meets our goals
Fair outcome = lower than our goals
Bad outcome = seriously misses the mark
- 3. Have some objective subject matter experts ready to look at things right after launch to evaluate what is and is not working.**

- 4. Make sure to solicit and respect the feedback of the people delivering the services and the job seeker and employer customers receiving the services early in the implementation process and on an ongoing basis.**
- 5. Do not hesitate to create new indicators based on what you see as you implement.**
- 6. Abandon things that aren't working if they can't be fixed no matter how much sweat equity you have in them and try a completely different way or drop the initiative if at all possible.**

Get off the deck of the Titanic!

- 7. Celebrate success and be proud of being able to fail forward!**

THINGS I WANT TO REMEMBER
FROM THIS WORKSHOP