

The 6 Keys to a Flourishing Enterprise

Flourishing means to “live to the fullest...thrive...prosper...grow in a healthy way, especially as the result of a particularly congenial environment.”¹ Can you imagine working towards a world where the primary aim of business is well-being, happiness, and prosperity for all? It would begin but not end with profitability.

The cornerstone of such a possibility is what every heart-centered business leader longs for: an energizing and profitable experience of meaningful service to others. While this vision for business is elusive today and idealistic for the future, the pursuit of such a world provides us with an immediate shift in how we show up at work. This shift is about hope. It is about generating greater fulfillment for what we are doing today.

Begin this journey with yourself and imagine what “could be” with your own organization if your people were approaching their work with flourishing in mind. What would that do for the value of your business and the value of your business experience?

Upon examination, you will quickly notice our six keys are simple, but not easy. This is true because so few business leaders can even imagine what we are boldly offering in this article. You will discover, however, that pursuing a huge vision of this nature is exhilarating from the start.

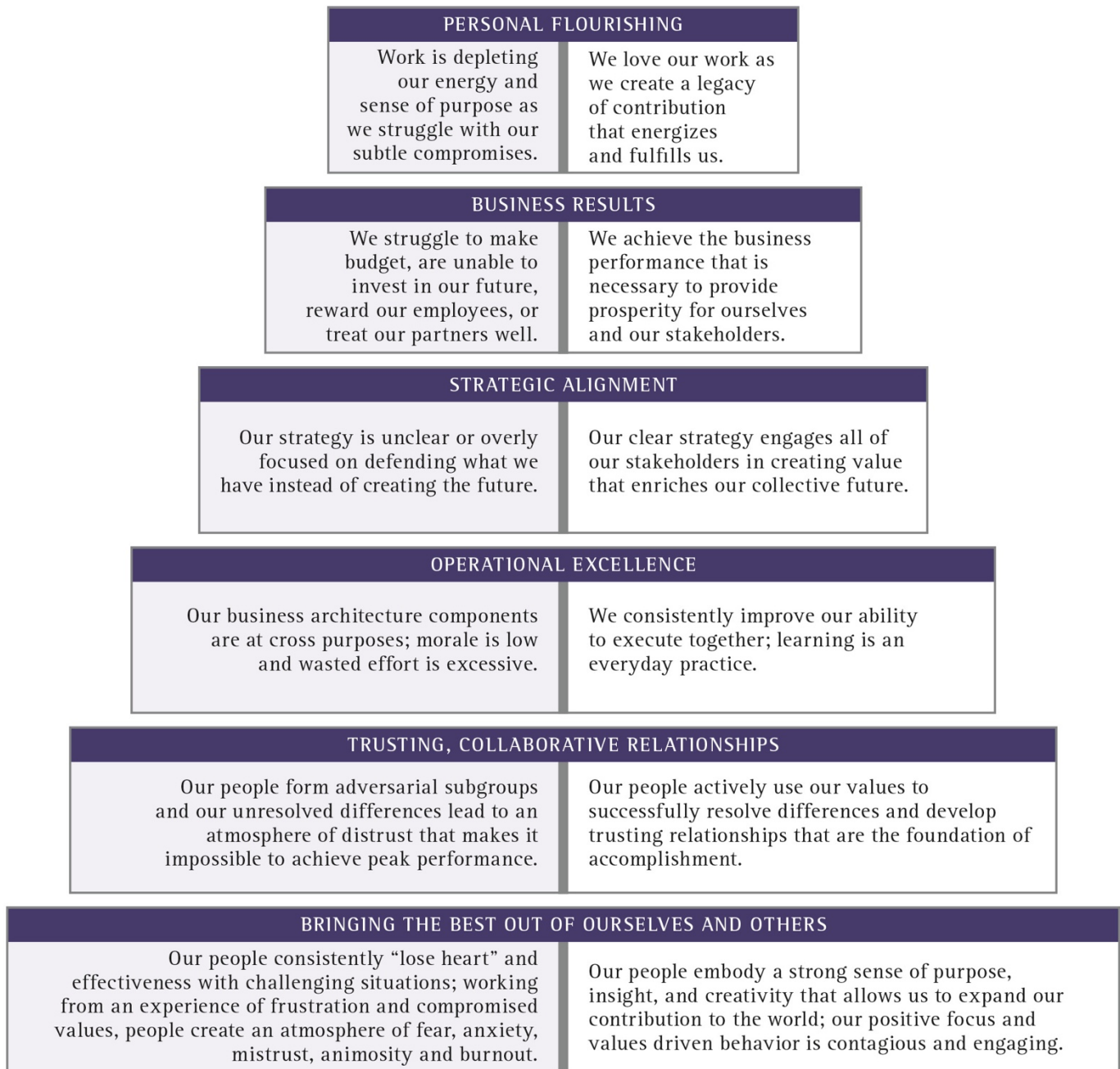
You will soon understand that the six keys or building blocks will all need attention - simultaneously and sequentially. Once you begin to rethink everything, you will feel a surge of inspirational creativity. This will allow you to attract others into this new conversation. As soon as the spark is lit within the hearts of your core team, you will want to begin today right where you are. You will ultimately learn to trust that the process of transformation unfolds as you take each meaningful step. With a strong combination of persistence, patience, and openness to discovery, you will be surprised at how refreshing it is to go to work, and what you can accomplish!

The middle two keys will appear to you as the usual topics at the core of most business conversations: ***Strategy and Operational Excellence***. This is what your people do all day long.

¹ Flourishing Enterprise: The New Spirit of Business, authored by Chris Laszlo and 8 Distinguished Fellows, including Paul Werder, from the Fowler Center for Business as an agent of World Benefit; published by Stanford Press, 2014

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A Business in Breakdown | A Flourishing Enterprise



The difference we offer here is your people’s full engagement with these concerns. This only occurs due to the stronger foundation you will build with the two keys on the bottom: **Trusting, Collaborative Relationships** and **Bringing the Best Out of Ourselves and Others**. These two, often underemphasized, keys entail who you and your people are being all day long. They are necessary for your organization to truly flourish.

Without **Trusting, Collaborative Relationships** throughout your organization, your traditional business conversations about strategy and operations can feel empty, frustrating or both. Human engagement makes all the difference. Without it leaders feel and speak as if they are “pushing a rope up a hill.” The foundation under **Trusting Collaborative Relationships** is doing our own transformative work: **Bringing the Best Out of Ourselves and Others**. This occurs when your people selflessly focus on the good of the whole, rather than pursue or protect their own self-interests. They are willing to do the work necessary to master their minds and emotions as a means of bringing your organizational values to life every day. These two keys open huge new opportunities to create more value through operational excellence and strategic alignment.

Once you have these 4 keys opening doors to new and improved ways of working together, you discover your new bottom line is both **Personal Flourishing** and **Business Results**. This is what you are achieving every day: you come to work energized with the “high” that comes from a selfless, purposeful team experience. You are also gratified that you have contributed to thriving people becoming better equipped to improve your company’s financial performance.

Now consider, since there is no rule about where you must start, perhaps personal flourishing is where you will begin. Your own transformation may be required before you can approach the other 5 keys with renewed vitality. In truth, our keys or building blocks are more interdependent than the illustration indicates, so begin where your need is most urgent. Once underway, the positive energy you create will become contagious. The questions below will serve to get you started. Enjoy your journey, but remember it is a journey that will require your full commitment – and it’s totally worth it!

Overarching Question: If you separated the left and right sides of our illustration and imagined it as a 1-10 continuum, how would you rate your organization today on each of the 6 keys or building blocks?

Sample Questions for Personal Flourishing:

1. How healthy and full of vitality are you?
2. Is your work having an energizing or depleting effect on you?
3. Do your purpose and values drive your daily priorities?

Sample Questions for Business Results:

1. Are your financial results sufficient to live a life of well-being and service?
2. Do your people say that their compensation allows them to live a balanced life of personal flourishing?
3. Do your results allow you to invest in your future and contribute to a flourishing world?

Sample Questions for Strategic Alignment:

1. Do your organization’s purpose, vision, and strategy have a flourishing world woven into them?
2. Are all of your stakeholders enthusiastically engaged in supporting your strategy?
3. Does your personal purpose and desired legacy match up well with your business vision?

Sample Questions for Operational Excellence:

1. Do your structures and processes support one another in a unified manner allowing for the coherent and harmonious pursuit of business success?
2. Are continuous learning, innovation and excellent performance a source of joy for all of your people?
3. Have aligned purpose, trust, and empowerment appropriately replaced or supplemented hierarchical authority as the “way things get done around here?”

Sample Questions for Trusting, Collaborative Relationships:

1. Is your organization’s culture comprised of people focusing on creating good news for the company, their colleagues, and themselves?
2. Do your people take the time to understand and honor what is important to one another when they need to work together?
3. Do your people engage in regular open, honest, and respectful conversations to learn from their moments of frustration and disappointment when working together has been difficult?

Sample Questions for Bringing the Best Out of Ourselves and Others:

1. Do your people use their differences and conflicts as occasions for improving themselves, deepening understanding of one another, and strengthening trust for the future?
2. Do your people engage in a daily practice to improve their ability to actively live your organization’s purpose and values?
3. Is lifelong learning and the use of self-reflective practices common among your people?

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