

Most quality organizations are driven to improve—to make tomorrow better than today. One of the challenges many leaders face is finding the time to work on their business rather than just in their business. As Charles Hummel once observed, “The important task rarely must be done today, or even this week. The urgent task calls for instant action...the momentary appeal of these tasks seems irresistible and important, and they devour our energy.” Where is the energy spent in your organization? Are you focusing too much attention on the urgent at the expense of the more important? Is there a need to move from being less reactive to being more proactive?

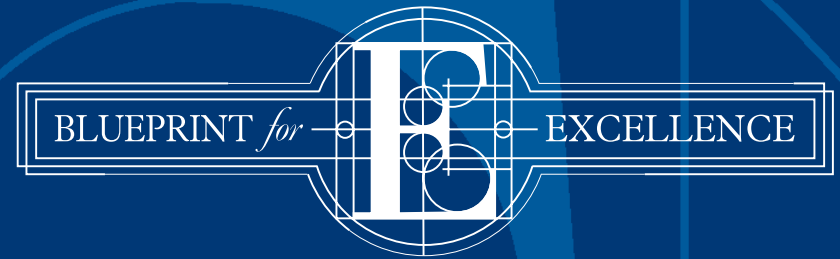
For many organizations the need to improve and progress is not a new desire. But all too often efforts in this area are viewed as “flavor of the month” leadership programs that rarely produce significant and lasting results. To implement real change requires the ability to follow through on the resolution long after the emotion with which it was made has passed—to make it part of the organization’s culture.

Creating a dynamic future represents opportunity. But as Thomas Edison said, “Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.” Many organizations will never make it to the next level because they are not willing to pay the price. To create a dynamic future requires desire, planning and effort. The reasons for doing so are many and benefit everyone in the organization. But if we really want to move forward in significant ways, we must understand the process required to do so.

As you continue to read, you will learn about a process worthy of your dedication. You will learn the common barriers to progress that most quality organizations face. You will learn strategies for overcoming those barriers. But most importantly you will learn about a program that has proven to help organizations channel their energy to the important things...things that will lead them to their dynamic future.



“Guidance In Developing Excellence”  
Certified Upstream Guide



# CREATING A DYNAMIC FUTURE FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

“Excellence is an art won by training and habit.

We are what we repeatedly do.

Excellence, then is not an act, but a habit.”

—Aristotle

“In the end, it is important to remember

that we cannot become what we need to be

by remaining what we are.”

—Max De Pree



# THE PROBLEM:

Quality organizations are driven to improve—to achieve a higher level of excellence in all they do. However, all quality organizations are hindered in some fashion by the following barriers. To what extent does each barrier impact your organization?

1

## ACCOMPLISHING GOALS

Few organizations have a process in place to accomplish the goals they set. As a result, most organizations have a poor track record in accomplishing their goals. It is virtually impossible to create a high achievement culture in any organization without a solid track record in accomplishing both strategic and improvement related goals.

2

## “CHANCE FOR SUCCESS” APPROACH

Most endeavors are approached with a “chance for success” attitude. While our intent is to have success in a given endeavor, our overall effort invested does little to ensure success will be the end result. There is a big difference between a “chance for success” approach and a “leave nothing to chance” approach.

3

## LACK OF COMMITMENT

It is far easier to generate support for an endeavor than it is to gain commitment. There is a huge difference between commitment and support. The problem within many organizations is that leaders feel they have commitment from stakeholders when, in fact, they may only have support. Commitment means doing everything possible to bring about success in a certain area or endeavor.

4

## LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Most organizations lack a strong measure of accountability. Goals are set and assignments are made without a system of accountability in place. In looking at world-class organizations, one of the key things that stands out is that employees want to be held accountable. The highest form of accountability is self-accountability.

5

## PROCRASTINATION

It is entirely possible for leaders to go weeks, months and years wanting to work on their organization—to make needed changes and course corrections—only to continue to believe that the right time is anytime but the present.

6

## SERVICE DELTA

All employees within an organization choose each day what degree of effort they are willing to put forth. The difference between their maximum effort and the level at which they are currently operating is referred to as the Service Delta. One of the primary goals for leaders should be to reduce the service delta of all employees.

7

## LACK OF VISION

Most organizations lack a clear, compelling vision that motivates all employees to give their maximum effort. A key part of a vision statement is the organization’s courageous goal and descriptive future of what things will be like for everyone when the goal is reached.

8

## LACK OF CONCENTRATION

On average, employees are interrupted every 10 minutes during their workday. Whether it’s the phone ringing, e-mail messages chiming their way in, or someone at their door, interruptions happen far too frequent. These interruptions become a barrier to achieving excellence and hinder an employee’s ability to do their best work.

# THE SOLUTION:

Removal of any or all of these barriers will allow your organization to have greater success in all endeavors. Though it may not be easy, these barriers can be overcome. Here are five keys to removing these barriers and to creating greater excellence in all aspects of your organization.

1

## ELEVATE YOUR VISION

Get everyone in your organization to function as a team by identifying a common, compelling vision that not only motivates them to work together, but to give their very best effort. To create a vision statement that lets all employees know where the organization is headed and what the future holds requires careful planning. Your vision becomes the primary compass for your strategic plan—from which will flow your 3-5 year goals and then your annual goals.

2

## MEASURE PROGRESS

Develop a systematic way of measuring your progress towards your organization’s vision. Too often, organizations only measure themselves against their peers and/or competitors. This becomes a difficult way to measure progress unless they are consistently striving for excellence. You need to find a way to take a regular measurement every 6 months or so to determine if your organization has moved closer to your vision and has improved in its ability to create excellence. Your key performance indicators for this measurement need to be much more than financial numbers.

3

## STANDARDIZE EVERY PROCESS

Develop greater excellence in your organization by standardizing processes—those repeatable things you do within your organization. Quite literally, you are no better than your repeatable business processes. John Maxwell was on point when he said, “We overestimate the event and underestimate the process. Every fulfilled dream occurred because of dedication to a process.” Your organization is made up of dozens of repeatable processes. One of the fundamental keys to creating excellence within your organization is to create excellent processes.

4

## USE A STRATEGIC GOAL PROCESS

Develop a process in your organization for setting and accomplishing goals—both strategic goals and improvement goals. This process should include a clear definition of the goal, identification of the goal benefits and critical success factors, and a detailed task list identifying the due date and responsible party for each task. Identify the progress that needs to be made each month towards longer-term goals. This will go a long way towards creating a high achievement culture within your organization.

5

## ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY

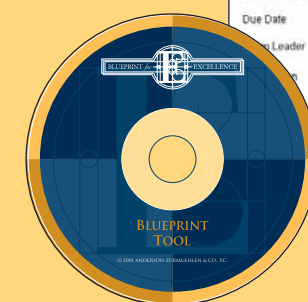
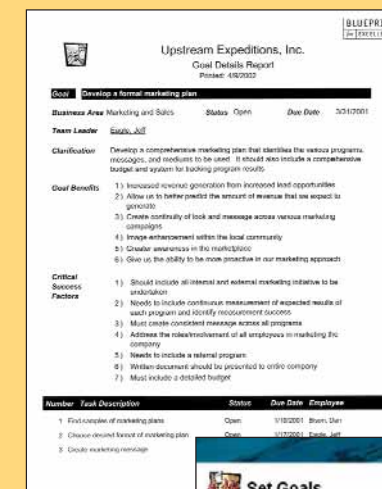
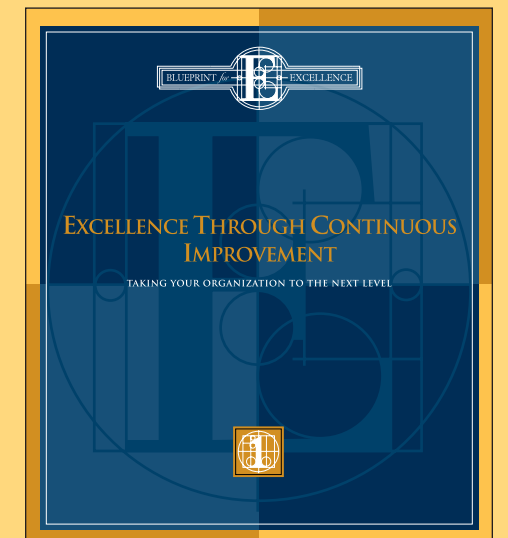
Develop a process of accountability in your organization where employees are set up for success and then held accountable to an action plan. David H. Maister wisely said, “If people are not prepared to be held accountable for what they do, it is unlikely they will achieve much. To choose a goal without being prepared to be accountable for progress towards it is to choose nothing.”

# THE PROGRAM:

Blueprint for Excellence is a process of creating excellence in every area of your organization through continuous improvement. The Blueprint program contains the step-by-step processes and tools that you will use to create a dynamic future.

## BLUEPRINT FOR EXCELLENCE

Blueprint for Excellence is a proven program that helps organizations overcome the barriers and achieve excellence by following a guided process of continuous improvement. Unlike many improvement programs, Blueprint for Excellence moves beyond theory and carefully blends training, mentoring, peer interaction, processes, tools, practice and time to help your organization develop practices and habits that will result in immediate and long-term results. Richard G. Scott said, “To reach a goal never before attained, you must do things you have never before done.” The Blueprint process will help everyone in your organization do those things—either not done before or done at a poor level—that will help your organization attain new heights.



## BLUEPRINT TOOL

Many good ideas are never implemented because of the effort required to put them into practice. The Blueprint Tool enables the immediate application of the processes you will learn in the Blueprint for Excellence program. You will use the tool to conduct an organization evaluation that will produce a report card from which you can continuously measure progress and identify areas of strength and weakness. You will use the tool to evaluate goals, identify their benefits and critical success factors, and develop a detailed action

plan with specific steps for how you will accomplish them. You will use the tool to monitor progress and print reports that make follow up and accountability a reality. In short, the Blueprint Tool will become an important key in helping you overcome barriers to your success.