

rB Sense of Urgency | Rod Brace

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I enjoy a good crisis occasionally. There is something about the immediacy of action required that provides clarity and unity for a team. Crisis can be a short-cut to teach an organization to have a sense of urgency.

It is difficult to not be lulled into passive pursuit of some vague notion of purpose. There are things to do that occupy our time even though they do little to reach desired goals. Routine becomes a surrogate for meaningful work. Hours logged in the office become the metric of success. We are a nation of convenience bound workers who do not like urgency, much less the laser focused thought and actions required in a crisis.

Having a sense of urgency is the life-blood of purpose driven organizations. If the purpose is important, then we should pursue it in a manner that is respectful of that purpose. Too many organizations lack the energy required of purposeful pursuit because they lack a purpose that is important enough to pursue.

A sense of urgency is not a frantic shout to man the battle stations or calls to just do something. Calm and methodical steps to connect people and purpose through accountability measures are the desired course. Careful planning, timelines, clarifying conversations and a focus on outcomes all pave the way for urgent accomplishments.

By organizing work, personal pursuits and life components around a mechanism for acting in real time, we naturally develop a sense of urgency in ourselves and those we lead. It must begin with the leader as the point of ignition. Leaders who find themselves unorganized, unclear and unprepared for an urgent journey will eventually be lost in the shuffle, resorting to old habits of waste.

An urgent leader keeps the organization moving by not becoming a speed bump to progress. Team members find their questions are answered quickly and completely by urgent leaders. Emails do not linger without a reply. Signatures are processed quickly. Phone calls are promptly returned. Communication is broad in scope and frequent. Team members are encouraged to create solutions and handle issues without elaborate layers of approval and oversight.

Large portions of an organization's expenditures are lost without a sense of urgency. Growth opportunities are missed and handed off to more nimble competitors. Efficient and responsible employees leave to find an organization that is more responsive. Sense of urgency becomes the pivot point between surviving and thriving.

As a leader, carefully consider whether you are urgently moving your organization toward success rather than aimlessly plodding a pointless path.