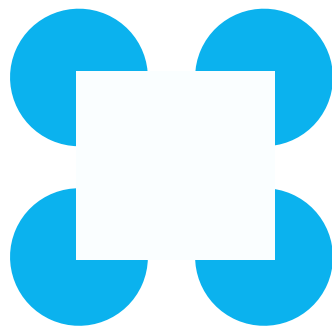


Extraordinary Outcomes

Shaping an Otherwise Unpredictable Future



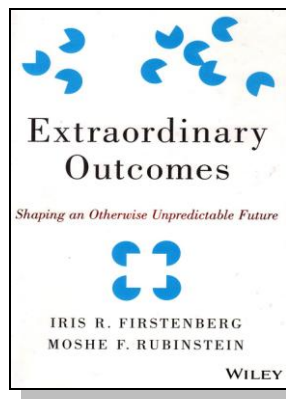
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EXTRAORDINARY OUTCOMES: SHAPING AN OTHERWISE UNPREDICTABLE FUTURE

Iris R. Firstenberg and Moshe F. Rubinstein
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DISCUSSION GUIDE

The discussion questions in this guide are designed to help you and your team leverage the concepts and tools of the book, to achieve extraordinary outcomes.

Team members should read the sections of the book associated with the question before the discussion to become familiar with the concept. These sections are listed at the bottom of each Discussion Question page. The team can then reflect together and discuss the application of the concept to their work.

Purpose

Purpose is the magnetic pull that draws us into the future, injecting us with resilience to overcome stumbles and reinterpret tedious tasks along the way. Purpose acts as a filter, helping us determine what we have to pay attention to, and what we can safely ignore. Purpose creates focus and fuels our curiosity, helping us identify more quickly uncertainties that are unfolding so that we can more quickly adapt.

Articulating purpose is an art. A compelling purpose is succinct, inspiring, and clear. Rather than speaking to profits or shareholder value, a powerful purpose appeals to our desire to engage in work that is noble, meaningful, and connected to something that transcends ourselves.

Team Discussion

Discuss with your team the question, “What is our purpose?”
Use the Toyota method of asking WHY five times to get to the heart of your purpose.

Tap into uniqueness. Ask each member “How would you like to uniquely contribute to this purpose? Is there anything you would like to bring to the project or work that is important to you and that would help us as a team?”

BOOK READING

For more detail on defining purpose, see Chapter 2, pp. 11 – 19; 26 - 28

For more detail on tapping into uniqueness, see Chapter 2, pp. 19 – 21

For more detail on the Toyota Gaps Analysis, see Chapter 6, pp. 167 - 168

Team Standards

Effective collaboration requires a collaborative mindset. To create the mind of a team, engage your team in a conversation about standards. Often an organization has a set of values; standards define how our team will live up to these values. Standards are not rules, which can often be insulting (and people either follow them or break them). Standards define what we expect of ourselves and of each other, no matter the circumstances. As a team we don't just show up; standards are the principles that define how we show up. They inspire us rather than restrict us. Standards are our stabilizing anchors in a world of uncertainty.

Team Discussion

Have a discussion with your team about standards. What is it your team values and how can those values be tangibly expressed? Can you learn from any past mishaps, misunderstandings, or miscommunications to generate standards that would prevent their recurrence?

BOOK READING

For more detail on building standards, see Chapter 3, pp. 29 - 56

Galvanize Your Team

Creating a culture that is focused on a compelling purpose, in which team members are actively and enthusiastically engaged, requires ongoing commitment to team standards.

Imagine if each day, *everyone* in an organization spent the first ten minutes in the morning talking about the same standard or value. Knowing that everyone else also had the conversation, this priming might very well then impact interactions throughout the day. A prime is like a filtering lens, bringing certain things into greater focus, and what is extraordinary is that it can impact both thinking and behavior, and works whether we are aware of the prime or not.

Team Discussion

How can we, as a team, bring the standards to life? What can we commit to that will be frequent, consistent, and predictable? The Ritz Carlton Hotel chain has a daily huddle; all teams across the world meet for 10 minutes to focus on one standard per day. They ask:

1. What does this Standard mean to me?
2. What am I doing to live up to this Standard?
3. Have I seen a good example of this Standard on the team?

What would be effective for our team?

BOOK READING

For more on priming, see Chapter 4, pp. 59 - 78

For more on the Ritz Carlton daily huddle, see Chapter 4, pp 60 – 62

Amplify the Positive

Positive emotions alter mindsets and change the brain in beneficial, long lasting ways. People experiencing positive emotions show patterns of thought that are more creative, flexible, inclusive, open to new ideas, and efficient. We often celebrate outcomes on our projects; we don't do nearly enough to celebrate the people and process of getting to the outcome. Research shows that successful teams experience three-fold more positive interactions than negative interactions in the workplace; and that underperforming teams can turn themselves around and become more successful by adopting this ratio.

Team Discussion

In what ways can you amplify the positive within your team? Consider ways in which you can celebrate small wins and incorporate celebration and appreciation into your interaction with teammates. Page 82 contains a list of ideas. What can you add to this list?

BOOK READING

For more on positive emotions and thinking, see Chapter 4, pp. 83 – 85

For more on celebrating process and people, see Chapter 4, pp. 81 – 83

For more on the ratio between positive and negative interactions, see Chapter 4, pp. 81

For more on small wins, see Chapter 4, pp. 75 - 77

Expand with AND

One of the most limiting words that constrain possibilities is the word OR. We make trade-offs and forego value instead of thinking about how to merge desirable options and expand possibilities. We can re-arrange our sense of what is possible and find better options with AND. To generate ideas, use the PRICE model. The acronym stands for Purpose, Reduce, Increase, Create, and Eliminate.

Team Discussion

What “OR” assumptions are standard for your organization? In the context of achieving your team purpose, can creative solutions be applied in order to excel on cost AND quality AND schedule? What can you reduce, increase, create, and eliminate, to better achieve your goals?

BOOK READING

For more on how to Expand with And, see Chapter 4, pp. 73 – 75
For more on the PRICE model, see Chapter 6, pp. 168 - 169

Pictures of the Future

Human brains are innately wired to respond to stories. Telling a provocative story, with judicious use of descriptive data wrapped within, is remarkably impactful for shaping the future. With a compelling story, we are transported into worlds of other possibilities, activating the powers of imagination. Many organizations are recognizing the power of stories to create clear pictures and motivate action to shape the more distant future.

Team Discussion

Five years from now, the Wall Street Journal has written about your team in a front-page article. Take a mental leap into the future, and work with your team to write the article in the past tense as though your achievements have already been realized. Dream big and generate as much detail as possible around *what* was achieved. Once the article is finalized, come back to the present and begin thinking about *how* you achieved this vivid future state.

BOOK READING

For more on the power of stories, see Chapter 3, pp. 48 - 55

For more on picturing the future, see Chapter 5, pp. 94 - 99

Deliberate Chaos

Chaos can be emergent or deliberate. Emergent chaos requires extensive problem solving and crisis management as unanticipated problems emerge. Often the emergent chaos is the result of a question that could have been asked much earlier or the result of resistance from a stakeholder that was brought in late.

The model of deliberate chaos calls for purposely creating chaos up front, by asking questions and bringing multiple perceptions to the table early. Engaging stakeholders early, actively listening to their concerns and creating trusted relationships with them creates build-in, mitigating the need for later unpredictable buy-in.

Team Discussion

Who needs to be involved earlier on your projects? How can you create build-in with key stakeholders? What will it take to engage them? What do you need to start doing? What do you need to stop doing?

BOOK READING

For more on deliberate chaos see Chapter 5, pp. 100 - 109.

Bring the Future to the Present

One of the biggest challenges in creating plans and creating value is accounting for the uncertainty inherent in the future. To conquer uncertainty means to eliminate it where possible and reduce it where you can. There are a number of ways to eliminate and reduce uncertainty, including taking actions earlier, visiting the future, and partnering with the future.

To reduce uncertainty, consider what actions you can take in the present that often are done later in sequence.

To visit the future, consider that your uncertain and ambiguous future may already be part of someone else's vivid and concrete present state, and by visiting them you can gain clarity and reduce uncertainty.

To partner with the future, consider looking for someone that is one step closer to the future than you are, to make your own weakness irrelevant.

Team Discussion

How can you bring the future to the present in what you do?
Devise at least one way to bring the future to the present with your team.
What resources do you need to make it happen?

BOOK READING

For more on conquering uncertainty, see Chapter 5, pp. 89 – 94

For more on visiting the future, see Chapter 5, pp. 109 – 111.

For more on partnering with the future, see Chapter 5, pp. 111 - 118

Adaptive Planning

In a world of complexity, rigid planning that tries to account for every contingency leaves us unprepared when unexpected events unfold. To successfully navigate into the future we need a planning model that allows us to embrace uncertainty. Distributed Leadership is a model that gives each person, at their level of work, the authority to make decisions to get their job done.

Team Discussion

On your team, do you have the flexibility to respond in real time to change? What needs to be done to establish greater distributed leadership?

BOOK READING

For more on adaptive planning and distributed leadership, see Chapter 5, pp. 119 - 130

Rule of 3

Three is a cognitively magical number that is our mental sweet spot. When we organize information into structures of three it helps us think through complexity more readily. For example, it is not a coincidence that large numbers like 1000000000 are written as 1,000,000,000 with the commas creating groups of three zeroes. We need to find simple rules for a complex world and the Rule of 3 is one such simple rule.

Team Discussion

What are the three most important factors on your projects that constitute or contribute to 80% of your success? Do you dedicate enough time and resources to these three?

What are three things you could do differently?

BOOK READING

For more on the Rule of 3 and simple rules, see Chapter 5, pp 133 - 135

Resilience

A fixed mindset is the belief that the talent we are born with determines the success we will have and that we cannot be more than we already are. If you have a fixed mindset, a success validates that you are smart and talented while a failure proves you are neither. In the face of failure you quit immediately.

In a growth mindset, people believe that their abilities can be developed and improved through hard work, new experiences, and taking on challenges. Talent is something you can build, and setbacks make you question your strategy, not your self-worth. In the face of failure, you try again.

In a fixed mindset we think, “I can’t do this.”

In a growth mindset we think, “I can’t do this – yet.”

Team Discussion

As a team, ask where you might be stuck in a fixed mindset of “we can’t do this.” How does the team react to failure and recover from setbacks? To enhance team resilience, establish a failure protocol.

BOOK READING

For more on resilience and the growth mindset, see Chapter 6, pp. 142 - 154

Creating the “CULTURE OF ROI” – Relentless Ongoing Improvement

Organizations with a growth mindset constantly question how to better serve their purpose. They want to develop new products, services, strategies, and tactics to get better all the time.

In their quest to relentlessly improve themselves, they know that some ideas will work out better than others, and some ideas will fail. Giving people license to explore, try new ideas, and creating an environment of amnesty when ideas don't work, is key in a culture of relentless ongoing improvement. Acknowledging and learning from failure is a necessary element of the system for shaping success, and not a license to abandon accountability. We give people the responsibility to ultimately get it right when it matters, by giving them the authority to get it wrong in the process.

Team Discussion

What can we do to create an optimal environment for relentless ongoing improvement?

BOOK READING

For more on relentless ongoing improvement see Chapter 6, pp. 165 - 176.