

## What We Do and How We Help

Strateja & MerHan Associates work with you to define or refine your business beyond existing boundaries. For example, when first starting up, you may have too narrowly defined what business your company is in and in doing so you may have boxed in yourself, your employees and your clients. These boundaries have a tendency to restrict thinking and provide excuses to ignore opportunities you may be well equipped to handle. In this economy, no one can afford to lose revenue potential from such brittle, shortsighted thinking.

No matter the business challenges our clients face, our ultimate objective is to help them overcome professional misery and grow to – and beyond - the next level. Our ultimate purpose is much more subversive than merely solving business problems. We believe that the old way of doing business is dying. The earlier it is dead and buried the better for us all. We are here to usher a new way of thinking and collaborating together that produces new ideas, happier employees and higher productivity. In short, we are here to provide a much needed renovation to the modern workplace.

"*Bigger, not Best*" and a belief in the seemingly limitless frontier have too often been the drivers of growth in the USA, starting way back during the Pilgrim times. "Cultivate the land, wear it out and then move west another 10 miles" has long been the attitude.

Historically, when people began to manufacture, they simply adopted these agricultural habits - "*Quantity, not Quality*". This unrelenting exploitation of what were thought to be never-ending resources combined with some good old-fashioned corporate greed lead us to a disposable business culture that is no longer sustainable. Indeed, some experts consider it as bordering on commercial suicide with the results visible in today's economic situation. The current recession has not only destroyed markets but killed any lingering humanity in many companies as they struggle for survival.

In today's fast changing business conditions, companies must be able to quickly adapt their organizational infrastructure to these changes. Business models must reflect a certain flexibility in order to design and align new processes that support the company's' Mission and Purpose defined in the initial business definition.

However, companies need to acknowledge the constant tug of war between opposing forces while struggling to break the tradition of patriarchal organization systems modeled after the military, churches and governments. The companies we work with have realized this and chose MerHan as the catalyst to for them to innovate and prevail in the modern business environment. They know that their future with sustainable growth depends on their ability to

- Identify the short- and long-term drivers behind any Crisis
- Pinpoint the Opportunities within to chart a new path
- Overcome internal resistance and creating the Ability to Change

The transition from the old to the new way of thinking can be hugely profitable and not nearly as socially disruptive as skeptics might fear. On the contrary, it leads to strategic innovation, customer satisfaction, growth and an end to those arcane management practices that lead to personal misery in many organizations.

Strateja & MerHan Associates act as catalysts. By definition, a catalyst initiates a reaction. We do this by suggesting ideas and asking questions. These questions lead to the growth of knowledge and the

mapping of strategic plans that outline the potential directions to be considered. Whether individually or in various combinations, these plans will then guide the organization in achieving the desired results.

As this answer might not fully explanatory, the following describes why we are called in when organizations feel the need for help. We:

- Create New Beginnings – when things have gone badly, when projects or new ventures are in danger or have failed, when relationships are conflicted and stressed, anytime things need to be fixed, significant opportunities are generated for growth and renewal
- Confront Stance - when organizations or individuals become lost in helplessness, hopelessness, cynicism, detachment or exaggerated preoccupation with status, privilege and entitlement, critical moments are presented to invite change
- Seek an Exception - when control and consistency are major preoccupations in organizations that cause almost everyone to seek safety, approval and permission from people in powerful positions and when an individual or group wants to march to the beat of a different drum, powerful opportunities are created to engage and confront issues of accountability
- Initiate Endings - when coming to terms with ending things is one of the most onerous tasks at work (such as the possibility of closing of a plant or department, the potential resignation or termination of an individual or the threat of losing a valued customer or vendor creates moments that invite authentic dialogue
- Maximize Performance - when things in organizational life (such as performance reviews) create much anxiety and complaining as a strained parent-child dialogue make these discussions rarely satisfying to anyone, we modify the style of the conversations so they have the ability to change the culture within an organization

The processes used by Strateja & MerHan Associates are not new or proprietary but combine proven tools and business philosophies that helped many companies including giants such as Toyota, the Gore Company (manufacturer of Gore-Tex) and Ricardo Semler's SEMCO dramatically increase quality and profitability by allowing *people* to change their systems and take responsibility for them.

People can affect systems as much as systems affect people. The key is to *allow people to influence the systems which influence them*. For this to work, its users must believe that people are important, not mere "human resources" to be used and discarded. By bringing out the best in their people, organizations can reach optimal effectiveness and increase profits. Some of the highest-performing organizations in the world are also the best to work for.

So, how do you want to work? Same old, same old – doing more of the same you have been doing in the past, all the while hoping that there will be a different outcome? Or would you like to join us on a journey that will take your organization to a new level of performance?