

Summary Thoughts from the Bell Oaks Business Forum – 10/24/08

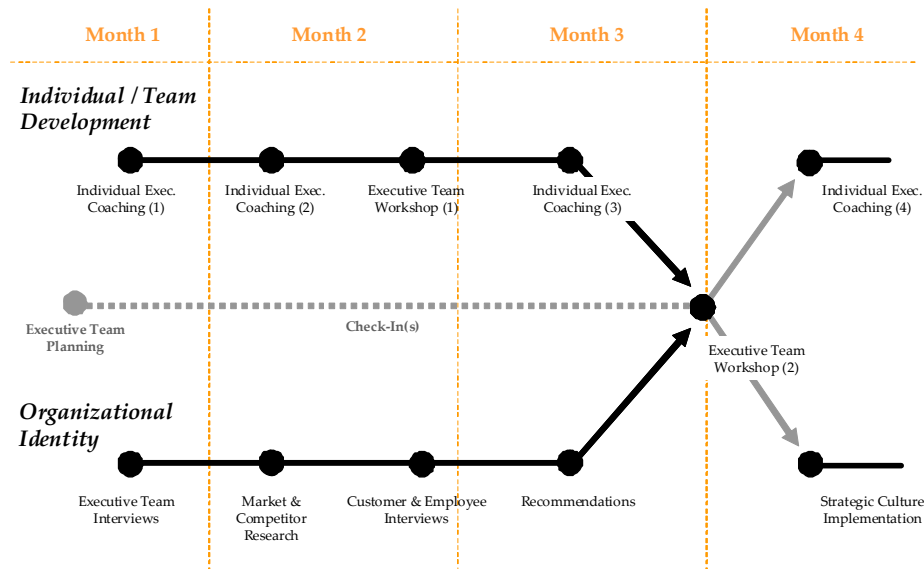
Thanks for your interest in our work and for coming out on Friday morning. We enjoyed the conversation with you and wanted to send along some summary thoughts and further detail regarding our process (see the “wishbone” diagrams below) in creating strategic corporate cultures to help organizations achieve core growth. If you would like to explore things further, let’s talk.



Following up on one conversational thread, it is worth noting that until 1982, Chick-fil-A was not the Chick-fil-A we know today. At a meeting of senior leaders during a crisis period (rising costs, declining same store sales), Dan Cathy asked a fundamental question: “Why are we really in business?” From their deep exploration of that question, they developed the purpose statement that underlies the strategic culture we know today. One result: increasing same store sales every year since 1982. We developed our “wishbone” process to lead to that kind of exploration and outcome—without having to rely on a crisis to focus people’s attention.

The Two Key Insights that Inform Our Process (and can help you get from “here” to “there”)

- (1) You need **current, robust customer insight** to light the fires for strategic culture building—fires which cast light (for direction) and heat (for urgency). There is no substitute for knowing how your customers really see you (strengths, values, and warts) and for knowing what they really need and want—now and in the future—from you or someone else. This data, properly framed, rallies people at all levels to address a shared reality.
- (2) You need to **develop your key leaders and the organization together**. (Focusing on one or the other in isolation doesn’t get it done.) Your new culture will require new perspectives and behaviors across all levels. If key leaders aren’t stepping up, we all know what happens. The good news? Senior executives commit to their own development more readily when they can see an explicit link between their growth and the organization’s development, when they see an actual **process** that makes the connection rather than just a promise.



We look forward to speaking with you all soon.

Andy & Brandon