

CONSULTATIONS



MANAGING THE FUTURE BY DEFAULT

by Pete Petersen

If you ask a cross section of senior executives what keeps them awake at night one of the answers would be “the future.” Makes good sense doesn't it? The future is unpredictable, unknown and if you think about it very long a little scary. Now if you would ask these same executives where they actually spend their time most would say they are consumed with meetings, operations, sales, margins and people issues. Indeed if you would check their calendars they are telling the truth.

Now ask them how much time their management team spends discussing and planning how their business will compete in the future? The answers frequently range from “I don't have any time to think about that” to “We did that five years ago.”

So instead of leadership actively looking ahead and planning for the future they

simply react to competitive forces, play catch up and ultimately hit the wall when their market share decreases, margins grow thin or growth stops. Frequently their companies lose any significant points of difference in the marketplace, try to unsuccessfully imitate their more innovative competitors and lose key people who have become frustrated with an uncertain future.

How is your company doing? Consider these questions.

- ▶ What percentage of management's time is spent on external rather than internal issues? New approaches versus operational issues?
- ▶ How much time does management spend on discussing potential business scenario's 5–10 years into the future?
- ▶ Does the management team jointly discuss the future, competition and new opportunities to gain a shared point of view or are these discussions limited to a select few or the Board ?
- ▶ Does management have a clear point of view about the industry in 5 years? Is it different than your competitors?
- ▶ How well does leadership understand competitors and their strategies? Do they take competitors seriously?
- ▶ Does the industry view your business as a leader or a follower? Why? Do your competitors try to copy you?
- ▶ Is your passion in operations or business development?
- ▶ Where does management get its new ideas? From within the industry or by interaction outside of the industry?

If you don't like your answers perhaps your company is spending too much time dealing with the past and present and too little time developing the future.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT JENSEN CONSULTING

The planning season has been heating up for Jensen Consulting. This summer, we've assisted six different clients with strategic planning projects. Our planning work this summer has been wonderfully diverse, touching the healthcare, technology, professional services, insurance and distribution spaces, plus a variety of audiences (boards of directors and senior teams) and ownership structures (for profits and not for profits and family businesses).

Other recent projects:

- Team development for the leadership team of a large, global division of a multi-national business in Central Iowa
- Succession planning for a statewide non-profit
- Russell spoke on highly effective boards to 150 leaders at a non-profit's annual international leaders conference
- Pete has been asked to develop a case study for an international agri-business leadership development program
- Our executive coaching clients include several new and/or young CEOs
- We continue to serve clients scattered around the country with Board Evaluation, Director Peer Review, Renomination and CEO Evaluation services.



NOTES ON LEADERSHIP

By Russell Jensen

Successful, effective leaders have a peer network.

We continue to stress the importance of a peer network because we have seen how important it is to your ongoing leadership success. You simply can't take your biggest, most sensitive business challenges to many people for advice, and even when you do it's sometimes hard to read the feedback. A great *McKinsey Quarterly* article titled "A Guide for the CEO-elect" quotes one CEO: "The last time I knew if my jokes were really funny was the day before my new position was announced." Plus, no matter how confident you might be in your decision making, an outside perspective can generate ideas and give you important feedback that helps shape and reshape your approach to issues that are concerning you.

For 12 years, the Executive Roundtables have been a peer network for more than 100 presidents, CEOs and business owners. These monthly, half-day sessions encourage an open, honest dialogue that allows participants to talk about a variety of business issues in a non-competitive, confidential forum. From year to year, we have a high retention rate of participants – even though these are some of the busiest people we know.

Clients have told us repeatedly through the years how much

they value having a group of trusted advisors. These are not advisors who will tell them what to do, but share their experiences in similar situations. They give advice. They listen. They encourage. It is a great resource for executives from any industry and any company regardless of ownership structure and size.

As we prepare for the 2007–2008 Roundtable sessions, we are excited to announce the formation of the Senior Manager Roundtable. We are excited to extend this opportunity to a new level of leaders. Many

of our Executive Roundtable participants encouraged us to make a Roundtable available to their emerging leaders – ones who are new to a position or an outlet to help grow their decision-making skills. Again, we think this is a unique opportunity and one that will pay dividends for both the participants and their respective companies.

We still have some seats left for both the Executive and Senior Manager Roundtables beginning in September. Yes, this is a pretty direct pitch, but we know how valuable this program can be for your ongoing leadership growth.

We'd love to tell you more about what we have planned, so **contact the office at 515.875.4824 or email us at Jensen@rjensenconsulting.com.**

NEW THIS YEAR! Senior Manager Roundtable

The Senior Manager Roundtable is perfect for emerging leaders who may be new to their position or looking to finely tune their decision making and management skills. The format will closely follow the Executive format with ...

- Pre-reading assignments
- Member issue discussions
- Case studies requiring preparation
- Guest speakers as appropriate

[GET MORE INFO](#)
Download more info about our Executive Roundtables here.



SUGGESTED READING

[True North](#), by Bill George, former CEO of Medtronic and now a professor at Harvard Business School. Provides George's leadership transformation model, with feedback from 125 other leaders and an appendix with some excellent questions and exercises for the reader.

[What Got You Here Won't Get You There: How Successful People Become Even More Successful](#), by Marshall Goldfield. The executive coaching guru presents 20 bad habits that high achievers need to address to move to the next level.

[The Stark Truth: The Most Overrated and Underrated Players in Baseball History](#), by Jason Stark. I'll tell you all about this one if I ever get it back from my son.

Need some quick hitting articles on a variety of leadership topics? Knowledge at Wharton is a free e-newsletter service that has a great companion website check out <http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/> for more information.

Dr. John C. Maxwell also sends out a free leadership e-newsletter, [Leadership Wired](#). A recent issue caught my attention. His opening comments reviewed the five practices that help leaders serve others:

1. See the Future
2. Engage and Develop Others
3. Reinvent Continuously
4. Value Results and Relationships
5. Embody Values

Good practices to remember.



The United Way's Social Venture Partners brings together our community's forward-thinking entrepreneurs to help nonprofit organizations build their capacity to make social change.

More information about this important organization can be found at the [United Way](#) website, or by typing in http://www.unitedwaydm.org/asp/leadershipgroups/group_home.aspx?affinityid=6.