High-Performance Organizations:

Finding the Elements of Excellence

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To identify what makes a high-performing company, a team from the Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp) used the relevant business research to suggest the characteristics most associated with success. They conducted the High-Performance Organization Survey 2007—commissioned by American Management Association (AMA)—and asked 1,369 respondents about how they achieve results. The survey inquired about revenue growth, market share, profitability and customer satisfaction. The research team correlated market performance with responses about strategy, leadership, customer-orientation and other factors and analyzed how high performers differ from the others.

Like all survey data, these results have their limitations. Correlation is not causation, and the data are based on self-reports rather than on external market information. Nonetheless, the results provide valuable indicators about what separates higher-performing organizations from their lower-performing counterparts and show the practices that are most effective in driving higher performance.

High-performance companies are the role models of the organizational world. They represent real-world versions of a modern managerial ideal: the organization that is so excellent in so many areas that it consistently outperforms most of its competitors for extended periods of time.

Managers want to learn more about high-performance organizations so they can apply those lessons to their own companies. Their goals are to ensure that their own organizations excel in their marketplaces.

It is difficult to discern exactly why some organizations perform better than others do. First, there is the problem of determining which organizations are high performers. Should analysts study only those that outperform others in their own industry? How long a time period should they assess? Which measures, financial or otherwise, are the best ones to use?

Once analysts settle on answers to those questions, they then have to try to determine the reasons that a given organization performs so well. Organizations tend to be complex and unique entities. This makes it difficult to draw straightforward lessons.

Despite these and other difficulties, researchers have been trying to identify and study high-performance organizations for years. Much has been learned during this time. As Julia Kirby (2005) noted in the *Harvard Business Review*, management experts continue to build on one another's work to formulate more sophisticated ideas about organizational performance.

This study continues in that tradition, building on the theoretical work of others, even as it provides new insights about high-performance organizations. To this end, a team of researchers analyzed the business literature in this area and conducted a global survey looking at the characteristics associated with high performance. The *High-Performance Organization Survey 2007*—commissioned by American Management Association (AMA) and conducted by the Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp)—asked 1,369 respondents about a series of organizational characteristics that the relevant literature suggests are associated with high performance. It also inquired about revenue growth, market share, profitability, and customer satisfaction. The research team correlated responses about market performance with responses about strategy, leadership, customer-orientation, and other factors. Based on those findings, the team divided respondents into high, middle, and low performers.

Like all survey data, these results have their limitations. Correlation is not causation, and the data are based on self-reports rather than on external market information. Nonetheless, the results provide clues to what separates higher-performing organizations from their lower-performing counterparts. Generally speaking, higher-performing organizations are superior to their lower-performing counterparts in the following areas:

1. *Their strategies are more consistent, clearer, and well thought out*. They are more likely than other companies to say that their philosophies are consistent with their strategies.
2. *They are more likely to go above and beyond for their customers*. They strive to be world-class in providing customer value, think hard about customers' future and long-term needs, and exceed customer expectations. They are more likely to see customer information as the most important factor for developing new products and services.
3. *Their leaders are relatively clear, fair, and talent-oriented*. Those leaders are more likely to promote the best people for the job, make sure performance expectations are clear, and convince employees that their behaviors affect the success of the organization.
4. *They are superior in terms of clarifying performance measures, training people to do their jobs, and enabling employees to work well together*. They also make customer needs a high priority.
5. *Their employees are more likely to think the organization is a good place to work*. They also emphasize a readiness to meet new challenges and are committed to innovation.
6. *Their employees use their skills, knowledge, and experience to create unique solutions for customers*.

The study also indicates that even high-performance organizations could improve in various areas. The data show that higher performers, taken as a whole, could do considerably more to match their performance metrics with their strategies. Even so, high performers are much more likely than low performers to report that their organization-wide performance measures match their organization's strategies. This was, in fact, the *single* largest difference between the two groups.

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A lesson is likely to be learned here: Like great athletes, even high-performance organizations must continuously strive to improve and "work on their games." Without the passion for improvement, they are unlikely to remain high performers for long. After all, there is usually no shortage of competitors out there who are working hard to beat them in their markets.

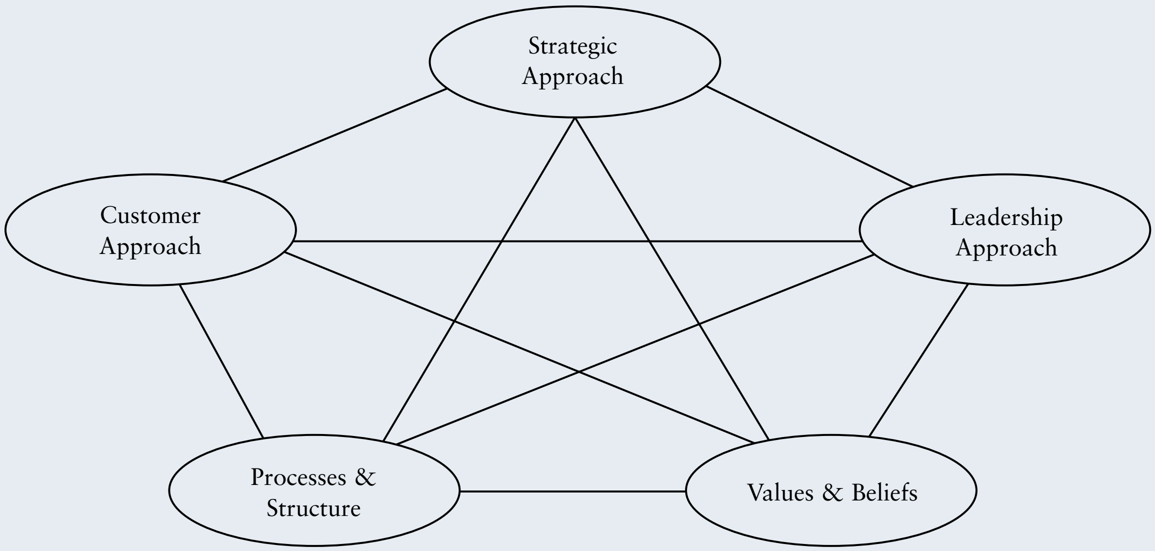
Characteristics of High-Performance Organizations

This article identifies the elements of excellence underlying high-performance organizations. First, we present a model of high-performance. Second, we look at data from the *AMA/i4cp High-Performance Organization Survey 2007* to see how well it supports the model and to detail approaches that are correlated with high performance.

Every organization is unique, including how it applies methods of managing and sustaining high performance. Each of the high-performing companies in our study uses its own particular blend of approaches. Executives select the approaches most suitable to

EXHIBIT 1

Interactive Components of High-Performance Organizations



Source: Overholt, Granell, Vicere, Jamrog, 2006.

their particular organization based on their market situation, their strategy and their people.

The composite survey results revealed in this section provide a broad perspective of the many ways that organizations manage their performance. Just as we can characterize the composite training methods of high-performing professional athletes, we can report the results of how the best organizations operate and succeed. Similar to professional athletes' training regimes, the regimens of high-performing organizations show us the many ways to gain success. As aspiring athletes can pick and choose from the composite regimen of professional athletes to best fit their sport, body type, and physical abilities, so can executives and managers choose from our composite results for high-performance organizations.

A Model of High-Performance Organizations

From close analysis of successful business practice, experts have derived various principles of high performance.

From Weber, for example, come insights about the importance of organizational structure and processes. Drucker and Van de Ven point out the need to align behavior and strategy. Deming highlights the virtues of measuring people, processes, and outcomes. From such literature, we have developed a model of performance that centers on five major characteristics of organizations:

1. An organization's consistent *strategic approach* helps determine its success. This consistency can be measured to see how well the organization "walks the talk." High-performing organizations tend to establish clear visions that are supported by flexible and achievable strategic plans. They also have clearly articulated philosophies that set the standards for everyone's behavior. In addition, they have leaders, managers, and employees who behave consistently with the strategic plan and the company's philosophy.
2. The second major characteristic is *customer approach*: how a company treats its customers. High-performance organizations tend to have clear approaches to obtaining new customers, treating current customers, and retaining customers. They also build the necessary infrastructure and processes to support their customer approach.
3. *Leadership approach* describes the organization's strategy in managing people to achieve a particular set of behaviors. High-performance organizations tend to be clear about what behaviors employees must exhibit to execute organizational and departmental strategies. Executives and managers set clear goals, understand employees' abilities, and guide their performance.
4. *Processes and structure* captures how organizations arrange their work processes, policies, and procedures to support and execute strategy. High-performance organizations have processes that reinforce strategy, setting up workflows and tasks that most effectively enable employees to meet internal and external customer needs within the limits of the strategy. Such companies tend to use a wide variety of metrics to gauge the work for each department and the organization as a whole.
5. *Values and beliefs* are essential to helping a company execute its strategy and achieve its mission. High-performance organizations typically have a set of well-established values that are the deep drivers of employee behavior and are well understood by the vast majority of the employees. These values and beliefs are embedded in the organization and are consistent with the company's approach to leadership.

An extensive review of the research indicates that these five factors are the major drivers that influence organizational performance. Each interacts with and influences the others, creating a whole system. A change to one creates changes in the others. Subsequently, the system tends to be in continual flux. The interactions among these five characteristics are illustrated in Exhibit 1.

One way to think about how a system is continually in motion, with elements shifting in relation to each other, is to picture a sailing vessel. A sailboat is a system made up of various crucial components, among them the helm (or steering wheel), the rudder, which is controlled by the helm, the boom, which is attached to the sail, the sail itself, and the sheets (or lines) that control the boom. These components must work together as a system or the vessel as a whole will fail. Changes in wind are analogous to changes in the market, and the ship's components are akin to the five major drivers of organizational performance

As any sailor knows, moving as planned through the sea means always accounting for the direction and the velocity of the wind, the length of the sheets, the cut of the sail, the currents in the water, and the angle of the rudder. As the sailor goes forward, he or she is simultaneously adjusting these components to harness the wind and accommodate the sea, continually rebalancing the components to maintain an essential harmony among them.

This is the underlying problem and challenge in high-performing organizations. The executives must know how to move their organizations forward while balancing the parts of the system. Executives in high-performing organizations follow the direction of the wind and water (market changes), executing them with excellence while using them to achieve competitive advantage and superior results.

High Performance in Practice: What the Survey Data Tell Us

To test this high-performance model and identify how high-performing companies achieve success, the AMA/i4cp team conducted a global survey to which 1,369 companies responded. The *AMA/i4cp High-Performance Organization Survey 2007* analysis then grouped respondents into three categories—lowest performers, mid-level performers, and highest performers—based on their responses to market-performance questions that focused on revenue growth, market share, profitability, and customer satisfaction.

The team then compared the highest performers to the lowest performers on key attributes within the five areas detailed here: strategic approach, customer approach, leadership approach, processes and structures, and values and beliefs.

The results reveal which attributes are stronger in high-performing organizations than in less-well-performing organizations. Overall, of the 79 total attributes, 64 were positively correlated with high performance. These results paint a compelling picture of how high-performance organizations excel.

Strategic Approaches: Consistent, Clear, and Well Thought Out

In the area of strategic approach, consistency is important to high performance. The common wisdom of "walk the talk" is an indispensable ingredient in high-performing organizations. Most people judge the truth of what an individual says by matching it to his or her behavior. If, for example, an executive says one must behave consistently with the company's strategy or philosophy and then behaves inconsistently, employees draw a variety of conclusions, most of them destructive to an organization. These can include:

1. We do not believe what he or she says.
2. We are allowed to behave the way the executive does: We can pick and chose which rules to follow.
3. The rules do not apply to everyone (or anyone); therefore, we are allowed to do whatever we wish.

EXHIBIT 2

How Do High-Performing Organizations Approach Strategy?

Most Widely Used Practices

- Organization's philosophy statement is consistent with its strategy.
- Respondents know what they need to know about their organization's strategy in order to do their jobs effectively.
- The basic theme of the organization's philosophy statement matches respondents' personal philosophy.

Practices in Which High Performers Furthest Outstrip Low Performers

- Organization-wide performance measures match the organization's strategy.
- Organization's strategic plan is clear and well thought out.
- Employees act in ways that are consistent with the behaviors needed to execute the strategic plan.

Executives in higher-performing organizations avoid these problems by ensuring that employees are clear about the strategic plan and the company's approach to business and that managers behave consistently. On all 12 survey attributes that measure consistency of strategic approach, the highest-performing organizations scored higher than the low performers. The survey assessed employees' understanding of the company strategy and philosophy, as well as the degree to which behavior is consistent with strategy and philosophy. All 12 attributes are positively correlated to high performance.

Consistency of leadership is only a part of the equation. The *AMA/i4cp High-Performance Organization Survey 2007* shows that the single most widely cited strategic practice among high-performing organizations was, "My organization's philosophy statement is consistent with its strategy." The strategic practice in which high performers furthest outstrip low performers is "Organization-wide performance measures match the organization's strategy," followed by "Organization's strategic plan is clear and well thought out."

These findings indicate that high performance is not related just to consistency of leadership behaviors but to consistency with the overall philosophy of the organization. Leaders come and go, but philosophy tends to be more stable. Strategies should be aligned with these philosophies as well as with performance measures.

Consistency is not, however, enough. The great American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines." High-performing organizations must make sure that their consistency is not "foolish," which is why ensuring that a strategic plan is "well thought out" is so strongly associated with market success. No company can perform well if poor leaders devise poorly conceived strategies, even when those strategies are consistently implemented.

Customer Approaches: Going Above and Beyond

Customers are crucial to any line of business, but what kind of customer approaches are most effective to establishing high performance? To find out, the *AMA/i4cp High-Performance Organization*

EXHIBIT 3

How Do High-Performing Organizations Approach Customers?

Most Widely Used Practices

- Organization believes that the business exists primarily to serve customers.
- Organization strives to be the best in the world in providing value for its best customers.
- Organization assesses and determines its customers' future needs.

Practices in Which High Performers Furthest Outstrip Low Performers

- Organization uses customer information as the most important factor for developing new products and services.
- Organization accurately targets its customers' long-term needs.
- Organization exceeds customers' expectations.

Survey 2007 included 12 questions about how respondents view customers, treat customers, and are organized to meet customer needs. The data reveal that all 12 of the customer-related questions are positively correlated with high performance.

Specifically, the results indicate that higher-performing organizations tend to be more attuned to the current and future needs of their customers than are lower-performing organizations. High performance is also associated with a strong emphasis on customer service, including vigorous efforts to serve customers better than anyone else in the industry. The survey also found high performance is linked with the use of "customer information as the most important factor related to developing new products and services." In short, high-performing companies have—and act on—foresight in regard to their customers.

High-performance firms also understand that different customers have different needs, and that some customers add more to the bottom line than others. Such organizations create different types of processes to manage different categories of customers, and they are attuned to shifts in the market that require them to change how they treat customers. In general, they are more outwardly focused on customer needs and behavior than lower-performing organizations.

The survey questions and responses in this area can also be grouped into three major categories:

1. *External focus:* In general, high-performance organizations are more willing than other organizations to hear what is best for the customer rather than what is best for the organization.
2. *Philosophical approach:* High-performance organizations intend to be the "best in the world" in providing value and exceeding customer expectations. These are not just lofty words or statements, some research shows, but rather actions that are put into practice. As with strategic approaches, high-performance companies are more likely than other organizations to "walk the talk" in terms of customer focus.
3. *Internal design:* Higher-performing organizations also tend to be better at creating and maintaining internal processes that best meet the needs of the customer. Their customer-focused processes are also more flexible than those in lower performing organizations and leave room for employees to use their judgment in meeting customer needs.

Leadership Approaches: Focused on Performance, Beliefs, and Talent

Leadership, especially at the CEO level, is frequently portrayed as the *key* ingredient in creating a successful organization, but the larger research suggests this can be overstated. Research conducted by Nitin Nohria and colleagues at Harvard Business School found, for example, that on average, 14 percent of a firm's performance is dependent on its leader ("Creating," 2003).

Leadership is only one of five key components of organizational systems that must operate in a kind of mutual harmony to be effective; however, in today's superstar-focused culture, executives and leaders are what most business writers tend to focus on first. People are acculturated to emulate the superstar, to be just like him or her.

The *AMA/i4cp High-Performance Organization Survey 2007* asked participants 11 questions about their organizational approach to leading. The research team found that one of the most widely agreed-on leadership-related strategies is ensuring that "everyone is clear about the organization's performance expectations." About two-fifths of respondents either strongly or very strongly agreed that their organizations do this, and high-performance organizations were considerably more likely than lower-performing organizations to say this. In fact, of the 11 leader-related strategies asked about in the survey, this was the one in which higher performers furthest outstripped lower performers.

Another important factor associated with high performance is "making sure employees believe that their behavior affects the organization." Leaders cannot do their jobs alone. They must be able to convince others of just how important their own behaviors

EXHIBIT 4

How Do High-Performing Organizations Approach Leadership?

Most Widely Used Practices

- Immediate supervisor understands the strengths respondents bring to their jobs.
- Employees believe that their behavior affects the organization.
- Everyone is clear about the organization's performance expectations.

Practices in Which High Performers Furthest Outstrip Low Performers

- Everyone is clear about the organization's performance expectations.
- Management promotes the person who has the best skills and knowledge to do the job.
- Employees believe that their behavior affects the organization.

are to the success of the whole organization.

A third factor that was strongly associated with performance was the idea that "management promotes the person who has the best skills and knowledge to do the job." Performance appears to be higher in organizations where promotions are based on talent and merit rather than on other factors, such as organizational politics.

The leadership-behavior survey questions can also be analyzed from a broader perspective that is based on the high-performance paradigm set out here. The questions can be grouped into three major categories:

1. *Supervisory relationship:* For over 50 years, organizational researchers have found that the most important relationship within any organization is the one between the employee and his immediate supervisor. A good relationship between employee and supervisor is associated with higher performance, more safety-conscious behavior, better physical health, and higher employee satisfaction. Not surprisingly, the best-performing organizations in the survey scored higher than lower in all the questions related to this area, including employee comfort with being able to express disagreement.
2. *Innovation in HR:* The survey also found that high-performance organizations had more innovative HR than the lower-performing organizations. Their HR functions bring new approaches to people management to managers so they are continually aware of what other companies are doing to manage people more effectively.
3. *Clarity of goals and consistency of rewards:* As noted here, high-performance companies are clear and consistent in the area of performance expectations, and they also tend to be more consistent in the ways they reward workers. They set clear performance expectations, reward employees who have the best ability, and reward those employees who strive to best meet customer needs.

In short, clarity and consistency are important in terms of strategy and philosophy, customer focus, and leadership behaviors. These components mutually reinforce each other, strengthening what we can term the "culture of performance" by minimizing the destructive and unproductive behaviors that are the result of mixed messages.

Processes and Structure: Centered Around Metrics, Customers, and Training

Sometimes truisms are true, and this seems to be the case with the old adage, "You can't manage what you can't measure." The *AMA/i4cp High-Performance Organization Survey 2007* strongly indicates that clearly defined performance measures are a major key to success. Not only was the statement "my organization's performance measures are clearly defined" one of the most highly agreed to statements among high-performing organizations, but it was the statement in this survey section in which higher-performing organizations furthest outstrip lower-performing organizations.

The survey found other especially critical characteristics associated with high performance:

1. A strong focus on customers;
2. The kind of training and instruction that is necessary to do jobs well; and
3. Keeping current with state-of-the-market technological advances.

EXHIBIT 5

How Do High-Performing Organizations Approach Processes and Structure?

Most Widely Used Practices

- Organization's highest priorities are on meeting customers' needs.
- Organization's delivery schedules for products and services are based on customer needs.
- Organization's performance measures are clearly defined.

Practices in Which High Performers Furthest Outstrip Low Performers

- Organization's performance measures are clearly defined.
- Employees receive the training and instruction necessary to do the job properly.
- Organization keeps current with state-of-the-market technological advances.

The first of these reinforces previous findings: There is a strong relationship between high performance and customer focus. The second suggests that training and skills play a strong part in high performance. Third of these points to the need to stay current with technological advances, which clearly drive performance when used wisely.

The survey asked 24 questions in this section, twice the number in the first three sections. The higher-performing organizations were rated higher on most of those variables. The processes and structure questions and responses can be grouped into four major categories to provide a broader perspective.

1. *Information access:* High-performance organizations understand the power of good communication and sharing information. Information is viewed as something to be shared rather than something to be hoarded for the purpose of power and control. High-performance organizations' supervisors share information freely. In addition, information pertinent to the job at hand is made readily available to employees.
2. *Technology:* Keeping abreast with technological advances is an ongoing strategic concern. High-performance organizations are more likely to use state-of-the-market technology than other organizations. Because such organizations are more customer-focused than others, they also are more likely to use customer-relationship management software than are lower-performing companies.
3. *Performance measures:* As noted, higher-performing organizations leverage performance measures to drive clarity and focus throughout their organizations.
4. *Customer focus:* Higher-performing organizations are more aware of internal and external customer satisfaction than are lower-performing organizations. In addition, higher-performing organizations have processes than are more outwardly focused than lower-performing organizations.

EXHIBIT 6

How Do High-Performing Organizations Approach Values and Beliefs?

Most Widely Used Practices

- Most employees think the organization is a good place to work.
- The organization's organizational culture is externally focused on customers, markets, and competitors.
- The organization emphasizes readiness to meet new challenges.

Practices in Which High Performers Furthest Outstrip Low Performers

- The organization emphasizes a readiness to meet new challenges.
- A shared value that keeps the organization together is commitment to innovation.
- Most employees think the organization is a good place to work.

Values and Beliefs: Upbeat, Ethical, and Ready for Challenges

A reputation as a "good place to work" is a solid indicator that an organization is a high performer. Not only is the characteristic most widely cited by higher-performing organizations, it is also one of the areas in which those organizations furthest outstrip low performers.

High-performance organizations are also well aware of external factors such as customers, markets, and competitors, and they are ready to take on new challenges. Another factor relatively strongly correlated with performance is a commitment to innovation.

The survey also asked respondents about ethics. The research team found that fully 69 percent of responding organizations said that their organizations adhered to the highest ethical standards, and the percentage was higher for top performers. The high positive response rate reflects the current concern over ethical behavior in organizations, and the data indicate a positive relationship between performance and ethics.

The values, beliefs, and ethics survey questions can be grouped into three categories to provide a broader perspective:

1. *Approach to work:* In addition to some of the values noted previously, employees in high-performance companies tend to be loyal to the company and they tend to participate in their organization's social events. They also tend to be more involved and more comfortable with their companies.
2. *How the organization treats its employees:* High-performance organizations create an environment that fosters cohesiveness, loyalty, and readiness to change. Such organizations tend to treat their employees well, and employees, in turn, treat the organization well. These organizations also tend to be more concerned about their employees than the lower-performing organizations are, and they tend to have employees who are able to find helpful, knowledgeable opinions among their coworkers.
3. *Employees have the freedom to use their judgment:* In high-performance organizations, employees have more freedom to use their own discretion than employees do in lower performing organizations. Employees in these organizations also have more liberty to change processes or procedures to improve outcomes. Their supervisors have the same type of freedom. All of these changes are made within a more cohesive group than in lower-performing organizations. The feedback loops minimize disruption and reduce confusion.

Summary of Results

As this study has shown, there is no single secret to high performance. Rather, successful organizations are dynamic systems with interdependent parts. As the AMA/i4cp team reviewed and digested the results of the *AMA/i4cp High Performing Organizations Survey 2007*, we developed a short list of characteristics of high-performance organizations:

1. They "walk the talk," behaving consistently throughout the organization.
2. They understand their customers to a high degree, knowing what customers need and focusing on meeting those needs.
3. They manage locally yet share information; they develop and support great supervisors and provide access to as much information as employees can use.
4. They create an environment of focus and teamwork; they do this by designing procedures and processes to pull everyone together and by clearly measuring outcomes.
5. They treat employees well so that employees will treat the organization well; they clarify values and expectations and they behave with the highest ethical standards.

Organizations that share these characteristics are not guaranteed to be high performers, but they stand a considerably better chance of performing well than if they fail to adopt these traits

Conclusion

This study shows that achieving high levels of organizational performance is a multidimensional process. A company's values and philosophy must align with its strategies, which then must align with performance metrics and leadership approaches. Organizational alignment is important, but so is excellent execution. Strategies, for example, must be well thought out, and the organization should strive to exceed customer expectations.

The study also suggests that, over the next 10 years, these characteristics of high-performance organizations are likely to remain stable but the ways in which companies demonstrate those characteristics will evolve. For example, there will be changes in leadership competencies, talent-management programs, technology usage, customer service, performance metrics, and the like. Achieving and maintaining high performance will require companies to adapt to a changing marketplace and shifting social attitudes.

Organizational leaders will also need to adapt to new theories and understandings of high performance, staying abreast of the research in the field. After all, today's favored strategies and best practices can easily become tomorrow's failures of imagination. Amid these changes in practices and marketplaces, some companies will be especially outstanding in terms of their ability to perform at a high level for years at a time. These organizations will always be worth studying because they have much to teach us.

APPENDIX

Survey Findings: High Performers vs. Low Performers

In the AMA/i4cp survey, multiple questions used the well-accepted Likert-type scale, with a 1 rating generally designated as "very strongly disagree" and a 7 rating designated as "very strongly agree." A variable labeled "performance" was created from the average of the four market performance questions that focused on self-reported revenue growth, market share, profitability, and customer satisfaction. A tertiary split was then done on performance, creating high, middle, and low groups. The high performers are the high group, and the low performers are the low group. The data in the tables reflect the largest reported gaps between high and low performers in terms of their usage of these practices, as determined by their average 1 to 7 Likert-scale scores.

Strategy	High Performers	Low Performers
My organization's strategic plan is clear and well thought out.	5.64	4.61
My organization-wide performance measures match the organization's strategy.	5.50	4.47
The behavior of the executive team is consistent with the organization's philosophy.	5.53	4.60
The behavior of employees is consistent with the **behaviors needed to execute the strategic plan successfully.**	**5.31**	**4.37**

Leadership	High Performers	Low Performers
Everyone is clear about the organization's performance expectations.	5.43	4.51
Management promotes the person with the best skills and knowledge to do the job.	5.04	4.19
Management rewards employees who take risks to better serve customers.	4.80	4.11
Employees believe that their behavior affects the organization.	5.50	**4.73**

Customer Focus	High Performers	Low Performers
We use customer information as the most important factor for developing new products and services.	5.53	4.58
We accurately target our customers' long-term needs.	5.38	4.48
We exceed our customers' expectations.	5.59	4.71
We use high-developed customer-listening strategies to determine our customers' expectations.	5.12	4.24

Process and Structure	High Performers	Low Performers
My organization's performance measures are clearly defined.	5.53	4.70
Employees receive the training and instruction necessary to do the job properly.	5.27	4.50
We keep current with state-of-the-market technological advances.	4.85	4.08
Our internal processes are designed to enable us to work together as well as possible.	**5.11**	**4.37**

Culture	High Performers	Low Performers
My organization emphasizes readiness to meet new challenges.	5.53	4.65
A shared value that keeps my organization together is commitment to innovation.	5.04	4.18
Most employees think this is a good place to work.	5.65	4.87
My organization's organizational culture is extremely focused on our customers, markets, and competitors.	5.55	4.84

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Jay J. Jamrog is the senior vice president of research at the Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp), formerly the Human Resource Institute (HRI). As a futurist, he has devoted the past 20 years to identifying and analyzing the major issues and trends affecting the management of people in organizations. Jay is the associate articles editor for the "building a strategic HR function" key knowledge area of *People & Strategy*, has had articles published in major business magazines, and is frequently quoted in business publications and newspapers. He often collaborates with, and speaks before, other organizations and associations on major research topics related to the future of people management. Prior to joining HRI in 1982, Jay held numerous management positions, including vice president of purchasing for a large import/export wholesaler.

Mark Vickers is the vice president of research at the Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp). He has authored many reports and white papers for the institute, is the institute's former managing editor, and is currently the editor of *TrendWatcher* and *The Fortnight Report*. He has authored and coauthored various periodical articles and has served as an editor and project manager for a number of AMA/HRI research projects.

Dr. Miles H. Overholt, Ph.D., is a principal at Riverton Management Consulting Group. Miles leads an international team in developing new organizational assessment tools to measure the linkage among strategy, behavior, personality type, and individual competencies. As the team leader, Miles helped create the Organizational Capabilities Index, the comparative organization tool that underlies i4cp's study of strategic alignment employee behavior and organizational performance. Miles has over 25 years of consulting and research expertise in organizational design, change, and behavior. He is the author of *Building Flexible Organizations: A People-Centered Approach* and has written numerous articles on organizational performance, change processes, systems thinking, and systems metrics. His undergraduate degree is from Lafayette College, and he earned his doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania.

Carol L. Morrison is a productivity and corporate performance knowledge center manager for the Institute for Corporate Productivity. She has a BS in sociology/social work and a BS in business administration/marketing. Her career experience spans public, private, and nonprofit sectors. She has established and directed a municipal government information department and headed employee communications for national and multinational corporations. A senior research analyst, she is the author of research reports on subjects ranging from change management to employee engagement.

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