



THE VIEWPOINT.

O'Neill Consulting Group
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TRANSFORMATION *is what is new and what is next for organizations large and small.*

It speaks of what is yet unimagined, but also what is possible if people and groups of people innovate their thinking, their behaviors, and their views of the world.

At O'Neill Consulting Group, our team has been increasingly engaged with executive leaders in important discussions about transformation. Maybe you have, too.

Whether voiced as innovation, market disruption, reorganization, globalization, or transformation, a growing number of market-moving enterprises - including most of our clients - are poised to alter how they do business or are already engaged in strategic initiatives that will deliver radical changes for their companies or customers.



*"The most effective way to cope with change is to help create it."
- L.W. Lynett, 1960's IBM Executive*

Ideas and the talent that conceives them will shape the competitive landscape of the future.

Organizations with the boldest ideas, the most inspiring leaders, and the most distinctive customer experiences will exploit long-held competitive advantages or evolve from market disruptors to become new industry leaders.

Sounds good, right?



But how do you make transformation real? Real enough to drive the results you want to produce, or that you increasingly need to produce?

From our experience, it starts with the willingness and desire to try something new. That is why we listed one of our New Year's Resolutions for 2014 as: "Embrace disruption. Imagine new ways of doing things. Execute."

It is admittedly a small step, but to create a culture of discovery, we know that we have to emphasize the value we place on trying new things.

Often, the benefits of transformation are directly proportionate to your company's appetite for changing the "how things get done around here." In view of that, it is extremely important that your culture instills and rewards the right attitude and mindset among your team-members. Be it a large enterprise shift or the smallest of adjustments, your next innovation will only come from challenging assumptions and looking at things you have known for a long time from a fresh angle.

A second key to making transformation real hinges on investing in the right resources. That is, the right talent with the right budget and the right scope. If you also leave your talent with the freedom of a blank slate, you will further promote entrepreneurial initiatives and spur the generation of creative thoughts.

Given our industry focus, we make every effort to be on the pulse of transformation related to finding, attracting, and retaining the best talent. And, there are a number of developments that have caught our eyes:

1. Visionary companies like global automaker **Infiniti** are leading the way by creating the role of Chief Transformation Officer to drive innovation and organizational realignment with real accountability for breakthrough results. It comes as no surprise that Infiniti's vision statement is "Boldly Break Away." Transformation leaders at the executive level exert influence to accelerate key learnings from change projects and to remove any organizational or cultural obstacles that may get in the way of success.

2. **Netflix, Inc.** has garnered headlines for its distinctive approach in shaping its "Freedom & Responsibility Culture" through unconventional Human Resources policies and employee incentives. The company eliminated its vacation and clothing policies, informed managers that they would be rewarded for providing the right context for employee behaviors rather than trying to control them, and set compensation packages at the top of the market. At the same time, the company reinforced its leadership position, more than tripling its stock in 2013, winning 3 Emmy Awards, and increasing subscribers to about 29 million.

3. Emerging technologies are also poised to transform how we build corporate cultures. Professor Alex (Sandy) Pentland, Director of the **Human Dynamics Laboratory** at MIT, has created electronic badges that collect and produce data related to day-to-day employee interactions. Worn by employees, the badges gather insight on numerous characteristics including team performance, interaction patterns, mannerisms, and attitudes. (Sounds a bit like Big Brother?) With this data, Pentland can predict team performance and draw conclusions on desirable and undesirable habits – things that may otherwise go undetected.

"The main dangers in this life are the people who want to change everything or nothing."

-Lady Nancy Astor, first woman to sit as a member of parliament (MP) in the British House of Commons

A third consideration in the pursuit of a corporate transformation agenda is understanding its game-changing impacts - disruptive and energizing - on your customers, business partners, suppliers, employees, shareholders, communities, and others touched by your organization.

Getting too far ahead of the rest of your enterprise can create resentment, confusion, fear, excitement, and a range of other human emotions. That is why it is important to inform your stakeholders of the initial need for change as well as your progress toward the desired transformational results. That way, they can make the required shifts before it is too late to catch up with the rest of your company.

Securing the early involvement of those who will be impacted by the strategic outcomes of your transformation initiatives is always a wise decision. Sometimes, it makes all the difference.

In the end, transformation is about being courageous. Throughout history, mankind has embarked on journeys in hopes of discovering something new or better.

Driven, in part, by natural instincts, explorers like Christopher Columbus, Leif Ericson, and Ferdinand Magellan took to the seas with visions of what they might find over the horizon or halfway around the world. And, they did so facing their fears, countless opposition by others, and the risks involved in going on an expedition. Why? Because they believed in their cause. And look at the outcome: the discovery of the New World and the first circumnavigation of the Earth.

This desire to achieve something better also moved Alfred Lord Tennyson to capture the notion of man's quest for new frontiers in his famous poem *Ulysses*:

"Come my friends, 'tis not too late to seek a newer world."

So we ask you, is transformation on your horizon?



O'NEILL CONSULTING GROUP'S RECAP FOR TRANSFORMATION *Making it Real for Your Company*

1. Create that sense of organizational purpose, maybe even competitive urgency, to explore what customers need from the ground up. You might be surprised by what you learn.
2. Know where to invest. Exploring what your company is really capable of achieving requires an investment in the right talent, the right resources, and the time it takes to explore, test, learn, refine, and execute.
3. Communicate with stakeholders about the immediate and potential impacts and timing of your transformation agenda. You will gain support along the way, and you will likely head off many obstacles ahead of time.

About O'Neill Consulting Group:

O'Neill Consulting Group is a client-centered, retained executive search firm delivering high-impact talent solutions to business leaders globally.

As trusted partners, fearless truth-tellers, and life-changers, we intersect our clients' need for talent with candidate aspirations, demonstrating commitment, consistency, and care, while improving our clients' organizations and the lives of candidates.

We have locations in Boston, Dallas, Newport, Research Triangle Park, London, and Shanghai. We specialize in our Consumer, Industrial & Manufacturing, Life Sciences, and Private Equity practices. Learn more at: www.oneillconsulting.com