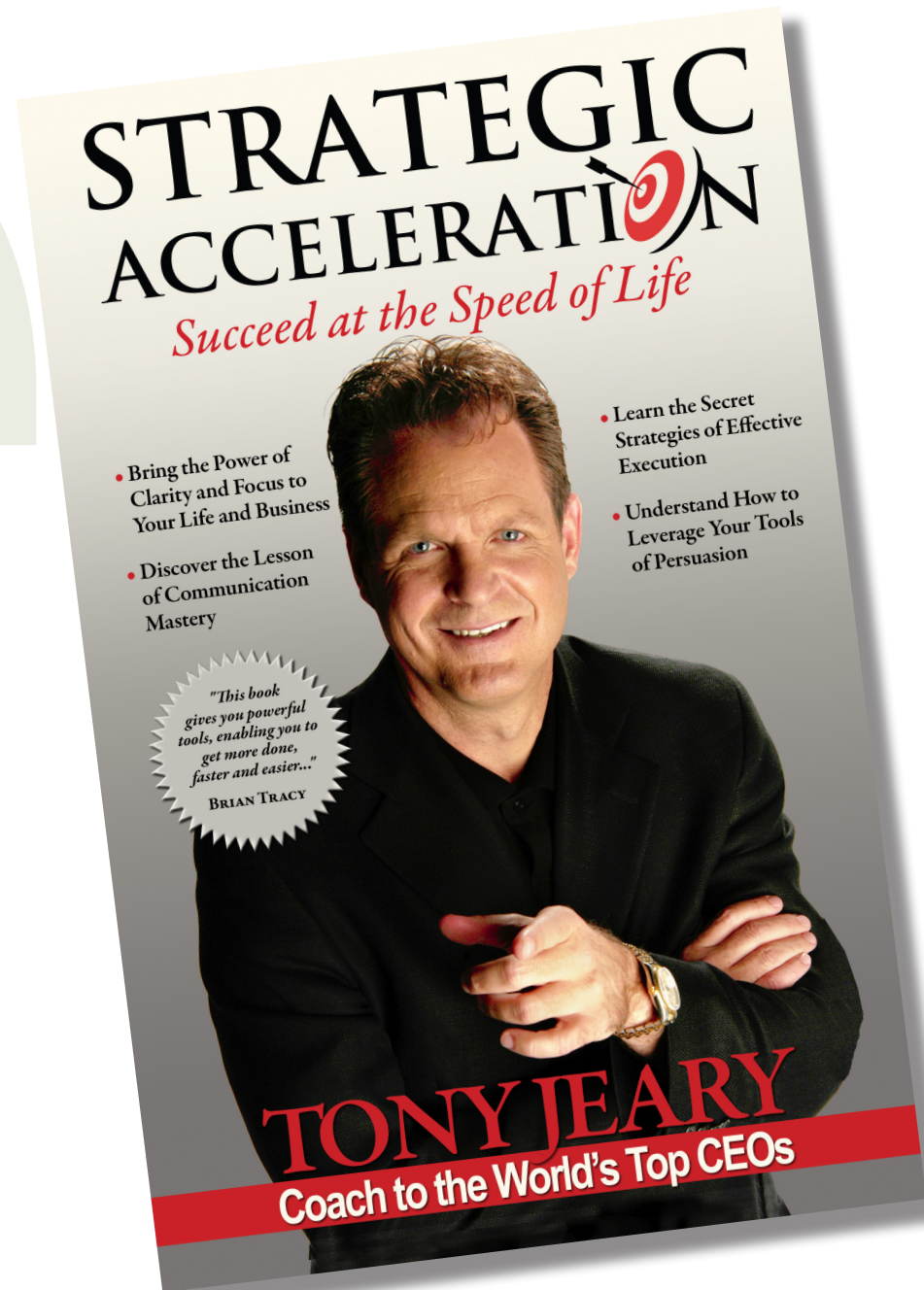


7 Things to Do NOW to Improve Results



Change your Thinking
To Improve Your Results
Tony Jeary



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In this manifesto, bestselling author and business strategist Tony Jeary reveals issues critical for success in an economic downturn. This manifesto is based on concepts discussed in Jeary's latest book, ***STRATEGIC ACCELERATION: SUCCEED AT THE SPEED OF LIFE*** (Vanguard Press; March, 2009). Jeary has personally coached the CEOs from some of the world's largest companies including Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, Qualcomm, Samsung, New York Life, Firestone and many others. See www.strategicacceleration.com.

Strategic Acceleration — Change Your Thinking... To Improve Your Results!

By Tony Jeary

As the public perception of the economy worsens, it is possible we may worry ourselves into an even worse reality. The greatest threat to our economy right now is the cumulative effect of businesses failing to take action they need to take, as they “wait” to find out what is going to happen. If all businesses slide into a “wait” posture, the ripple-through effect could be a serious problem on the entire economy. Unfortunately, the early signs of this “waiting” syndrome are already on the horizon!

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Prudence is one thing. The fear of doing what needs to be done is quite another. There are actions that need to be taken now to position your business to survive and thrive. This manifesto is a challenge for specific action that will require you to change your thinking, if you want to improve your results!

It's Not Business As Usual!

If you think you can keep doing the things you've been doing and sustain past success, you are mistaken. America voted for change and it is going to get change. Much of it will radically transform the way American businesses function and compete.

Business as usual is unrealistic in our current economic climate. Leaders must accept the fact that success is likely to become a moving target and their organizations must become faster, leaner and better equipped to compete and change quickly. To embrace speed as a strategic asset requires higher levels of clarity about the real needs and goals of the organization. Clarity means that the value and purpose of every effort must be evaluated and put to the test.

Two years ago my company conducted research among our best customers and determined there are three basic, strategic concepts that directly impact achieving superior results. The concepts are Clarity, Focus and Execution! These are the keys to achieving superior results on both professional and personal fronts! These three keys also reflect a new way of thinking you need to embrace, to better frame your strategy building process. Here is a quick description of each of these strategic concepts.

CLARITY: You must be clear about your vision and what you really, really want!

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FOCUS:

You must focus on *High-Leverage Activities* (HLAs) that will move your strategic results needle!

EXECUTION:

You must execute by strong communication such as elevating your ability to persuade and influence others!

Clean Up Your *Belief Window*

Strategic thinking and planning begins with something called your *Belief Window*. Your *Belief Window* determines how effectively you are able to perform because it ultimately controls all of your choices and actions. Your *Belief Window* is shaped by the facts or ideas you accept as truth and your personal experience as it relates to those facts. The speed of life presents a constant, unending flow of information that contains a mixture of fact, truth, myth, rumor, and in some cases, downright deception. This can negatively impact the principles in your *Belief Window*.

Because your *Belief Window* doesn’t always provide a wholly accurate view, it can produce significant errors in the way your mind filters the information that passes through it. What are the consequences of your *Belief Window* framing something incorrectly? What if your *Belief Window* causes you to take action or inaction based on something that just isn’t true? How would this erroneous framing of an event, an idea, or a person impact your results? For example, if you believe there is no way to be successful in an economic downturn, all your action will be impacted by this belief.

If your error in perception involves a significant principle necessary for achievement, it might stop you from taking an important step toward success, or it might even cause you to fail completely.



Therefore, you need to have the ability to adjust your *Belief Window* when it impedes your success. The first adjustment you may need to make involves the way you approach the creation of your strategy and planning. The issues of Clarity, Focus and Execution must become the foundational framework for all that you do. Whatever the goal, whatever the need, whatever the problem or challenge – always begin with three questions:

What do I really want and what is the value and purpose of it?

What are the (HLAs) I need to do every day to impact my results?

What do I need to do to communicate and persuade others to take action and exceed expectations?

This is the new action template I am suggesting for your mind.

Get clear! Get Focused! Execute, Get Results!

When you are committed to this approach, the next step is to wrap them in a powerful concept that can transform your life and work. The concept I refer to is this: ***Always Exceed Expectations!***



Exceeding Expectations – The “*Silver Bullet*” of Results!

One thing I’ve learned during my life is that even though the economy may go up and down, some things are always the same.

One of the things that doesn’t change is that even in tough times when people and businesses cut

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back on spending, nobody can completely stop spending. That means somebody is always buying and somebody is always selling. In tough economic times, you just need to make sure you are one of those doing some selling!

My father taught me a great truth when I was growing up: “Give value, do more than expected.” I have not only lived by this principle, I have built many successful companies based on it. It has been the key to my own success both personally and professionally – and it proves out – in good times and bad. Exceeding expectations is the means by which value is created and things get sold! You can exceed expectations in price, quality or service and with focus, all three – but you must understand what it really means to exceed expectations before you can actually do it.

The first thing to understand about exceeding expectations is this: The expectations you exceed today become the seed for new opportunities in the future. This may seem to be an obvious fact, but many people fail to connect today’s actions with future opportunities. By that I mean they approach exceeding expectations as a one-off special event rather than a way of life. Exceeding expectations is a foundational attitude and something that you have to pursue daily. Exceeding expectations is a proactive effort that is always looking for a way to express itself. Exceeding expectations is a completely voluntary activity and when it becomes foundational to the way you think it has the power to become the seed for new opportunity.

It is rare for anyone to exceed expectations unless they do it on purpose. To exceed expectations on purpose means that you have an understanding of expected performance, and you realize that expected performance is in no way extraordinary. It becomes tougher when you realize that exceeding expectations requires more effort to surpass what might be described as “acceptable performance.” Acceptable performance is in fact mediocrity and mediocrity is usually the norm. It’s hard to sell mediocrity and leadership makes that determination!



Leadership is a Results Contest

I have said for years that leadership is a results contest and in today's global business climate, growth and success will be determined by two organizational needs. The first is the need for speed. The second is the need for results. Simply stated, leadership is a results contest! Leadership is about getting things done. Results are about winning in the marketplace. Results are about scoring more than the competition and having an organization that can push the ball across the goal line when the going gets tough.

There are three enemies of speed and results:

The first enemy is the absence of clarity.

The second enemy is the lack of focus.

The third enemy is poor execution.

The absence of clarity drains organizational energy. Lack of focus produces a culture of indecisiveness and excessive preparation. Poor execution degrades effectiveness, limits results and restricts growth. Today, the success of an enterprise literally depends on its ability to respond to the marketplace within time frames that may have been previously believed to be impossible.

I teach a methodology called *Strategic Acceleration* which results from achieving the organizational mindset I have described in this manifesto (*Strategic Acceleration*, Succeed at the Speed of Life, Vanguard Press, March 2009). The mindset required to produce *Strategic Acceleration* is proactive and it is anticipatory. It tenaciously clings to the need for results and refuses to back away from difficulty or roadblocks. *Strategic Acceleration* is characterized by a desire to win, a desire to be creative, persistence, a demonstration of commitment. When an organizational



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culture is characterized by these qualities – accomplishment exceeds expectations. When that happens, *Strategic Acceleration* is achieved.

Good leadership is characterized by putting all the pieces together that allow execution of vision in the marketplace. For a vision to be executed it must be understood and supported by the business as a whole. There must be unity and there must be clarity. All of this comes together with one primary goal: To get results! In the most basic terms, that is what leadership is about: Creating organizational environments capable of getting superior results. To get results there must be a high level of organizational energy.

Organizational energy is the collective sum of the human spark that powers the desire to win, produces creativity, supports persistence, and establishes the foundation for collective commitment. When organizational energy is degraded, all of these qualities begin to erode and *Strategic Acceleration* is lost.

7 Things to Do NOW to Improve Results

I close this manifesto with 7 specific things I challenge you to act upon and implement. If you do these things, you will suddenly find that you have clarity, focus and execution. You will have changed your thinking and changed your results.

Recognize that “Business As Usual” is not an option.

Leaders must accept the fact that success is likely to become a moving target and their organizations must become faster, leaner and better equipped to compete and change quickly.

“Economic pressures will eliminate the luxury of long-range planning, but the need to plan effectively will be intensified.”



To embrace speed as a strategic asset requires higher levels of clarity about the real needs and goals of the organization. Clarity means that the value and purpose of every effort must be evaluated and put to the test.

Create strategies based on what can actually be seen.

Economic pressures will eliminate the luxury of long-range planning, but the need to plan effectively will be intensified. Organizational leaders must learn to evaluate, test and revise their plans and strategies several times a year to insure they maintain competitive positions. In less volatile times, strategic planning every couple of years was satisfactory. Today, planning once a year isn't enough. I believe quarterly strategy reviews are a key element for future success, because success is going to become a moving target!

Reevaluate the Value and Purpose of your Vision.

Being clear on what leadership expects is the result of understanding the “why” of things. Discovering “why” is achieved by factually knowing and understanding the value and purpose of our vision and all that we do. As the world changes rapidly we must constantly ensure our value and purpose match the needs of our customers and prospects.

Being aware of the changing felt needs of customers holds the keys to winning in a troubled economy. People will continue to have needs and that fact will never change. However, the needs of people will change faster and become less frivolous as the economy tightens. The value and purpose of your effort must be understood within the context of these changing needs.

Identify and disrupt organizational comfort zones.

Good economic times and prosperity create comfort zones that people resist leaving. Troubled

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times demand these comfort zones be challenged so that new behaviors can flourish.

Strategic change demands a lot of emotional energy because it requires new thinking, which in turn disrupts comfort zones. We all know how people resist leaving their comfort zones! That is why change is a big deal to people and is so difficult to achieve at an organizational level. The pain that accompanies change can be financial, physical, or emotional, but regardless of the type of discomfort created by change, the speed of life demands that you embrace it if you intend to be competitive and effective.

Conduct Quarterly *More-Of-Less-Of* Reviews.

Leaders must become focused on real results, and approach all they do from that perspective. *High-Leverage Activities* must be identified and executed. Since change is rapid, frequent analysis of what is working and what is not should become a standard practice.

There are four questions that must be asked:

What do you need to do more of?

This question helps you identify what you need to continue doing in order to increase your results.

What do you need to do less of?

You must identify the things you do that waste time, or are not effective.

What do you need to start doing?

This question asks you to think of things you are not doing that could be significant and important to getting better results.



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What do you need to stop doing?

You must identify low-impact, time-wasting activities to eliminate from your daily habits. These activities could be minor, such as spending too much time on the telephone with colleagues, helping others out on non-emergency items while pushing aside your more critical tasks, inefficiently preparing for meetings, and generally allowing small things to push you away from your primary objectives.

Commit to exceeding expectations and providing value.

Leaders must guide their organizations into a culture that is willing to exceed expectations. The ability to exceed expectations internally and externally will separate winners from losers in the years ahead.

One of the keys to creating a culture willing to exceed expectations is having organizational clarity concerning purpose and value. If there is a negative perception of purpose and value, there will be no willingness to exceed expectations or change voluntarily so that superior results can be achieved. Consequently, leaders will have to push the team, rather than permit the vision to pull people toward it. For this reason, why becomes the critical issue of perception, and to achieve clarity, it must be addressed. Exceeding expectations will flow from that point.

Abandon activities that won't move the strategic results needle.

If something isn't working, stop doing it! This means people must be willing to voluntarily let go of things that may be close their heart, but ineffective in a rapidly changing economy.

**These seven actions, if taken, will build confidence personally
and in your team and lay a solid foundation for success – even in these unusual times.**

You can find out more about *Strategic Acceleration* and changing your results at

www.strategicacceleration.com

Find out more about your own Strategic IQ at

www.strategiciq.com.