NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS FROM ACCELERATE 2014

PETER SENGE:

This presentation set the tone for a thoughtful and engaging conference experience. The following represents some of the highlights from Peter's talk.

Factors that shape the future of enterprise

1) This is strategic not peripheral, it is influenced by the **future** of the enterprise
2) This relates to how you create value—it is a core aspect to be integrated into primary business including:
   • How to tackle our innovation
   • How culture is embedded
   • How to create and capture value
3) Collaboration is the human face of systems thinking! To transform a system requires working at the human system level. Significant change work always comes down to collaboration; this is how things get done. Ensuring that the important actors are in the room and involved.

Advice on Convening

When creating an effective gathering or "social space" container the following elements are required:
   • D**iversity** and **influence**
     ○ Diversity: the voices of the system; systems representation
     ○ Influence: ability to gather resources and create ---> Action
   • Ability to hold the energy of the conversation respectfully, complexity and different points of view
   • Ability to create an energetic field and space for participants in a different way
   • Ability to **Listen** to the whole! So often we do not listen to others.
   • Ability to welcome participants, get them energized, and ready to work
Example cited: Sustainable food lab with Unilever & Oxfam

Learning Journeys "going out and going in"

Learning journeys require both:
Going out -- "let's go on a bus and see the world together!"
Going in – "let's reflect on our human biases, mental models, backgrounds, and blind spots

Transforming the system is ultimately about transforming relationships. If you aren't transforming the relationship, you aren't progressing. It's the quality of the relationship that matters.

We need different operating systems for different players
   • For profit, low tolerance for labs
   • Non profit high tolerance for labs

How do we establish trust?

From the rhythm of practices:
- Beginning of meeting check-ins
- Small enough tables so people can hear each other (simple stuff!) 8-10 tables are too big.
- People still discriminate from what they hear from inferences (active listening). Being a good listener takes discipline.
- Keep a journal
- Focus on a different quality of conversation
- Read the Fifth discipline book for more

Q: How do I help people see convening as a priority?

Bell curve of people interested in convening:
- Identify those who are ready and excited to collaborate. If people don't want to be engaged, let them go. Don't obsess about convincing people. Go with the people who are ready to engage. Re-deploy your energies to the potential and possibilities (ie: a reluctant CEO came on 5 years later)
- Use compelling and interim goals
- Maximize your meetings. Face to face time is precious; help focus people around what they can accomplish that they can wrap their arms around.
- Don't talk. Do.

In convening, there is a gap between the "excitement/talk" and "action." That gap represents a deficit of resources - whether it be time, money, etc. Therefore, we must ask, do we have dedicated resources?

It's all about deep processes. Rapid cycle prototyping is a mechanism for aciton

Three pearls of wisdom!
1) Scale lurks behind the question. Scale is massive (ie. we needed to start 20 years ago; we started with the Limits of Growth in '72)

2) Key success factor for change makers are the **courage to act + discipline** to follow through. You need the courage to try even when you know you are going to fail

3) Paradoxically we need to **manage our emotions**. Change agents need to be emotionally sophisticated. The world has enough anxiety, anger, fear, and desperation. It doesn't help.

Read the Necessary Revolution and the Fifth Discipline for more pearls of wisdom!