



## Media release

# Need Customer Engagement? First Engage Your People!

**Monday June 2, 2014.** Converge Consulting Co Founders and Principals Ty Wiggins and Wayne Condon believe that successful businesses of today and in the future will be those that challenge the age old mantra that *'The customer is always right'* – and are putting their employees first and the customer second.

Over the past decade, the paradigm of success has transformed away from Product Centricity towards Customer Centricity. Of course the customer is important to any business, and the Converge's Wiggins and Condon observe that enterprises make audacious (and to often ineffective) plans to deliver value to them without really understanding that the *Strategy to Performance* gap often lies with an organisation's people.

So it's no surprise that the organisation's people only want two things from their employer –

1. Specifically what you want them to do
2. And how they are going i.e. measurement

For Wiggins and Condon Customer Centric strategy spring from the management floor like lemmings of a cliff, but where are the links between capability to deliver and the authority and autonomy given to the people with the responsibility to execute the plan?

The Converge Principals often refer to the critical elements of CEO communication of the strategy or plan, and this must transfer all the way through the organisation and includes transferring power to the front line. Therefore for this to be effective, the key pillars of winning KPI's, must communicate with absolute clarity what the business needs to occur and why!

The "how am I going" is not some subjective vagary that Bill the manager thinks is appropriate on some idle Tuesday, but specific, preordained, measurements that can be articulated and reported on daily of activities that are critical to the success of the organisation.

Critical success factors (CSF), give the strategy its focus through the eyes of those charged with the responsibility of executing it...its people.

This in turn results in the question being asked "How do you assure your people have the capability and inclination to deliver?"

Much has been written in response to this question, but when maximum satisfaction meets maximum contributions, REAL BUSINESS PRODUCTIVITY OCCURS.

An organisation's people can be grouped into distinct categories from 'fully engaged and making massive contribution' to those 'having a crack but working on the wrong things' to the 'crash and burners'.

Many employers would respond that it's easy to spot the 'non engaged' but both Wiggins and Condon challenge "is it?" They use the rowing analogy to demonstrate this dilemma.

In a rowing 8, it's easy to spot the one with the oar in the air, but it's the one with the oar in the water that isn't rowing that is causing the real pain in an organisation.

But if an organisation measured the output of every oar, management would be equipped to change / correct / encourage / remove that oarsman before it costs them the race.

Understanding, measuring and managing critical success factors, is increasingly important to ensuring the survival and future prosperity of organisations, in these times of economic uncertainty. Most businesses know their success factors, however few have:

- worded their success factors appropriately
- segregated out success factors from their strategic objectives
- sifted through the success factors to find their critical ones – their critical success factors
- communicated the critical success factors to staff

It is the CSFs, and the performance measures within them, that link daily activities to the organisation's strategies. Knowing the CSFs may be the deciding factor in an organisation's survival.

Wiggins attests that "If your organisation has not completed a thorough exercise to know its critical success factors performance management cannot possibly function. Performance measurement, monitoring and reporting will be a random process creating an army of measurers producing numerous numbing reports, full of measures which monitor progress in a direction very remote from the strategic direction of the organisation".

"Very few, if any, of the measures in these reports could be defined as 'winning KPIs' as they have been derived independently from the CSFs".

Besides focusing on the relevant performance measures, thus significantly reducing the number of performance measures used, knowing ones CSFs will reduce the number of reports that are produced at the end of the month.

Many of these 'monthly' reports are not related to the CSFs, and are reporting progress too late, well after the 'horse has bolted' so the question has to be asked "Why do we have them?" Pareto's 80/20 rule most certainly applies with reporting, with 80% of management's need being met by 20% of the reports prepared.

Condon contends that the ones needed to deliver this helping new people develop, great people be recognised, and people at risk being identified...makes sense.

"If your financial objectives are to be reached, your customer problems have to be solved, and it's your people who are going to solve them," said Condon.

"We have found by assisting organisations, coaching the leadership team on not only communicating the plan more effectively but understanding that real sustainable customer experience excellence results comes from understanding your people first."

Both Wiggins and Condon affirm that often the first step to better leadership is to understand your people and the current situation. However it's not enough to simply do a profile, businesses must link the people with the plan.

"The guiding principle of many successful enterprises is the satisfied individual customer. Measurements around that customer satisfaction, is critical, and a sustainable profit is one of the results. However we are seeing that the businesses that are flourishing in today's environment are the organisations that link critical success factors with the daily activities of its people," concluded Wiggins and Condon.

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