

EXCERPT

Leading Out-Of-The-Box Change: Thriving and Growing In Challenging Times

By

Doug Eadie

©Governance Edge, LLC All Rights Reserved

BEATING THE ODDS

I wrote *Leading Out-Of-The-Box Change* to arm you with very detailed, practical, down-to-earth guidance that you can put to immediate use – in your nonprofit or public organization and even in your personal life – in beating the odds and accomplishing significant out-of-the-box change. The guidance that I share in the following pages has little to do with planning and management theory, nor do I waste your and my time by merely summarizing what other authors have written on the subject of change. Rather, all of the advice and counsel in this very practical little book is based on my quarter-century of work as a senior executive in the nonprofit and public sectors and as a consultant to over 500 nonprofit and public organizations.

Accomplishing significant change and building solid board-chief executive partnerships have been my twin professional foci and passions for over twenty-five years, and the wisdom I share in this guidebook has been thoroughly tested through my work with the governing bodies, chief executives, and senior executives of international and national associations, economic and community development corporations, public school districts, postsecondary educational institutions, providers of health care, aging and social services, and public transportation authorities. Of course, changing in major ways always involves some risk, and hence requires a good dollop of courage, but the advice and counsel in this guidebook will help you keep the risk within reasonable bounds.

The four preeminent keys to your taking command of out-of-the-box change in your nonprofit or public organization are:

KEY #1: POWERFUL AND PASSIONATE CEO LEADERSHIP

Every successful out-of-the-box change process I've observed over the past quarter-century has been led from the top down – by the organization's chief executive officer, serving as the organization's **Innovator-in-Chief**. Working closely with her governing body, the CEO wears three hats as Innovator-in-Chief: **Chief Process Designer**, **Chief Motivator**, and **Chief Enabler**.

KEY #2: A WELL-DESIGNED OUT-OF-THE-BOX CHANGE PLANNING PROCESS

Successfully accomplishing out-of-the-box change requires putting in place a well-designed process for identifying and analyzing out-of-the-box issues in the form of opportunities for growth and challenges facing your organization; selecting the issues on which your organization should focus now; and fashioning and implementing change initiatives to address the selected issues. The process I've just described – which I call the **Out-of-the-box Change Portfolio Process** – has very little in common with traditional comprehensive, long range – often called “strategic” – planning for arbitrary and largely meaningless periods such as three or five years, which has sacrificed thousands of trees producing tons of documentation but little significant change.

KEY #3: INTENSIVE GOVERNING BODY INVOLVEMENT

The governing body – whether a board of directors or trustees, a city council, or county commission – must be your organization's preeminent Change Champion if you are to accomplish out-of-the-box change. Only your governing body has the authority to adopt plans and strategies and to commit financial resources to implementing out-of-the-box change initiatives. Also, strong, consistent board backing for your chief executive officer is critical to countering the normal human resistance to change and, consequently, getting initiatives implemented. The only reliable way to transform your governing body into a Change Champion is through the kind of meaningful involvement in fashioning out-of-the-box initiatives that breeds board ownership.

KEY #4: METICULOUS MANAGEMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION

Significant, out-of-the-box change tends not to happen; getting it accomplished defies steep odds. Sometimes it fails because of poor planning, or inadequate CEO leadership, or failure to turn key stakeholders into owners and change champions. But even with well-crafted change initiatives in your Change Portfolio, a highly effective Chief Innovation Officer at the helm, and your governing body and other key stakeholders serving as ardent Change Champions, out-of-the-box change in your organization can bite the dust because of poor execution. So you're well-advised to pay close attention to managing the implementation of the change initiatives in your organization's Out-of-the-Box Change Portfolio through formal structure and process.

©Governance Edge, LLC All Rights Reserved