

Is it time for an Operational Review?

I received a call from a good friend of mine who is an executive of a medium sized insurance company. He was in the first stage of problem solving -- trying to figure out what the problem was. And he was very frustrated. We've all been there. He knew things weren't working the way they should but couldn't figure out what was wrong or what needed to be done.

He was at a crossroads. He knew if he didn't do something soon he would probably set it aside and work on something else. This would be easy. He is like everyone else; he had a lot of things to do. But, he was afraid to ignore his concerns. He'd been an executive for a while and his instincts told him he needed to resolve this issue.

As our conversation continued, it became clear that what he described was the effect or result of several things that weren't working well. Some of these were surface issues but there were also problems with the fundamentals in his area. These deficiencies were interacting on each other, making their identification difficult and the solution complicated. I've known him for a long time and he probably could have worked this out himself but he didn't have the time. He also wanted another viewpoint, one that had broader industry experience.

Fortunately, this is what our firm does. Years ago we developed a quick and easy process to sort through these types of complex situations, identify the specific problems that need resolution and then create the plan to either resolve them or go beyond repairs to creating a new situation that will better suit your future needs. We call it an Operational Review and it usually takes less than a week. It helped him. Perhaps it can also help you.

Here's how it works. First, we ask you to send us information about the areas you want us to look at. It can be the whole company, a division, department or group of departments. This is primarily factual information that we can review easily in our office. It includes background information about your company and the area you may want us to focus on, plus information about your concerns. We also review your website and available industry information about your company with A. M. Best and other sources.

Then we set up a time to visit your office and conduct a series of one-on-one interviews with you and your key people. This usually takes two or three days but it can take longer. At the end of the interviews we meet again with you to discuss our findings. We also review various solutions that fit your specific situation. After these discussions, we formalize our recommendations in a written report that outlines everything we discussed and any agreements we may have reached.

As you can see, this process is a little like the medical checkup you get annually from your physician. It's quick and painless. People involved usually only have to dedicate an hour or less to the process. Sometimes this process confirms what you thought. Sometimes it brings brand new insights. In either case, it is always worth the cost. For more information on what this study costs, please call me.

We started our consulting firm almost 15 years ago to help insurance companies make fundamental improvements in the way they operate. Please visit our web sight at McDonaldConsultingGroup.com, where you'll find further explanations of these ideas in our Concepts and Ideas section.