



Creating the Accomplishment-Driven CultureSM

By Marion Spears Karr and Jean Craig Long

In today's market, organizations have to be faster, stronger, able to do more with less resources, have a superior customer service acumen, a mission that is worthwhile, and a team of people who see themselves as critical to the success of that mission.

If your organization is truly about life-changing business, if your organization is out to make a difference in the quality of life and state of the world, then your employees- your team members - need to be focused on what they can do every day to make the organization better.

Creating that mindset requires that the team members move away from the mentality of "a good day's work for a good day's pay" and begin to ask themselves the question, "What did I do today to make my organization better?" That question speaks to the shift going on in the business paradigm today.

Today's success is about bringing value to your job, not fulfilling your job description.

Over the years we have been conditioned to think that our job is to do a "fair day's work for a fair day's pay". It is engrained in us that a "fair day's work" means to fulfill the requirements of the job description that defines our role. We were also taught that this level of performance insured job security.

As we are seeing in this new millennium, this rule no longer exists. The challenges of the emerging global economy, the pressures on businesses to do more with less, and the change in the whole work force dynamic as the Baby Boomers begin to age out, have completely stormed the walls of traditional business convention and burned them to the ground.



Why Anxiety Is High

A Gallup Poll from 2009 indicated that 31% of all workers in the United States fear that they will lose their jobs. This is a remarkable increase from 15% in 2008. In fact, this is by far the highest of all the years since 1998 when this poll was first taken. Even more telling about the concerns of the workforce as it relates to job security is that 46% of all workers are afraid of losing job related benefits, 32% worry that their wages will be reduced, and 27% fear that their hours will be cut back, all of which are the highest percentages since this poll began. Worker anxiety could be at an all time high....so much for feeling secure.

If this is the case, we are compelled to answer two questions:

1. How are we as employees, administrators, managers and workers of any type of business, for profit or not-for-profit, to position ourselves in the most favorable circumstances possible?
2. Is there anything we can do to provide a level of protection for ourselves in this new paradigm that our current job market presents?

The answer to the second question is Yes and the answer to the first can be found through a complete shift in how we see our role at our employer. Simply stated, our job is no longer about fulfilling the requirements of the job description. We are to make an effort every day to make our organization better. This is *the new job security*. We're talking about a shift in the business paradigm.

What's the paradigm shift?

The shift to make is from a task-oriented job description fulfillment mentality to a value-focused and accomplishment-driven philosophy.



Task vs Accomplishment

With a task-oriented job description fulfillment approach, we are focused on our own role and our view of the bigger picture is limited. We think, "I've done my part. I've checked-off my list of things to do."

Many times, employees wonder if what they do makes any difference because today seems very much like yesterday and tomorrow is setting up to be just like today. If someone doesn't do their job well, they may have to pick up those un-done pieces before they can continue with their work, cutting corners to make up for the lost time and to stay on track. If one employee's outstanding job and someone else's mediocre work are both deemed acceptable, then things in the workplace are out of balance and dysfunction is inevitable.

Moving through the day with a task-orientation mindset, we do not realize the impact of our work on others. In a task-oriented, job fulfillment frame of mind, we do not fully appreciate our value to the organization. In a task oriented, job description fulfillment mentality, we think only about our job, our tasks, our to-do list... and we think small.

The Accomplishment-Driven CultureSM

With a value-focused and accomplishment-driven culture, the focus is on success of the whole organization and success in any area of the business affects everyone directly. It's not about "me" anymore. It's about us – and we will all benefit tremendously by focusing on accomplishments of the whole organization.



Motivation and Personal Value Increase

We are not talking about tasks anymore, rather, our focus shifts to accomplishments. Either what you do feeds an accomplishment, or you don't do it. In an accomplishment-driven culture, each team member understands their value to the organization. They know that doing their job means success for the organization.

No More Busy Work

With this approach, there is no more busy work – everything either feeds an accomplishment or work is re-distributed and a position eliminated. Success of the organization comes from team members who mutually support and appreciate each other's work because that is how results are achieved.

Interdependency Means Sustainability

It becomes very clear how your work affects someone else's. Others depend on your 100% and mutual appreciation increases morale overall. Job titles, levels of seniority and decision-making-authority are irrelevant to the fact that everyone, and this includes the CEO and top managers, must think in terms of accomplishments when going about their work. Requests from the CEO, for example, must come *after* the consideration, "Is this request I am about to make going to impact our clients?"

Most importantly, every single person, with their unique set of skills, insights, talent and experience, is needed in order to achieve accomplishments. Understanding the value they bring to their business is critical for each and every employee from the top down.



8 problems with a job description fulfillment approach

A job description fulfillment approach no longer supports business success because it:

- 1. Creates a false sense of job security.** It provides a feeling of certainty about our work when the reality is very uncertain. Rapid and constant change in the world demand that we become more adaptable if we're going to grow and be sustainable.
- 2. Reinforces the limiting attitude: a day's work for a day's pay.** When the goal is to just get through the day, something needs to change. An attitude like this no longer fits the business paradigm and is a drain.
- 3. Encourages a restrictive way of thinking – silo thinking.** Looking out for #1 is a dead-end. Period. Looking out for the whole organization will build resilience because everyone has everyone else's back, and benefits because of it.
- 4. Doesn't encourage emerging knowledge and new skills.** After all, why bother learning anything new when you can get by with doing a mediocre job? If you're not rewarded for effort, and if you have no way to put new skills into action, why bother?
- 5. Doesn't allow for flexibility.** With a philosophy of job description fulfillment, we're in a box with defined walls. The real world is throwing out surprises all the time that we're unprepared for.
- 6. Opportunities are missed.** We never see them coming because we don't know what's going on beyond our own responsibilities. We're thinking from a narrow, limited place instead of from a place of possibility. We're just not operating on a creative basis.



7. **Allows busy work.** You're unaware if or how your work has value – and this is the kiss of death for employment. Busy work in this economy is a waste of time and resources. Either re-distribute work or eliminate a position.
8. **Is boring, predictable, and way out of step with the unpredictable nature of the world.** Without stoking the combustible elements of risk-taking, experimentation, ingenuity, and personal drive with sparks of creativity, innovation, and imagination, the boring and mundane grinds to a stop.

10 Benefits to the Accomplishment-Driven CultureSM

In contrast, an accomplishment-driven culture:

1. **Builds a more robust list of accomplishments.** Both the employee and the business benefit when employees are able to articulate their value to the whole organization. When the entire team thinks in terms of accomplishment, imagine the department's value to the organization's success.
2. **Boosts performance** - Imagine walking into your performance evaluation able to clearly articulate your accomplishments to the department. When you think in terms of the key question: What did I do to make my business better today? Your performance is going to sky rocket in value.
3. **Improves promotability.** Who is more valuable to the organization, the one who is focused on tasks or the one who understands their value to the success of the operation and is accomplishment-driven?
4. **Staff discover how to "manage up"**- When you articulate your value in terms of accomplishments, you raise the standard of performance for all employees, especially supervisors and managers.



- 5. Eliminates busy work!** Everything you do becomes important to the overall accomplishments of the organization. If it doesn't directly lead to an accomplishment, you don't do it.
- 6. Increases personal sense of value.** A team of people who each understands their role in the big picture generates confidence and high morale. Wouldn't you rather have a team member who is lit up with potential and on fire with enthusiasm?
- 7. Builds better resumes.** And, in the unfortunate case when employees find themselves in the open marketplace, they excel as job candidates because they can articulate their value while the average candidate describes themselves in terms of their job description. You are far more valuable than your job description! Think in terms of values-based and accomplishment-driven.
- 8. Increases problem-solving skills.** Identifying hidden needs and gaps is possible. Trouble-shooting skills are enhanced. When each person understands that his/her success comes with a team member's success, creativity and motivation is high.
- 9. Increases accuracy, scalability, and encourages team cohesion.**
- 10. Work is more fun.** It's simply more fun and meaningful when people "get" the big picture.

What did you do today to make your organization better? When was the last time you asked yourself this question?



What the CEO can do

Organizations need to teach employees how to articulate their value. More often than not, when asked what they do, people respond with titles and words from a job description. This does not even begin to define value. It is a limiting way to think and to be. Teaching the team how their work affects each other builds value.

Also, CEOs, executives, and managers have a responsibility to reward employees who think in terms of accomplishments (an extra hour for lunch, a gift certificate, a cool plant on their desk, etc).

Providing resources for training opportunities that help employees to discover for themselves, their value and that of others on the team, is critical.

If you see your organization here, if your organization is poised for growth, and if you have a team ready to move forward, you may be interested in learning more about the workshop, "Creating the Accomplishment-Driven Culture." It may be the launch to success in 2010 that you're looking for.

What the workshop can do for you:

- Build a more robust set of accomplishments
- Boost individual and team performance
- Increase a sense of value
- Clarify each team members' role in success
- End busy work
- Improve annual reviews
- Build a plan



The Workshop

Creating the Accomplishment-Driven CultureSM is a one-half day workshop co-developed by Marion Spears Karr and Jean Craig Long. As a team, Karr and Long teach for profit and not-for-profit businesses how to shift mindset from a task-oriented and job description fulfillment mentality to a new paradigm and create the accomplishment-driven culture.

It is applicable to divisions/departments/agencies/teams. It is designed for discovery, enlightenment, humor, and long-term impact.

What participants say:

- I absolutely have a better understanding of where I fit in and the value that I provide to the overall success of the team.
- I would recommend the workshop to people both at my company and at other companies.
- Employees tend to only think of what they are doing at the moment instead of thinking in terms of the big picture and what is best for the future of the company. Many companies would benefit from the program, and it would help to motivate employees.

Who is Marion Spears Karr? Karr is an 18-year veteran of executive recruiting who helps clients create an atmosphere of growth, development, and rewards for its most precious resource – its people – and maximize the value gained from that resource. His latest achievement and contribution to the world is skateboarding across North Carolina to raise awareness and funds for brain injury.

Who is Jean Craig Long? Long is an independent consultant emphasizing organizational resilience and adaptability who has an ability to visualize



future demands and priorities. Her experience includes over 25 years in nonprofit resource development, publication in two national planned giving magazines, and she is the recipient of the Women of Achievement Award in recognition for Leadership in Public Service to the State of North Carolina by the Integral Science Institute.

To learn more about how to create an accomplishment culture that is relevant today with the future of the organization in mind, please contact:

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