



To Change
Your Results!

Change Your
Thinking >

Tony Jeary

The Waiting Syndrome

As the public perception of the economy worsens, it is possible we may worry ourselves into an even worse reality. The greatest threat to our economy right now is the cumulative effect of businesses failing to take action they need to take, as they “wait” to find out what is going to happen. If all businesses slide into a “wait” posture, the ripple-through effect could be a serious problem on the entire economy. Unfortunately, the early signs of this “waiting” syndrome are already on the horizon!

Prudence is one thing. The fear of doing what needs to be done is quite another. There are actions that need to be taken now to position your business to survive and thrive. This manifesto is a challenge for specific action that will require you to change your thinking, if you want to change your results!

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It's Not Business As Usual!

If you think you can keep doing the things you've been doing and sustain past success, you are mistaken. America voted for change and it is going to get change. This change will radically transform the way American businesses function and compete. For example, it has suddenly become frowned upon (politically) for companies to have pricey motivational meetings for employees and appreciation events for customers. New solutions to meet these needs are necessary.

Business as usual is unrealistic in our current economic climate. Leaders must accept the fact that success is likely to become a moving target and their organizations must become faster, leaner and better equipped to compete and change quickly. To embrace speed as a strategic asset requires higher levels of clarity about the real needs and goals of the organization. Clarity means that the value and purpose of every effort must be evaluated and put to the test.

Two years ago my company conducted research among our best customers and determined there are three basic strategic concepts that directly impact achieving superior results. The concepts are Clarity, Focus and Execution. These are the keys to achieving superior results on both professional and personal fronts. These three keys also reflect a new way of thinking you need to embrace, to better frame your strategy building process. Here is a quick description of each of these strategic concepts.

Clarity:

You must be clear about your vision and what you really want!

Focus:

You must focus on high-leverage activities that will move your results needle!

Execution:

You must execute by elevating your ability to persuade and influence others!

Clean Your Belief Window

Strategic thinking and planning begins with something called your Belief Window. Your Belief Window determines how effectively you are able to perform because it ultimately controls all of your choices and actions. Your Belief Window is constructed with the facts or ideas you accept as truth and your personal experience as it relates to those facts. The speed of life presents a constant, unending flow of information that contains a mixture of fact, truth, myth, rumor, and in some cases, downright deception. This can negatively impact the principles in your Belief Window.

[I]f you believe there is no way to be successful in an economic downturn, all your action will be affected by this belief.

Because your Belief Window doesn't always provide a wholly accurate view, it can produce significant errors in the way your mind filters the information that passes through it. What are the consequences of your Belief Window framing something incorrectly? What if your Belief Window causes you to take action or inaction based on something that just isn't true? How would this erroneous framing of an event, an idea, or a person impact your results? For example, if you believe there is no way to be successful in an economic downturn, all your action will be affected by this belief.

If your error in perception involves a significant principle necessary for achievement, it might stop you from taking an important step toward success, or it might even cause you to fail completely. Therefore, you need to have the ability to adjust your Belief Window when it impedes your success.

The first adjustment you need to make involves the way you approach the creation of your strategy and planning. Clarity, Focus and Execution must become the foundational framework for all that you do. Whatever the goal, whatever the need, whatever the problem or challenge—always begin with three questions:

- 1. What do I really want and what is the value and purpose of it?**
- 2. What are the high-leverage activities I need to do everyday to impact my results?**
- 3. What do I need to do to communicate and persuade others to exceed expectations?**

This is the new action template I am suggesting for your mind. Get Clear! Get Focused! Execute! When you are committed to this approach, the next step is to wrap them in a powerful concept that can transform your life and work. The concept I refer to is this: Always exceed expectations!

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Exceeding Expectations—The “Silver Bullet” of Results!

One thing I’ve learned during my life is that even though the economy may go up and down, some things never change. One of the things that never changes is that even in tough times when people and businesses cut back on spending, nobody can completely stop spending. That means somebody is always buying and somebody is always selling. In tough economic times, you just need to make sure you are one of those doing some selling!

My father taught me a great truth when I was growing up: “Give value, do more than expected.” I have lived by that principle and it has been the key to my own success—in good times and bad. Exceeding expectations is the means by which value is created and things get sold! You can exceed expectations in price, quality or service and possibly all three—but you must understand what it really means to exceed expectations before you can actually do it.

The expectations you exceed today become the seed for new opportunities in the future.

This may seem to be an obvious fact, but many people fail to connect today’s actions with future opportunities. By that I mean they approach exceeding expectations as a one-off special event rather than a way of life. Exceeding expectations is a foundational attitude and something that you have to pursue daily. Exceeding expectations is a proactive effort that is always looking for a way to express itself. Exceeding expectations is a completely voluntary activity and when it becomes foundational to the way you think it has the power to become the seed for new opportunity.

Exceed expectations on purpose.

You must have an understanding of expected performance, and that expected performance is in no way extraordinary. It becomes tougher when you realize that exceeding expectations requires more effort to surpass what might be described as “acceptable performance.” Acceptable performance is in fact mediocrity and mediocrity is usually the norm. It’s hard to sell mediocrity and leadership makes that determination!

Leadership is a Results Contest

In today's global business climate, growth and success will be determined by two organizational needs. The first is the need for speed. The second is the need for results. Simply stated, leadership is a results contest! Leadership is about getting things done. Results are about winning in the marketplace. Results are about scoring more than the competition and having an organization that can push the ball across the goal line when the going gets tough.

There are three enemies of speed and results:

- 1. Absence of clarity**
- 2. Lack of focus.**
- 3. Poor execution.**

The absence of clarity drains organizational energy. Lack of focus produces a culture of indecisiveness and excessive preparation. Poor execution degrades effectiveness, limits results and restricts growth. Today, the success of an enterprise literally depends on its ability to respond to the marketplace within time frames that may have been previously believed to be impossible.

I teach a methodology called Strategic Acceleration, which results from achieving the organizational mindset I have described in this manifesto. The mindset required to produce Strategic Acceleration is proactive and it is anticipatory. It tenaciously clings to the need for results and refuses to back away from difficulty or roadblocks. Strategic Acceleration is characterized by a desire to win, to be creative, persistent, and demonstrate commitment. When an organizational culture is characterized by these qualities—accomplishment exceeds expectations. When that happens, Strategic Acceleration is achieved.

Good leadership is characterized by putting all the pieces together that allow execution of vision in the marketplace. For a vision to be executed, it must be understood and supported by the business as a whole. There must be unity and there must be clarity. All of this comes together with one primary goal: To get results! In the most basic terms, that is what leadership is about: Creating organizational environments capable of getting superior results. To get results there must be a high level of organizational energy.

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Organizational energy is the collective sum of the human spark that powers the desire to win, produces creativity, supports persistence, and establishes the foundation for collective commitment. When organizational energy is degraded, all of these qualities begin to erode and Strategic Acceleration is lost.

7 Things to Do NOW to Change Results

I close this manifesto with 7 specific things I challenge you to act upon and implement. If you do these things, you will suddenly find that you have clarity, focus and execution. You will have changed your thinking and changed your results.

1. Recognize that “Business As Usual” is not an option.

Leaders must accept the fact that success is likely to become a moving target and their organizations must become faster, leaner and better equipped to compete and change quickly. To embrace speed as a strategic asset requires higher levels of clarity about the real needs and goals of the organization. Clarity means that the value and purpose of every effort must be evaluated and put to the test.

2. Create strategies based on what can actually be seen.

Economic pressures will eliminate the luxury of long-range planning, but the need to plan effectively will be intensified. Organizational leaders must learn to evaluate, test and revise their plans and strategies several times a year to insure they maintain competitive positions. In less volatile times, strategic planning every couple of years was satisfactory. Today, planning once a year isn't enough. I believe quarterly strategy reviews are a key element for future success, because success is going to become a moving target!

3. Reevaluate the Value and Purpose of your Vision.

Being clear on what leadership expects is the result of understanding the “why” of things. Discovering “why” is achieved by factually knowing and understanding the value and purpose of our vision and all that we do. As the world changes rapidly, we must constantly ensure our value and purpose matches the needs of our customers and prospects.

Being aware of the changing needs of customers holds the keys to winning in a troubled economy. People will continue to have needs and that fact will never change. However, the needs of people

will change faster and become less frivolous as the economy tightens. The value and purpose of your effort must be understood within the context of these changing needs.

4. Identify and disrupt organizational comfort zones.

Good economic times and prosperity create comfort zones that people resist leaving. Troubled times demand these comfort zones be challenged so that new behaviors can flourish.

Strategic change demands a lot of emotional energy because it requires new thinking, which in turn disrupts *comfort zones*. We all know how people resist leaving their comfort zones! That is why change is a big deal to people and is so difficult to achieve at an organizational level. The pain that accompanies change can be financial, physical, or emotional, but regardless of the type of discomfort created by change, the speed of life demands that you embrace it if you intend to be competitive and effective.

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5. Conduct Quarterly More-Of-Less-Of Reviews.

Leaders must become focused on real results, and approach all they do from that perspective. High-leverage activities must be identified and executed. Since change is rapid, frequent analysis of what is working and what is not should become a standard practice.

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There are four questions that must be asked:

> What do you need to do more of?

This question helps you identify what you need to continue doing in order to increase your results.

> What do you need to do less of?

You must identify the things you do that waste time, or are not effective.

> What do you need to start doing?

This question asks you to think of things you are not doing that could be significant and important to getting better results.

> What do you need to stop doing?

You must identify low-impact, time-wasting activities to eliminate from your daily habits. These activities could be minor, such as spending too much time on the telephone with colleagues, helping others out on non-emergency items while pushing aside your more critical tasks, inefficiently preparing for meetings, and generally allowing small things to push you away from your primary objectives.

6. Commit to exceeding expectations and providing value.

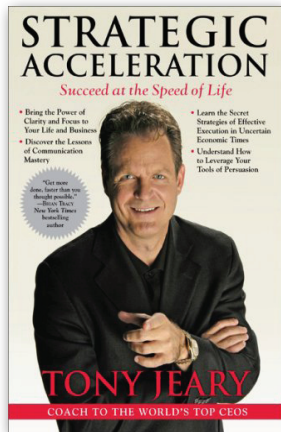
Leaders must guide their organizations into a culture that is willing to exceed expectations. The ability to exceed expectations internally and externally will separate winners from losers in the years ahead.

One of the keys to creating a culture willing to exceed expectations is having organizational clarity concerning purpose and value. If there is a negative perception of purpose and value, there will be no willingness to exceed expectations or change voluntarily so that superior results can be achieved. Consequently, leaders will have to *push* the team, rather than permit the vision to *pull* people toward it. For this reason, *why* becomes the critical issue of perception, and to achieve clarity, it must be addressed. Exceeding expectations will flow from that point.

7. Abandon activities that won't move the strategic results needle.

If something isn't working, stop doing it! This means people must be willing to voluntarily let go of things that may be close their heart, but ineffective in a rapidly changing economy.

These seven actions, if taken, will build confidence within your team and lay a solid foundation for success—even in bad times. 📌



BUY THE BOOK

Get more details or buy a copy of Tony Jeary's [*Strategic Acceleration*](#).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

This manifesto is based on concepts discussed in Tony Jeary's latest book, *Strategic Acceleration: Succeed at the Speed Of Life* (Vanguard Press; March, 2009). Jeary has personally coached the CEOs from some of the world's largest companies including Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, Qualcomm, Samsung, New York Life, and Firestone. You can find out more about Strategic Acceleration and changing your results at strategicacceleration.com.

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