



PETRA PLANNING

3 COMMON ISSUES THAT ARE SLOWING
DOWN YOUR BUSINESS



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LIFE LESSONS for BUSINESS OWNERS

THE WEAKEST LINK

A highlight of my recent vacation to Costa Rica was a guided nature hike through the jungle of Manuel Antonio National Park. Danny, our guide, was dressed like Indiana Jones and armed with a long-range spotting scope mounted on a tripod. He guided our group of ten "turistas" on a four-hour hike through numerous trails, occasionally stopping to set up his tripod and point out the amazing wildlife, including monkeys, sloths, birds, iguanas, insects, and more.

Overall, the excursion in the jungle was enjoyable, but spoiled by one annoying dynamic in our group – the youngest couple in the group was lagging behind at every stop. Almost every time we restarted our journey down the trail after a stop, Danny would realize that he was two turistas short in his group. He'd then have to go back to the last spot and wrangle up the stragglers.

The young couple was typically taking pictures, or exploring side paths, while the rest of the group was waiting impatiently on the trail. The tour of the national park took longer than planned and we ultimately got caught in an afternoon storm while leaving the park. I was soaking wet when we arrived at the bus, and I wondered if our group would have avoided the storm if our laggards had kept up with the tour group throughout the morning. In organizations I coach, it's not uncommon to see similar situations: The team can only move as fast as the slowest or weakest link.

The drag on your organization could be a team member, a manager, an entire department, an equipment or a process.

The key to a fast-growth organization is to constantly identify what's holding you back and create a plan to fix it. A quarterly planning meeting is an ideal place to address constraints slowing down your company.

Based on my coaching experience, here are the three most common issues that slow down organizations:

1. INEFFECTIVE INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

The number one issue restricting many organizations is poor internal communications. The problem can manifest itself in many ways, but it almost always starts at the top.

If the leadership team is incapable of communicating a clear vision on a consistent basis, it is impossible for the team to follow. Once the leadership team has a clear and consistent vision, the next communication breakdown typically has a regular rhythm for communicating amongst the team.

Organizations need a daily huddle that allows every team member a single channel to participate in sharing relevant updates about clients, obstacles, and accomplishments.

Another example of poor communications is when teams are incapable of participating in constructive debates, typically due to a lack of trust or a misunderstanding of individuals' communication styles.

2. DISENGAGED TEAM MEMBERS

According to a recent survey by Gallup, only 13 percent of people working at companies today have any strong emotional commitment to work at their company. Some of these other 87% of team members are not just disengaged – they're actively destroying the company from the inside.

The first way to address this problem is to have a structured and stringent hiring process, like TopGrading, to ensure that you only hire team members that fit your culture.

And second, your leadership team and managers must actively build a culture of accountability. Team members that regularly fail to meet their commitments must be trained or removed. I always remind my clients that the biggest thing holding back your top team members, the "A-players," is the disengaged employees.

3. POORLY DOCUMENTED SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

Early in my entrepreneurial journey I had the delusional belief that I could just hire good people, pay them well, and they would know what to do without any oversight or management. And while you might get lucky every now and again with hiring a unicorn, it's not a scalable approach to building a high-performing team.

All organizations should identify their key processes and systems, document them thoroughly, and then consistently refine and improve them.

A related challenge is a company that's not committed to continuous learning and development. The world and technology are rapidly changing, so don't assume that the systems and processes that work today will be competitive tomorrow. As Edward Hess documented in his great book, "Learn or Die: Using Science to Build a Leading-Edge Learning Organization," to survive in today's world a company must become a high-performance learning organization.

If your company's journey to the next destination is taking longer than expected, ask yourself, "What or who is slowing us down?"

This article originally appeared on AllBusiness.

THE PETRA EXPERIENCE

The Petra Experience is like a Mental Marathon of focused effort to create a specific set of priorities and a planned process to achieve them... as a team.

Looking to change your business life - forever?

The daily grind of growing a business is tough... it doesn't have to be that way. We work from our own business experiences while focusing on your business – as coach and an accountability partner. We implement the Petra Process in a way that ensures it “sticks” then we stay engaged to keep you on your path to success and less frustration. We don't want this to be just another thing you start – then it gets ignored and finally dies... let's stop that cycle in your business. The Petra Program 'clarifies' what is most important to be done – by whom, by when – **AND** creates an accountability structure to ensure **IT GETS DONE.**

*Rob Simons is an entrepreneur coach with business coaching firm Petra.
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