

Great by Choice-S. Collins

Reflection

Some organizations seem to thrive during times of adversity. Some would call it luck but Collins describes three core principles that, in addition to luck, allow great organizations to weather adversity.

Three main points from the text that really stuck out to me are: the 20-mile march, bullets before cannonballs, and SMaC principles. The 20-mile march is simply setting a consistent goal and not wavering too far ahead of that goal in the good times and trying to get as close as possible during the bad times. Being consistent and methodical achieving your goals helps with consistency and provides buffers when the going gets really tough. Bullets before cannonballs is basically testing things out in small doses before launching into a full-blown initiative. Schools could really benefit from this by considering piloting more programs and initiatives before rolling out things on a mass scale. Bullets allow or recalibration Andre firing while cannonballs is akin to putting all of your eggs in one basket. Finally, having a set of core principles that you operate under through good times and bad is very important. Solid principles should be able to weather storms and stand the test of time (think of the United States Constitution and how it has gone relatively unchanged, aside from the initial influx of amendments in the Bill of Rights, for over 200 years).

Notes

-we cannot predict the future but we can. create it
-different **behaviors**, not different circumstances

Fanatic discipline

-consistency of: action, values, morals

Empirical Creativity

-In face of uncertainty top leaders do not look to society members or social actions for their own actions, they look at the research itself
-relying on direct observation or or rival experience of others

Productive Paranoia

-consider failure as a likely result regularly
-maintain hyper vigilance in good times and bad
-turn into preparation and production

Level 5 Ambition

-deflect attention from self
-ambition is for the cause and not self

Ch3-20 mile march

-pursue less aggressive growth
-small, deliberate steps to growth

Characteristics of a good 20 mile March (steady, consistent growth)

-set productive goals with lower bound of results that are acceptable
-self imposed constraints that will set the upper bound of results
-tailored to the enterprise
-lies largely within your control
-has a Goldilocks timeframe
-designed and self imposed from within
-must be achieved with great consistency

-reduces likelihood of being hit by catastrophe by keeping steady growth and results
-builds confidence that you can maintain performance in adverse conditions
-take responsibility for results...look within
-self control is imperative in a chaotic, uncontrollable world

Ch4-fire bullets then cannonballs

-successful companies are not necessarily the most innovative

- Innovative enough to be successfully

-mix creativity and discipline
-bullets help you get your bearings (see what will work) then when you hit you fire the cannonball

- Bullet: Low cost, low risk(minimal consequences for misses), low distraction (for overall enterprise)

Ch5

-recognize and prepare for the worst
-what you do before the storm comes

- Extra cash reserves, extra oxygen reserves

-what kind of risk are you taking ?
-go slow when you can and fast when you must
-prepare to act fast so when the time comes to act you can do so with confidence
-You must be willing and ready to zoom out in light of new information to get a sense of the big picture and then zoom back in to re-focus your efforts on either your old goal or a new goal

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Ch6

- SMaC recipe: specific, methodical, consistent
- what is your company's recipe for success?
- The most successful companies do not change their success recipe in the face of adverse conditions.
 - How do you amend your recipe if needed?
- US constitution is a solid piece of evidence of SMaC in action
 - Created 200+ years ago and only been amended a few times outside of the Bill of Rights
- SMaC principles are rarely changed, and if they are only one principle is

Ch 7

- luck or skill?
- luck is unforeseen, cannot be impacted by the actions of a person/organization, and has major good or bad consequences
- best way to produce luck is the swim with strong people