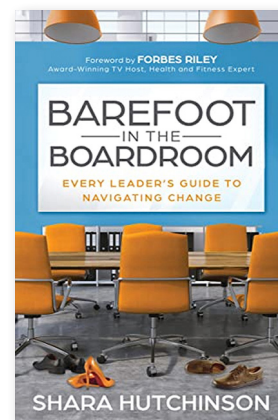


Barefoot in the Boardroom

Every Leader's Guide to Navigating Change

by **Shara Hutchinson**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Certified as a Change Management Practitioner and Talent Optimization Consultant, Shara Hutchinson wrote *Barefoot in the Boardroom: Every Leader's Guide to Navigating Change* to demonstrate how to assess one's leadership capacity, change impact, and organizational health. She reveals the strategies and tactics necessary to achieve a leader's most audacious goals.

By following Shara's proactive measures and techniques outlined in this book, business professionals will expand their leadership skills while simultaneously encouraging the growth of others. *Barefoot in the Boardroom* will scale an organization, team, or department to not only identify the right strategic initiatives but to execute those initiatives and sustain success. This book will challenge business professionals to break out of the box and innovate with the times. Each chapter offers clarity for strategic initiatives, key objectives, operational tactics, and measurable outcomes that encourages leaders to implement change and innovation in order to sustain professional longevity.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- A vast array of proven techniques and strategies.
- The competencies needed to develop a high-performing team.
- How leaders can align their business strategy with their team.
- A signature change management strategy.
- How to expand leadership skills while encouraging the growth of others.

Introduction

Within *Barefoot in the Boardroom*, business leaders will find a vast array of proven techniques and strategies to apply. The author introduces her “Exposeyour™” Leadership Capacity approach, which includes the nine leadership competencies needed to develop a high-performing team, while her encouragement of vision teaches leaders how to align their business strategy with their team, ensuring that they have the right people in the right seats to get the right results. She also introduces the “Barefoot Method™”, which is her signature change management strategy that can be applied to any organization, team, or department to ensure it is future-proofed.

Phase 1 – You’re Already In The Boardroom

Time For A Change

No leader with an audacious vision builds a company with the intent of only surviving for a few years. The objective is to keep growing and reach the heights of success over time and have a future. For that, a plan and having the right leaders in the right positions is necessary.

Change is the leading force in the corporate world that decides the decline or rise of a company, so get comfortable with it and get ready to take your shoes off!

Organizational success and survival are highly reliant on the capacity to manage and adapt to change. As a result, businesses must establish a long-term strategy beyond prior techniques, approaches, and quick fixes. This entails planning for the future, looking beyond the confines of the internal business environment, and considering the entire industrial ecosystem in which the company operates.

Expose Your Next Level

You cannot take your team to the next level if you haven’t identified the next level. Likewise, you can’t identify the next level for your organization or department’s vision of success if you haven’t exposed the next level for yourself.

There is always another level to everything, including your leadership. Leadership is about getting people to appreciate and invest in your mission. Working with and managing your team to accomplish your goals is all about maintenance and seeing that things happen as they should every day. Both are necessary, but only leadership will take you to the next level.

No matter how successful you are, you can always explore another level, discover new things, make mistakes, improve yourself, experience failures, and develop game-changing ideas. You will have a higher chance of learning more unique concepts and having new ideas if you expose yourself to new people and new information. As a result, you will create an appetite for more growth, expose your next level, and then act towards achieving it.

The culture of your organization or department is mainly dependent on how the leaders handle change, chaos, and discomfort. The quality of your leadership is determined by the quality of the questions you ask yourself daily. These questions allow you to explore possibilities, fail forward, and challenge yourself to change.

Expose Yourself To New Ideas

Exposure to new environments and situations has a lot to do with growth. Sometimes exposure is unintentional and we experience it whether we want to or not. Yet, intentional learning is more critical for the development of a leader. This means it is necessary for leaders to knowingly introduce themselves to diverse situations and conditions, learn new things, and polish their abilities.

A leader must prepare and have the skills needed to improve their organization in order to escape a demise. They need to know how things work in a particular context to learn new things, bring up their game, and make adaptive plans for potential shifts in the future. To learn how various environments act, however, a leader must first introduce themselves to these environments.

Rapid, constant, and disruptive changes now require leaders to change and develop. It involves exposure to diversity in many aspects. That’s why, as leaders, we must discover the correct solutions by strategically opening ourselves up to creativity, new concepts, and fresh possibilities. We have to upgrade our information pool continually. Leaders must improve themselves and continually learn new things to deal with the latest and ever-changing market conditions.

Phase 2 – Take Your Shoes Off

The Employee Experience

Significant results within your organization require a team effort, making it necessary also to develop your team. You must start by knowing your team members to coach them to success. It requires understanding their personalities,

work styles, strengths, weaknesses, needs, and wants.

A diverse group is becoming a business necessity instead of an ethical banner that companies hold to show their commitment to embracing and valuing difference and change. As leaders, we have an inspiring vision, a comprehensive and strategic plan, and we know the results we want to achieve. However, we often overlook the necessity to develop a strategy for the most important asset: the people who will ultimately make it happen.

If your corporation hopes to achieve your desired market objectives, you must choose an organizational model that helps implement your business plan. A host of issues occur when the structure and strategy of an organization are in contrast with each other.

There is no single right way to develop a people strategy. That's because every organization has a unique business strategy, structure, culture, and workforce. To create the best people strategy, leaders need to consider multiple factors. And for that, leaders must engage in understanding their employees and be involved with their development.

The Customer Experience

For any business, customers are important stakeholders. Everything from planning to the execution of a product or service is about satisfying the end-users. Over time, the preferences and choices of end-users change, so a business must innovate its customer services along with other business innovations.

The future of the customer experience and the future of your business are intimately intertwined. If your customers are not happy, they will not be customers for long. As a result, you won't be in business for long. There is a continual variation in what clients want and expect. Ultimately, companies that do not conform to delivering a higher level of customer service endanger their future.

A business market is never free of competition. Therefore, it is imperative to build trust and continually discover newer ways to serve consumers and improve customer loyalty to remain competitive.

A business needs to think like an innovator—always coming up with ideas to improve their services and products or to introduce something new in the market. A business should be able to see the market changes coming from a distance. Predicting future demand by analyzing the current market pattern can provide a company with solutions even before

the customers realize they are expecting something else.

Your teams can use customer journeys to map and track their complaints and strategize the area of improvement needed to boost sales. The awareness, consideration, and decision-making stages of sales help you envision how customers pass through and encourage each interaction.

BAREFOOT Method™

Every organization has its predetermined path, better known as best practices and processes. If you are determined to succeed, you must be committed to a culture of innovation and constantly challenge the “this is how we've always done it” mindset.

The BAREFOOT Method™ is an acronym of eight letters. It comprises proven strategies and tactics that I have implemented to achieve exceptional results and the framework I've observed while watching other successful leaders and mentors. Each word of this acronym explains a step to effectively lead your team through change and demonstrate the heroic measures that the world's greatest leaders utilize to reach the next level.

B – Break: Corporate transformation may be difficult to achieve, as many businesses are learning.

A – Assess: Assessments are necessary for a business to examine and analyze where it is today and where it wants to go in the future.

R – Reposition: When you ask a business owner what their secret to success is, you will almost always hear something about the people that work with them.

E – Execute: Starting with the first step and then assessing many elements, the plan will become evident—you'll see the whole image of what you have and require at this time.

F – Follow-Up: Follow-up is the next important step. To keep an eye on the “pulse” of your major projects and the company as a whole, you'll need to plan recurring meetings.

O – Operationalize: You have identified goals, created a thorough action plan to meet them, and established the accountability framework. Now it is critical that you operationalize your plan.

O – Opportunities: Many individuals are apprehensive about change. That's reasonable given how many large corporations have been affected by such developments and have lost their market share. However, there is another angle to consider.

T – Timeline: Whenever I am on a long road trip, I always have two questions: Are we delayed? What time will we arrive? Knowing the answers to these questions allows me to evaluate whether I need to make any further stops and to set reasonable expectations.

Phase 3 – Stand On The Table

Effective Change Management

Change management is at the heart of a company’s ability to accept and implement change successfully. It enables employees to comprehend and commit to the shift while also allowing them to perform efficiently. Effective change management is vital to fundamental transformation.

When you take unconventional actions in hopes of getting an extraordinary outcome, the responses are similar. As a leader, you must have the courage to take such steps—to be “barefoot”—so that you can do whatever is necessary to achieve your most audacious goals. You must be willing to stand out and do things differently than others would. After all, someone must go against the norm to ensure your organization has longevity.

When you STAND as a leader, you demand respect and accept responsibility for bringing about essential changes for the organization’s growth and development. It conveys that it is not about exploiting the authority you have, but about bringing innovation, development, and implementation of plans under your supervision.

Change management does not end, even when the change is complete. You must continually analyze outcomes, collect data, train staff on new techniques and business process-

es, and revise targets as needed throughout and after the process. If your organization is embarking on large-scale changes with the BAREFOOT Method™, you may need to interchange various methodologies in conjunction with it.

Trust The Process

When the dream you have is big enough to ensure your organization has longevity and your team scales to meet the demand, there will be times along the journey when you will wonder when you’ll see tangible results. Change takes time, even when you have the right team in place and all the right tools. It is possible to have a fully functioning organizational structure and still need intervention. When you feel discouraged, if you determine that you still want the result, you will achieve it as long as you keep taking steps in that direction. Trust the process.

Conclusion

Many leaders are afraid to take the steps necessary to get to their next level for various reasons. Remember, it is not just about survival but about sustainability. Take control of the wheel of your leadership vehicle, avoid an organizational CRASH, steer in the direction of your most audacious goals, and navigate change until you arrive at the desired destination. In other words, take the steps to enter the boardroom, take off your shoes, and then STAND on the table!



Shara Hutchinson is TEDx Speaker and International Best-Selling Author. With a master’s degree in Business as well as a bachelor’s degree in Technical Management, Shara Hutchinson is the CEO of Xposeyour. She is a certified as a Change Management Practitioner and Talent Optimization Consultant. Shara is a technology-oriented executive and customer success professional with over 17 years of leadership experience and a proven track record of developing and implementing operational strategies and technologies that creatively enhance the customer experience while supporting key business initiatives.

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