

RESULTS REVOLUTION

Achieving What Matters Most

FOR YOUR **TEAM**, YOUR **COMPANY**, YOUR **LIFE**



CRAIG HICKMAN

New York Times bestselling
author of *The Oz Principle*
and former CEO

CRAIG MORGAN


Leadership Development,
Performance Improvement
Thought Leader and former CLO

Another Groundbreaking Book from PARTNERS IN LEADERSHIP

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 Partners In Leadership®
Temecula, CA

This book is a work of fiction. Though some names, characters, incidents, and dialogues are based on historical record, the work as a whole is a product of the authors' seasoned imaginations. The foremost reality is that the authors have connected the fundamental principles and perspectives described in these chapters based on several decades of successful strategy, culture and leadership development consulting with many of the finest companies in the world.

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To Laura, Winston, Bill, and Lorraine

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Preface

RESULTS ARE EVERYTHING

For the past forty years we have worked independently as management consultants and organizational change agents to help our respective clients improve their results. During these four decades, there has been a deluge of business books and management programs promoting all sorts of new approaches and methods to improve business results. In fact, we have written and developed some of those books and programs ourselves. So, it's natural and necessary for us to ask, "Have business organizations markedly improved over the past four decades?" Our answer, based on research and experience, is, "Yes, some have. However, only 12% (or 60 companies) from the Fortune 500 in 1955 remain today under the same name."

At the same time, in a majority of cases, performance improvements achieved have fallen short of the promises made by authors, management gurus, program developers, consultants, trainers, or the business leaders who hired and espoused them. Why? The lamentable, hard-to-accept reality is that most business leaders and their countless consultants (including us) have been focusing all of our attention on the process rather than the prize.

As counterintuitive as it may seem, after forty long years, we have decisively realized, separately and together, that achieving business success is less about managing how we want people to act and think and feel in order to deliver the desired results and more about managing how we want people to act and think and feel about the desired results themselves.

Rigorous adherence to the best management and leadership practices does not always produce the needed results. In the end, business success always comes from people who clearly understand what matters most to the business, actively connect what matters most to the business with what matters most to them individually, and never stop working until they make all of it happen—plain and simple.

When people willingly commit to delivering a blend of what matters most to the business and what matters most to themselves individually, amazing accomplishments and incredible advancements follow, every time. That's why we've joined forces to write this book.

In 1975, political activist and management pundit Richard Cornuelle ominously wrote in his book, *De-Managing America: The Final Revolution*, "Management which manages by specifying behavior is dehumanizing and inefficient. Management which specifies results is emancipating." We have largely ignored and underappreciated Cornuelle's warning and are now in need of a Results Revolution more than ever. But first, we need to ask some important *why* questions? Why hasn't such a revolution already happened? Why are we still obsessing over behavioral change? Why haven't we learned to create genuine results partnerships in business organizations—partnerships that foster real commitment and determination to achieve joint results? Even the latest research on how our brains function, which is exciting and enlightening, begs the same logical question: why don't we care more about each other's professional and personal success in direct pursuit of organizational results?

We think the answers to these questions lie in the simple wisdom of an ancient folktale and cherished childhood story: *The Little Red Hen*. Yes, the little red hen produced an amazingly successful Results Revolution by closing the gap between expectations and outcomes. We call upon this classic fable of the little red hen throughout the book to help explain how one company used a simple regimen for managing and leading results to drive greater focus, energy, and solutions . . . and thereby achieved extraordinary results. Applying the story's elegant simplicity and enduring wisdom to today's creeping complexity and debilitating disengagement in organizations allows you to deliver unprecedented levels of results for the benefit of customers, shareholders, the organization, coworkers, and yourself.

Revolutionizing the way we lead people and results not only liberates and transcends, it also dramatically intensifies focus, expands energy, and speeds solutions, which transforms and guides strategy, leadership, and culture. This is exactly what we need. Today's business enterprises demand unrelenting improvements in results, because their customers demand them and their competitors deliver them. Along with this escalating demand and delivery comes an incessant pressure to reduce the costs and resources associated with finding better, faster, and cheaper solutions. Despite this persistent drone, great companies with outstanding talent often fail to deliver the expected and needed results. How does that happen? Enterprises and employees are currently trapped in a flawed *cause and effect* paradigm that increases rather than diminishes the distractions that hinder and impede the achievement of results.

In the pages that follow, we will not only debunk this half-century old pattern of management and leadership, but also provide a new pattern that takes full advantage of everything leaders and organizations have learned during this same time period.

To get there, we need a Results Revolution. Achieving and sustaining success in today's business environment requires different solutions—namely, the willingness and ability to change the way we manage and lead results at the organization, team, position, and personal levels. Whether in an orchestra pit, art gallery, sports arena, classroom, factory, customer's office, cubicle farm, virtual team, or C-suite, results are always going to be the key to success and those results always come from people who passionately want and need to achieve them. Sweet and simple . . . but we've lost sight and touch with these fundamental truths. It's time for us to reconnect and revolutionize.

We hope you enjoy reading this book as much as we enjoyed writing it. We also hope it engages your heart, mind, body, and soul, persuading you, no matter what your level in the organization, to begin creating a Results Revolution in your team and workplace today.

The Authors

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DISAPPOINTING RESULTS

The torment was in the uncertainty—the lack of predictability, the recent setbacks, the gut aches. Three CEOs in seven years and now he was searching for a fourth to stem the tide of what had resulted in ten straight quarters of nagging little losses that were now packing a cumulative wallop. For Rogers, it had been agony heaped upon agony with no turnaround in sight. Rumors on Wall Street were raging. Employees either avoided eye contact or hid behind closed doors whenever he was around. The company's leaders were on edge, networking with their favorite headhunters while wondering what was coming next. Corporate cynicism had reached an apex.

Rogers Barrington, Chairman of the Board and grandson to the company's founder, sat in his stylish office on the 54th floor of the John Hancock Building overlooking a frozen Lake Michigan. It had been one of Chicago's worst winters on record, which to Rogers mirrored the company's dreadful performance. He was guiltily grateful that his office was no longer located at corporate headquarters in the suburbs. Making eye contact with employees had also become difficult for him.

At age 67, Rogers Barrington looked physically fit and notably distinguished—the epitome of a successful corporate leader—but he was suffering from heart disease. His doctors told him that if he didn't reduce the stress, he'd have another heart attack within two years. He hadn't even told his wife yet. Personally returning to the pressure-cooker role of CEO was obviously out of the question. Twenty years at the helm had been more than enough. Besides, he'd already made his mark with an impressive track record of taking his grandfather's successful business to number 598 on the Fortune 1000 list.

Despite his anguish over the company's recent failures, his heart disease was reasonably stable thanks to stints and medication and he wanted to keep it that way for as long as he could. Seven years earlier, he'd relinquished his CEO position and assumed the role of Chairman of the Board. But the company's current performance was aggravating a blood pressure problem. His doctor, wife, and family were imploring him to let go . . . *let go, right? Sure, he thought, just let go—how in God's name do I do that?*

The idea of *completely letting go* reverberated in his head, making his gut ache. This company wasn't just his life; it was a third-generation dynasty. His father had taken his turn at the helm. He had been a steady state player—just enough growth to keep everyone happy and next year possible. When Rogers Barrington took over, he literally changed the lives of every member of his burgeoning extended family and thousands of employees. In a million incalculable ways, he really lit it up . . . and it had to continue.

He cringed as he cycled back for what seemed like the zillionth time. A flurry of issues descended on him like a plague of voracious locusts. *All of this trouble started on my watch.* The typically reserved, buttoned up senior leader would never utter such blasphemous words in public, but the phrase resounded in his head along with the image of his grandfather's beet-red face.

Adding insult to injury, Wall Street was having a field day with Rogers' reputation and legacy. The painful but predictable gossip in competitive corporate circles had unfairly suggested that his early years at the helm may have been a fluke . . . that he had inherited it, not earned it. Rogers' insides burned when he thought about it, and his outward appearance was beginning to show the effects. He looked like he'd aged ten years in the past five and he was a lot crabbier these days. He was not a good loser.

This is grandfather's baby, he kept saying to himself, those Wall Street parasites have no sense of the loyalty, fortitude, and devotion required to keep battling the odds. In one sense, it would be easy for him to sell the company and pay people to manage the resulting fortune. But whenever he considered it, he could hear his grandfather and mentor screaming in his ear: *what the hell are you thinking Rogers . . . you can't sell the company . . . so you damn well better find the right successor to restore the company's industry-dominating growth. I couldn't get your father to agree, but industry dominance brings you economic leadership, Rogers, which is everything in business because it allows you to invest more back into the business than your competitors. Don't ever forget that.*

The old man had made his grandson promise to preserve and protect the family's golden goose . . . from his deathbed, no less. He'd seen something special in his grandson Rogers, but he hadn't lived long enough to see what his talented blood protégé had actually accomplished.

Even now, the one thing that continued to replay in Rogers' head wasn't the heart disease or his doctor's diagnosis after his first heart attack twelve years earlier that bypass surgery wasn't an option. It was the punishing petition made by his grandfather over thirty years ago, a few minutes before he died. The words pounded in his ears: *never let the light of our family's resolve go out.*

Rogers grimaced. *How has the very thing I've grown up loving become a millstone? Is this the way it always is with family wealth? A blessing and a curse?* He winced as he thought of his son and daughter, neither of whom wanted to follow in their father's footsteps. Then he winced, again, as he thought of hiring his fourth CEO in seven years.

For the past several hours, he'd been mulling over three finalist CEO candidates while reviewing the company's latest financials. Barrington Corp had become trapped in a malaise of mediocrity. Two and a half years of operating in the red had thrown the mid-sized conglomerate into an organizational stupor and there was no recovery path in sight. Besides enduring three CEOs in seven years, the primary issues were antiquated business models, disengaged workers, an uninspiring portfolio of businesses, and complexity creep. Sadly, the once high-performing Barrington Corp had become just another also-ran in jeopardy of tumbling into the quagmire . . . or worse, the inglorious abyss.

Major shareholders, many of them family members who together controlled the company's publicly-traded stock, were very unhappy. Some were even considering shareholder lawsuits. The company's stock price had plummeted over the past three years from a high of \$119 to a mere \$35 per share. And, for the fourth time in seven years, the board of directors was trying to find the right person to take the helm of this flagging ship.

The \$4 billion Chicago-based company, founded seventy-five years earlier by the eminent entrepreneur John Rogers Barrington, started out as a kitchen appliance manufacturer under the brand name Lake Shore Appliances. In the years since, Barrington had acquired and integrated over a hundred companies ranging from construction products to consumer electronics to software to financial services to alternative energy. Ten years ago, the company was a rising star expected by most stock market analysts to become a blue-chip investment for decades to come. Today, the company seemed more like a hodgepodge of lackluster performers that had grown out of control. In point of fact, some of Barrington's companies needed to be divested, some needed to be expanded, others needed to be strengthened through new acquisitions, and still others needed to be smartly repositioned in the marketplace. The new CEO would have to address all of these business challenges decisively.

Although Barrington would have preferred elevating an internal player, there was only one viable candidate for CEO from inside the leadership ranks at Barrington and that was Jack Grossman, President of the Consumer Electronics Business Group. But Jack, in Rogers' view, still needed development and seasoning. Jack's time would come if he continued to perform and mature. So, Rogers was going to the outside once again. And of course, the boutique executive recruiting firm Rogers had hired was promoting what it claimed to be an exceptional slate of thoroughly vetted CEO candidates. Each contender seemed to be highly qualified and undeniably unique. However, Rogers had already spent a small fortune on executive recruiting firms only to see Barrington's last three seemingly well-qualified CEOs crushed or confounded by the challenges. In truth, he'd looked at so many of these candidate profiles in the past seven years that they all started looking the same to him . . . except one. For some reason, that he did not yet fully understand, Rogers was drawn to Ann Strong.

He thought back to the first time they met for lunch at the RL Restaurant in downtown Chicago. When Ann walked into the dining room, it seemed as if everyone paused mid-bite to watch her weave through the tables. She was wearing a royal blue sheath dress and matching heels. But it was her hair that made people stare. A shimmering red, it almost seemed on fire. As she approached the table, Rogers stood to greet her. She shook his hand firmly in a double-hander, expressed her delight to be meeting with him, and graciously thanked the waiter who seated her. Her hazel brown eyes were alive and inquisitive throughout their lunch conversation.

Like the other candidates, Ann had acquired a pedigreed academic background and worked for marquee firms making her bones. She had a commanding yet compassionate presence, but what made her stand out from the rest was her demonstrated ability to get results. She had already orchestrated two smaller yet impressive corporate transformations and seemed hungry to make Barrington her next triumph. Although both of her prior companies were significantly smaller than Barrington, \$600 million and \$2 billion, their turnarounds had been relatively rapid and definitely dramatic in scope. As important to Rogers was the fact that the employees in both companies still revered Ann Strong. She seemed to have worked miracles, winning over even the employees most resistant to change.

The executive recruiter who was recommending Ann called her a natural change agent—a real visionary—who was uncompromising about results. This was clearly evidenced by her track record of performance as a leader at Procter & Gamble and Berkshire Hathaway and then as a CEO of two transformations. Some analysts viewed her methods as extreme, pointedly harsh and edgy, but no one was arguing with the results she produced. She'd turned business losses and slow growth into profits and significant growth in two very different industries. Board members from each of her previous companies had confirmed it. But it was the people at her two previous companies—the ones that sucked it up and made significant change—that seemed to be her greatest admirers. In a world where attitudes toward CEOs are mixed at best, these people were still gushing with passionate praise.

Could she really be that good? Part of Rogers thought the extreme praise might be hype, but the other part of him thought she just might be exactly what his company needed. She was stable, solid, and savvy. Not perfect, but clearly competent and driven. She was divorced from a successful corporate attorney in New York City, but they still spent family time together on holidays and special occasions. Neither had remarried. It was something Rogers had probed in their first interview because nothing was above scrutiny when it came to hiring CEOs. From the beginning, Ann and her husband's careers had always come first. The unintended consequence was that they had a marriage in name only. They simply lost touch, failing to understand, acknowledge, and respond to each other's dreams and emotional needs. These realities had eventually led to unspoken disappointment, disdain, and estrangement. They had two grown children, a boy and a girl, both of whom lived in the Chicago area and were gainfully employed. By all accounts, she had managed to hold her family together despite the divorce.

Rogers resolved to sleep on it for one more night. His late father had always recommended the practice prior to any important decision. But he tossed and turned all night and was wide-awake by the time the sun began to rise. *This has to work . . . if it doesn't, everyone I care about stands to lose a fortune . . . and I will be remembered as the idiot who led the company into decline.*

In the breakfast nook of a downtown apartment next to his office, Rogers opened Ann Strong's file one more time while sipping his morning coffee and watching the winter sun rise over Lake Michigan. He reflected on his three face-to-face interviews with Ann, smiling about her distinctive no-nonsense approach.

She had shrewdly sidestepped the headhunter's second-round of screening efforts and navigated straight to the decision-maker, Rogers Barrington, early in the process. She looked like any typical senior executive—well dressed, confident and charismatic. However, the resolve in her eyes and the self-assurance she exuded made everyone take notice. So, did her vibrant red hair.

In their second interview together, she had disarmed Rogers again by using the fable of *The Little Red Hen*. He replayed the story in his mind just as Ann had told it two weeks ago.

The little red hen lived together with a dog, a cat, and mouse. The dog napped on the porch, the cat slept on the couch, and the mouse snoozed next to the fireplace while the little red hen did all of the housework. She cooked the meals, washed the dishes, made the beds, swept the floor, cleaned the windows, mended the clothes, raked the leaves, mowed the grass, and hoed the garden.

One day while gardening, the little red hen found some grains of wheat. "Who will help me plant this wheat?" she cried.

"Not I," said the dog.

"Not I," said the cat.

"Not I," said the mouse.

"Then I will," said the little red hen.

Then the little red hen planted the wheat, watering and weeding the ground each morning until the wheat began to grow. When the wheat was ready to harvest, she asked, "Who will help me cut this wheat?"

The response from each of her colleagues was again, "Not I." So, the little red hen harvested the wheat by herself.

The same thing happened when the little red hen asked for help to take the wheat to the mill to be ground into flour, to gather sticks to make a fire in the stove, to mix the flour with other bread ingredients, to knead the dough, put it into the pan, and bake it in the oven. Each time, her colleagues responded, "Not I." So, the little red hen did all of it alone.

When smells from the baking bread filled the house, the dog and the cat and the mouse came running into the kitchen.

As the little red hen took the beautiful bread out of the oven she asked, "Who will help me eat this bread?"

"I will," said the dog.

"I will," said the cat.

"I will," said the mouse.

"No, you won't," said the little red hen. "I did everything required to bake this bread and I'm going to eat it . . . all by myself." And she did.

After that, whenever there was work to be done—bread to be made—the little red hen had three very enthusiastic and energetic helpers.

When Ann had finished telling the story, she immediately launched into its applicability at Barrington.

"The fable of the little red hen is about activating people to fully understand how business results can reveal the results they want and need to achieve themselves. I simply don't think this is happening at Barrington . . . at least not at the level you need. If you and I come to an agreement, this will be my focus. Getting people to take ownership for results that they truly want and need to achieve . . . and it has to start with us. In other words, what matters most to you and your family, what matters most to Barrington in light of the current business challenge, and what matters most to me as a prospective CEO of this company? The fable of the little red hen is not only about getting results . . . it's also about capitalizing on reciprocity. To me, it's about investing in my own success as well as the success of my coworkers, my teams, and the organization."

"No argument here," Rogers had said as he shook his head.

What followed was a thorough discussion of what mattered most to each of them and why. Rogers wanted his reputation intact, his legacy assured, his family of shareholders satisfied, and his personal life fulfilled and happy. All four of those “wants” depended deeply on Barrington’s “need” for growth, profitability, employee engagement, and market leadership. Those four requirements represented the essence of Barrington’s current business challenge.

Ann wanted freedom to operate, autonomy to lead another bigger and better corporate transformation, a generous compensation package with the commensurate number of stock options, and the respect and admiration of her coworkers.

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