

CREATING EXTRAORDINARY ORGANIZATIONS

Volume 4, Letter 1
January 6, 2006

Review of Volume 3

I write this letter for those pioneers who want to move beyond the ordinary to the Extraordinary in creating business organizations.

Special Request: If you know of an organization you think is an EO, please let me know about it. If you know of one that would like to become an EO, please let me know.

Thank You

Welcome to Letter 4-1 of Creating Extraordinary Organizations. Last year we covered a considerable amount of territory on the journey to Extraordinary. As I did in Letter 3-1, I am going to review last year's letters to give a perspective of where we have been. This will in turn form a basis for moving on.

Major Areas Covered Last Year

Last year's letters were a bit of a mixed bag. However, the overall theme of the year was looking at issues we must face in creating an Extraordinary Organization. There were also several letters relating to Sudbury Valley School, the only EO I know. If you want to read a letter just click on **Read**.

Letter Summaries

Letter 3-1: Review of Volume 2

Read

Letter 3-2: A New World Requires Radically New Business Organizations

Creating EO's is essential to bringing true freedom and democracy to business organizations. This will greatly benefit all those who work in them. Even more important, if we want to create a world of freedom and democracy—as we constantly proclaim—we can only succeed if we first do so in our own business organizations.

Read

Letter 3-3: Finding Beliefs

In this letter, I started looking at the issues one must address and solve in order to create an EO. The design of EO's derives from a different set of beliefs or paradigm than Command and Control. Therefore, the first issue is changing the beliefs through which we see the world. This letter started with this quote that highlights the importance of beliefs:

Your beliefs become your thoughts.
Your thoughts become your words.
Your words become your actions.
Your actions become your habits
Your habits become your values
Your values become your destiny

--Mahatma Gandhi

Read

Letter 3-4: Daniel Greenberg Oped Piece

The SVS Journal had a wonderful oped piece by Daniel Greenberg. He is one of the founders of the school and a leading spokesperson for its educational philosophy. He kindly gave me permission to reprint it with some comparison revisions.

I have long seen an almost perfect correlation between our current educational model and our current organizational model. The former is Command and Control for kids, the latter for adults.

This article could just as easily be about the business organization system as the educational one. All you have to do is change a few words to move it from one world to the other. I did this in the article by bolding the **educational** words and adding **[business words]**.

Read

Letter 3-5: Changing Beliefs

This letter contained some quotes by Barry Neil Kauffman and Peter Elbow on the nature of beliefs and why people hold on to them. It also quoted them about prerequisites for changing. The letter proposed no process but some points to keep in mind, namely:

- We can propose new beliefs, but we cannot force them on others.
- We cannot change other's beliefs.
- A person can only change beliefs when she is aware of her current ones.
- A person will change beliefs only if he sees the new ones as serving him better.
- A person has to believe she has the freedom and ability to change.
- You cannot produce change by attacking the old paradigm.

Read

Letter 3-6: Function, Will, and Being

In this letter, I looked at some ideas that are important but not easy to understand. They are three aspects of the world as proposed by Gurdjieff and J.G. Bennett, one of his prime pupils. I have learned from my consulting experiences that it is important if not essential to understand them when designing or working with organizations. Briefly they are:

- *Function* is the world of doing and action.
- *Will* is the force or intention that makes doing happen.
- *Being* is the energy that powers *will* and *function*.

These three aspects are present in whatever we are experiencing. The amount and quality of each of them determines the nature and quality of the experience.

Read

Letter 3-7: Prerequisite Characteristics of Individual Members - Part 1

This letter addressed the first of two make or break issues one must deal with in creating or shifting to an EO. This is making sure that every individual has certain characteristics that s/he must have to function in an EO. Six of the most important are:

1. A high level of self-knowledge
2. A high level of self-respect
3. The ability to be autonomous
4. The ability to work closely with others
5. The ability to seek, accept and handle responsibility
6. A high level of capability in one or more of the functions the organization needs.

Read

Letter 3-8: Prerequisite Characteristics of Individual Members - Part 2

For individuals to develop these characteristics they need an organization that enables them to do so. This letter suggested some ways organization members might design their organization to do this.

Read

Letter 3-9: Letting Go of Control

The second make or break issue is giving up control. Unless those currently in control are willing to give it up, there can be no EO. This requires them to change to the Core Belief: *An organization has no hierarchy of authority. Authority comes only from the people who will be subject to it.* The letter looked at several aspects of this issue, namely:

- This is a belief issue
- Resistance to change
- Which individuals and organizations are prospects for doing this?
- How do we find prospects?

Read

Letter 3-10: Reflections on a Visit to SVS - Part 1

In September I was at last able to visit the only EO I know, the Sudbury Valley School. The visit turned out to be more than I had hoped it would be. I spent one and a half wonderful days there and experienced an incredible community. In this letter, I gave my reflections on six aspects of the school.

Read

Letter 3-11: Reflections on a Visit to SVS - Part 2

I continued my reflections on my visit to SVS. I devoted this letter to the two most important aspects of the school. The School Meeting and the Judicial System are the core of the operation of the organization. The letter looked at each of them in some depth.

Read

Letter 3-12: Issues to Consider When Creating an EO: Decision Making

In this last letter, I returned to the issues related to creating an EO. The issue was decision-making. I had dealt with this topic in Letter 1-5. **[Read]** However, it went into more detail about types of decisions and methods for determining who makes what decisions. In this letter, I looked more at the question of what we need to consider in creating an EO. The letter addressed three questions:

1. Who makes the decision?
2. How do groups decide?
3. How do you decide who is involved and in what way?

Read

Until Next Time

The next letter will continue looking at the issues confronting us in creating an EO.

Be Well, and
Be Extraordinary!

Don Yates
Extraordinary Organizations

* * *

Announcements, Information, and Comments

Comments and questions please

Please let me have your questions and thoughts so I can include them in the letter. Just click on the email link in the Contact Information section below. Thanks

Forward this letter

If you know someone you think would enjoy receiving this e-letter, please forward it. Just click on the Forward Email link at the bottom of this letter. You will receive a form on which you can add a personal note and the name and address of the recipient.

Receive notifications of future events

You can now sign up to receive notices of future EO events. Click on the Update Your Profile link at the bottom of this letter. A form to indicate your choices will then pop up.

Eletter archive

If you would like to read PDF versions of published CEO Eletters click on CEO Archives

Subscribe to CEO

If you would like to subscribe to CEO [free of course] click on [Subscribe](#), and fill out the form on the web page. Thank You!

* * *

Privacy Policy: I never rent, trade or sell my E-mail list to anyone for any reason what so ever. You will never get an unsolicited E-mail from a stranger because you joined this list.

© 2004 Don Yates, All rights reserved. You are free to use material from this Creating Extraordinary Organizations E-letter in completely or in part. I would appreciate it if you would include with it this attribution:

By Don Yates of Extraordinary Organizations. Please visit EO's web site at [Http://Www.Extraordinaryorganizations.com](http://www.Extraordinaryorganizations.com) for more information and resources for Creating Extraordinary Organizations.