

# **The Pursuit of Excellence In The Face of Adversity**

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## **The Setting**

- Environmental Protection Agency,  
Office of Research and Development (ORD)
- 1900 Researchers, Managers and Admin Staff
- Impact of P.A.R.T., Declining Resources
- Scientific Research Culture is One of Skepticism
- 10 Year History of Change Efforts
- Reluctant Demand Function
- Never Met an Approach to Change We Didn't  
Try

## **Our Experience with HPO**

- Launched Effort Within One Laboratory with approximately 400 staff at 4 Locations
- Provided 3-day Training to All Employees
- Staff Intrigued by Concepts, but . . .
- Strong Skepticism about Management Commitment to Change
- Management Commitment Critical

## **Outcomes from Our Experience with HPO**

- Strategic Customer Value Analysis Helped Lab to Survive P.A.R.T.
- True Leaders Emerged
- Strong Skepticism about Management Commitment to Change Validated
- Current Status of Change Effort in the Lab

## **Plan B**

- Working at the ORD Level
- Efforts to Overcome Earlier Change Efforts – Losing the Big L on Our Foreheads
- Working Where We Are Wanted
- Developing Models to Shift the Dialog
- Determining What Needs We Can Meet -- Strategic Planning, Training, Coaching and Facilitation

## **The Perfection Vs. Excellence Model**

- Pursuit of Perfection (Left Column)
  - Fear Based
  - Stifles Risk-Taking
  - Creates Win/Lose Scenarios
  - What Happens When the Paradigm Shifts?
- Pursuit of Excellence (Right Column)
  - Based on Continuous Learning
  - Encourages Enlightened Risk-Taking
  - Creates Win/Win Scenarios
  - Facilitates Responsiveness

## Pursuit of Change Model

- Perceptions vs. Reality
- Expected Rate of Change
- Typical Change Experience
- Importance of Bumps in the Road in  
Creating Real Change
  - What We Learn
  - Seeing Problems as Opportunities
  - Importance of Collaboration

## Training Modules

- **Optimizing Your Interactions and Expanding Your Sphere of Influence**
  - Based on Perfection vs. Excellence and Change Models
  - Experiential Learning and Role Plays
- **Diversifying Your Strengths**
  - Based on Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
  - Develop Appreciation for the Value of Different Perspectives
  - Understand the Role of Type Under Stress
- **Getting What You Want**
  - Needs Based Negotiations
  - Role Plays
- Each Module Is Designed to Transfer Learning to Workplace

## What We Learned

- Management Support Can Help or Hurt
- Integrity is Essential
- Coaching Works For Many Managers and Staff
- Positive Emotions are Powerful
- Flexibility in the Moment Wins Credibility
- Simple Models Convey Profound Truths
- Diversity is Powerful
- Public Servants Are Passionate About the Pursuit of Excellence

## Questions?

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