

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0

Greetings from Bogota!

As fellow Radio Amateurs, we all want the same thing - to enjoy and achieve personal fulfillment and growth through our beloved Amateur Radio, enhancing our technical, social, personal leadership, and organizational skills and knowledge. And when the propagation Gods smile down on us, things only get better.



To ensure the continuance and growth of our domestic and international operating privileges and spectrum allocation, Canadian Amateur Radio service needs to be protected. Spectrum is finite and commercial interests and demands are insatiable and growing.

That's just one of the many harsh realities of life and one vital role for our national organization - the only national organization we have - [Radio Amateurs of Canada](#).

The radio bug has been in my blood for almost 50 years and Amateur Radio, combined with hockey, basketball and the Scouting movement, saved me from smoke filled pool halls, so popular when I was a teenager growing up in Baie-Comeau, Quebec, on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River. Snow drifted to second story windows back then, and walking to school in minus 30F weather in a 40 mph gale was commonplace - but that's another story...

The real story is Radio Amateurs of Canada and its cultural transformation.

This is not a new issue. The RAC Board and Executive have been dancing around the topic for years but the slide to oblivion continues. As difficult and scary as it is, the time has come to face reality and take some history-making action to transform Radio Amateurs of Canada into the vibrant and sustainable organization it can be. The alternative is RAC withers away and we all lose.

Your enrollment in the transformation process is vital. Radio Amateurs of Canada must transform into the organization we all need. It won't be easy. Nothing of great importance and significance where the stakes are high ever is easy. And don't sit back waiting for RAC leadership to wave a magic wand and make it happen. There is no magic wand. All of us - you and me - can and must make this happen.

Please take an hour to read this entire document - all parts - 1 through 16.

Let's start the process - in every club, in every group, every provincial organization - big or small. Let's transform Radio Amateurs of Canada.

Thanks for reading and please share this with every Ham you know!

Respectfully,

John Bartlett
VE1OZ / HK3OZ

e-mail: johnbartlett@live.com

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0

Part 1 - Dinosaur Disease



"Let's not pretend things will change if we keep doing the same things."

A crisis can be a real blessing to any person - to any nation. All crises bring progress. Creativity is born from anguish - just as day is born from the dark night. In crisis, invention is born - discoveries and big strategies. He who overcomes crisis overcomes himself. He who blames failure on crisis neglects his own talent; this is being more respectful to problems than to solutions.

The incompetence is the true crisis. The greatest inconvenience to people and nations is the laziness with which they attempt to find the solutions to their problems. There's no challenge without crisis. Without challenges life becomes a routine, slow agony. There is no crisis without merits. It is through crisis that we can show the very best in us. To speak continuously about a crisis is to promote it, but not to speak about it is to exalt conformism.

So instead, let us work hard. Let us stop, once and for all, the menacing crisis that represents the tragedy of not being willing to overcome it."

Albert Einstein

Question:

If change is truly inevitable and necessary for survival, should not our fears be based on failure to change, rather than change itself?

If we fail to change, we may not achieve our goals. We may lose our national organization - Radio Amateurs of Canada.

So our fear of change is truly an **oxymoron**. We fear the wrong thing; the only fear we have to fear is - the fear of failure to change. Would you agree?

The challenge:

The nature of the task should not be underestimated. However RAC, while financially strapped, has a portfolio of human assets that are among the best anywhere. If we begin with an honest realization of the current state and follow that up with a true desire for change, we can develop a clear strategic direction which will put Radio Amateurs of Canada on the road to success.

Ultimately morale has to be re-built, not just among members, but among future-members, both of whom have been watching for years as the organization has bounced from one crisis to another.

The need for change is big - perhaps bigger than is realized - so courage and tenacity will be required in order to persevere - knowing it's the right thing to do.

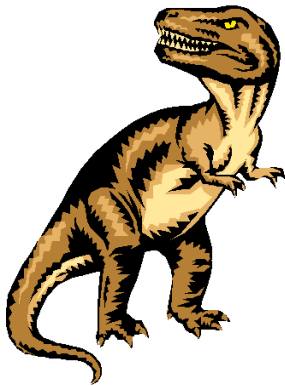
Ultimately, this is a battle for the hearts and minds of Canadian amateurs and future amateurs.

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0

At the Annual General Meeting in Halifax on 6 August, RAC President Geoff Bawden, VE4BAW, officially launched RAC's transformation - hence this document - the intent of which is to provide context and set the stage - specifically, the why, how and what of RAC's transformation.

So what is requested of you? Easy - just read this material, reflect on it, its relevance and applicability to you - and engage in the process.



Know the process - a radical act of sorts - will be somewhat difficult and uncomfortable but also know it's not rocket science.

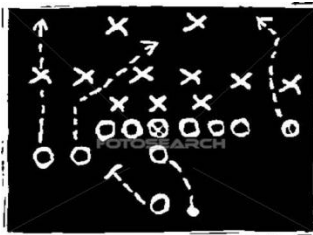
As humans we all have beliefs, experiences, training, likes, dislikes, and habits, which constitutes **our being** - how we think, how we behave, and what we value. As the process unfolds, we will be challenged.

The process won't always appear logical and it may not be smooth, but it should equip everyone with the insight required to transform RAC's culture and create its strategic future.

BTW, all thoughts, comments and suggestions are welcome.

Part 2 - Dream Job

From traditional strategic planning to storytelling:



Strategists often struggle with strategic options. First, they worry about what they have to come up with to make the proposed option credible. Then they spend hours on SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analyses and spreadsheets, which provide reasons to kill possibly great ideas at worst, and slow down the process of coming up with ideas at best.

Then there's the existential angst. Even if strategists do come up with a well-argued idea, they still worry about treading on other people's toes. And after all that soul searching, they end up with an idea that makes too much sense to be interesting - so they kill it.

Sound familiar? If so, your strategy-making process is being taken far too seriously. In this instance strategic option generation is being treated as a construction exercise where you're going to build an option, and where there are a bunch of pieces to assemble, all of which have to fit logically together in an airtight way - otherwise, it isn't legitimate.

This approach is just too difficult. Unreasonably high standards choke off or delay the production of options and is one reason why strategy processes so often produce a bunch of options that aren't decisively more interesting than the current strategy - yet require lots of work to generate and analyze. Plus, all that work and anguish tends to make participants edgy and they start picking at one another's options rather than treating them as interesting additive thoughts.

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0

Solution?

Think about strategic options as being just a happy story about the future. It doesn't have to be right and it doesn't even have to be sensible. It just has to result in the organization being in a happy place in the future. In fact, if it were absolutely right and utterly sensible, RAC would probably already be doing it.

The story doesn't have to be constructed analytically. This is a holistic process where we find ourselves playing and see ourselves winning. The only real requirement is this must be a happy and an aspirational story. By the way, if it isn't happy, it isn't worth being an option in the first place.



If every participant tells one another a happy story - a dream of what could be - the group will have a wonderful list of options quite quickly, because participants won't feel they have to work super hard and be terribly careful and highly logical. Meanwhile, creativity is elevated - because these are just stories (dreams) - happy stories.

Once the happy stories are assembled - the key question then is what would have to happen for them to be true? And by working backward from that attractive possibility, a short list of strategies and activities are then developed which, if realized, would make these dreams come true.

In brief that's the process. The good news is - it's not rocket science.

Part 3 - Teams and Team Players

Teamwork:



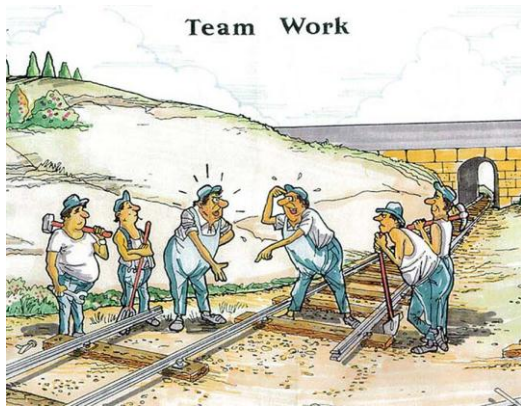
An organization's culture is a complex system with a multitude of interrelated processes and mechanisms that keep it humming along. In companies, performance reviews and training programs define the organization's expectations. Reward systems reinforce them. Memos and communications highlight what's important. And senior leadership actions - promotions for people who toe the line and a dead-end career for those who don't - emphasize the company's priorities.

In most business organizations these elements develop unconsciously and organically to create a system that, while not always ideal, works. To change culture is difficult, messy and complex. So why not avoid it? Why change the culture? The business seems successful. The culture seems to be working. Why not keep it?

Because it isn't sustainable. People aren't happy. Satisfaction is abysmally low. People are not performing. Some are even threatening to leave. The organization is developing a reputation as an unhealthy place in which to work. Eventually the organization will lose its best people and no one will want to belong there.

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0



So, just how do you change the culture of an organization? Such a simple question - surely there must be a simple answer.

Regardless of the type of organization, **the key is building an effective cohesive team.**

Teamwork doesn't require intellectual insight or masterful tactics. More than anything else, it comes down to courage and persistence. So, if you are committed to making your team a healthy one, and if you can get the rest of the team to share your commitment, you're probably going to make it.

Teamwork is hard to measure. Yet, as difficult as teamwork can be to achieve, it's not complicated. The true measure of a successful team is it **accomplishes the results** it sets out to achieve. To do that on a consistent, ongoing basis, a team must overcome five common dysfunctions:

Dysfunction 1: Absence of Trust

Members of great teams trust one another on a fundamental, emotional level and they are comfortable being vulnerable with each other about their weaknesses, mistakes, fears and behaviours. They get to the point where they can be completely open with one another without filters.

Dysfunction 2: Fear of Conflict

Team members who trust one another are not afraid to engage in passionate dialogue around issues and decisions key to the organization's success. They do not hesitate to disagree with, challenge, and question one another, all in the spirit of finding the best answers, discovering the truth, and making great decisions.

Dysfunction 3: No Commitment



Teams that engage in unfiltered conflict are able to achieve genuine buy-in around important decisions even when various members of the team initially disagree. That's because they ensure all opinions and ideas are put on the table and considered. This creates confidence that no stone has been left unturned.

Dysfunction 4: No Accountability

Teams that commit to decisions and standards of performance do not hesitate to hold one another accountable for adhering to those principles and standards. What is more, they don't rely on the team leader as the primary source of accountability; they go directly to their peers.

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0

Dysfunction 5: No Achievement

Teams which trust one another, engage in conflict, commit to decisions, and hold one another accountable, are very likely to set aside their individual needs and agendas and focus almost exclusively on what is best for the team. They do not give in to the temptation to place their own interests or ego-driven status ahead of the collective results that define team success.

Two important questions:

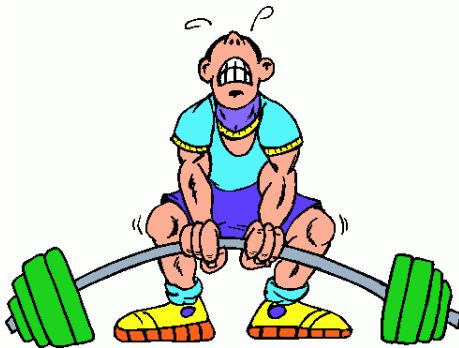
1) Are you really a team player?

Sometimes team improvement is doomed from the start because the team is just a team in name only.

A real team is a small group of people who share common goals as well as the rewards and responsibilities for achieving them.

It's okay to decide that your group isn't a real team. In a world where real teamwork is rare, plenty of non-teams do succeed. In fact, if your group is not meant to be a team, it's far better to be clear about that up front rather than waste time and energy pretending you're something that you're not.

2) Are you ready for the heavy lifting?



The advantages of being a real team are enormous. They can't be achieved without a willingness to invest considerable time and emotional energy in the process. Unfortunately, many teams aren't prepared for this and they try to take shortcuts and half measures. Not only does this prevent them from making progress, it can actually lead to a decrease in the team's performance.

It's important to go into this process with eyes wide open - with no illusions about what is required. That doesn't mean becoming a team will take years or that it will be unpleasant. Most teams can make significant progress in weeks or months and find the process itself to be most rewarding - if they do it right.

Everyone is driven by four factors:

- affiliation (desire to be liked/loved)
- achievement (desire to compete against challenging goals)
- power (desire for influence and respect)
- meaning (sense of purpose)

If people have the opportunity to achieve, affiliate, influence and find meaning, they will be motivated and engaged **even without** a clear vision of the future.

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0

The Mark of a Team Player:

An organization's success depends on a huge variety of talents and skills more than any one member of the organization can possibly possess. There are technological issues, legal issues, financial issues, personal issues, leadership issues and more. A member of any organization who is self-aware enough to know he is not adept at everything is one who has taken the first step toward being a great team member.

This personal mastery involves a heightened understanding of one's own behavior, motivators, and competencies. It's necessary to have the "emotional intelligence" to monitor and manage one's responses in a variety of situations.

This can be very difficult, especially for those who are not comfortable, knowledgeable, or willing to acknowledge their individual strengths and weaknesses.

We all know people who insist on controlling everything within the organization. This kind of behaviour blocks or limits the talents of others and does not contribute positively to the forward momentum of the organization. Such individuals need to understand they are more part of the problem than the solution.

Part 4 - Leadership is Critical

Isn't it sad that the few who criticize and berate efforts being made to move things ahead in the organization are allowed to do such great harm - with apparent impunity? Where is the leadership?



As it was in the days of Noah ...

Unfortunately, due to battle scars from previous unpleasant encounters many good people drop out of the debate. By choosing to remain silent they leave the malcontents and blockers with considerable influence and control - spoiling it for all.

Leaders must continuously assess and profoundly understand the organization's culture. They must formulate plans to optimize it, make it visible, communicate it powerfully - and when necessary, develop strategies to win back the hearts and minds of members and prospective members of the organization.

It's really that simple - it's not rocket science.

And while it may appear overly simplistic to say, leadership must recognize and live by one simple rule - **lead, follow or get out of the way**. That sometimes is a root-cause issue. Many leaders don't have, or have lost, the leadership and management skills required, or are too proud to follow someone else with better skills and ideas.

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0



Traditional thinking is of **limited value** here. It rarely proves effective because it mostly just rehashes the past. And leaders who won't get out of the way block change.

Other behaviors that contribute to organizational problems include:

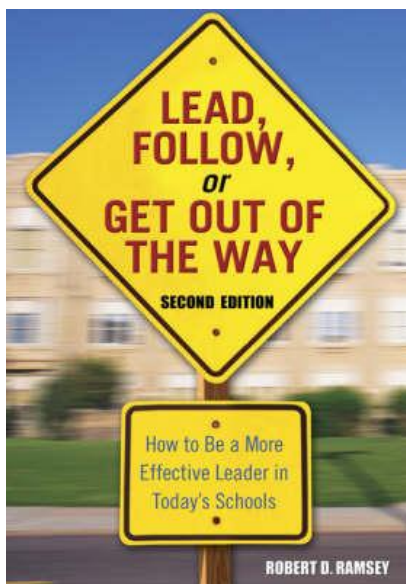
No time to talk: People are busy and have many tasks to accomplish within a short period of time. Typically a quick to-do list - issued once - replaces conversation. There's no listening - and very little learning. The single iteration of a message is not communications.

It's my party: Successful organizations strive for transparency and inclusion. Not all members feel that way and they sometimes don't share information with others. Sometimes they forget - and sometimes they simply hold back on information as a means of control.

Power play: Information shared or not shared can be an instrument of power. This type of power play has no place in a team.

I'm not listening: Tune out the world and it will go away. That's an attitude that arises when there is so much information or issues are so complex that people simply tune out. Sometimes they tune out because they don't want to change - or because they can't handle the information overload.

Not my issue: Members within the organization understand communication deficiencies but don't take action to improve it. As a result, meetings and conference calls continue to run longer than they should, e-mail messages pile up or don't get answered, and people remain uninformed, despite an overload of information.



So what can be done about this?

Acknowledge problems exist. Take responsibility for things you can change. Focus on becoming a better listener. Reduce the volume of unnecessary e-mail.

Change your communication mindset. Be available to exchange ideas. Make it clear that everyone owns communication issues. Everyone will have a stake in keeping lines of communication open and flowing.

Punch holes in silos. Initiate dialogue with individuals with different interests. Share information with them and ask for information in return. Keep talking.

Communication issues are a fact of life. If RAC executives and directors begin to own problems, individual and systemic, solutions will be found.

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0

Radio Amateurs of Canada leadership needs to acknowledge organizational culture as a key aspect of sustainability and growth.

Absent a strategy to win the hearts and minds of members and future members by substantially changing the culture of the organization, Radio Amateurs of Canada risks forever bouncing from one crisis to another - never achieving its true potential.

Part 5 – Being Effective

Defend your ideas without being defensive:

Getting behind an idea means it has captured your imagination, conviction and passion. Such commitment is essential for the successful implementation of any important initiative and this enthusiasm helps bring others to the cause. But it can also be your worst enemy when someone pushes back.

Since you are so enamored of your idea, your instinct is to protect it as you might a child. This project is my baby. **Big mistake!** This puts you on the defensive.



When you face criticism you need to defend yourself without being defensive. Being defensive opens you up to additional criticism because very often it provokes negative behaviors such as lashing out or shutting down - where you become caught in the moment, and the niceties of polite discourse go out the window. It's okay to be passionate, but you need to avoid becoming overly passionate - unwilling and unable to listen to others.

Maintaining an even keel in the face of skepticism or even hostility is vital to leadership presence.

It's the kind of aura you need to radiate if you ever hope to instill confidence in your leadership abilities. When people are whaling on your ideas it's easy to get caught up in the heat of the moment, so the challenge is not to overreact. The key is to separate personality from ideology.



A Gift

Be prepared.

Be generous.

Be patient

Do what is best for the organization.

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0

Part 6 - Transformation Isn't Optional

As stated at the outset, the process of renewing any organization's culture starts by recognizing that the **current state is not sustainable**.

If you feel uncomfortable with the status quo, if you believe the organization is in need of a cultural overhaul, if you think fundamental, substantial change is required - even if you're not sure about the specific details and don't know quite how to proceed - this process just might be for you.

Consider the following. It's a way of creating a vision for the future. We do this by participating in a mini role playing exercise.



Imagine, a **magic Genie** appears and you are granted **one wish** to make RAC a better organization. You tell the genie your one wish is "in five years, Radio Amateurs of Canada is **THE** highly recognized, highly respected organization representing the interests of all Radio Amateurs in Canada."

So the conversation with the Genie might go something like this:

Genie: Your wish will be granted if you can describe 10 things that will have happened for RAC to be **THE** highly **recognized**, highly **respected** organization representing the interests of all amateurs in Canada in five years.

*And **your response** might go something like this:*

Regarding Recognition:

- RAC will have successfully and convincingly communicated a compelling value proposition
- the entire Canadian amateur radio population and all other stakeholders will have bought into this new culture.
- the RAC executive and board will have developed a five year dynamic strategic plan
- RAC organizational culture will have shifted from reactive to being well-lead and managed
- membership will have hit unprecedented highs

Regarding Respect:

- respect across the organization's entire constituency will be evident
 - the governance model will have been widened to permit increased participation
 - RAC will have commissioned an impartial evaluation of its performance, constitution, organizational structure, core values, & aims & objectives. These findings will have been published, and RAC will have committed to a program of continuous improvement and operational excellence
 - RAC will have established appropriate management oversight for matters involving leadership succession, strategic planning and financial integrity
- communication between membership and the board will be open and friendly



Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0

The above process is obviously abbreviated and overly simplistic, however you can see the general approach.

Remember this is just an example. The real process would generate multiple dreams (wishes) which would then be distilled and "things that would need to happen" for each dream to come true would be formulated in a multi-year plan.

While the work involved may seem daunting and overwhelming, taken one step at a time, it is doable - the process does work. The greatest difficulty lies with our own personal discomfort with change itself.

Note: a dream doesn't have to be constructed analytically (see part 2 of this document). Rather, it's a holistic story where we find ourselves playing and see ourselves winning. The only real requirement is it must be a happy and an aspirational story.

Transformation isn't Optional:

We all can agree RAC cannot be allowed to fail. Operations must continue. Radio Amateurs of Canada must grow and become stronger, organizationally and financially - and there is agreement RAC needs to change its culture.

Unless the organization changes substantially, among other things, RAC will have a difficult time:

- demonstrating a value proposition
- growing membership to achieve a critical mass
- attracting the talent required to operate
- becoming financially sustainable

Yes, culture is the hardest thing to change. That's because culture change is not a decision. Culture change is an ongoing campaign.

Even in a hierarchy, top officials can declare a new policy or a new structure, but they can't change behavior without winning hearts and minds.

And if culture change is difficult within a "for profit" company where people receive salaries, it's even harder in volunteer organizations like Radio Amateurs of Canada.

Culture includes proven, acceptable methods by which members of an organization address problems. And culture defines the priority given to different types of problems. In and by itself, culture is a very powerful management tool.

So the question is - will you buy in, unconditionally, to the need to reset the organization, to change RAC's culture, and to create RAC's strategic future?

Do you have the courage to dream?

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0

Part 7 – Tearing Down the Status Quo

What tells us RAC needs to change?

- membership is declining
- revenues continue down and RAC will likely fail within 12 to 18 months
- the executive team has suffered infighting and the departure of some key personnel
- volunteers for key positions are difficult to recruit
- the organization is perceived as closed and secretive
- TCA revenue does not cover costs
- TCA working group has largely isolated itself from the management team
- membership penetration in Quebec remains poor
- non-members have no status
- a critical membership drive has not been well supported
- the cultural change process not well supported
- participation at key regional events is inconsistent
- financial reports are not public
- membership numbers are not disseminated
- governance structure is flawed
- the management team is dysfunctional
- executive members are focused only on their specialty
- there is no mentoring program for volunteers
- there is no performance review process and no consequence for failure
- governmental relationships are weak
- board meetings are closed

Next steps?

The change process espouses the following:



- focus on what to achieve rather than attempting to fix problems
 - focus on the future and make no reference to the past
 - envision (dream of) a preferred future
 - develop strategies to realize that future
 - create your strategic future
 - recognize change is a constant
 - your dream cannot be imposed or mandated
 - the only person who has "the answer" is you
- change happens when the entire community is enrolled

So what's your dream?

In preparing this part, I worked with Peter West, VE3HG. As most of you know, Peter was, until 10 September 2010, RAC's Vice President of Public Relations. He has a background in group work and professional coaching.

So I asked Peter to engage with me in the process - leave the past behind, transport himself into the future and create a dream of what RAC could be.

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0

Here's Peter's dream:

"This morning when I awoke, I had a sense everything had changed. Our RAC management meeting was held last night on an open, regularly scheduled, bi-monthly "Go-To-Meeting" webinar site, with over 500 participants (members and non-members alike) who signed in and contributed via email.

The number of directors was much expanded based on population distribution. Now, there were three directors from the East, five from Quebec, five from Ontario, two from Manitoba, two from Alberta, two from Saskatchewan, one from the Yukon/NWT and four from British Columbia. The number of Vice Presidents was also expanded to comprise a working group of over 20 volunteers and included the RAC office staff and editor of TCA.

All issues concerning increased Quebec participation had been solved by amateurs in Quebec and had been quickly adopted by the greater RAC community. While different, these solutions are workable, profitable and amateur radio across Canada was the beneficiary of this work.

All representatives in the management group now have voting rights on all issues with the sole exceptions of major financial and constitutional changes. Financial budgets receive approval at the Annual General Meeting by the membership. Extraordinary matters that do arise are brought before the AGM for discussion and vote by all.

Financial reports are published on a public website, as are RAC membership numbers. Financial reports are audited and approved annually.

Active committees include our Youth Educational Program and new licensee programs which contribute to the overall growth of Amateur Radio. As well, beginners' programs offered by RAC-affiliated clubs are producing a large and significant impact. Both of these groups have benefitted immensely by close affiliation with their counterparts in the American Radio Relay League.

Once a month, the Presidents' Council meets online with RAC's president and all the presidents of RAC-affiliated clubs. This meeting is open to all.

The government liaison committee meets quarterly with representatives of Industry Canada and negotiations are underway for RAC to administer the licensing of amateur radio operators in Canada. Issues such as interference and tower height restrictions are two of the main items of current interest to this committee.

The TCA committee has found several professional sales people willing to work on commission and ad sales for TCA cover the salaries, production and mailing costs. In fact, TCA is now making a small profit."

We need to hear from you about your dream:

The above is Peter's dream for a better RAC. But it's not necessarily the best dream and it's certainly not the only dream. All of your dreams are required. As RAC members (or future members) your dream is essential if Radio Amateurs of Canada is to survive.

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0

As a radio amateur I've been fascinated by the diversity of Amateur Radio around the world. And out of that realization came the thought that every member and future member should get to make a wish - create a dream.

We need not be looking to create the perfect RAC. Instead we should be trying to create the perfect RAC's - which would appeal to the divergent interests of all members and future members.

Listening to member feedback is okay but doing something about it is better - and it's better done quickly.

RAC leadership needs to find a new way to expand the Amateur Radio experience. RAC needs to attract the right people with the right culture, inspire them, and draw out the best in them. Continuous learning and tearing down the status quo is absolutely essential.

OK - there you have it - a blueprint for change. Your thoughts, opinions, and suggestions are essential; the clock is running and the need for change is urgent.

Part 8 – Do You Read Me? Can You Hear Me Now?

Greetings RAC board, executive and special advisors,

During and after the 22 July Board Conference call, some of you sent me notes telling me you were glad I was back aboard the RAC train, adding if there was anything you could do to help, I only had to ask.

And, as much as I knew the road ahead would be difficult, I felt encouraged and proceeded to produce and send you material (the intro and previous 7 parts of RAC's transformation).

But now, with only your stony silence to show for the effort, I must confess to feeling a little surprised and also a bit disappointed. But you should know I will not give up. I will never give up. As they say in St. Henri, a tough neighbourhood of Montreal - "you fight me, you fight my gang". Of course, the folks there have a certain way of saying it with the right accent and all. But you get the idea.

And so my friends, in the spirit of full disclosure I will tell you what I have done. Yesterday, the deck of eight PDF files was e-mailed to over one hundred opinion leaders, club presidents and personal friends across Canada, in order **to enroll them** in RAC's transformation.

Feedback has been universally positive and very supportive.

So come on! Show membership the RAC executive and board are 100% behind the transformation effort.



Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0

Don't be part of the problem - be part of the solution! The eyes of all Canadian Radio Amateurs are upon us.

In the words of our friend Waldo on the preceding page - "Hmm, I know you think you understand what you thought I said, but I'm not sure what you heard is what I actually meant".

Part 9 – Don't Shoot the Messenger

Greetings again RAC board, executive and special advisors,

It's the process: I know - it's the process you don't like - it's not me. The change process is uncomfortable and difficult. First and foremost, it requires us to put our egos on hold and pride in the closet. It requires us to understand how our life experiences, our training, education, likes and dislikes, our habits and beliefs, all affect our ability to change.

Not easy: It's not an easy process, it will take time and it will require the **enrollment** of RAC's entire constituency. That's why material has now been put up on the RAC Blog and why it was e-mailed across the country.

Sense of urgency: This dance has been going on for years. This is not a condemnation - just a statement of fact. But the music has stopped. The band has gone home. The dance is over. It's time to act!

Not moving quickly with the transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada is not an option. Everyone knows the status quo is not sustainable. We cannot afford a wait and see approach. And while a large part of the Radio Amateur community is justifiably skeptical about the organization's ability to pull out of the nose dive, I have no doubt membership will rally and support the organization as never before, provided the RAC leadership transforms into a **truly functional team** and creates and communicates powerfully a future image of Radio Amateurs of Canada, one created through the enrollment of RAC's entire constituency.

So who's Waldo: You may have wondered what the heck a gorilla photo was doing on the previous page. Waldo happens to weigh 800 pounds. Waldo is a surrogate for the RAC membership.

In the words of our friend Waldo above - "Hmmm, I know you think you understand what you thought I said, but I'm not sure what you heard is what I actually meant".



As the RAC board, executive and special advisors, we are accountable to Waldo for the growth and health of Radio Amateurs of Canada. There is no magic wand - only magic dreams, discussions and actions.

Let's make the transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada our sole focus!

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0

Part 10 - Start in the Future

Greetings again RAC board, executive and special advisors,

The assertion: The material is "a standard PDF that is changed for each organization that he does work for". Not so fast, batman. What is being advanced here actually comes from personal experience.



Take a look at www.hk3oz.com under "Creating Better Organizations" on the main menu - bottom left.

It's essentially the result of thirty-three years of leadership and change management experience - what works well and what doesn't. As to "...each organization he does work for..." - well, since retiring almost eight years ago I haven't worked *for* anyone; I have on the other hand worked *with* a few organizations of my choosing, helping them to create their strategic future - all pro bono. Recall these same notions were

presented at the RAC Board meeting on 3 May 2008 in Cornwall, Ontario.

The transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada must be unstoppable in light of what the organization is facing. The path is not about arrival - it's about what Radio Amateurs of Canada will become along the journey.

Intention: Use the unstoppable power of intention. Be clear about what you want to create. To do so you must have a clear, true, deep, authentic desire.

Elimination: Release anything not in alignment with your intention. When you plant a seed, the first thing that comes up is the dirt. Get rid of the dirt. It's hard to stay focused on your intention when you're focused on reaction.

Attention: Use the creative power of your attention. Attention is the daily practice of intention. Create new habits, new practice. Habits create your destiny.

Decision: Decision is intention with legs. Stop waiting to be qualified enough. Why not make a decision? Small decisions will teach how to make big decisions.

Take action: Action is decision with legs. Get deliberate - don't react - instead act. Be proactive. Take conscious action.

Honour the past: Get complete with the past - honour it, otherwise, as the RAC leadership, you'll miss out on your potential. And recognize this: where you are right now has been created by your past or present. It is your current being.

Support: Reach out for support - to RAC's entire constituency. Don't forget Waldo. After all, isn't RAC's constituency the reason you are in your respective roles?

Think about RAC's transformation from where you want the organization to be.

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0

Part 11 - Leadership with Passion Trumps All

Greetings RAC board, executive and special advisors - yes, me again,

Leadership versus management:

Great teams don't happen without visionary leadership and management. Both are required for great performance. Leadership inspires; management explains what is expected and measures results.

Leadership guides; management navigates, explaining the who, what, why, where, and how of things.

Leadership provides hope; management analyses performance, communicating with and motivating the team. Leadership is visionary, able to describe the future; management maintains a steady course towards desired goals and objectives.

Leadership rallies the team to do what's right; management identifies issues and solves problems.

Leadership and management are clearly complementary.

Both are required for great team performance. Radio Amateurs of Canada needs the leadership of the board and executive. **It's largely about passion** - dreaming of what the future state of RAC could be.

I remember Gerry, VE3GK (Golden Kilowatt). Gerry had passion and was known not only for his BIG antenna systems, but also for the tiny full-KW amplifiers he designed and built. Gerry was a huge inspiration to and changed the lives of many of his students at Highland Park High School.

Gerry was passionate about amateur radio, always talking about possibilities - he made a difference. Gerry was a leader.

The same can be said about Art Blick, VE3AHU - Mister CARF, Ron Hesler, VE1SH - CRRL's public relations chief, Tom Atkins, VE3CDM - RSO and IARU champion, and many more.

All were passionate about amateur radio - all were visionary, always thinking and talking about future possibilities. All have passed on but their memories linger.

As written in the part 10 of this document, the transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada must be unstoppable in light of what the organization is facing today. The path is not about arrival. It's about what RAC will become along the journey.

Doing the right thing trumps doing everything right - however nothing beats inspired, visionary leadership with passion.

And RAC's transformation needs to be driven by that kind of leadership, originating from where you want the organization to be - RAC's new being.

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0

Part 12 - Opening up to Opportunity

Greetings RAC board, executive and special advisors - that's right, it's me again,

Getting motivated: You don't need to be motivated for long - just long enough to overcome the inertia. Because once you get started, it takes little discipline to keep going. Getting started is the hard part - like getting into a cold pool. Once you're in, it's fine. It's *getting in* that takes motivation.

You only need to be motivated for a few short moments. Between those moments, momentum or habit or unconscious focus - your new being - takes over.

Does that take discipline? Sure. But when you break it down, the hardest part - the part for which you need the discipline - it clearly is getting started. You'll find all sorts of things and reasons to distract yourself from starting. But if you can get yourself to start, you don't need much discipline to continue and finish.

We waste a lot of time, energy, and focus second-guessing ourselves. Am I doing the right thing? Is this worthwhile? Is this going to work out? That moment-by-moment deliberation is a distraction at best and sabotage at worst. If you keep asking yourself whether something is worth working on, you'll reduce your effort on that project. Continually asking "who wants to spend time on something that might fail?" will doom its success.

On the other hand, it's impossible to ignore feelings of uncertainty. And if you do eventually decide to change your commitment and abandon, you'll know it's not from momentary weakness. It will be your strategic, rational, intentional decision. What's important though is your moment of choice be when you are in the right state of mind to make the best decision.

Which is why, sitting here at my computer at 5:30 am this Tuesday morning, I've decided to write again urging you to listen to what's being said about Radio Amateurs of Canada and its leadership - even if it's only a small proportion of those who take the time and have the energy - and importantly - who care enough about our organization to provide input.

Don't be blind. Consider the input as a gift.

Open up to the opportunity. Open up to new ways of thinking about how to create a new future for the Radio Amateurs of Canada.

Part 13 - Enrolling our Constituency

Greetings again, RAC executive, board and special advisors,

A recent article on [design thinking](#) is the inspiration for this piece. That article outlines four important things successful designers do to achieve significant breakthroughs to solve problems and innovate.

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0



They Question: Designers ask, and raise, a lot of questions. This is often the starting point in the design process - "stupid questions" - the ones that challenge existing realities and assumptions. Asking "why" questions can make the questioner seem naïve while putting others on the defensive - as in, "What do you mean - why are we doing it this way? We've been doing it this way for 15 years!"

By encouraging people to step back and reconsider old problems or entrenched practices - re-framing the challenge at hand - thinking can be steered in new directions. Questioning and rethinking basic fundamentals - like asking "what business are we really in? what do today's members (Waldo) actually need or expect from us?" - has never been more important.

They Care: Designers really care about client needs. It's easy to say RAC cares about member needs. But to really empathize, Radio Amateurs of Canada must be willing to do what many of the best designers do: step out of the organizational bubble and actually immerse itself in the daily lives of the very members it is trying to serve - really observing, listening and paying close attention to members' unarticulated needs. Focus groups and questionnaires are not enough.



They Connect: Designers have a knack for synthesizing - for taking existing elements or ideas and mashing them together in fresh new ways. This can be a valuable shortcut to innovation. It means you don't necessarily have to invent from scratch.

Designers know they must think laterally and enroll their constituency, searching far and wide for ideas and influences, trying to connect ideas that might not seem to go together.

They Commit: It's one thing to dream up original ideas, however designers quickly take original ideas beyond imagination by giving them form. Whether it's a napkin sketch, a prototype carved from foam rubber, or a digital mock-up, the quick-and-dirty models that designers constantly create are a critical component of innovation because when you give form to an idea, you begin to make it real.

It's also true though - when you commit to an idea early, putting it out there while it's still young and imperfect, you increase the possibility of its short-term failure. But designers are much more comfortable with this risk than most of us. Designers know innovation often involves an iterative process with setbacks along the way.

They know small failures are actually useful because they show what works and what needs fixing.

The ability to "**fail forward**" is a valuable quality in times of dynamic change.

So, based on these notions, let's consider the possibilities for RAC's website and TCA, Radio Amateurs of Canada's bi-monthly magazine.

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0

Previous parts of this document and past presentations have highlighted the need for RAC to restore its relationship with its constituencies in such a way that new conversations for possibilities, opportunities and action emerge. Specifically, leadership designs and ***enrolls** its entire constituency into RAC's new beginning and its new organizational culture, committing to complete integration, collaboration and co-operation, effectively creating a forward thinking network of conversations.

** enrollment is defined as generating a possibility in another person's listening, such that the other person, group, team, or organization takes action consistent with that possibility*

So how could this work?

The RAC website: It's cumbersome to navigate, daunting to anyone visiting for the first time, and a real challenge to organize and maintain. Overhauling it - and it does need an overhaul, right? - will be a gargantuan task, likely too large for any one person. The mind almost overloads with the nature and complexity of the task.

But if you approach the problem with an "**enroll our constituency**" mindset, new possibilities emerge. What if the RAC website became many websites - a sort of "sum of all Canadian Amateur Radio interests" type of website? What if the website had a national section plus sections for each province and territory, all with a common look and feel? What if it was organized differently with sections focused specifically on the diversity of our avocation, for example - digital modes, DXing, contesting, net activities, UHF/VHF, IRLP/EchoLink, repeaters, moon bounce, antenna designs, help for new amateurs (an Elmer section), regulations, international affairs, etc.?

There could be space for clubs - space completely under the club's control and responsibility.

The RAC website could be a decentralized model rather than a centralized one. Each director could be accountable for content creation and maintenance for their particular geography which would be tailored to regional needs, characteristics and activities.

Club websites could be hosted on the RAC site, and the RAC site could be wide open to all amateurs, members and non-members alike.

Think of the possibilities.

What a powerful a message to our constituency! Wouldn't this say - RAC wants to include and enroll members and future members?

And the thinking could be extended to creating a new digital version of TCA - an online delivered magazine - freely available to all. Like the website itself, RAC directors and executive could be responsible for encouraging and generating newsworthy content.

And think about advertisers. Knowing our website included our entire constituency, and digital TCA was freely distributed and widely read, advertiser support could be overwhelming.

And of course there would be a TCA Editor.

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0



Clearly this thinking is a bit off the wall, but with a design thinking mindset, it could all become feasible. BTW, with Joomla website software, the de-centralized website concept is very much possible and entirely feasible.

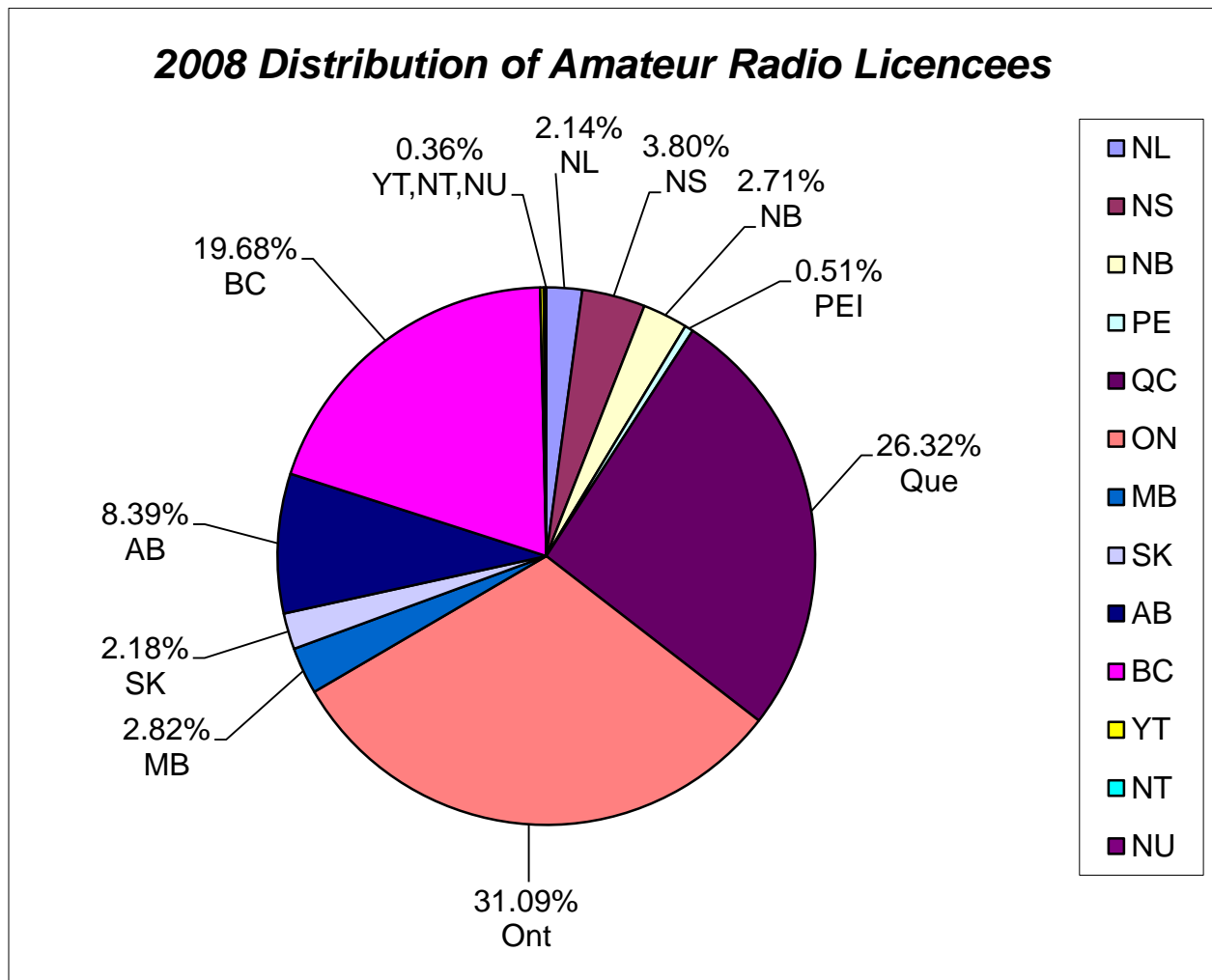
Part 14 - Reaching Out

Greetings again, RAC executive, board and special advisors,

Numbers sometimes don't provide a clear picture - but if the data can be converted into an image - in this case a pie chart - a more cogent picture emerges.

Skeptics and naysayers may be quick to dispute the chart, pointing out it is based on out-dated, inaccurate or misleading information (or all three). And yes - that's probably true - the data is likely not 100% correct. But consider the big picture. Take the 50,000' view.

What message does this information convey?



Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0

Obvious, isn't it?

The 2008 license data shows **57.4%** of all amateur radio licenses are in Quebec and Ontario. **77%** of the licenses are spread across three provinces - QC, ON and BC. And with the addition of Alberta, that percentage goes up to over **85%**.

The point?

But first a disclaimer: While the data is obviously out of date and may no longer be totally accurate and perhaps even misleading, because the list had apparently not been maintained - "...people who passed away may still have been included...", it nonetheless is likely representative of the big picture.

BTW, whether a RAC member or prospective member is in Trinity Bay, NL, Smithers, BC, Seabright, NS, Shawinigan, QC, Saskatoon SK, or the GTA, ON, RAC shows no favourites. Radio Amateurs of Canada is a national organization and by definition no part of "RAC-land" should trump any other.

Seriously though, does the pie-chart provoke any thoughts, comments or questions?



Is the current RAC membership - or RAC director distribution - anywhere similar to the pie-chart of amateur radio license distribution? Are the data divergent? Where? Why? Any plans to address the disparities? What specific kinds of plans or programs?

Note: approximately one quarter of all Canadian amateur licenses are in Quebec. RAQI (Radio Amateurs du Quebec) currently has about 3500 members out of the estimated 12,000 Quebec license holders - a penetration rate of just shy of 30%. By comparison, RAC's entire Canadian membership tallies less than 4800 members in all of Canada. This represents a far lower penetration than RAQI's.

Having said that, would not an analysis of what RAQI is doing be useful, if only to discover why, where and how they are successful? What three or four strategies does RAQI employ to drive membership and promote the RAQI brand? And what are RAQI doing specifically as it relates to club relationships?

And what about other successful amateur radio clubs and organizations? What **value propositions** have **they** developed to secure and maintain their brand? How do **they** conduct business? What strategies do **they** use? Why not enroll the key leaders of all successful clubs and organizations into RAC's new being?



Regardless of language, culture, altitude or latitude, our world is an increasingly small, interconnected and universal place. There are lessons to learn from others - no one has a monopoly on knowledge, passion or success.

So, why not reach out? Why not create a network of key leaders of clubs and other amateur radio organizations across Canada (RAC's constituency) - and enroll these folks in the creation of RAC's strategic future - RAC's new being. Why wait?

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0

Some members of the RAC board and executive may be fearful of or reluctant to embrace the process of creating RAC's strategic future. Some may be too busy, or not really aligned, committed or serious about, or not able to do what is required. If this is the case - and in the words of that old saying - "lead, follow or get out of the way" - don't block the process. **Let those who do "get it" do what needs to be done.**

Not everyone is blessed with natural leadership ability or even the desire to lead. Some may be much better administrators, managers, researchers, technocrats, or specialists. Not everyone has what it takes to lead.

But once in a leadership role, leaders must lead. They must inspire. Leadership must display courage, will and above all - passion with a sense of urgency - pointing the way, establishing bold, audacious, and even impossible goals. And leadership needs to spread the "dream process" about what Radio Amateurs of Canada can be - rather than discuss, analyze, fret and commiserate the past.



The leadership team needs to pull out all the stops. Superior leaders know they can't do it alone. They know they need to enroll the entire constituency - enrollment being defined as generating a possibility in another person's listening, such that the other person, group, team, or organization takes action consistent with that possibility. Leadership needs to create informal alliances and encourage local organizations to hold **RAC "dream events"** similar to what the Halifax Amateur Radio Club in Nova Scotia is holding on September 15th.

Is the dream process uncomfortable? Is it touchy-feely? Is it a bit scary? Of course it is. But armed with a design thinking mindset and a creating your strategic future process as described and defined in this and previous material, it can all become quite feasible.

The ball is in our court. Waldo is watching.

Part 15 - Don't Ignore Waldo

To: RAC President Geoff Bawden, VE4BAW,

Including this one, over the past month or so you, the board and executive of RAC will have received 15 parts of RAC's Transformation plus an introductory piece entitled "Breaking Down Walls of Indifference". This material supports the cultural transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada and was designed to help achieve a successful transition - things you need to know, consider and do as you follow the process as defined.

You and I discussed this change process in early July, and you heard me describe it again on the RAC board teleconference on 22 July. You, the board and executive also received other materials including a PowerPoint presentation made to the 2008 RAC Board Meeting in Cornwall, pre-board meeting correspondence, and finally survey results of a questionnaire administered to the board and executive in June of that same year. Again, all of it relates to the process - **Creating RAC's Strategic Future.**

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0

Largely, it's common sense. Mostly, it's about a different way of thinking - one which starts in the future - with RAC's new being. And as stated many times, the process requires the total commitment and involvement of the entire board and executive. It requires the existence of a **functional team**, as well as the enrollment of RAC's entire constituency. Bold, audacious leadership is absolutely essential, as is the ability and courage to dream of what RAC could be.

During the last month, feedback from the RAC leadership team has been next to nil, and so I'm really not sure where the board and executive stand regarding the process. Is the material being read, I wonder. If so, does it make sense to you all - does it resonate within? Or are the executive and board in denial respecting the need for change?

And what about the responsibility to Waldo?

With full recognition I am neither a member of the board nor on the executive of Radio Amateurs of Canada, I am now dropping back. It was never my intention to be the sharp edge of the sword here - or to have a high profile - rather it was simply to advance a process for change.

Clearly, as leader of Radio Amateurs of Canada, this is your show, not mine. You need to take control.

Best of luck at your October meeting in Ottawa.

Respectfully,

John - VE1OZ / HK3OZ

Part 16 - Is RAC Culture too Nice?

To: RAC Executive, Board and Special Advisors,

Yes, me again...back for one final thought.

Do you avoid conflict? If you do, you're not alone. Conflict avoidance is one of the most common characteristics of corporate cultures. At the same time it's one of the most pernicious and dangerous sources of unintentional complexity in organizational life. (see part 3 of this document - Dysfunction #2 Fear of Conflict).

The tendency to avoid conflict is entirely human. Most people want to be liked and unconsciously fear arguments, disagreements, or negative messages which will create tension with others with whom they interact. Compounded with the pressure to respect authority and the organizational stress on teamwork, this creates a great deal of anxiety around stirring up trouble.

It's no wonder then so many of us avoid conflict. Unfortunately this avoidance creates disconnects and lower standards of performance - all of which complicate organizational life.

Creating RAC's Strategic Future

The Transformation of Radio Amateurs of Canada - ver. 2.0

There is no easy formula for learning how to engage more effectively in constructive conflict. But there are some things that may help move in that direction:

Reflect: Look at yourself in the mirror and give yourself an honest appraisal of your readiness to challenge, give bad news, or otherwise create a degree of conflict. Can you think of situations where you should have spoken up but didn't, or where you tempered your words too much? Are there any particular types of conflict you avoid more than others, such as pushing back on authority?

Get feedback: Talk to friends, family, or colleagues. What's their perception of your willingness to engage in conflict, and your ability to do it constructively? Ask them about specific situations or patterns that they might see but are not obvious to you.

Correct the problem: Do some experimenting, particularly in the areas that are difficult for you. Try pushing back on requests that doesn't make sense. Speak up in a meeting when you don't agree. Give someone feedback that you've been withholding. No matter what you do, start the conversation by saying you are trying to get better at dealing with conflict, and you hope this comes across constructively.

In doing so, you'll position yourself as speaking honestly, trying to learn, not just picking a fight, hopefully reducing anxiety and making conflict more constructive.

Other Related Documents:

2008 PowerPoint Presentation - www.hk3oz.com/RACStrategicFuture.ppt

Creating Better Organizations

- Teamwork - www.hk3oz.com/teamwork.htm
- Strategic Future - www.hk3oz.com/strategicfuture.htm
- For Leaders - www.hk3oz.com/forleaders.htm
- Tools - www.hk3oz.com/tools.htm