

The Next Level Leading Beyond the Status Quo

By David Cottrell & Alice Adams

1. Set Your Goal

- a. Getting to the next level is about balance – sharpening obvious skills, honing secondary skills, and maintaining balance between people skills and professional skills.
- b. Taking steps toward the Next Level can be the most painful and also the most powerful aspect of any change.
- c. If you want a place in the sun, expect some blisters.
- d. Moving to the Next Level includes the possibility of having to give up something...and that “something” differs with every goal.

2. Evaluate the Situation

- a. Identify opponents preventing you from reaching the Next Level...and develop remedies.
- b. Identify goals and strategize focus. Those team members satisfied with status quo should be (a) brought up to speed or (b) encouraged to transfer.
- c. Teach the business of the business by exploiting operational business intelligence and achieving teams of the right people with the right information.
- d. Multiply the power of one by the number of strong members on your team.

3. Equip Yourself

- a. Equipping for the Next Level means being able to recover from unexpected adversity.
- b. Create a contingency plan on how you will react to an unexpected crisis.
- c. Understanding the “business of your business” creates ownership for your team members.
- d. Collaborations are important for accomplishing goals and celebrating the achievement.

4. Endure While Improving

- a. For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction, so if your organization aims forward, expect backward motions from time to time.
- b. It's productive to stop and evaluate what's working and what's not...even when things are going well.
- c. Change is painful and requires discipline and commitment – but in the long run, improvement cannot be made without change.
- d. Eliminate stress-producing practices, which are activities that don't encourage productivity.

5. Reevaluate Performance

- a. Visualize the big picture and determine the real truths.
- b. Embrace and address the truths...not what you want to believe, but what is...and reevaluate regularly.
- c. Make adjustments and think outside the box to move ahead.
- d. Once you've resumed your forward progress, think about your "next big thing."

6. Evaluate Comfort Zones

- a. Push yourself out of your comfort zone and into greater challenges. When an organization's strategy becomes predictable, they are a sitting target for their competitors.
- b. To maintain and grow, the organization is to stay aligned with what customers and/or stakeholders see as value.
- c. Risk is a part of the big picture. To safely take risks is having people who know nothing about business but are experts in increasing revenue, motivating young talent, and developing new customers on our team.
- d. Staying in your own lane means focusing on the basics responsible for your success, but don't hang in your comfort zone too long.

7. Stick To Your Strategy

- a. Don't be an obstacle to anyone or any effort to reach the Next Level. An effective leader doesn't impede his or her followers.
- b. Don't move your team along too quickly, but also don't move so slowly that the team burns out. Provide challenges when the team is ready to reach the Next Level, but don't overwhelm them with impossible tasks.
- c. You can't wait for opportunities. You have to have a strategy, so when opportunities arise, you'll have a sharp axe and enough energy to reach the finish line.
- d. Reaching the Next Level doesn't just happen. It takes vision, discipline, and action.

8. Set Your New Goal!