



Guttman Insights

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Marc Speichert is Chief Digital Officer, Consumer Healthcare, GSK, a science-led, global healthcare company with a mission to help people do more, feel better, and live longer. GSK is the world's sixth largest pharmaceutical company. GSK Consumer Healthcare develops and markets some of the world's most iconic brands and products in the wellness, oral health, skin health, and nutrition categories.

What's the effect of digital technology on how work gets done?

When I first started working as a brand manager, I used a Macintosh Computer, created slides on acetate for presentations, and sent messages by fax. The biggest change is in connectivity, which has literally erased physical boundaries. One of the blessings of technology is the dramatic increase in data, which has its downside in information overload.

What's the biggest impact of digital technology at GSK?

Connecting people within our complex, global organization, where people are dispersed and fragmented, and working in many different geographies, is a tough challenge. Technology has created a link that helps bring us together. The people on my team are dispersed all over the world. We're rarely in the same room together. Technology is a connecting thread that helps drive team cohesion.

In this issue, Marc Speichert, Chief Digital Officer, GSK Consumer Healthcare, reveals what he and his colleagues are doing to bridge the digital technology-high performance divide. Howard Guttman deconstructs the murky empowerment issue and provides leaders with tips on where to look for potential resistance before launching a change initiative.

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Leader's Corner: High Tech Meets High Performance at GSK

In what ways has the use of data-optimization techniques and algorithms affected decision making at GSK?

Take marketing as an example. We've become much smarter in how we make media purchases. We're using sophisticated marketing technology that gives us the ability to buy media in a much more scientific and data-driven way. Online data optimization has given us deep insight into consumer needs and buyer behavior. This has given us greater transparency, effectiveness, and efficiencies!

What about the use of digital technology in patient care?

I recently attended a meeting in San Francisco in which one of the presenters used computer input to examine every data point in his body. He was able to explain to his healthcare provider precisely what was happening internally and what treatments would be most effective. Going forward, consumers will be much better equipped to understand their bodies and manage their health, while doctors will become more like consultants to their patients, providing them with guidance. Digital technology has also enabled us to create virtual reality as a new treatment modality for patients. For example, in a study of burn victims, the use of immersive virtual reality reduced the pain associated with severe burns. These victims were better able to tolerate pain than with the use of traditional opioids alone. "Digiceuticals" are the wave of the future.

Data security has becoming a looming issue for corporations as well as government. What's an example of what GSK has done to protect its data?

I mentioned earlier the insights that we've gained into consumer behavior. It's very sensitive information. We've negotiated a deal with Google that gives us ownership of our own "tech stack," which is a set of software that provides the infrastructure for a computer. Instead of going through some intermediary agency, we own the technology and have direct access to Google, which gives us control of how we capture and deploy data and greater data protection. We're the only company in the consumer healthcare space that has such an arrangement with Google.

You attended GDS team alignments as both a participant and team leader, correct?

I've been a participant in the alignment of GSK's Strategic Leadership Team, as well as in that of a Category Leadership Team. And I have been through the alignment process as the leader of my own team.

What were the differences, if any, going through the team alignment as a leader versus as a participant?

As the leader, I was focused on my team and not just myself. I asked: "How can I help team members show up as high-performance players?" "How can we share the burden of driving the team forward: not just as a collection of different functions, but united to support the enterprise?" As a participant, I found myself being more introspective, looking inwardly and asking myself, "How can I be more of an enterprise leader and contribute more not just to my function, but to the team and organization?"

Did your perspective of the team leader change by being a participant in a team alignment?

My introduction to GSK—it was my first week on the job—was attending an alignment session of a leadership group of which I am a member. The session was super helpful in humanizing the leader in terms of who he was as a person, his vulnerabilities, and how he managed his team. It helped forge a personal connection with the leader. During the session, there was clear, direct, and candid discussion about the frustrations and issues facing the team members and what the expectations were for resolving them. It was very revealing. I came away with a very clear understanding of the leader's expectations in closing the gaps and of what was expected in terms of my contribution to the team.

And what about your colleagues on the team?

I left the session energized. I felt like I had gotten to know team members in a kind of speed-dating way! People were opening up with one another, sharing feedback about what was going well, and what they would be expected to do differently. For example, one team member was given feedback about needing to move away from a business-as-usual, reinvent-the-wheel mind-set. It was good for me to hear that, and I immediately knew that I would have to work doubly hard on a change and transformation agenda. It was a good way for me to get started.

What were some of the issues facing you and your leadership team that prompted you to move toward the horizontal, high-performance (HPT) model?

During my first year, I changed virtually every member of my leadership team. It was time to define the rules of the game with the new team, how we were going to come together as a team, what the expectations were, how we could move from a perspective emphasizing functional success—in analytics, media, e-commerce, and content and digital marketing, for example—to one that brings all the pieces together to work cross-functionally for team success.

Your team has only been through the initial team alignment, but have you noticed any change in its behavior?

There's much more enterprise-level thinking. For example, we had a talent gap and one of my lead team gave up a superstar player within his function to fill the gap for the broader benefit of the team and enterprise. Other members of the team are stepping up to assume greater leadership responsibility. If you came into our team meeting, you probably would mistake several of them for the actual team leader! We're much better at putting hard issues on the table and vocalizing the issues that the team is facing. But in terms of decision-making speed, we're still a bit clunky.

And what about your behavior as a leader?

When I started, I tended to be very directive. I wanted early wins. I now feel much more comfortable sitting back and letting team members blossom. I feel that I have greater credibility in the organization and that my confidence level has increased. One piece of feedback I received from my GDS coach was not to lose sight of my Emotional IQ—and of people—as I focused on driving change quickly. I've learned to set priorities and balance making things happen with bringing people along.

What's the connection, if any, between the horizontal high-performance orientation and technology?

The horizontal, high-performance way of working and technology are great enablers of each another. Use technology properly and think horizontally, and you drive greater transparency, connectivity and decision-making speed. Combining both enables you to connect with the right people at the right time.

Your advice to other chief digital officers contemplating adopting the horizontal, high-performance approach?

Do it sooner rather than later! The high-performance, horizontal approach creates a deep understanding of who you are as a leader and how best to rally the troops around you. It helps create a candid and open dialogue about expectations and what success looks like. In a fast-moving world, you need to be agile. How you flex and optimize are essential, which is what the high-performance approach is all about. It gives you the right toolkit to stay ahead. 🌱



Leaders, Followers, “Follower-Leaders,” and Engagement

by Howard M. Guttman

We all know that leadership and followership are different sides of the same coin. It's tough to lead an army of disengaged, I-could-care-less troops. And from a follower's perspective, there's always a what's-in-it-for-me subtext to the relationship with leaders, as any deposed dictator—or CEO, if he or she is forthright—will tell you.

Leaders and followers come in many shapes and forms. In the last half of the twentieth century, we were smitten by the inspirational CEO: everyone from Sam Walton to Jack Welch. These days, there is a strong preference for the blend-in CEO. This is the brand of leader celebrated by Jim Collins in his book, *Good to Great*. Sure, the blend-in leader can get the job done, but he or she tends to blend into the organizational wallpaper rather than command center stage.

There have been many attempts to slice and dice followers. Remember David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*, a study of conformity in which the author advanced the concept of “inner-directed” and “other-directed” personalities? Today, much of the focus of management thinkers is put on the dynamics being played out between Baby Boomers (born 1945-1964); Gen X (1965-1978); and Millennials, aka Generation Y (1979-2000).

Over the last several years, there has been a growing interest in the concept of engagement as key to leader-follower effectiveness. It is a concept made popular by the Gallup organization, which has demonstrated through its work in employee surveys that greater levels of employee engagement lead to greater employee effectiveness and results. According to a recent Gallup statistic, companies with highly engaged workforces outperform their peers by 147% in earnings per share.

To me, engagement is the measure of the willingness and ability of followers to further the organizational strategy and goals set by their leaders. In a high-performance environment, engagement acquires get-the-job-done muscle. It turns followers into “follower-leaders,” the kind of team members that Marc Speichert mentions in this issue, each of whom, if you entered a team meeting, could be mistaken for the team leader. Now that's performance muscle!

Engagement, defined as both willingness and ability, entails three key elements:

In a high-performance environment, engagement acquires get-the-job-done muscle.

- First, engagement implies willingness and enthusiasm for getting the job done. In other words, the higher the level of engagement, the more followers genuinely want to succeed. But engagement goes beyond emotional investment and enthusiasm. The last thing leaders need is to have smiley employees working diligently in the wrong direction or at odds with the organizational culture.
- So, the second element implied by engagement is having followers in sync with the overall business strategy and the operational goals that flow from it. This includes alignment with the organizational culture. For example, if the organization is a high-performing one, engagement would involve commitment to working in a horizontal environment, to moving from individual accountability to peer-to-peer and even peer-to-leader accountability, to accepting and giving honest feedback, to continually ratcheting up levels of performance.

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- The third element is that engagement implies that employees have been provided with the right skills to do the job. Years ago, I remember watching a sitcom where the two leading characters worked for a door-to-door sales organization. Each day, the sales team assembled bright and early, chanted the company fight song, and marched off enthusiastically, products in tow, to conquer customers. At 5:00 p.m., the two hapless sales reps returned sullen and dejected. They hadn't sold a dime's worth of goods. All the cheerleading by the leader and the high engagement of the two employees didn't mean much without the skill to close a deal.

Employee engagement, properly understood, can be a rich and powerful measure of organizational effectiveness. And it is a concept that can provide great support for leaders intent on building a high-performance organization of “engaged,” like-minded follower-leaders. ●

If I Were You:

Tips for High-Performance Leaders

by Howard M. Guttman

A company decided to restructure by going from a geographic to a business-segment focus. The change didn't sit well with a number of turf-minded executives who resisted the change, fearing a loss of power and decision-making clout. The foot-dragging was a distraction for members of the senior leadership team, who became trapped in an endless cycle of debate and second-guessing about the change. This created dissatisfaction among the next tier down, slowing the change and proving deadly for quarterly bottom-line results.

Change resistance can take a number of forms, ranging from passive-aggressive behavior—paper compliance but little more—enrolling the level below to not engage, constantly asking “gotcha” questions, stalling, and the like. These behaviors signify a lack of buy-in and fief protectionism rather than being at stake for the success of the enterprise.

The problem is not with debating change. Disagreement openly expressed is a virtue. But once the decision is made to “go there,” the time for debate and negotiation is over.

The key question is: Are you at stake for the team and enterprise or for your own point of view? Failure to get on board becomes dysfunctional, just as the company in the example above discovered. “Hands from the grave” is the most common and insidious form of change resistance.

If you are about to launch a change, watch out for these four common areas of potential resistance seen among your team:

Parochial self-interest: I don't like the way change might affect me and my area.

Low tolerance for change: I am comfortable with the status quo and would rather not upset it.

Misunderstanding and/or lack of trust: I don't get the rationale for change; I am suspicious of the motive and/or consequences.

Differing assessments: I have a different point of view regarding the need for or the direction of the change.

Diagnosing early on the causes of change resistance is step one in moving ahead, especially when the aim is to fast-track the change and implement quickly. Ask: Which of the four areas need to be addressed? How quickly does the change have to be implemented? And, once you make the assessment, what's the best strategy to overcome the resistance? ●