



## Persistent Performance+

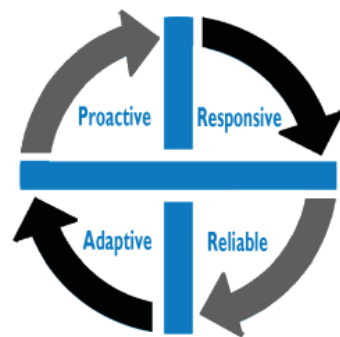
### Responsive

Thought Leadership Report

#### Persistent Performance+

In our previous email blast we introduced MainStream's model for generating increased performance now and over time, Persistent Performance Plus. In that issue we highlighted the four key attributes.

- **Responsive** – Ensure calls for improvement are met with an appropriate sense of urgency, bias for action, and follow through to the implementation and results
- **Reliable** – Establish roles and responsibilities and develop sufficient capability to respond to the call for action and manage the change to a beneficial result



- **Adaptive** – Pursue breakthrough where and as required without reservation, augment internal subject matter expertise with relevant external competencies and perspectives
- **Proactive** – Build a proactive environment around the improvement whose members are ready, willing and able to uphold the implementation and continue to pursue perfection

#### A Rapid and Effective Response

Today, we take a more probing look at what it means to be Responsive. Regardless of the nature of the call for action, the speed with which you respond can be the difference between succeeding and failing to reach an implemented and sustained solution. The old adage, to “strike while the iron is hot” couldn’t be more relevant than it is when you find yourselves moving from the point of realizing a change is needed, to the point of taking action to pursue that need. There is a sense of urgency that accompanies the realization of any improvement need. That urgency will provide a significant amount of fuel for the change engine. The longer it takes to respond, however, the more of that fuel will be evaporated by the status quo, day to day challenges and the next pressing issue. The key for leaders and decision makers is to facilitate a quick advance from the point of realizing the need to the point of action.

But being quick isn’t all there is to it. Here are some keys to remember that will help make your response effective. These items should be spelled out clearly in an improvement initiative charter before it is turned over to the project team for action.

**Clearly Articulate “Why”** – In addition to the problem or opportunity statement, provide a brief high level narrative about what makes the need so important and the consequences accompanying success or failure. Recent studies show this message is most effective when it has

a primarily positive tone balanced with an appropriate amount of any harsh realities that surround the circumstance. Steer clear of assigning cause or identifying solutions in the problem statement or narrative as this will subvert the work of the team and taint the results.

**Be Realistic, and Commit** – All too often the expectations or goals of an improvement effort require it to be too comprehensive; addressing all known or perceived shortcomings or causes. The danger of expecting too much, too soon, is the hesitation it causes in those who have been charged to lead and support the effort. Replace unrealistically high expectations with those that are reasonable yet represent a marked improvement, and document your commitment to act on the proposals of the team. When project teams know their solutions are going to be implemented they will self-impose expectations, and make and deliver great solutions.

**Select a Good Project Leader** – The Project Leader will have responsibility to deliver on the need. This person should have a reputation as a respected and trusted agent and should be a good collaborator. Look for someone who is known to finish what they start and is not interested in receiving the recognition for the team’s efforts. You will be amazed at how much you can accomplish if you don’t care who gets the credit. Steer clear of people who are known for their personal agendas, are not good team players or who have trouble completing special assignments.

**Name Oversight (i.e. Support) Resources** – To support the Project Leader, identify a Champion and at least one Key Stakeholder who are directly vested in the outcome of the project. They should be readily available to the Project Leader to help with resources, communication and project advocacy. Steer clear of those who do not have sufficient authority, have little or nothing to do with the area(s) affected and anyone who is known to be overly protective of their own area of responsibility.

In concert with your normal chartering criteria these relatively simple pointers will help get projects off to an effective start quickly, with a firm foundation and a high potential to succeed.

#### Learn More

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