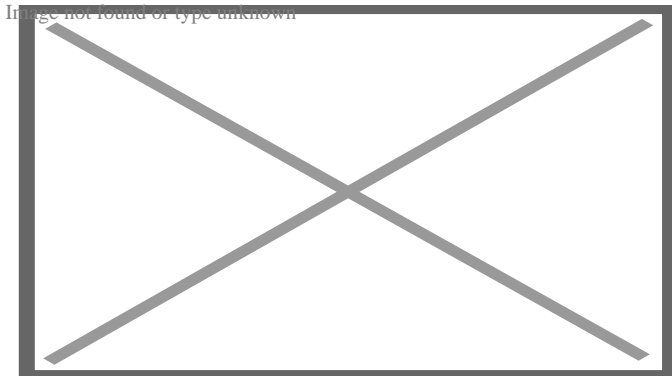


Evolving into an “Outcome Guide”

Description

When Consulting Just Doesn't Fit the Narrative of Our Results First Work



As a Results First leader, I am different than an every day consultant. I chose the term “Outcome Guide” for six specific reasons:

1. Guiding is in a result context. You don't need a guide to wonder through a field or a forest—whether literal or figurative. You need a guide to reach a destination—whether it is mountain top, a creel full of fresh trout, or a specific accomplishment for an organization.

2. Success is clear and agreed upon in advance. You either reach your summit or you do not. The point is not to write a plan but to use a plan to get to a stated place of achievement. So many consultants are paid by the hour or the output. I am paid when you arrive where you wanted to go. And I offer a warranty.
3. Guides are expected to know the route and share that knowledge. They do not ask their clients to discover their own paths. They are a resource-full partner, not simply a facilitator for reformulating what group members already know.
4. Guides help with provisions. I find the analogies to organizational life playful and helpful. Many organizations, for example, set forth on program voyages loaded with murky baggage of evaluation and outcome terminology. They have packed too much to sustain the pace.
5. Guides are expected to know the terrain. Think, for example, of swamps as places that can mire you down and cause great loss in momentum. Most organizations can anticipate these after the blush of project launch is over. Knowing about when swamps (as well as mountains and other obstacles) will be encountered gives a huge leg up on how to avoid or get through them.
6. Guides must know the starting point. Whether on a map or a Garmin, you need to know present location as well as destination. Starting half way up the mountain is very different than starting at the bottom. Further, most groups find it difficult to confront unpleasant discrepancy between aspiration and current reality. Jim Collins is among those that feels that confronting reality clearly is essential for greatness.

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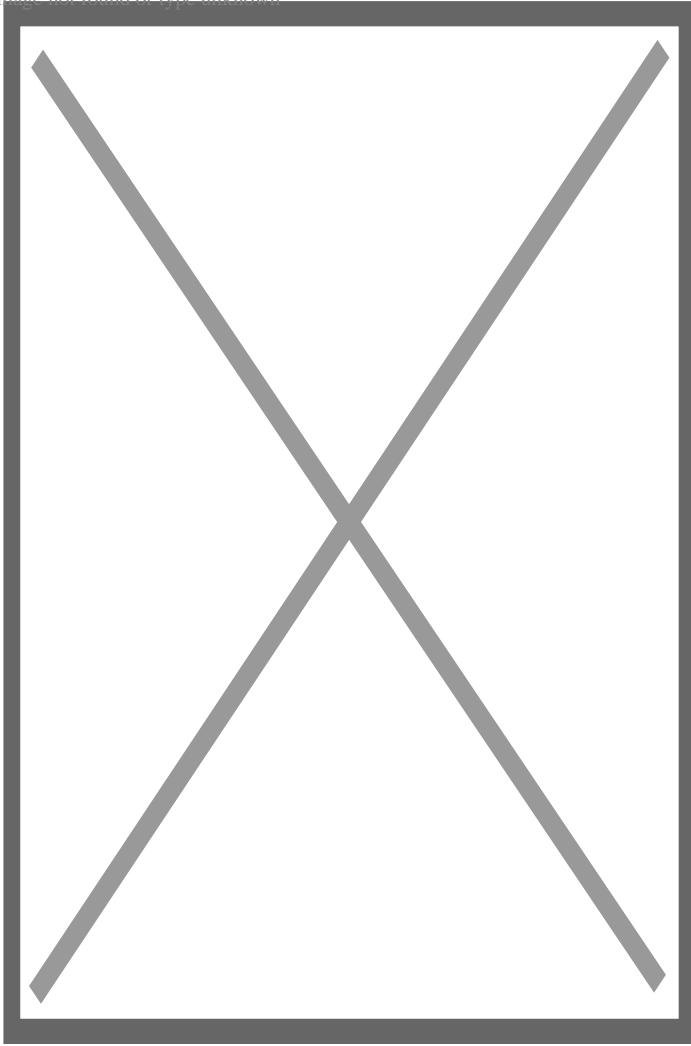


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I developed many of my thoughts and tools while President of The Rensselaerville Institute (TRI) , “the think tank with muddy boots.” I recommend the Institute for project-scale engagements. Its Outcome Group is especially good at insuring that an outcome framework gets to your “shop floor” in a way that builds energy and intense focus on achievement. I especially like it that TRI is the first to take its own advice. Its signature program, School Turnaround puts a set of outcome tools to use to reverse failure in public schools in short order.

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January 2020