

# Lessons for Turning Around Schools from the Corporate and Non-Profit Sectors

Providence

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# 1. Focus on Leadership

- Leadership is important in general
- Leadership as key in troubled times
- Industry expertise desired

## 2. Act Quickly

- Create urgency for action
- Overcome non-helpful responses

### 3. Diagnose Before Selecting Recovery Pathways

- Don't go after programs to start
- Understand the nature and extent of failure

- On a grand scale, diagnosis of a turnaround organization's condition can provide the appropriate foundation required to support recovery. Diagnostic work can help break the spiral of failure described by Stewart (1984) in which troubled organizations such as schools simply do more of the same or pursue random "silver bullet" solutions.

Very often these companies continue to follow the same practices that caused the original failures. They leap without looking onto one panacean bandwagon after another, with no comprehensive evaluations of their real weaknesses. As these firms devote the majority of their time and effort to each newfound cure-all, less and less time becomes available to correct their basic weakness(es). Thus further deterioration occurs. (p. 110)

- Diagnoses can
  - Galvanize support for action
  - Create a sense of urgency
  - Build ownership
  - Provide basis for short-term and long-range plans

## 4. Emphasize Efficiency First, Rather than Programs

- Focus on retrenchment
- Target resources

# 5. Centralize Options

- Pull power and resources to the center

## 6. Recognize the Limitations of Structural Moves

- Structural changes do not predict performance
- Focus on DNA of why reforms work

# 7. Focus on Core Lines of Work

- Protect the viable core
- Shrink the product line
- Attend to quick impacts

# 8. Focus on the Customer

- Decline linked to disconnect from customer
- Build outside-in, not inside-out

# 9. Create Hope Through Vision

- Give people something to believe in
- Ideas
- Objectives