

## A Compelling Case for Strategy

### Facing the Hard Facts of Reality in Business Today

#### **How Things Are**

A screaming comes across the sky – a clarion call for action. We are living in a recession that is the most devastating and longest-lasting since the great depression of the 1930's. This has resulted in an unemployment rate that surpasses 17% and continues to climb. Many of those lost jobs will never return. We have a significant number of people who have been unemployed for more than a year, which impacts their employability. Availability of business loans is at best tenuous. The cost of business keeps rising. Our economy is fragile and susceptible to the slightest impact, both nationally and internationally. In short, there is critical uncertainty in our lives and in the marketplace.

#### **Stalemate Thinking**

Many live in hope that someday things will return to how they used to be. However, we must face some undeniable facts. We don't know how long this situation will last and ultimately turn out, but for sure it's not going to be as it once was. Our knowledge and past experience will be compromised by circumstances, time, and competition. Past operational standards are being rapidly redesigned and replaced. Today's technology moves with the speed of light as new products are launched and their replacements are in production. The challenge of competition in today's market is more intense than ever, impacting the way we do business across the board.

#### **Action Needed**

While recent past recoveries were generated by bubbles, i.e. dot-com and real estate, this recovery will require innovation. History has proven that often when companies get into trouble it is not because of their weaknesses but rather because of their strengths. This occurs because they tend to exaggerate the expertise that brought them success. What is needed now is fresh thinking and inventive actions that build a new foundation and position our organizations for future productivity and viability. The clarion call is for strategy and implementation – our surest and most productive way to assure a viable future for our businesses, ourselves, and the country.