



Linea Insights

To Fail or Not to Fail

That is the Question

From an early age we are taught to value success, the focus clearly being on achievement rather than failure. This philosophy is initially instilled in us from our parents and continues to become more prevalent as we advance through our college years and into our business lives. As we mature the consequences of failure increase exponentially. Ultimately we are rewarded for success and reprimanded for failure.

How can one succeed without first failing? Anyone who has taught a young child to ride a bicycle will appreciate that it can be a slow process and despite the best precautions the child will inevitably fall off a few times before mastering the art of riding. Numerous business writers have celebrated the success of entrepreneurs and inventors whose actions and ingenuity have pushed the boundaries and challenged the norm, significantly improving peoples' lives. It is no surprise then that society often fails to mention the pathway to success, but look beneath the surface of many great business successes, and you are likely to find a trail of failures that preceded them:

Thomas Edison performed 9,000 experiments before developing a successful version of the light bulb. He stated "I have not failed. I have merely found 9,000 ways that won't work".

Henry Ford only succeeded in producing motor cars on his third attempt.

National cultures can also have an impact upon success. In Germany, bankruptcy can end a business career, whereas in Silicon Valley it is often seen as an inevitability of pushing the boundaries and a fantastic grounding for creativity.



Current market conditions are tougher than ever and it is imperative that organisations succeed in everything that they do in order to meet stakeholders' varying expectations. Some organisations such as Honda are encouraging failure in the pursuit of excellence; however this can be a costly strategy and is certainly not something that is suitable for all organisations. So how does an organisation push the boundaries of success without incurring the costs of failure?

One of the easiest and most overlooked options is to learn from other people's mistakes and experiences.

Linea has supported many organisations across a diverse range of market sectors to improve creativity and help them to succeed through knowledge transfer and the development of a learning, development and forward thinking culture. We can share our experiences to help clients avoid common mistakes and adopt best practice.

If you would like to maximise your organisations chances of success without incurring the costs of failure, contact us today for a free no obligation conversation, to discuss your current challenges and the deployment of timely and cost effective improvement support.

About the Author



Ian Chambers

A Business Improvement specialist with over 20 years' experience devising and leading complex Operational and Financial Turnaround, Transformation and Continuous Improvement Programmes.

With a background in Change Management, Lean Transformation, Financial & Commercial Management, Supply Chain / Procurement Optimisation and Programme Delivery gained within leading UK and International Public and Private sector organisations.

Ian possess an extensive track record of devising, managing and implementing comprehensive, multi-million pound, cross organisational transformation and continuous improvement programmes for NHS, Public and Private organisations and is an expert in delivering sustainable operational improvement and financial balance in challenging situations.

He received national recognition for collaborative programme delivery in the Government Efficiency Awards, was shortlisted as finalist in two further National Awards for NHS Transformation and achieved runner-up in the IFT Public Sector Turnaround Programme of the Year.

Ian holds an Honours degree in Business Management, is a Fellow at the Institute for Consulting, Fellow at the Institute for Operations Management, Fellow at the Chartered Management Institute, Fellow at the Institute of Logistics and Transport, Member of the Asia Transformation & Turnaround Association. Member of the Institute for Turnaround and committee member for the IFT North of England.

He has held numerous board and senior advisory positions, is a certified Lean Practitioner, Master Coach and a member of government and corporate turnaround panels.

This document has been prepared by Linea. The contents of this document do not constitute any form of commitment or recommendation on part of Linea and speak as at the date of its preparation.

© 2022 Linea Group Limited. All rights reserved.

No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy or otherwise without the written permission of Linea Group.

Access to and use of this information is made under and shall be governed by the laws of England and the English courts shall have exclusive jurisdiction over any matter arising in connection with it.