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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lagging Businesses Can be Revived
But Not Lagging Leaders

In a monthly poll of its membership, the Society for Advancement of Consulting (SAC) reports that lagging businesses are subject to short-term, rapid revival—but only if the leadership is not lagging.

Gayle Lantz, president of Gayle Lantz, LLC in Birmingham, AL, reports that as a first step, leaders should reinvigorate the organizational vision. "Revisit or recreate the organization's vision. A compelling vision can be revitalizing. Avoid overworking the vision statement; you don't need a wordsmith. What's most important is that the vision resonates with employees in whatever form the organization has chosen to express it. Organizations can incorporate visual, metaphoric, or dramatic interpretations of their vision."

SAC CEO Alan Weiss, Ph.D. notes, "Many firms try to become better at what they are already doing, rather attempting new things. If it merely tries to improve, a lagging organization will simply lag a bit less. It should begin by really breaking the mold, reinventing itself, and starting a new life. Apple did it with the IPod. IBM did it with its consulting arm. But US Airways and GM don't seem able to understand that dynamic."

It's vitally important to focus on your best customers and prospects, rather than the entire range or the stragglers. SAC member Gary Patterson, President of Fiscal Doctor in Boston, reports he is no longer surprised by his clients' lack of interest in determining their top ten customers are by profitability, until after they engage him to help on another topic. Then someone usually asks, "If you can find out who our ten best customers are, please let me know, so I can visit the right people."

John Carroll, president of Unlimited Performance in Mt. Pleasant, SC, has identified three immediate actions to change the momentum of a lagging organization:

1. Stop digging. No one else put you in the hole. Own up to the fact that the shovel is firmly in your grip, and there's something you're doing or not doing to create your situation.

2. Chop one obvious piece of dead wood. In order of potential effectiveness, this can be the non-producing team member or the struggling profit center that has yet to live up to its name.

3. Get out to see your customers. You're more likely to learn by visiting customers than by studying spreadsheets.

Weiss concludes that based on SAC members' observations of thousands of businesses, the toughest parts of reversing the doldrums are admitting the problem and taking responsibility for fixing it. "We're obsessed with avoiding blame, rather than creating improvement," notes Weiss. "Organizations are not turned around from the bottom up, but from the top down, and that's why leaders are presumably paid top dollar. You don't need high-priced help to merely steer the old course."

SAC is an international association of consulting professionals who subscribe to an industry code of ethics and have provided evidence of significant consulting results among their clients. For more information, please go to http://www.consultingsociety.com, write to info@summitconsulting.com, or call 800/825-6153 (401/886-4097).