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STRAGILITY

Excelling At Strategic Changes

By Ellen R. Auster and Lisa Hillenbrand

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"In today's business world, if you're not leading change, you're not leading. *Stragility* expertly tackles the wicked challenge of how to orchestrate change in a way that leaves the organization and business results stronger."

--Chris Hood, President, Kellogg Europe

"*Stragility* is a treasure trove of practical tools for rapidly engaging and aligning your organization to execute your strategy."

-- Andrew Atkins, Chief Innovation Officer, Interaction Associates

"Auster and Hillenbrand understand how change works in the real world.

Every business leader should read this book..."

--R. Edward Freeman, University of Professor, Darden School of Business, University of Virginia

DRIVING PEOPLE-POWERED CHANGE

New Book Reveals How To Harness The Energy and Ideas of Your People To Create An Organization Capable of Continual Reinvention

"Change today is constant. But sadly, in most organizational changes, much more attention is paid to the plan, costs, and investments than to the people who have to make a change work," say Ellen Auster and Lisa Hillenbrand, world-class authorities on corporate transformation.

Based on their decades of combined experience, their new book, **STRAGILITY: Excelling At Strategic Changes**, details what businesses must do to harness the energy and ideas of their people to achieve the continual reinvention needed in today's fluid and turbulent marketplace.

Hillenbrand, who served as Global Marketing Director for Procter & Gamble, and Auster, who has more than two decades of experience as both an academic and a consultant, coined the word "stragility" to denote the set of skills necessary for successful change. "Stragility is our term for strategic, agile, people-powered change," they explain. "Unlike many approaches that

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focus on large-scale transformations and top management, stragility is aimed at any type of change, at any point in a change process, because it focuses on such key issues as sparking people's passion, overcoming politics, and preventing the change fatigue that can paralyze even the best people.”

In **STRAGILITY**, the authors help businesses identify where their change process has derailed, enabling them to break bad habits and develop new skills. For example, when there's political infighting and turf wars, it means that the inevitable politics of change have been ignored. Similarly, disengagement, blaming, and resentment can indicate that there has been a “tell and sell” approach, rather than one that fosters ownership and accountability.

The authors' strategy – based on their research as well as their practices in Fortune 500 companies, small businesses, and social sector organizations – is comprised of four stragility skills, each of which is linked to a key goal. The goals are:

Redefining Strategy to Win – “Strategy is not something we can develop once and forget,” say Auster and Hillenbrand. Many companies make the mistake of “locking and loading” on a strategy and failing to systematically reassess if they are on the right track. In **STRAGILITY**, the authors explore how to determine if course corrections are necessary. For example, they explain how, after multiple mergers, Macy's redefined its strategy to regain its connection with local markets and customers.

Building Support – Ignoring the politics around change won't make them go away, warn Auster and Hillenbrand. The authors address how to navigate politics and emotions to build support and input. For example, when a new president took over at KFC at a time when corporate/franchisee relations were at a record low, he succeeded by addressing the tensions and frustrations directly, rather than avoiding those political minefields.

Fostering Ownership and Accountability – Traditionally, companies “tell and sell” when it comes to change, but according to the authors of **STRAGILITY**, this fails to produce the necessary buy-in and engagement. They urge organizations to “go slow to go fast” – taking the time to build passion, engage with people, ask for ideas and input, and work through

their concerns. When Starbucks was struggling in 2007 and 2008, the CEO invested in a galvanizing event for 10,000 employees, asking for their help in re-creating the company's vision and then translating that vision into changes every employee could relate to.

Creating Successful Change Again and Again – With the frenzy of change and the amount of activity most employees have on their plates, change fatigue and even burnout are often the result. The authors emphasize the importance of prioritizing and “bundling” initiatives to reduce change fatigue. For example, when Steve Jobs returned to Apple in 1997, he forced the organization to focus on only four products – famously turning the company around after being three months away from insolvency.

“By mastering these skills, you'll not only increase your organization's odds of surviving change, but you will be developing one of the strongest sources of competitive advantage: the ability to navigate current change challenges while building the long-run capabilities necessary for ongoing success,” explain Auster and Hillenbrand. **STRAGILITY** offers hands-on, practical, and effective principles, along with concrete diagnostic tools, to help any organization get started, re-energize, or better lead changes already in the works. Applying these proven practices will help anyone manage the necessary challenge of strategic change, again and again.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Ellen R. Auster has more than 25 years of experience as an academic and consultant specializing in strategic transitions, transformations, and turnarounds. Professor of Strategic Management and the Founding Director of the Schulich Centre for Teaching Excellence at the Schulich School of Business, York University, she has published widely in journals including *The Academy of Management Review*, *Management Science*, *Sloan Management Review*, *The Journal of Business Ethics*, and *Human Resource Management*. Auster has also been quoted in *BusinessWeek*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Harvard Business Review*, and *USA Today*, among other leading news sources.

Lisa Hillenbrand, who is the founder of Lisa Hillenbrand & Associates, previously served as Global Marketing Director at Procter & Gamble. She specializes in marketing, strategy, and organization change interventions that return brands to growth, and led the team that “re-engineered” Procter & Gamble's company-wide brand building approach. Hillenbrand has delivered keynotes for the AMA, Marketing Science Institute, and Thomas Edison Foundation, and has consulted with and led top rated workshops for Google, Facebook and many others.

Books from **Rotman-UTP Publishing** bridge research and practice, offering actionable learning for navigating today's complex business environment. Business professionals, students, and anyone interested in staying current with the latest in business thinking will be engaged by these titles, which reflect the Rotman School of Management's vision for "a new way to think."