

**BUILDING RUSSIA'S COMPETITIVENESS IN THE 21ST CENTURY:
FROM THE SCHOOLHOUSE TO THE WORKPLACE**

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"Education isn't a social concern, it's a major economic issue. If our students can't compete today, how will our companies compete tomorrow?"

John Akers, former Chairman of IBM

"In the 21st century, the education and skills of the work force [will] end up being the dominant competitive weapon."

"Head to Head" by Lester Thurow, noted American economist

"A country's competitiveness starts not on the factory floor or in the engineering lab. It starts in the classroom."

Lee Iaccoca, CEO of Chrysler Corporation

The world is undergoing dynamic changes. Increasingly, agricultural nations are becoming industrial nations, while industrial nations are becoming nations which develop and sell knowledge.

The global marketplace has become reality. No longer do companies compete solely in domestic markets. Faxes, cell phones and the Internet have freed industrial firms from geographic boundaries. Toyota can build cars as easily in Indiana as it can in Japan. Motorola can assemble pagers as easily in Singapore as it does in Florida. General Motors makes cars in Canada and Korea as well as the United States. I. B. M. makes some of its computers in Mexico as well as the Far East. Pitney Bowes puts its name on the outside of some photocopy machines while Ricoh puts its mechanisms inside. Brand names like: Kentucky Fried, McDonalds, Sony and Fiat are as recognized in Russia as they are in the United States, Japan and Italy.

Businesses are no longer geographically bound to produce products in their home countries. Neither are they geographically bound in their hiring practices. Companies are capable of flying around the globe in search of cheap labor, to places where taxes are reasonable, regulations are limited, and where workers are qualified to run, repair, design and develop machinery.

Nations are being drawn into the global marketplace without regard to the impact on their cultural, social, economic or educational environments. Businesses must depend on a well-trained, technologically-prepared workforce. If they cannot find those workers in their home nation, they will seek locations where they can find that labor supply. Workers are being called upon, to work in teams, alongside people of different nations, cultures and social backgrounds. Total Quality Education can provide the means of teaching students of diverse backgrounds how to meet the challenges of a multi-national

global workforce.

Russia has gone through a dramatic change in the past 100 years, its economy is moving from jobs involved in agriculture, to mass production and now is on the threshold of the information and knowledge based-economy that requires greater educational levels for success. Yet the school model is little changed in its 100 year history. True, school buildings have changed. Schools have new forms of technology including computers, fax, Internet and photocopy machines. The school year is still based on the agrarian model allowing students to leave school for the fall planting, and the summer and spring harvesting. Schools are organized on the industrial top-down management model designed to train people for low skilled jobs requiring rote learning, individual non-team achieved goals, highly time-structured and tightly disciplined environments. In many classrooms, students still sit in straight rows. Teachers stand in front of the room, giving the perception of having all the answers, using chalk and talk methods, pouring knowledge into the seemingly empty heads of students.

Russia stands poised to enter the 21st century with school calendars created in the 17th century, teaching methods developed in the 17th and 18th centuries and classrooms designed in the 19th century. Russian education is like the crew in the rowboat furiously rowing to the future while the boat is firmly tied to the rooted paradigms of the past. A nation cannot until we untie the rowboat.

BUILDING HIGH PERFORMING EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Everyone wants high performance whether it is in automobiles, sports teams, or businesses. As the population ages and the government downsizes, there are increased demands on limited government funding. This means that schools will have to become high performing institutions.

Traditionally, schools have asked for greater inputs - more money, more teachers, more books and smaller classes. Taxpayers, politicians and businesspeople are now demanding greater output from schools using the same or diminished resources; in other words, higher performance. Sustained economic growth of a country can best be achieved by having high performing educational organizations. High performing educational organizations are capable of increasing a nation's productivity and quality.

Why high performance?

Jobs have become more complex. In the first half of the 20th century, physical power was the engine that drove economic development. Since the 1950's and into the 21st century, brain power is the driving force. In 1950, 2/3 of Russians who had jobs worked with their hands, while 1/3 worked with their minds. Today the ratio is reversing.

Knowledge and information - the commodities of the 21st century - are the most easily transported resources a nation can possess. Knowledge can be taught to anyone, any-

where, anytime.

In the 21st century, the nation with the best schools will be the strongest country in the world. To compete in the global marketplace, Russia's businesses must depend on a well-trained, technologically prepared workforce, and if they cannot find those workers at home, they will look elsewhere. No longer does a Russian graduate have to compete against other Russian graduates for jobs but against the best graduates of Singapore, China and Israel. Other nations, including mine, are raising their national standards. Others are using international standards like ISO to raise their standards globally. If Russia fails to do the same, it will fall behind in the global employability competition.

The problem is that Russian schools are improving numerically, while the world and the workplace change exponentially. The obvious answer to retaining, high-income, high-technologically-skilled jobs to is to improve the educational achievement levels. And even that will not insure that jobs will stay in the country. But without a highly educated workforce, Russia cannot even gain admission into the game of global competitiveness.

The competitiveness of the global economy makes educational change inevitable.

Some nations have been using Total Quality Education as a device for moving their school systems toward improvement. They have been successfully using Total Quality Management techniques, tools and philosophy in reducing dropouts, increasing post-secondary school attendance, expanding parental and faculty involvement, and developing numerous business partnerships. Total Quality Education has proven itself in America, Australia, New Zealand, and parts of Latin America and Europe. Yet this process is virtually unknown and untested in Russia.

The Pillars of High Performance

All high performing organizations have four pillars. These pillars provide a foundation upon which all the other components are placed. The pillars are:

Dynamic Leadership
High Performing Product
Continuous Improving Results
Organizational Core Elements

A high performing educational organization must possess certain qualities that are either built into the organizational structure or the leadership must establish if the organization is to succeed.

Organizational Core Components

A high performing organization must have a purposeful, measurable mission that has been developed with customer input. There needs to be a strategic plan for deployment as well as actual deployment. When organizations fail to reach high performance, it is

not because a plan hasn't been developed but rather because it hasn't been adequately deployed. The organization must measure its results insuring that they lead to a gradual fulfillment of the mission.

Organizations need to be customer focused with open communication both within and outside the organization. A statement of core principles must be in place. They must be in alignment with the day to day operations of the organization.

Leadership Core Elements

A leader must drive the organization. He/she must not only have a personal vision of success but must also motivate others so that they desire to achieve the objectives. A leader must show others that the whole can be far greater than its parts and that by working together the vista will be limitless.

The educational leader must support risk-taking teachers and principals.

Management of the school organization must be by facts and data. The measure of success is not based on if the material has been taught but rather if the material has been learned and mastered.

High Performing Product

In the past when students dropped out of school, the economy was able to absorb them. There was a need for workers who could and would follow the advice and mandates of a better educated manager.

Russia's dropouts and graduates today have no such luxury. More is being demanded of workers than ever before. Mastering basic skills and tasks is simply the baseline of a graduate's resume. With the workplace constantly changing, schooling can no longer be to age 16. It must start at birth and end at death. Students must know how to work on teams, know the problem-solving process and must be able to measure the success of their achievements. They must be able to identify their obstacles and develop techniques to resolve them. They must be innovative, creative thinkers and be proactive seeking solutions to things before they develop into problems.

Continuous Improving Results

Most of us can name companies that became complacent and lazy thinking that they had achieved the ultimate success and no longer thought they had to innovate or improve. Schools have a great deal to learn from these business failures. Continuous measurement of results and evaluation of customer satisfaction surveys determine the success of high performing organizations whether they are in business or in education.

Knowing that we must measure is very important. Knowing what to measure is even

more important. Measuring how many books taken out of school library is less important than knowing how many were read, understood and their information applied. Alignment of mission and results and determining how to close continuously the gap between the two marks the difference between failing and thriving organizations.

Summary

Russia was built by the graduates of the schools. Their graduates provided the manpower that built the industries, transportation and communication systems. Graduates were the workers in the factories, the middle managers and even became chief executive officers. Russia can only thrive in the 21st century if all the graduates of its schools succeed and make the country into a high performing global nation. If the schools cannot turn out high performing graduates, how can industries produce high performing products and services? Total Quality Education helps supply an answer.

It is anticipated that, as a result of these presentations the Russian educational community will be made aware of this new educational process and will align their schools to this model for educational improvement.

The presentation will be drawn from this paper.