

BREAK/AWAY



LEADERSHIP. TRANSFORMED.

TODAY'S LEADERS ARE EXPECTED TO BE NOTHING LESS THAN EXTRAORDINARY

Whether the challenge of the day is to grow revenue by another order of magnitude, rapidly scale a disruptive service offering, or transform capabilities across an enterprise, leaders are perpetually tasked with doing what hasn't been done before.

To lead is to push beyond what we know to be possible, time and time and time again. There isn't a playbook for winning in this age of agility, and often leaders simply don't know how step up and deliver at the level being asked of them. It isn't that they are lacking in ability or experience. Indeed, every seasoned leader has found themselves playing "above their league" countless times (likely the reason they got where they are today). But what sets extraordinary leaders apart is their capacity to muster the confidence to act in the face of uncertainty.

Breaking away from proven patterns of performance is no small feat - the courage and determination required to push into uncharted territory is remarkable. We prefer to stay within our comfort zones, and the realities of organizational life don't always encourage, reward, or even tolerate performing in ways that weren't planned or approved through the appropriate channels.

For leaders to truly break away, transformation is needed within individuals and organizations. Specifically, we must overcome three performance barriers that confront every leader (see next page for a detailed description of each barrier):

- **Making space:** finding the necessary time in the day to truly lead
- **Navigating complexity:** clearing the clutter to identify what's important
- **Moving with speed:** favoring action over perfection or deliberation

Leaders and their organizations need a way to break away from these barriers and discover what it means to outperform.

*"There isn't a
playbook for
winning in this
age of agility."*

EVERY LEADER MUST OVERCOME **THREE** PERFORMANCE BARRIERS

MAKING SPACE

Leaders struggle to find the necessary space - the crucial pause between meetings, emails, and countless fire drills - to take their performance to new levels. To tap into the creativity and strategic insight required to re-invent performance, a leader needs dedicated time to secure the right frame of mind. Leaders can do much good for themselves by blocking their calendar for a sizable chunk of each day. They can do even more good by adopting new habits in their daily routine - like meditation, writing, or bouldering - that stretch their intellect and actually open up new capacity for creative thought. Organizations can also help by taking a stance on how many meetings are really needed each week for a round robin of "red/yellow/green" status and by minimizing administrative tasks that don't add any real value to the business.

NAVIGATING COMPLEXITY

Yes, the global marketplace and our diversified corporations are complex things indeed; we don't need to belabor the point here. The important thing for leaders to understand is that, amid all of the noise, there are always a handful of signals worth their attention. With practice, leaders can improve their ability to quickly discern what information to act upon and what to ignore for the time being. And they can boost the performance of their teams by simplifying the playing field and helping their people focus on the work of highest value; they do this by being clear and persistent about their vision and the objectives most important to the team's success. There are likely a multitude of ways any given organization can reduce complexity as well, like stripping rigidity out of annual planning or by making the goal cascade more agile.

MOVING WITH SPEED

Perhaps the single greatest differentiator between leaders in the top and bottom performance quartiles is the velocity at which they translate ideas into action. Moving with speed can be a tall hurdle for many leaders to clear - speed can mean being comfortable going to market with a prototype that isn't 100% perfected, anticipating customers' needs and being ready with a solution before the request rolls in, and learning to trust one's own instincts to do what's right in the absence of vetting and approval. Organizations can amplify the preference for velocity by rewarding action over perfection or consensus, and by celebrating fast failure.

THE WORLD NEEDS A FASTER, LIGHTER, MORE DISRUPTIVE LEADERSHIP SCIENCE

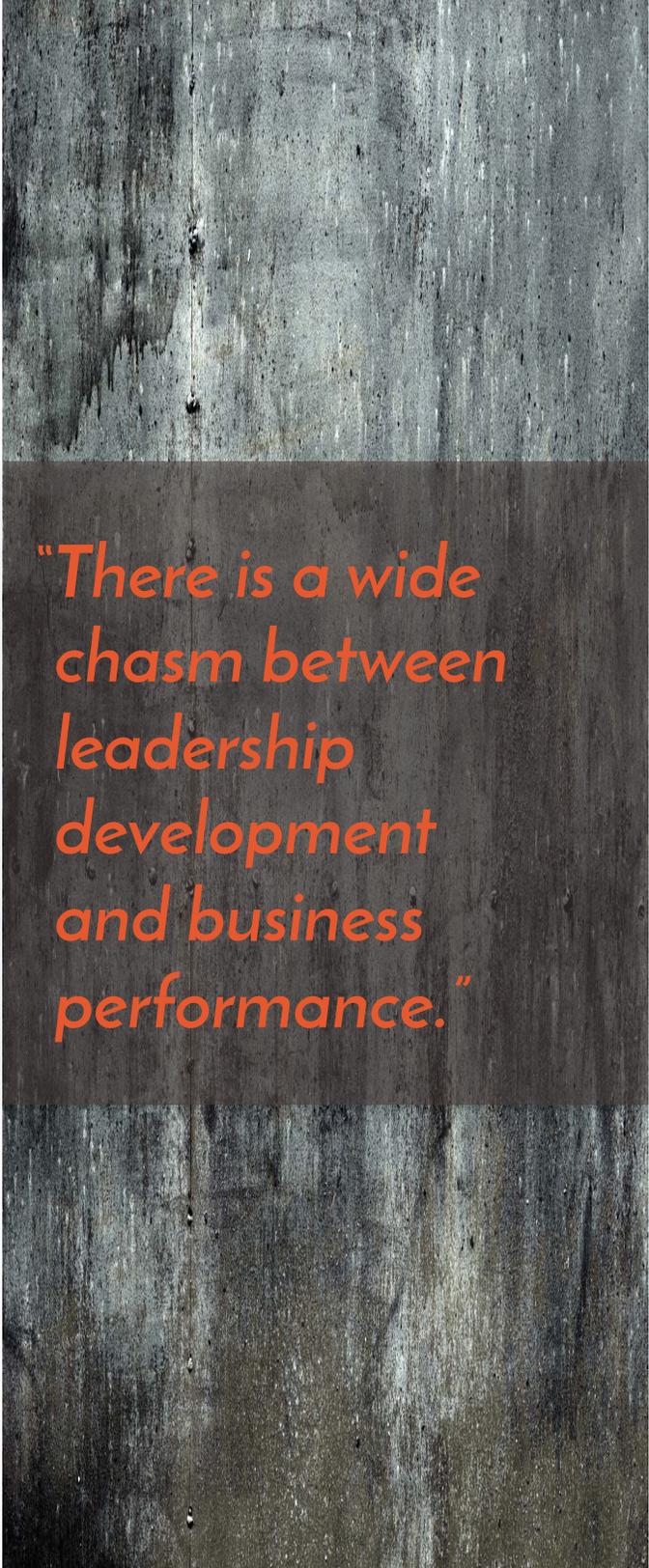
The world is long overdue for a new science of leadership. We expect leaders to perform at new levels every day, and our development approach needs to be just as dynamic. The new science must favor action over theory: leaders need the clarity and capacity to venture confidently into the unknown.

Conventional approaches to leadership development have delivered relatively little value. Experts within universities, corporations, and consulting firms have become very good at describing who leaders are, even applying the latest big data analytics to identify the common themes. But despite all of the peer-reviewed studies and investment in courseware, “leadership” remains a perennial challenge for organizations. They simply cannot develop leaders at pace with the demands of business.

There is a wide chasm between leadership development and business performance. The bulk of products and services on the market tend to be rooted in clinical, competency-based models that prescribe behaviors to up-and-comers. The result is a bland, somewhat generic curriculum that does little to drive meaningful action. Worse, programs often partake in “leadership for leadership sake,” meaning they indulge in discussions on leadership theory rather than focus leaders on the performance shifts needed to achieve next-level results.

To be clear, there is some utility in defining competencies: they can be useful for outlining cultural expectations, and they can also add rigor and consistency to selection or evaluation processes. However, competencies fall short when used as the basis for leadership development – such models can constrain the realm of the possible, instead of freeing leaders to solve an organizations’ most pressing issues.

At Break/Away, we subscribe to a different science of leadership, one that is fast, light, and disruptive.



“There is a wide chasm between leadership development and business performance.”

FIVE CORE TENETS OF LEADERSHIP AND TRANSFORMATION

Break/Away translates these tenets into tools and experiences that enable leaders to outperform. Using a mix of strategy definition, customized programs, and self-guided conditioning, our approach is scalable, adaptable, and action-oriented.

1. **Leaders are not born, they are revealed.** Leadership isn't something bestowed on the gifted few. And it isn't acquired in the halls of Ivy League institutions. Leadership can only be revealed through a process of self-discovery and personal transformation. Each individual has the potential to grow, improve, and to lead; with the determination to find one's own purpose and the thirst to reach ever-higher levels of performance, any one of us can reveal what it means to lead.
2. **Transformation starts with a leader's vision and voice.** Leadership is deeply personal. To take command of the future, a leader must find their unique purpose as well as an authentic way to rally others around it. The first step in a leader's transformation is to articulate their leadership identity, the impact they aspire to make, the situations that energize or drain them, and their natural style for inspiring others.
3. **Leaders improve through performance.** While there is certainly value in studying new concepts and learning from others, these are not the ultimate source of growth and development. The only way to perform at a new level is to do just that - boldly doing what one hasn't done before. Each of us has thresholds that determine the level of performance we can comfortably sustain. Our capacity to lead directly relates to the depth and distance we can travel before hitting that boundary, and transformation requires us to "find the edge."
4. **When thresholds are stretched, they tend to stay stretched.** Each time we span a threshold and stretch our limits, we create a new baseline for performance. Drawing from the same principles that condition top athletes for long-distance races, leaders define the future by going to the brink of performance and then pushing beyond. Through repeated and incremental gains, a leader develops endurance that enables them to perform at perpetually higher levels. And by continually testing the boundaries, they're able to completely re-define what's possible.
5. **Leaders unleash the talents around them.** One of the greatest bridges for leaders and organizations to cross is moving from control to trust. Because we value predictability and because we often translate our visions down to the tactics, our tendency can be to opt for control. But if we trust our own vision and voice, communicate it with clarity and conviction, and trust those around us (peers, team members, partners), we can open up new possibilities for collective performance.

CONDITIONING BREAKAWAY LEADERS AT SCALE

To transform leadership across an enterprise, intensive conditioning and change is required both individually and organizationally. Our approach directly drives business strategy, involves leaders taking on real and high-stakes challenges, and is sustained via systemic change that enables a new level of performance.

These three steps illustrate our engagement methodology:

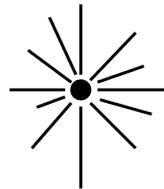


Clarify.

Define the business strategy and the level of leadership needed to win.

Example Outputs:

- Executive strategy lab ("Accelerator")
- Identification of target leadership segments



Spark.

Drive immediate results & declare a compelling "call to action."

Example Outputs:

- Deployment of teams to solve most pressing business issues
- Intensive 1:1 conditioning



Sustain.

Deploy large-scale development and align key programs & policies.

Example Outputs:

- Custom programs for key leadership segments
- Program & policy alignment roadmaps

These three phases provide a basic architecture for enterprise-wide leadership transformation. Above all, Break/Away tailors solutions to the business strategy, and then deploys them at scale.

"Break/Away tailors solutions to the business strategy, and then deploys them at scale."

AN OVERVIEW OF THE BREAK/AWAY ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY



Clarify

The critical first step when embarking on this type of effort is to clarify how the business is going to win within its strategic context, and how leadership needs to support that vision. For example, depending on the firm's challenges and priorities, there may be a need to double-down on leadership development within the domains of digital, innovation, the customer, or execution. It may also be appropriate to invest development capital at the executive level or across the front-line population, or within certain geographies or business units.

We often start engagements by convening an executive team for a multi-day "Accelerator", an intensive leadership lab where the team develops strategies related to their greatest business challenges and opportunities. This is the catalyst for the team's performance and it provides context for broader transformation.



Spark

After there is clarity on the strategic direction of the business and context for the leadership development agenda, we help organizations drive immediate results and declare a compelling "call to action" regarding the level of leadership needed to win. Practically, this includes deploying leadership teams to tackle the organization's most pressing issues and having top leaders "over-emphasize" the types of actions needed to support their vision. This initiates a new dialogue within the organization, and the tangible outcomes employees start to see will serve as an inspiration for their own transformation.

During this second phase, key groups of leaders are typically supported via intensive conditioning and are provided a set of tools and practices to incorporate new patterns of action into their day-to-day leadership.



Sustain

With the context clearly set and demonstrable outcomes to show for new ways of leading, the transformation must be sustained through ongoing, focused initiatives. Development efforts continue to be deployed - now at a larger scale - and changes begin to be made to key business and talent processes so that they operate in support of the transformation.

This is the phase in which broader leadership development programs are launched to key segments of the workforce. These often include large-scale initiatives driven by tools for self-guided conditioning and social learning. Another critical undertaking is the assessment and re-alignment of core processes and structures such as annual planning, decision rights, performance management, and workforce design.

BREAK/AWAY

Every quantum leap in business performance requires a step change in leadership capacity.

At Break/Away, our goal is simple: to give leaders a calm, confident voice in an era of unprecedented complexity.

From over two decades of research and working in the trenches with leaders throughout organizations, we have assembled a leadership science that enables executives to eclipse performance thresholds and go the distance. Our clients include “C” level executives who want to push their top teams to reinvent what’s possible and drive business transformation, HR executives who are sparking a leadership renaissance in organizations, and individual leaders who want to reach new performance heights.

Contact us to learn more: info@breakawayleader.com