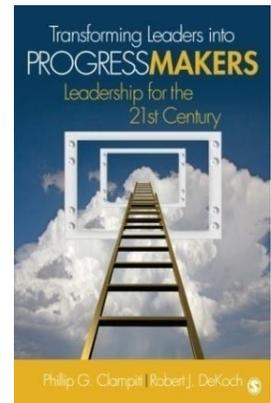


Section I

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces the framework and basic arguments of the book. It also outlines where the authors gleaned their major insights.

- I. Our purpose
- II. Our approach
 - a. Sections
 - i. Progress Model
 - ii. Progress Making Strategies
 - b. Insight Pools
 - i. Special Research Projects
 - ii. Leadership Literature
 - iii. Personal Leadership Experiences



Chapter 2: Exploring

This chapter identifies some common characteristics that explorers share, regardless of their area of specialty. Explorers tend to 1) *embrace uncertainty* by gravitating toward the unknown, random and complex; 2) *question the conventional* by formulating penetrating questions that go to the crux of the matter; 3) *trust their intuitions* which have been sharpened by extensive experience, and 4) *delight in the adventure* which emerges from acting in the here-and-now while thinking about and conquering uncertainties. Explorers gain strength, vitality and joy while laboring on the precipice of their abilities.

Everyone has innate exploring tendencies, but it is often exhibited in one part of a person's life and not in others. Exploring is an essential feature of progress making, but exploring alone *may* or *may not* result in making progress.

- I. Attributes of Explorers
 - a. Embrace uncertainty
 - b. Question the conventional
 - c. Trust their intuitions
 - d. Delight in the adventure
- II. Exploring and Progress Making
- III. Concluding Thoughts

Chapter 3: Refining

This chapter identifies some common characteristics that refiners share. They tend to 1) *gravitate toward certainty*, leaning toward the predictable, known and stable; 2) *strongly value order*; 3) *are enamored with precision and clarity*, by taking existing processes and pushing them to the extreme in a quest for optimization, and 4) *pursue correctness* by often tinkering with procedures and processes to improve accuracy.

Unlike explorers, refiners do not heavily rely on intuition or hunches. Instead they trust a systematic, methodical and thorough approach. And unlike exploring, the refining process tends to produce incremental and evolutionary progress.

- I. Attributes of Refiners
 - a. Gravitate toward certainty
 - b. Strongly value order
 - c. Enamored with precision and clarity
 - d. Pursue correctness
- II. Refining and Progress Making
- III. Concluding Thoughts

Chapter 4: Platforms

Platforms offer stability and structure. They provide a springboard for action, by protecting us from disarray while projecting us forward.

A new platform emerges from a combination of instinct, insight and hard work. A platform can be best illustrated with a series of nodes. The first node of a platform emerges with some individuals or team's instinct about how to approach a problem in an entirely novel way. The individual or team then *explores* a number of options to glean essential insights. They often test out options during this phase. After they settle on an acceptable solution they start *refining* it through a series of improvements. Cycles of exploring and refining ultimately lead to a fairly stable point that temporarily provides enough certainty to launch the plan or market the product.

Three essential features of platforms are that: 1) they are temporary but they are often treated as permanent. A false sense of stability and sustainability imbues all who work at maintaining and profiting from the existing platforms. A case in point: the domestic auto industry. 2) They don't necessarily lose their stability, but they often become irrelevant. Platforms provide focus at the expense of concealing other options. A case in point: Kodak film. 3) Platform improvement can create deceiving illusions. It is often difficult to judge whether an innovation is an improvement to an existing platform or a jump to a new platform. For example Wikipedia ushered in a new platform and competitor to traditional encyclopedias. On the other hand, changing the packaging of a cola product may appear like a radical transformation but in effect, it is a cosmetic change to an existing platform.

- I. How Platforms Emerge
- II. Features of Platforms
 - a. Platforms are temporary but they are often treated as permanent
 - b. Platforms don't necessarily lose their stability, but they often become irrelevant
 - c. Platform improvements can create deceiving illusions
- III. Concluding Thoughts

Chapter 5: Progress

Organizational leaders define progress in a variety of ways. They may define it in terms of profitability, innovation, growth, market share or social consciousness. Which one is appropriate depends on the organization's environment, philosophy and strategy at a particular point in time.

Traditionally, progress has been linked to concepts like moving forward or advancing. But, progress also implies something else as well—it implies grasping new and unknown possibilities. Thus progress embodies two images: the hurdler and the visionary. Leaders often view progress from very different vantage points—what counts for progress for one executive may not count for another.

Progress occurs when the following conditions have been met: 1) *Results emerged from conscious decision making and deliberate choices*. This rules out inertia and happenstance as sources of progress; 2) *Something—or some condition—has improved the status quo*. An organization, product or social movement makes progress when it moves beyond the current state of affairs; 3) *The improvements are legitimately sustainable*. The improvements should be sufficiently stable and endure long enough to serve as a platform. In other words, they should be resistant to rapid regression, and 4) *The improvements occurred through either exploring or refining*. These are the fundamental types of actions that drive improvement.

Some implications of the progress definition are that: 1) *Assessing the degree of progress requires a complex act of judgment*. For example, a sports team can have a losing record and still be making progress; 2) *Progress always creates new challenges*. For example, the Internet has expedited communication around the world but it has ushered in concerns about privacy and computer viruses; 3) *Progress is not inevitable*. A complex set of interrelated events produced the evolutionary track from the phonograph, to the eight-track tape, to the CD, to the iPod; 4) *Progress rarely follows a straight line leading from point A to B*. The development of the Curta calculator demonstrates the circuitous route that progress often takes, and 5) *Progress in one arena can influence progress in other, seemingly unrelated, arenas*. For example, we hear how cell phones have led to more distracted drivers, but they are also responsible for reporting drunk driving and other dangerous driving behaviors.

- I. Defining Progress
 - a. Results emerged from conscious decision making and deliberate choices
 - b. Something—or some condition—has improved the status quo
 - c. The improvements are legitimately sustainable
 - d. The improvements occurred through either exploring or refining

 - II. Implications of the Progress Definition
 - a. Assessing the degree of progress requires a complex act of judgment
 - b. Progress always creates new challenges
 - c. Progress is not inevitable
 - d. Progress rarely follows a straight line leading from point A to B
 - e. Progress in one arena can influence progress in other, seemingly unrelated, arenas

 - III. Concluding Thoughts
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Progress Maker Profile: Oscar Boldt and The Boldt Company

Chapter 6: The Progress Model

The Progress Model illustrates how progress can occur by refining or by exploring. Refining generates greater certainty and predictability when people improve existing ways of doing business. On the other hand, exploring—trying something new and innovate—involves taking a step into unknown, unpredictable and uncertain territory.

Progress can occur when either refining or exploring occur. But *enduring progress* only happens if you explore *and* refine. That explains, in part, the dynamic tension that occurs in the organization when decisions may appear contradictory, and motives suspect.

As people explore and refine, they establish platforms. A case in point: The Mercury, Gemini and Apollo missions. Each mission (platform) focused on different technological challenges and goals. After all the major lessons were gleaned from a particular mission (platform), it was time to move on to the next one. In other words, there are limits to the amount of progress that refining can generate. The mission was accomplished by embracing uncertainty and moving from one less-than-perfect platform to a better one.

There are several implications of The Progress Model: 1) *No platform is perfect*. For example, Sir Isaac Newton's theories provided a platform that allowed Einstein to create an even more encompassing platform; 2) *Progress occurs under conditions of "dynamic stability."* The wave-like rhythm of crests of uncertainty and troughs of certainty provides the essential tension for meaningful progress, and 3) *Perceptions of the path forward vary greatly depending on your current and projected platform position*. This implies that progress makers don't push their colleagues to embrace all the uncertainty at once; rather they often focus on a psychologically manageable chunk.

- I. How the Progress Model Works
- II. So What?
 - a. No platform is perfect
 - b. Progress occurs under conditions of "dynamic stability"
 - c. Perceptions of the path forward vary greatly depending on your current and projected platform position
- III. Concluding Thoughts

Chapter 7: How Explorers and Refiners Make Progress

Explorers and refiners make progress in different ways. Explorers search for a new approach or idea that represents a significant departure from an existing platform. The move from videotapes, to DVD's to internet-based content illustrates the development of new platforms. Refiners, on the other hand, improve existing practices, and seize incremental extensions of existing ideas. Much of Toyota's growth can be attributed to its commitment to the principle of Kaizen, or continuous improvement.

Yet explorers and refiners face key challenges in helping their organizations make progress: 1) *Fighting the status quo*. The "accepted" way of doing a task or managing a process often has powerful advocates; 2) *Managing fear*. Explorers, for example, may know how to quell their own fears, but they must help others manage their fears, as well; 3) *Battling fatigue*. The cumulative impact of these activities can be tiring and debilitating; and 4) *Knowing when to resist*. While the unknown and unproven entices explorers, they learn to temper that with reason. Refiners, on the other hand, watch for "danger signs" such as a drive toward a single solution or a mad rush toward perfection.

- I. The Explorers Mode of Making Progress
- II. The Refiners Mode of Making Progress
- III. The Challenges Faced by Explorers and Refiners
 - a. Fighting the status quo
 - b. Managing fear
 - c. Battling fatigue
 - d. Knowing when to resist
- IV. Concluding Thoughts

Chapter 8: Progress Makers

How do leaders address the tug-of-war between exploring new possibilities and exploiting certainties? That is the central question this chapter discusses. How leaders resolve this dilemma greatly influences the effectiveness and viability of their organizations.

Leaders have two basic alternatives to dealing with this dilemma: 1) they may employ the “ambidexterity” strategy by seeking to balance the exploring and refining forces in their organization, or 2) they may select a “burst” strategy whereby they refine for long periods of time and then explore for short bursts of time. The risk exists that refining activities undercut efforts to explore a new path, while exploring activities undermine attempts at refining. Regardless of which strategy is selected, leaders face the same core questions: When should we explore? When should we refine? When should we start building a new platform?

The examples of Sportable Scoreboards and Intel reveal how these companies made choices about which platforms to explore, which to refine and which to abandon.

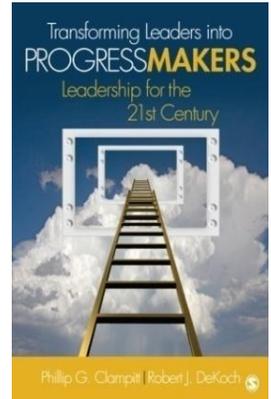
- I. The Central Conundrum
- II. The Progress Maker’s Response
- III. Making the Right Choices

Progress Maker Profile: Ron Reed and the Discovery Channel

Section II

Chapter 9: Envision the Future with Calculated Boldness

To envision the future with calculated boldness means seeking out the “sweet spot” between being overly timid and overly brash. Calculating leaders take cautions, small steps forward, while bold leaders take brash, large leaps forward. Progress makers, who act with calculated boldness, take deliberate strides forward, acting with pragmatic perseverance.



There are often manageable issues that stand in the way of a leader’s potential to act with calculated boldness: 1) *the leader overly relies on familiar courses of action*. Is the cause organizational inertia or is it a respect for tradition? 2) *the leader lacks awareness of all the potential points of intervention*. Symptoms often appear at one level that are not the real source of the problem; and 3) *the leader fails to engage in thoughtful and spirited debate*. The reason for this: they may lack the appreciation, temperament and/or skills to glean actionable insight from debate.

So, what tactics can progress makers use to envision with calculated boldness? They can: 1) improve, develop or acquire the necessary tools to monitor organizational health and direction; 2) ponder and debate gateway questions, such as “On what issue do I need to exert influence?” before proceeding; 3) identify system-level roadblocks to progress by identifying all the potential points of intervention (examples include *environmental issues* such as governmental regulations, *organizational issues* such as policies/procedures, and *individual issues* such as motivations and skills); 4) calculate the cost of failing to address critical issues; 4) utilize the power of self-fulfilling expectations (consider the power of the placebo effect), and 5) learn to tolerate setbacks and recover.

- I. Defining the Concept
 - a. Shun timidity
 - b. Shun brashness

 - II. What Inhibits Calculated Boldness
 - a. The leader overly relies on familiar courses of action
 - b. The leader lacks awareness of all the potential points of intervention
 - c. The leader fails to engage in thoughtful and spirited debate
 - i. Appreciation
 - ii. Temperament
 - iii. Education

 - III. What to Do?
 - a. Improve, develop or acquire the necessary tools to monitor organizational health and direction
 - i. The tools may be broken
 - ii. The tools may be the wrong ones for the task
 - iii. The tools may be missing

 - b. Ponder and debate the gateway questions before proceeding
 - c. Identify system-level roadblocks to progress
 - d. Calculate the cost of failing to address critical issues
 - e. Utilize the power of self-fulfilling expectations
 - f. Learn to tolerate setbacks and recover

 - IV. Concluding Thoughts
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Progress Maker Profile: Brigadier General H.R. McMaster

Chapter 10: Cultivate a Focused Flexibility Mindset

Cultivating a focused flexibility mindset means developing an ability to shift flexibly among opportunities as circumstances dictate while focusing on present needs. It means creating a mindset about the dangers of the extremes and being able to lean in the right direction at the proper time. An over-emphasis on either extreme can be problematic: a fixation on focus may lead to cognitive rigidity; an over-emphasis on flexibility may lead to constant shifting which may hinder the capacity to excel.

The practice of focused flexibility is difficult for a variety of reasons: 1) *Unexamined success*. It is too easy to stay with the success of the status quo. As a result, leaders lack the flexibility to move to a new platform because their current success silently morphs into inertia. 2) *Unmanaged stress*. The loss of a major client or departure of a key leader may create stress in the organization such that leaders retreat to protect what is absolutely vital and ignore the rest. 3) *Dysfunctional sensory mechanisms*. Will the people who serve as the eyes, ears, and fingertips of the organization sense subtle changes in the marketplace? Do they have appropriate access to key decision makers? Sometimes hypersensitivity occurs because leaders may overly rely on one particularly articulate voice inside or outside of the organization.

Several strategies help cultivate a focused flexibility mindset: 1) building in frequent iterative loops, 2) searching for optimal environments, 3) improving peripheral vision, 4) managing the amount of stress the organization places on employees, 5) “declaring war” on the “terrible triad” of a) excessive planning (the more managers try to drive out uncertainty, the more unpredictable the results really are), b) overconfidence (excessive planning often leads to overconfidence in the ability to control events) and c) cognitive errors (such as over-committing to a losing proposition or seeking out evidence to confirm a preconceived notion), 6) legitimizing strategic forgetfulness and 7) designating “project pruners” to control “irrational exuberance.”

- I. A Deeper Look at Focus and Flexibility
- II. Why is Focused Flexibility so Difficult?
 - a. Unexamined success
 - b. Unmanaged stress
 - c. Dysfunctional sensory mechanisms
- III. What to Do?
 - a. Build frequent iterative loops
 - b. Search for the optimal environments
 - c. Improve peripheral vision
 - d. Manage the amount of stress the organization places on employees
 - e. Declare war on the terrible triad: excessive planning, overconfidence, and cognitive bias
 - i. Excessive planning
 - ii. Overconfidence
 - iii. Cognitive biases
 - 1. Sunk cost fallacy
 - 2. Confirmation bias
 - f. Legitimize strategic forgetfulness
 - g. Designate “project pruners” and elevate their status
- IV. Concluding Thoughts

Chapter 11: Enlarge the Circle of Engagement

Enlarging the circle of engagement is more than “participative management” or “getting people involved.” The concept involves integrating diverse ideas and bringing together people of all persuasions, biases and skills--and even those who are indifferent, skeptical and fearful. This commitment leads progress makers to embrace uncertainty rather than to eliminate it.

Progress makers formulate a judgment about who to include in the circle, and by necessity, who to exclude. Progress makers assemble the right combination of people to create synergies, along with determining the right mix of explorers and refiners.

Leaders intuitively recognize the need to enlarge the circle of engagement, but often create the illusion because of: 1) *expediency* (many leaders feel that events move too fast to truly build employee commitment), 2) *ego* (engaging others reduces their personal ownership of ideas) or 3) *anxiety* (engaging others invites the possibility of conflict, disagreement or rejection).

To enlarge the circle of engagement, progress makers can take the following steps: 1) *assemble a diverse, but collaborative team*—much like C.S. Lewis did with the Inklings, 2) *communicate in a collaborative manner* which results in building critical relationships and enriches ideas, 3) *seek and discover the unifying point of commitment*, 4) *moderate the influence of status and roles*, 5) *seize moments of acceleration* by asking probing questions, providing thoughtful advice, and/or allocating new resources, 6) *add talent to the team in a thoughtful sequence*—much like Steve Jobs did with the iPod platform by creating partnerships in the music industry, and 7) *routinely take stock and evaluate progress*.

Progress makers have thick skin and sensitive ears: thick skin for the times when they encounter criticism and sensitive ears so they're attentive to underlying issues than can impede progress.

- I. The Concept
 - a. Note that the term “enlarging” suggests that progress makers formulate an artistic judgment about who to include in the circle, and by necessity, who to exclude
 - b. Notice the word “circle” denotes a self-contained completeness or wholeness
 - c. Note the presence of the noun “engagement” suggests the importance of cultivating commitment

 - II. Why Don’t We Enlarge the Circle?
 - a. Expediency
 - b. Ego
 - c. Anxiety

 - III. How do You Enlarge the Circle of Engagement?
 - a. Assemble a diverse, but collaborative team
 - b. Communicate in a collaborative manner
 - i. Exploring and respecting differences
 - ii. Promoting a spirit of inquiry
 - iii. Encouraging people to express doubt
 - c. Seek and discover the unifying point of commitment
 - d. Moderate the influence of status and roles
 - e. Sense and seize moments of acceleration
 - f. Add talent to the team in a thoughtful sequence
 - g. Routinely take stock and evaluate progress
 - i. They assess the role structure: do they have the right people in the right roles?
 - ii. They assess the performance of employees in their roles.
 - iii. They regularly assess their progress: are we really making progress on our key success factors?

 - IV. Concluding Thoughts
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Progress Maker Profile: Vicki Wilson and Door County Coffee & Tea

Chapter 12: Foster the Growth of Investment-Worthy Employees

Leaders and employees share responsibilities for fostering growth of investment-worthy employees. Leaders shoulder the responsibility of creating a growth-fostering environment. This requires financial resources but also their time to provide people with competency-building tasks and developmental feedback. On the other hand, employees have a responsibility to engage in self-development and advance the best interests of their organizations. They should be willing, capable and committed to adapting, continuously learning and embracing the organizational direction.

Managing this balance provides tricky for several reasons: 1) leaders lack the temperament to invest in others. They may be too self-absorbed or secretly resent the success of others; 2) leaders may lack the discernment to properly judge talent, and 3) leaders' investments are small, narrow or misguided.

Some basic principles of personal finance provide a useful framework for crafting actionable ideas to implement the strategy. For example, progress makers: 1) *craft a talent investment approach*, addressing questions such as "Does the current team consist of the right talents for the tasks and objectives to be achieved?" 2) *diversify their investments in employees*, by not hiring clones and mixing the types of investments they make in individuals; 3) *make routine talent investments*; 4) *regularly measure, analyze and discuss the performance of their talent investments*, 5) *routinely re-balance the talent portfolio* and 6) *cut their losses* when they know an employee is not a good fit for the job and they see dim prospects for future change.

- I. Defining the Concept
 - a. Growth-fostering environment
 - b. Investment-worthy employees

- II. Barriers
 - a. Leaders lack the disposition to invest in others
 - b. Leaders lack the discernment to properly judge talent
 - c. Leaders' investments are small, narrow or misguided

- III. What to Do?
 - a. Craft a talent investment approach
 - i. Talent proposition
 - ii. Talent acquisition
 - iii. Talent development and retention
 - b. Diversify your investments in employees
 - i. First, it suggests that progress makers avoid hiring clones
 - ii. Second, it suggests that progress makers properly mix the types of investments they make in individuals
 - c. Make routine talent investments
 - d. Regularly measure, analyze and discuss the performance of your talent investments
 - e. Routinely re-balance the talent portfolio
 - f. Cut your losses

- IV. Concluding Thoughts

Chapter 13: Seek, Nurture and Evaluate Actionable Ideas

Ideas alone cannot drive progress. The ideas must be actionable—that is, people must be able to *implement* the ideas. An actionable idea may consist of a tangible innovation (new product or process) or it may consist of tweaks and improvements to an existing process or product.

There are three phases to generate actionable ideas: 1) *seek*, a phase that often focuses on collaborating and brainstorming to search for new information, connections and insights; 2) *nurture*, the phase when ideas are honed and improved; and 3) *evaluate*, the phase when decisions are made to pursue or disband the idea.

There are common barriers that crop up which can derail this process: 1) *“sharp shooting,”* whereby someone proposes an idea only to have the group take “shots” at it, 2) *an insular mindset*, when people tend to put mental blinders on problems that inhibit them from seeing the unusual, and 3) *a phase imbalance*, when any one phase in the process (seek-nurture-evaluate) dominates or a phase is simply skipped.

There are several tactics that progress makers use to increase the likelihood of generating the right actionable ideas: 1) build “discovery time” into the schedule, surroundings and job duties; 2) cultivate employee imagination; 3) pay attention to “lead users”; 4) use the right skills at the right time; 5) articulate criteria used to evaluate ideas at different phases and 6) evaluate ideas by examining attributes or features, rather than relying on impressions.

- I. Defining the Concept
 - a. What types of ideas are deemed fair game?
 - b. Who decides whether an idea is actionable?
 - c. What time frame constitutes “actionable”?

 - II. Phases to Generate Actionable Ideas
 - a. Seek
 - b. Nurture
 - i. Willingness to be candid
 - ii. Tolerance for setbacks
 - iii. Patience
 - 1. They must tolerate the necessary developmental cycles
 - 2. They must patiently tolerate failures
 - c. Evaluate

 - III. Barriers
 - a. “Sharp shooting”
 - b. Insular mindset
 - c. Phase imbalance

 - IV. What to Do?
 - a. Build “discovery time” into the schedule, surroundings, and job duties
 - b. Cultivate employee imagination
 - c. Pay attention to “lead users”
 - d. Use the right skills at the right time
 - e. Articulate criteria used to evaluate ideas at different phases in the process
 - f. Evaluate ideas by examining attributes rather than relying on initial impressions
 - i. Praising the investment of personal energy
 - ii. Providing perspective
 - iii. Allowing for reflective stubbornness

 - V. Concluding Thoughts
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Progress Maker Profile: Laura Hollingsworth and The Des Moines Register & Gannett

Chapter 14: Select, Detect, and Correct the Proper Errors

An organization's learning capability is highly dependent on its ability to detect, correct, and learn from errors. Moreover, highly effective companies often try to "front-load" errors for prevention and innovation purposes. They then are able to share "lessons learned."

Radar provides a useful metaphor for discussing a framework for managing errors: 1) *Select the type of errors you want to identify and the appropriate "radar" for the situation.* Progress makers ask about what types of errors they wish to discover: minor errors or major ones? Random errors or systematic ones? 2) *Use the selected radar to detect errors.* A computer's automatic spell-checker highlights potential spelling errors (sometimes, though, you may get "false positives;" sometimes "false negatives"). 3) *Correct certain errors exposed by the radar detector.* Progress makers use their judgment about which errors to confront and when to correct them.

Often, there are personal and organizational forces pushing against properly managing errors. Example include: 1) *the human tendency to "save face" often inhibits people from acknowledging mistakes.* Instead of addressing errors, they engage in behaviors such as shifting blame, obscuring ownership or attaching the accuser; 2) *the "confirmation bias" amplifies our error-deflecting tendencies.* We seek out information that confirms our pre-existing opinions, and 3) *organizational cultures often inhibit properly managing errors.* Think of when federal regulators tried to warn members of Congress about the financial troubles of Fannie Mae.

Few would argue against the *idea* of properly managing errors, yet there are powerful personal and organizational forces aligned against the *practice* of it. Progress makers counter these forces with the following steps: 1) *conceptualize the errors you wish to monitor.* Monitoring errors in the exploring mode are significantly different than monitoring errors in the refining mode. Also, the number and kinds of errors that well-led organizations pay attention to are considerably different the errors less well-led organizations focus on; 2) *document and analyze errors to discern underlying error patterns.* For example, studies have shown that when gastroenterologists make errors conducting and reading colonoscopies, they usually miss the polyps on the right side of the colon; 3) *evaluate, recalibrate and adjust the radar detectors.* False positive and false negative errors are two distinctly different types of errors that are inherent to any testing; 4) *adjust error detection and correction responsibilities of stakeholders.* Consider Wikipedia, where a) errors are quickly detected and corrected, b) error detection/correction is a regular part of the activities and c) collaboration with others is a critical component to the detection and correction, and 5) *champion productive—as opposed to defensive—learning.* Productive learners discover how to avoid similar errors in the future; defensive learners concentrate their energy on avoiding responsibility and shunning change.

- I. Background
- II. Error Management Framework
 - a. First, you have to select the type of errors you want to identify and the appropriate radar for the situation
 - b. Second, you use the selected radar to detect errors
 - c. Third, you correct certain errors exposed by the radar detector
- III. The Counter Forces
 - a. First, the natural human tendency to “save face” often inhibits employees, managers and executives from acknowledging mistakes
 - b. Second, the “confirmation bias” amplifies all of our error-deflecting tendencies
 - c. Third, organizational cultures can inhibit proper error management
- IV. What to Do?
 - a. Conceptualize the errors you wish to monitor
 - i. Exploring errors
 - 1. Did we exercise due diligence before launching the innovative venture?
 - 2. Did we fail early enough in the process?
 - 3. Did we identify lessons learned?
 - ii. Refining errors
 - b. Systematically document and analyze errors to discern underlying error patterns
 - c. Evaluate, recalibrate, and adjust the radar detectors
 - d. Adjust error detection and correction responsibilities of stakeholders
 - e. Champion productive—as opposed to defensive—learning
- V. Concluding Thoughts

Chapter 15: Practice Receiver-Centric, Strategy-Based, Feedback-Driven Communication

What does it mean to communicate effectively? Does it mean to communicate more often? Provide more information? Studies confirm that there is a significant gap between the message that is conceived in the mind of the leader with the message that is perceived by the audience.

Your author presents three fundamental and interrelated attributes of a world-class communication system: it is 1) *receiver-centric*: Progress makers begin with a deep audience analysis to anticipate how different groups of people are likely to respond to a particular message; 2) *strategy-based*: Progress makers identify their communication goals, arrive at their core message, then set a general plan to move forward; 3) *feedback-driven*: progress makers check message fidelity by seeking out receivers' reaction.

There are often barriers that set this approach off-course: 1) a *"spray and pray" approach* to communication, whereby leaders spray information of all sorts to all audiences and then pray that everyone understands the message; 2) a *technology-driven communications strategy*, whereby leaders equate using the "latest" communication technologies with communication effectiveness, and 3) a *gap between leaders' desire to communicate effectively with their resources*. Often, leaders don't devote enough time or have the necessary expertise to craft, execute and evaluate their communication strategy.

The progress maker is guided by the following best practices: they 1) *select a rich and meaningful signature message* that captures the essence of their vision; 2) *use multiple, credible channels for important messages*, realizing that complex and potentially conflict-laden issues are best handled face-to-face by highly credible sources; 3) *translate their agenda for different audiences*, using the language of a particular audience and addressing their unique concerns; 4) *robustly "download" major decisions* by addressing seven key issues; 5) *identify, listen to and utilize opinion leaders*, realizing that opinion leaders shape how others interpret messages, information and events; 6) *harvest concerns and convert them into action items*, realizing that if they fail to identify and respond to concerns, others will; 7) *encourage upward communication*, and 8) *check the effectiveness of their communication*, seeking to understand employees' reactions to their communications.

- I. Defining the Concept
 - a. Receiver-centric
 - b. Strategy-based
 - i. First, what are the communication goals?
 - ii. What are the core messages?
 - iii. What is our general plan to move forward?
 - c. Feedback-driven

- II. Barriers
 - a. Spray & pray strategy
 - b. Technology-driven communications
 - c. Gap between desire and resources

- III. What to Do?
 - a. Select a rich and meaningful signature message
 - b. Use multiple, credible channels for important messages
 - c. Translate your agenda for different audiences
 - d. Robustly download major decisions
 - e. Identify, listen to and utilize opinion leaders
 - f. Harvest concerns and convert them into action items
 - g. Encourage upward communication
 - h. Check the effectiveness of communication

- IV. Concluding Thoughts