

### **Distant Drummer: Point of View**

*One's authentic inner thoughts and drives are the energy source that allows leaders to lead—and creatively shape the future.*

As I looked at and talked with leaders and executives in organizations, companies and agencies I knew well, I could see, while situational factors varied, the major themes—and predicaments—leaders were up against more often than not were the same: their ability to express their inner thoughts and drives to lead and creatively shape the future on important strategic propositions was frequently stymied. The sheer noise of modern organizational life often crowded out their best thinking.

Unfortunately, leaders were not getting the help they needed to address this dilemma head on. Yes, if they were fortunate, they could get some good advice and some shrewd counsel here and there, but too often it was in pieces or otherwise tucked in with other tasks. Addressing these issues never seemed to be the "main show" where they could really get sustained focus on the most essential elements. And among those few people who might otherwise wish to help leaders with this—and who were not driven by their own agendas—even fewer were equipped in their experience or skill sets or sensibilities to understand the underlying dynamics of an organization to really help them steer through it. Most coaches carried on about behavioral considerations, not bad in and of themselves, but too often cut off from real business problems and muscular organizational realities. A business was there to be had, it seemed. Hence, the founding of Distant Drummer.

**General Approach:** While there are several ways to pursue the service, Distant Drummer provides a series of face-to-face conversations over a period of 4-6 months. We can structure this creatively to maximize efficiency and leverage where travel is involved. Following initial dialogues around the presenting situation and aims, there are two major movements to the consultation.

The first movement is a movement inward. It is an exercise in discernment and reflection, a distilling out of the leader's own thoughts about the strategic proposition at hand from the "cultural stew." We crystallize out, as in a chemistry lab, the enduring notions and major sensibilities of the leader, getting proportion and perspective around some deeply held views. Just talking with someone who understands sympathetically and really listens is a relief and considerable help, given the "echo chamber" of today's organizations.

The second major movement is a movement outward, a movement towards understanding the organizational landscape and realities the leader is faced with. This is a joint exercise in organizational diagnostics—not on micro-processes, but consideration of the major tectonic forces he or she faces. Consideration is then given to options in navigating the landscape and how to best maximize the leader's own voice.

Some readings, assessments, interviews and group work with associates are potential features of the consultation, but the heart of the process is simply one-on-one conversations: reflective conversations that matter on the focus area at hand. The leader leaves the process with two things: first, learnings and insights for impact on the immediate strategic proposition and organizational context; and secondly, heightened internalized capacity for reflection as a deepened capability.

We welcome working with leaders on their continued journeys here.