



Blue Streak



Break Through the Barriers of Organizational Gridlock

*“We have never seen change so fast,
and it will never be this slow again.”*

~ Patrick Curry, IBM

THE *RENEGADE LEADER*[®]
COACHING & CONSULTING GROUP



Why *Change Agility* is a Must for Your Business

The stakes are high for business leaders.

Technology, globalization, and competition have combined to create a fast-moving business world.

Healthcare directors grapple with mergers, new regulations, and technological transitions. Technology leaders must constantly retain their industry edge in a sea of competitors. Executives must toe the line between retaining organizational culture and helping their company adapt to market demands.

It's clear that industry expertise is no longer enough. Running a profitable business will require something more—**change agility**.

Change agility empowers you and your team to discover hidden opportunities in seemingly impossible barriers.

When an industry shift occurs, change agility helps you...

- *Know your company's mission and how this will intersect with the change.*
- *See where you can align your company's expertise with market changes.*
- *Leverage effective communication to create buy-in on your vision to capitalize on change.*
- *Watch your organization execute your plan quickly.*

This leadership skill is vital. However, more often than not, there's something standing between you and change agility...and it's called **organizational gridlock**.

Organizational Gridlock Defined

Organizational gridlock robs you, your team, and your organization of the ability to see and effectively respond to change. It's what saps your company's morale and productivity.

Organizational gridlock, *noun* — Multi-tiered stagnation and dysfunction that hinders an organization from achieving change agility.

Organizational gridlock isn't pretty, and there's a good chance your organization suffers from it, perhaps without knowing it.

Check out these statistics to see why it's likely your business experiences some form of organizational gridlock:

- *75% of cross-functional teams are dysfunctional.*
(Harvard Business Review, June 2015)
<https://hbr.org/2015/06/75-of-cross-functional-teams-are-dysfunctional>
- *70% of change initiatives fail due to the human factor.*
(Deloitte, 2016)
<https://dupress.deloitte.com/dup-us-en/deloitte-review/issue-19/developing-more-effective-change-management-strategies.html#endnote-2>
- *75% of employers are not able to sustain change management initiatives.*
(Towers Watson, 2013)
<https://www.towerswatson.com/en/Press/2013/08/Only-One-Quarter-of-Employers-Are-Sustaining-Gains-From-Change-Management>

If so many companies suffer from organizational gridlock, you need to know if your company does, too.

Symptoms of Organizational Gridlock

From years of experience, I've identified some key symptoms that signal the presence of organizational gridlock. I've listed these symptoms below.

As you read, carefully consider each question. Place a check beside any symptom that describes your organization.

Leaders in your organization seem to drive in different directions.

A lack of leadership alignment can be your first clue that your company suffers from slow responsiveness to industry change. It may seem that you and your fellow leaders are always on different pages or view matters through different lenses.

Decisions are stalled in the breakdown lane.

This is an easy symptom to spot. Simply ask yourself...

- > *Are company decisions made without considering who we are as a company and where we're going?*
- > *Are decisions reactive and lack strategy?*
- > *Do decisions become "undecided" once they're outside the conference room?*

If you said yes to any of these questions, then your company may suffer from organizational gridlock.

Some leaders think they own the road.

Do some members of your team operate outside the lines of your core values? This can be seen when leaders make unilateral decisions without accountability or communication. At the company's lower levels, employees don't even know the rationale behind organizational decisions. Sometimes, as one client said, "People don't like ideas that don't originate from them."

You can't seem to accelerate fast enough.

In other words, the visions you have never seem to materialize. Perhaps your middle management understands your plan but doesn't have the resources to fulfill it. Or perhaps your organization suffers from failing to consider human factors when making decisions. This symptom can also occur when new ideas are allowed to launch without team members completing previous plans.

Your team uses Rearview Mirror Thinking.

Rearview mirror thinking signals gridlock and stagnation. When your company constantly focuses on past successes—or failures—you lose the ability to focus on future success. Today's leaders need to see around the corners, not rely on old strategies.



- Your company throws innovation out the window.**
Your company has organizational gridlock if innovative ideas all seem to die. Whether it's a suffocating chain of command or a stubborn gatekeeper, your company lacks a process for sharing innovative ideas. Your company may also focus on doing things perfectly instead of exploring creative solutions. As a result, your employees lose their entrepreneurial spirit.
- Leadership teams are wrapped around the axle of differing priorities.**
This symptom of organizational gridlock can be found in mergers, fast-growing organizations, and cross-functional teams. Employees are given one task, followed quickly by yet another priority. Team members struggle to know where to invest their time and energy in the face of conflicting demands.
- Your organization deals with road rage.**
This symptom is marked by interpersonal clashes that fail to take into account differing approaches. One leader cares about people while another cares about the goal, but neither is having the same conversation. In this instance, your organization may lack a shared language to discuss differing strategies for success. One client described a situation where there were over 10 emails discussing the use of a semicolon. While this may sound ridiculous, that's what organizational gridlock looks like.
- Your company suffers from blind spots.**
Blind spots are another symptom of organizational gridlock. If you or your team lacks awareness of certain challenges, you're more likely to experience delays, confusion, and conflict—without even knowing why.
- Your staff is running on fumes.**
If you experience this, you probably don't need a description. Your organization may suffer from poorly resourced projects, understaffed teams, and overwhelmed team members. Your employees are probably tired, burned out, and less than excited to take on new changes.

Now that you've read this symptom list, consider how many boxes you checked. The more check marks you see, the more your company struggles with change agility and suffers from organizational gridlock.

The *Solution* to Organizational Gridlock

The good news about organizational gridlock is that you don't have to suffer from it.

You can take steps to stop the vicious cycle. After supporting leaders, teams, and organizations for over 15 years, we've refined the tools needed to help leaders detour around the gridlock for their organizations.

1.

Get clarity about where you're going.

Finding the right detour around the gridlock starts with understanding the goal of change agility—and what it will take to reach your destination. Using the change leadership framework, I help leaders understand that change agility requires three essential ingredients: intellectual vision, emotional connection, and practical execution. With a solid foundation, it's easier to find clarity for ending dysfunction. www.ChangeLeadershipAssessment.com

2.

Discover how to operate in your professional lane.

Next, you need to discover the role you occupy in driving change agility. In other words, it's important to pinpoint the leadership style you use best to accomplish change. Understanding your strengths—and blind spots—will enable you drive in your professional lane, leading change more effectively by leveraging strengths. At this step, you'll want to discover...

- *Your cognitive preference.*
- *Your communication style.*
- *The leadership strengths you offer your organization.*
- *The blind spots you have.*

3.

Create buy-in from your organization so you're not traveling alone.

Once you understand what change agility means for your leadership role, you'll need to discover the unique preferences of other leaders in your organization. Gain an inside edge by learning how to influence others—up, down, and sideways—in the organization. Communicate so your ideas, and that of your team, are heard, understood, and acted upon. Detouring organizational gridlock is simpler once you have a common language to discuss differences.

Leverage your team's strengths, and develop a work-around for its shortfalls. When I coach teams, I also highlight the key ingredients of an effective team. This helps leaders compensate for any gaps or seek members with the needed qualities for moving their team forward.

4.

Establish collaboration to unite all the different departments.

After you create buy-in with your team, it's time to establish collaboration in all company departments. At this point, each leader leverages his or her newfound knowledge about leadership styles, teams, and communication to implement change. As you and your team adapt your strategies and communication to the needs of your employees, you'll gain influence and create collaboration.

5.

Create a culture that is able to change.

Over time, all these steps come together to radically transform your company culture. As you and your team consistently practice effective leadership, you build change agility for your organization. Your company will gain a culture that's able to spot, adapt, and take advantage of change. With change agility, you'll work smarter not harder, and you'll watch your organization function as a unit so your responsibilities are lightened.

Removing the Gridlock: Results You Can Expect

When you shift from gridlock to change agility, your organization can transform into a blue streak that creates big results. Decisions are made faster, cross-functional teams work together to speed execution, and you accelerate past goals like mile markers on the highway.

Your teams will begin to see around corners, anticipating bends and preparing for industry changes while laying the pavement for innovation to take you and your organization toward further business growth.

Once gridlock is replaced by change agility, you may notice that meetings take less time...or maybe your company doesn't need as many meetings in the first place.

Other changes may be more subtle. Office doors are open. Employees from different departments are communicating and collaborating on solutions to problems. Thinking begins to branch outside of the box, and there's a vibe of excitement, positivity, and possibility.

Most important, as a leader, you'll be able to...

- ✓ *Rejuvenate with extended vacations without worrying about your organization.*
- ✓ *Focus on strategic plans instead of putting out company fires.*
- ✓ *Maintain or gain a competitive edge.*
- ✓ *Create time for maintaining your health and cultivating well-being.*

Your Next Step

Break through organizational gridlock and improve your personal, team and organizational effectiveness.

Start with the CQ Assessment. The Renegade Leader Coaching and Consulting Group offers the CQ Assessment and Change Leader Framework so leaders...

www.ChangeLeadershipAssessment.com

- *Leverage their own change leadership style.*
- *Negotiate around blind spots.*
- *Create better strategies for change agility as a team.*
- *Benefit from a common language for navigating challenges.*
- *Discover and remove barriers to organizational change.*

Let's do this!

To begin to leverage your leadership and ability to accomplish change for your organization, contact us online:

therenegadeleader.com/contact/

You can also call **603-324-7171**

or email **Debora@TheRenegadeLeader.com**

What People Are Saying...

" I hired Debora and her team to facilitate an executive summit. As a result, our senior leadership team gained key insights about their leadership styles, their change leadership, and that of the team....Now, using Debora's change leadership training, we communicate more effectively as a team and move decisions forward faster."

- Cynthia Ring, CHRO at Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare

" Debora supports us in fulfilling our vision as a Healthcare organization. Over the past year she has provided change management, building change leadership and agility in our organization. Through assessment, employee engagement surveys and leadership development training, our executive team gained key insights to optimize our culture. Debora's creation and facilitation of action focus teams with our 25 department leaders, will enable us to achieve strategic priorities faster and with greater collaboration, and have fun doing it! Debora brings endless optimism to all she does and is a supportive partner in our success."

- Kris McCracken, CEO at Manchester Community Health Center

" Debora provided a debrief on our change leadership results at our Executive Leadership meeting. I immediately saw its value not only for our senior leadership team but for all of our managers. We immediately contracted for the CQ in our organization. Now, change agility gives us insight to a manager's leadership abilities, helps us to make good hiring decisions and to empower our teams to move quickly and implement changes."

- Tom Boucher, CEO at GNHR

"The future isn't scary, if you are the one creating it."

-Debora McLaughlin, CEO

About Debora

Debora McLaughlin is the CEO, founder, and thought leader of The Renegade Leader Coaching and Consulting Group. Debora helps executives, directors, and leaders with her knack for getting people on board to take action on big ideas.

From a chaotic healthcare merger to a stagnant insurance company looking to spur innovation, Debora has used her background in healthcare, technology, and coaching to transform organizational gridlock into creativity, collaboration, and excellence in customer service.

Even when big dreams are buried under paperwork, policies, politics, chaos, and obligation, Debora sees opportunity. Closing the gap between possibility and reality for her clients, she offers executive coaching, business consulting, and leadership development and training for a variety of business needs.



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