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Compass: Our 2009 Business Strategy

By Jim Ware and Charlie Grantham

When the going gets tough . . . (we're **not** going shopping)

These are clearly difficult times, and our recent newsletters have been largely devoted to offering our readers some perspectives on what's happening (and why) and giving them targeted, tactical advice about what to do. We've advocated "[Taking Charge of Tomorrow](#)" and "[Concentrating on Concentration](#)" as two very tangible approaches to confronting the challenges of our reeling economy.

Well, in the spirit of taking our own advice, we've spent a lot of time the last six weeks in planning mode, wrestling with how we (the Work Design Collaborative and our extended community) can cope with the harsh realities of the downturn and a highly uncertain future. After all, if we can't figure out what to do, how can we expect you to follow our advice?

Thus we've developed a series of focused strategies and plans for our own business in 2009 – and we want to share some of the highlights with you – not so much to show off but rather because we believe that being transparent about our interests and intentions may be the best way of all to achieve our goals.

So here goes. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome!

Vision

We will build a profitable, sustainable business focused on transforming the way people and organizations work. We will grow through partnerships and joint ventures. WDC will become the center of an active global community designing and building the workplaces, technologies, and management systems for the 21st century.

Mission

Our mission is to create the future of work. We are committed to creating workplaces and work environments that are humane, productive, and highly flexible.

Objectives

Our primary objective for 2009 is to **establish WDC as a national thought leader and expert resource.** We will produce a mix of business in all three of our core strategy areas. We will continue to support the WIPN, helping to grow that group to 20 companies. We will also establish one or more operational Business Community Centers and grow our consulting business by engaging at least three new distributed work advisory engagements in 2009.

Strategies

Distributed Work Engagements. Apply our research and consulting knowledge to articulate the business case for distributed work. Leverage existing contacts and clients to and sell new engagements.

Business Community Centers. Aggressively promote the BCC concept to public and private sector investors. Identify and engage with an active investor to fund business development. Draw on patent-pending tools to support individual feasibility studies and to guide the launch of new Centers. Take equity positions in local BCCs when possible.

Research Projects. Design, sell, and leverage research projects to create knowledge and promote the use of analytic tools supporting workplace strategy and management decisions.

Remember, the three rules of survival in uncertain times are:

1. Concentrate and focus
2. Concentrate and focus
3. Concentrate and focus

We're repeating that as much for ourselves as for you.

You may also recall a while back (May, 2007, to be exact) when we advocated following the "[Rule of Two](#)" as a way to filter out unproductive phone calls, conversations, and relationships. We're really doing our darndest to follow *that* advice these days. With so many people running around frantically trying to find work, we just can't afford to talk our way into oblivion – and neither can you.

So if we seem narrowly focused, and perhaps even a bit impatient, these days, it's because we are. This is no time for pie-in-the-sky day dreaming.

Now what we'd really like from you is some very direct feedback. What do you think of our mission, vision, objectives, and strategies? What opportunities to make a constructive difference have we overlooked? What would you do in our shoes?

One last note: our business plan is formatted exactly the way our friend Jim Horan suggests in his [One-Page Business Plan](#) book – and [on his website](#). See "[Taking Charge of Tomorrow](#)" (in the January newsletter) for more about the incredible value of creating a one-page plan. Take it from us, writing one you can live with – and work from – is no easy task.

This article is also available online [here](#). [Please send your comments directly to us](#), or post a comment on the [blog version of this article](#). We look forward to learning from you.

About the Work Design Collaborative and *Future of Work Agenda*

Future of Work is a global network of resources – practitioners, thought leaders, researchers, and senior consultants – who are committed to building and implementing physical, social, and technology-based work environments that are cost-effective, socially and environmentally responsible, and personally satisfying.

We are focused on defining the future of work and helping our members and clients achieve new levels of workforce and workplace productivity. *Future of Work* produces and distributes management tools, surveys, benchmark databases, white papers and technical reports, conferences and workshops, newsletters, books and articles, and public presentations on the changing nature of work. The Work Design Collaborative, LLC, provides leadership and infrastructure services for the *Future of Work* community.

Future of Work Agenda is a free monthly electronic newsletter produced by the *Work Design Collaborative*. To sign up for a subscription to *Future of Work Agenda*, please go to: http://www.thefutureofwork.net/news_newsletter_register.html.

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