

TRANSLATE, MOTIVATE, ACTIVATE

LARRY SOLOMON

Fortune 500 Executive and International HR Veteran Larry Solomon Delivers “The Ultimate Case Study” To Achieving Sustainable Corporate Change

Dallas, Texas (March 31, 2016) – Larry Solomon’s *Translate, Motivate, Activate: A Leader’s Guide to Mobilizing Change* (Brown Books Publishing Group) is “the ultimate case study” on successfully achieving large scale corporate change, based on his tenure at Cadbury-Schweppes in South Africa and the UK, and as executive vice president of human resources at Dr Pepper Snapple.

CEO Larry Young recognizes the strategic importance of his HR partnership with Solomon as key to the company’s unprecedented success during their time together at Dr Pepper Snapple. “The most significant HR value comes from my ‘translator’— having at my side an HR partner skilled at translating my vision for the organization into the hearts, heads and hands of everyone on my team,” says Young. “In 2006, we embarked upon a strategy that others in the industry had not yet succeeded at achieving: combining and merging bottling and franchise operations to create the first major fully integrated beverage business in the United States. My translator, Larry Solomon, played a major role. He took those challenges head-on.”

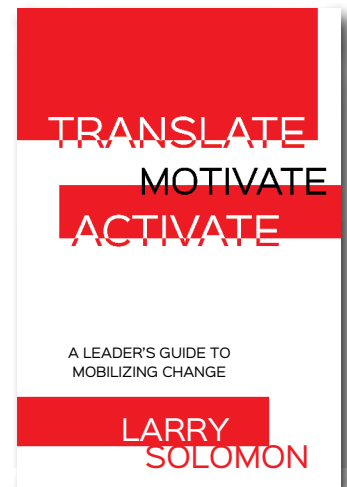
Together, over the course of a decade, the two men designed, strategized and executed their vision with intelligence and intention, fueling successful organizational change across the US and Mexico.

“With his creativity, energy and significant experience, Larry [Solomon] effectively engaged our 20,000 employees and helped us manage wave upon wave of fundamental change,” says Young. “The innovative methods he developed and implemented helped align the team behind the right priorities, as well as efficiently and effectively build skill-sets critical to our success.”

Solomon’s pragmatic framework for creating a successfully mobilized team is built upon four core elements: engage, align, enable and sustain. He understands how to mastermind strategy and mobilize change in any organization, recognizing what it takes to execute change at all levels internally and externally, moving beyond the boardroom and influencing every individual on the team.

Written in Solomon’s logical and practical style with end-of-chapter questions and illustrative retro graphics, *Translate, Motivate, Activate* breaks down how anyone can become a change master, communicating and inspiring others to take action and embrace a new way of acting.

For more information about author Larry Solomon’s debut book *Translate, Motivate, Activate* and *My Possibilities*, the nonprofit organization benefiting from all proceeds from sales of this book, please visit www.SolomonPS.com and www.mypossibilities.org.



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About the Author LARRY SOLOMON



Larry Solomon, CEO of Solomon People Solutions, managed wave after wave of fundamental change during his tenure at Cadbury-Schweppes and Dr Pepper Snapple (DPS), and now the author is sharing the innovative methods he developed and implemented in numerous countries and diverse cultures, to align thousands of employees behind the right priorities, while also efficiently and effectively building skillsets critical to company success. Solomon's service at Cadbury-Schweppes and DPS has spanned more than 28 countries and three continents. He served as executive vice president of human resources for DPS from 2003 to August 2013.

An educator at heart, Solomon currently teaches a post-graduate MBA course on "C-Suite Leadership" at the University of Texas at Dallas. He wrote *Translate, Motivate, Activate: A Leader's Guide to Mobilizing Change* as an educational tool to aid business leaders, HR professionals and MBA students to successfully achieve sustainable corporate change.

All of the profits from the sales of this book are donated to My Possibilities, a non-profit, "for-cause" organization and facility that provides full day, full year continuing education for disabled Texans who have "aged out" of secondary education. More information can be found at www.my-possibilities.org.

Solomon received his training and development diploma from the Institute of Personnel Management in Johannesburg, South Africa, and earned an MBA from the University of Texas at Dallas. He and his wife Charmaine, have four children, Tascha, Tyron, Donovan and Kyle, and they live in Plano, Texas.

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Q&A with LARRY SOLOMON

Does *Translate, Motivate, Activate* provide insights for executive leadership based on your own experience, and what would you like readers to take away?

There is no better learning experience than “the University of Life.” My desire is that every reader of this book might identify a few principles that equip him or her to either accelerate the execution of their change initiative or to avoid some of the traps that I have experienced.

What can C-suite leaders do to impact culture change utilizing an internal HR director in the process?

One of the most strategic roles that an HR leader can fulfill is that of “translator,” the right-hand person to the CEO who is able to effectively translate the leader’s vision, strategy and values into the day-to-day activities of every single employee in the business. This is what leveraging the power of your “human resources” is about.

How can a CEO become the organization’s change management champion? Is the secret to success simply communicating effectively through each phase?

The CEO must become the change he or she wants to create in the organization. Too often, leaders adopt a “good for the troops” approach to change... “*They* need to change.” The leader’s actions throughout the change journey will speak louder about his or her commitment to the initiative than all written or spoken communications on the subject.

Do employees need to change on a psychological level while accepting the process of change, and how can you reduce negative organizational impact?

Great leaders inspire others to achieve levels of performance that they would otherwise not have achieved. When this is the result of a united team effort, people usually embrace the change needed to be a part of a winning team. There are however those, who despite coaching, cannot or choose not to embrace the change. These individuals normally leave, and when they do not, how well the leader manages the removal of these individuals from the team, will have a significant impact on the change initiative.

Making these tough people decisions is important for the credibility of the initiative and honoring those team members who *are* embracing the change.

Making these decisions must therefore not be delayed and must be carried out in a manner that best preserves the dignity of the individual leaving the team.

Is clearly implementing strategy the biggest challenge to successful mobilization at all levels of an organization?

I would rather have an average strategy beautifully executed than a magnificent strategy poorly executed. Too little time is spent by leaders in effectively engaging the Heads, Hearts and Hands of every employee in the execution of strategy.

How do you define the word “Translate” in the context of organizational change?

Strategies seldom disseminate from a power point deck discussed at executive leadership level into the everyday actions of employees. That connection is seldom made and when it is, it often dissipates or is lost in translation.

When leaders support their teams in identifying specific actions they can take to positively contribute to the strategic priorities of the business, a foundation for true mobilization is set in place.

You ran HR for a multi-billion dollar beverage industry, does your “ultimate case study” provide intelligence that can be applied to a small- or mid-sized company?

Regardless of the size of the business, we are tapping into the potential of people. The principles covered in this book have been applied across diverse cultures and sizes of businesses—these principles remain fundamentally the same.

In fact, in small to mid-sized organizations, the messiness of change is more manageable and the positive impact of change is evidenced sooner than in larger organizations.

Is culture change a natural, evolutionary process born from a company’s intrinsic growth or is it a strategic plan that must be staged in phases?

In my experience, successful change is seldom a result of evolution, but rather a result of intelligent design and disciplined execution. There is a real danger in allowing change to be the result of an evolutionary process. The “survival of the fittest,” when injected into your change agenda, can lead you down a path of least resistance or by those who are most influential in the team. The messiness inherent in change will require continual adaptation as the change unfolds, but these adaptations are intelligently designed and executed with the desired end-goal remaining clearly in focus.

Can up-and-coming HR managers become effective translators for strategy that affects change?

The key is for HR managers to earn credibility within their organizations as business-people *first*, and as HR practitioners *second*. This opens the door for them to then create and implement pragmatic, business-relevant solutions that source and unlock the full potential of the human resources of the company. This is what translation is about, and it is the most strategic role of HR leaders.

Is it possible to motivate people at every level of an organization and what is the best way to gather consensus that moves people to change?

When driving change, the key is to attain “critical mass” - a term that relates to the triggering of an unstoppable chain-reaction. In organizational change, when you have a “critical mass” of powerful

influencers who openly support and execute the change you want to implement, the momentum becomes unstoppable. Resisters either get onboard or leave.

You had a relationship built on trust with CEO Larry Young at Dr Pepper Snapple Group, what does having mutual respect and support from leadership have to do with successful mobilization?

Larry Young has always led businesses with Finance at his left side and HR at his right. For HR practitioners, it is inspiring to have a leader who recognizes the critical role of HR as his or her “translator.” This gives the HR leader the authority to act, however, with it comes significant accountability to deliver practical, business-relevant solutions for the successful mobilization of all employees.

As the professor of an executive education course that is required to earn an EMBA at the University of Texas at Dallas, what do you see as the most important best practices college students can learn from your book today?

MBA programs generally do a great job at helping students develop strategy. The same cannot be said about the execution of strategies and change.

MBA programs lack focus in this area, yet so much of success lies in one’s ability to execute change through people. This book, as with the UTD Executive MBA course I have the privilege of running, equips students with practical ideas on how to execute strategy through unlocking the potential of their people. The book covers very little theory, rather focusing on pragmatism built over years of success and failure in executing change.

Beyond your book’s educational value, do you have a philanthropic for-cause initiative readers can get behind?

All proceeds from this book will go to My Possibilities, a non-for-profit, or as I call it, a “for-cause” organization, that courageously and relentlessly pursues the full, untapped possibilities of individuals with special needs.

This book is about leading change, and My Possibilities is an outstanding example of an organization that, against the odds, is redefining society’s expectations of what can be achieved by adults with special needs. Driving constant change with passion and purpose, My Possibilities continues to break entrenched mindsets, and through continued education and training, is giving dignity and purpose to people who previously have had limited opportunities for growth.



“We courageously and relentlessly pursue the full, untapped possibilities of our Hugely Important People, making every day count!”

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Excerpts from

Translate, Motivate, Activate: A Leader's Guide to Mobilizing Change

After all the years I have spent translating the change agendas of organizations into the daily activities of their employees, I realize there is no silver bullet, no single solution to managing change. However, I have found the steps and processes covered in this book to be powerful contributors to successful change management. When leading your team through these changes, then, aim to: Engage their **hearts** behind your vision, namely the preferred future outcome that you will lead them to. Align their **heads** around a handful of priorities that they have translated into their day-to-day roles. Enable their **hands** to execute by removing obstacles to performance, providing resources, and building the necessary capabilities. Sustain the momentum by passing the baton to your team, reducing their dependency on you to drive continuous change.

Whenever we implement change, whether it's through an acquisition, merger, reorganization, or the introduction of a new business process, we need to identify and build the capabilities necessary for success. Demands for new skill sets and ways of working will emerge as ripple effects of change, and we must be diligent about providing learning opportunities. "If we don't train them," says CEO Larry Young, "we can't blame them."

As translator, I have had the privilege of assisting leaders in businesses around the world in the translation of their visions into the hearts, heads and hands of their employees. Equally, I translated employee concerns, hopes, and fears regarding the proposed strategy back to their respective leaders. I believe that this two-way translation is the key to strategy execution and that it is the most important role that the human resource leader can play in an organization.

Investment in people can become a company's greatest asset. If you are directing human resources, by definition you accept accountability to maximize the return on this substantial investment. Leadership in action is being able to mobilize teams through the effective translation of strategy, and, when effectively facilitated by HR leaders, it earns them the right to be at the executive table.

While many leaders hold professional degrees, business programs arguably focus on what one would call the “hard skills”—the execution of strategy through finance, marketing, logistics, etc. The “soft skills”—those that execute strategy through people—are given far too little attention. The reality is that these are the difficult skills that we so often struggle with. After all, we’re dealing with the complexity of human creativity, opinions, perspectives, biases, and aspirations, to name only a few attributes that complicate our ability to mobilize a team behind one agenda.

True mobilization is never the product of evolution, which by definition is the outcome of the survival of the fittest. An evolutionary approach to mobilization is a drawn-out, destructive change process in which value is lost, inertia prevails, and myopic perspectives flourish. True mobilization is always a product of intelligent design.

If well executed, alignment unleashes the power, focused energies, and talents of the team. Alignment filters and demystifies the critical few priorities that offer the highest value to your change initiative, aligning both personal and collective effort—it is realized when employees know exactly what these priorities are and how they can contribute to their execution.

As leaders, then, assume nothing. It is better to ask seemingly obvious questions than to discover later on in the execution plan that there are numerous interpretations of the expected outcomes.

A bright leader with whom I once worked possessed an incredible intellect—his ability to grasp and interpret complex situations was remarkable. He could process terabytes of data per second, yet it was as if this computer-like mind was attached to a dot-matrix printer. His ability to communicate his thoughts with others was sorely lacking, often riddled with innuendoes, inferences, and ambiguities. We had to surround him with those who could translate his messages so that all employees in the organization could understand and respond appropriately.

In high school, I was fascinated by science experiments that demonstrated osmosis—“the movement of molecules through a partially permeable membrane in a direction that leads to equalization of concentration.” This process often occurs in the workplace. Through a form of osmosis, norms and standards are continually reshaped to form a new normal.

As resonance begins to build, individuals within your team will surface as true champions of change and continuous improvement. Seize the opportunity to recognize them, and allow them to lead identified improvement opportunities. Give them the necessary change management tools and decision authority to drive cross-functional initiatives, and provide them with the necessary coaching and support. Begin to build a pipeline of next-generation change leaders.

Change is the only constant. The key to successful mobilization, then, lies in the ability to demystify strategies and translate them meaningfully into the daily activities of every employee.

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What People Are Saying About *Translate, Motivate, Activate*

“In this book, Larry lays out a logical and practical approach to effective translation of strategy into the day-to-day actions of employees at every level of an organization. Visionary leaders need great translators. I encourage every CEO to read this book and share these proven effective methods with the head of the HR department.”

Larry Young

President & CEO – Dr Pepper Snapple Group

“Larry brings to our MBA programs a unique approach. Our graduates learn to effectively translate organizational change principles into powerful actions that generate sustainable results.”

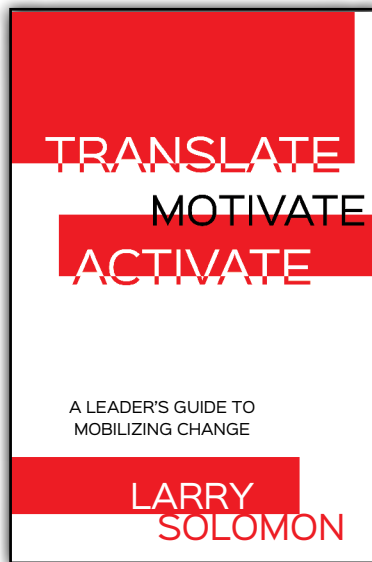
Dr. David Springate

Founder and Academic Director of Executive MBA Programs
University of Texas at Dallas

“In a successful career spanning forty years Larry has played vital roles in the design and execution of organizational change to drive healthy, sustainable performance. In this book he tells us not only *what* needs to be done, but offers practical guidance on *how* to do it, bringing the narrative to life through his own experiences. This is a must-read whether you are a general manager or a functional head and especially if you need any convincing that in any change people truly do matter.”

Patrick Fleming

Business consultant and former Cadbury Schweppes executive



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Synopsis:

All growth comes with growing pains—especially corporate growth. Larry Solomon, CEO of Solomon People Solutions and former executive vice president of human resources for the Dr Pepper Snapple Group, tackles the major challenges of mobilizing employees in his new book, *Translate, Motivate, Activate*.

Using proper change management, team leaders can unify employees by following Solomon's four principles: engage, align, enable, and sustain. Through discussion and professional examples from Solomon's career, learn how to effectively communicate not just the plan but the vision of success to employees of all levels.

Translate the company's vision to apply to the actions of each employee. Motivate team members to work towards a common goal. Activate individuals' unique skills to unlock your company's full potential. Join Solomon on an enlightening discussion of the power that lies in communication, empathy, and teamwork.

