



Drive the Revolution at Breakneck Speed

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Janine Sagert, Ph.D.

Optimize Resilience

September 23, 2004
Midwest Airlines Center
Milwaukee, WI
8 to 11:30 a.m.

Dr. Janine Sagert, a pioneer in the field of optimal performance, will talk to us about how to operate at high velocity while staying flexible, focused, and creative. Her 25-year body of groundbreaking research and experience on psychological resilience demonstrates that everyone can develop an ability to welcome change, take it in stride, and see opportunities in chaos. Do your key performers model the confidence, quick response, and focused attention that you need for maximum bottom-line performance? Get ready to fly fast and pass your competition at breakneck speed!

Dr. Sagert's mission is to provide the information, tools, and experiences necessary for players to develop individual resilience that will result in optimal performance organizations. Resilient companies have dynamic endurance because their employees meet rapidly shifting market demands, weather economic storms, and successfully coordinate complex maneuvers like restructuring with maximum efficiency and ease. Today's velocity of change makes resilience a priceless, hidden resource to nurture in your company's culture.

Dr. Sagert will illustrate how each person can, with a few basic shifts in operating patterns, tap into more of his or her potential while in "the zone," that mental state where demands are creatively met, inner equilibrium is maintained, and whole-brained capabilities are applied to everyday demands. She will deliver an experience that will change your paradigm about what's possible for you and your business.

Trail Blazer Series Information

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CREATING

ORGANIZATIONAL

BUILDING RESILIENCE

By Janine Sagert



Haven't you noticed that in demanding work environments (whether during organizational changes or high pressure situations) some people rise to meet the challenge while others seem unable or unwilling to get on board? Have you ever wondered what the potential of your organization would be if you had more "players" and fewer "resisters"? If so, you will be happy to know that the topic has been researched, that there are measurable differences between these two types of people, and that there are ways to help the "resisters" become "players."

Briefly, let me review what is known about those people who seem to be able to handle most situations that come their way. Two researchers at the University of Chicago, Suzanne Kobasa

and Salvatore Maddi, began their studies on this dynamic with Bell Telephone executives back in the late 70s. They gave all the executives in the study a test that measured levels of stress, and compared these levels to their stress symptoms. They selected those who had high levels of stress but who didn't show high levels of illness. In effect, they were saying, "Let's learn from the people who stay well and productive despite the demands made on them."

What they found was that the healthy people had certain characteristics in common. They called these people *psychologically resilient* and determined that they had attitudes and behaviors

that kept them *committed, in control* of themselves, and that they *handled change with relative ease*. Once this variable was isolated and made measurable, Kobasa and Maddi did a prospective study in which they monitored the influence of resilience, regular exercise (three to four times a week), and work support (the perception that their managers supported them in getting work done) on health. What they found surprised even them!

After one year, those who lacked all three factors (who weren't resilient, didn't exercise, and didn't feel that their superiors supported them at work) showed a high incidence of breakdown:

3% of them got sick. In the same environment, in similar jobs, those who had all three variables only showed a 7% rate of illness. That's more than an 85% differential! Furthermore, the single most potent variable, both alone and combined with the other factors, was resilience.

Since their breakthrough studies on the effect of resilience on health, my own research has shown that high resilience is correlated with high job satisfaction and that *it can be developed in a relatively short amount of time . . .* within two months with concerted effort.

How do you develop resilience? Actually it is quite straightforward but requires an understanding of mental dynamics. Here is the abbreviated version: The main thing that causes people to feel overwhelmed and distressed (and to stop performing at their best) is a *perception of being out of control*: not enough time, not enough people, not enough money, etc. When people feel out of control, their bodies start breaking down and their mental processes get very narrow and fearful. *This is the opposite of optimal performance!* The remedy is to provide training and environments wherein people actually experience being *in control* . . . not necessarily in control of the events around them, but of *themselves*. Once this simple but profound redirection of

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attention occurs, the way a person interprets the world shifts dramatically. Said another way, when a person believes, "I am in control," the mental, emotional, and physical reactions to events are much healthier and more constructive.

What does this mean for your company? Bottom line, if you are interested in developing more resilience, i.e., having more "players" and fewer "resisters," the thing to remember is to give people *experiences of being in control*. The potential for this low-cost approach is that you have a good shot at lowering health care costs, creating an environment for better working relationships, and a good likelihood of more productivity. Isn't it worth a try?

TIPS FOR CREATING A RESILIENT ORGANIZATION

1. Provide opportunities for employees to experience being in control. For example, allow them to participate in decisions, particularly those that have to do with *how* they accomplish their own personal work goals.
2. Provide training in self-control, particularly the control of their thoughts and emotions. There are many methods for this but all have in common the training of refocusing of attention. Reframing techniques, meditation techniques, biofeedback, and general stress management are all good examples.
3. Learn to structure work activities that are in the uppermost range of, but not beyond, the abilities of those you manage.
4. Give clear and specific goals, then provide direct feedback as to whether they are "on course" or "off course" in achieving those goals.

Dr. Janine Sagert is a pioneer in the field of optimal performance and has 25 years of groundbreaking research and experience on psychological resilience. Dr. Sagert will talk more about creating organizational resilience when she appears in Milwaukee as part of MRA's Trail Blazer Series on September 23, 2004 at the Midwest Express Center.