



Helping Leaders, Individuals and Teams  
**Learn,  
Communicate &  
Connect**

**KCS** Kacik Consulting Services, LLC

## The Art of Continuous Improvement



A friend recently told me that her son and daughter-in-law, who have been house-hunting, told her they can always tell if they're walking into the home of an older couple just by how tired everything looks. That gave her pause which prompted her to decide to update and redecorate her own house.

That got me thinking. That which becomes familiar to us ceases to be noticeable. When we walk into someone else's home, we see the things we would re-do, clean up, update, remove or change if we were going to live there. In our own homes, it's harder to see those things because we've become so used to what's there.

The same is true of our personal and our work lives. We get into patterns. We have learned from experience and mistakes what we like, what works, what doesn't and we've improved things along the

Continuous Improvement is Better Than Delayed Perfection  
-Mark Twain



way until hopefully, we're happy with what we're doing and how we're doing it. Well, sometimes that's a wonderful thing. In the workplace, however, that status can be deadly to the health and future of your organization.

**In order to keep our edge, stay competitive, be efficient both in the use of our time and dollars, keep up with the marketplace, keep our customers happy and attract new ones, we need continuous improvement!**

So how do we continuously improve and not become complacent with the status quo? How do we even recognize that we're suffering from the "status quo syndrome" as I call it?

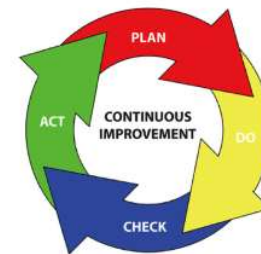
Those organizations which manage to stay on top are looking at the next iteration, the next version, the next whatever before the current whatever even reaches its zenith. Apple is a good example. The sales of one I-phone have not even peaked before they are bringing out the newest version and offering new products to entice their customers.

Here are some suggestions to incorporate continuous improvement into your world:

**First, look to new members of your team and your organization.** Look to the new recruits. No, they don't have all the history of what you've tried and learned along the way, but they do have a brand new perspective and they may be able to see how the next generation views what you're doing or offering. Oftentimes, when new team members make a suggestion, we are quick to respond with, "We tried that once", or "That's a nice idea, but trust us, it will never work", or "We can't do that because...". Before you reject the idea and

**Excellence is not a destination;  
it is a continuous journey that never ends.**

**-Brian Tracy**



Sometimes, when I don't want to do something, I realize it's because it's a drag, it's a pain-in the neck and it takes time away from things I'd rather do.

It's often in those situations, that I realize I need a better system, it needs to be organized differently or there's a more efficient way to do it and that's why it's become the item on my to-do list I keep putting off.

Take time every once in a while to stop and ask yourself, does this need a new system or process? And then put a little time

discourage the voices of new team members from making future suggestions, consider it, try it on for size, ask them more about what they see and how they would implement it.

**Second, be open to new ideas.** It's easy to reject things quickly when we're in our "status quo syndrome", so before rejecting something, sleep on it.

**Third, routinely ask and look for ways to improve efficiency, productivity and cost-saving measures with newer systems, methods or processes.** Make it a common topic for agendas and take time to periodically brainstorm new ideas for ways to improve what you're already doing.

**Fourth, look at your competition.** What are they doing? What can you learn from them. Sometimes your competition isn't always your competition. Sometimes you can use their ideas to up your own game and in some industries and areas, collaboration among organizations is welcomed, healthy and helpful to everyone.

**Fifth, ask!** Ask your colleagues, your friends, your customers, your competitors and people who know nothing about what you do. Ask questions that give you new ideas. Ask for what they think. Ask how they do things. Ask how they would approach something. Ask what they would want if they were your customer. You'd be surprised what ingenious ideas come from the strangest sources.

Would you like some help? I often facilitate processes with teams to do assessments of where they can make improvements. It's fun and energizing too! Reach out and let's chat.

into thinking about it.

Take a fresh look and ask for some outside perspectives. Sometimes it's as simple as asking someone, "How do you do.....?"

**Busyness breeds status quo syndrome. Yep. That's because when we're too busy, we fail to pull our heads out of the sand or we can't see the forest for the trees.**

No matter how busy we are, it's important every once in a while to take the step back to reassess. If we never do that, we can become a busy drill bit driving ourselves right into a hole in the ground.

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DO ALL THE THINGS




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## Upcoming Newsletters

### September

New Beginnings vs.

Look with fresh eyes,



Take your career to a new level. Contact me!



Overcommitment  
Learn to Say NO!

**October**

Don't Wait Until They're Gone!

**November**

Google's Biggest Secret's to Team Effectiveness: How do YOU Create Psychological Safety?



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