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HINKING

A SERIES OF WHITE PAPERS BY THOUGHT LEADERS AT THE REACH GROUP

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Increasing Production:

Getting Outside Your Comfort Zone

BUSINESS DECISION MAKERS USUALLY PURSUE WHAT IS COMFORTABLE FOR THEM.

That comfort zone often includes spending a lot of time in what Stephen Covey refers to as the "Crisis Mode." Managers focus their attention on fighting fires — solving immediate problems or recovering losses — rather than concentrating on long-term planning to increase production. They are missing out on an opportunity that is critical to their success.

Ask yourself the following questions:

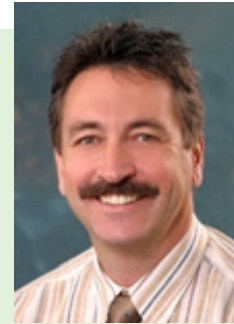
1. Are your production targets based on last year's budget?
2. Do you often meet or exceed your production targets?
3. Do you have the expertise to achieve your production targets?
4. Is your team confident it can achieve its goals and targets?
5. Do you ever play "catch-up" to your production plan and budget?

If you answered "yes" to three or more of these questions, your organization may not be spending enough time thinking innovatively and challenging existing practices.

Many businesses cruise along, meet the "acceptable" targets they have always met, and generally feel "comfortable" with how they are doing. No surprises.

It's not OK to be just comfortable, to be "good enough." To achieve your true potential, all levels of your organization

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need to be challenged to be uncomfortable with their targets, to stretch themselves to the limits of their thinking, and to constantly explore new and better ways of doing things.

Michael Michalko, an internationally acclaimed, creative thinking expert and author of "Thinkertoys, A Handbook of Business Creativity" says "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got."

People who are content with their production levels often believe that losses — waste, variability, downtime — are inevitable and should be the focus of their attention.

But really getting ahead of the pack and becoming a top competitor involves a lot more than simply eliminating losses. It requires a proactive approach to growing production volumes beyond physical and imagined constraints.