

# Lone Star Library: A pitch for corporate development beyond status quo

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## **Five Hidden Mistakes CEOs Make, by Tom Northrup (Solutions Press; \$20)**

All leaders worth their salaries want to drive their companies to success to grow profits and revenues, out-perform the competition, and emphasize action over reaction. Nice work if you can get it.

Tom Northrup's new book, *Five Hidden Mistakes CEOs Make*, argues that the executive ranks must strategically transform their companies' operations at all levels, from leadership ability and the inspiration of productivity to long-range planning and even the underlying corporate culture.

Writing as former CEO of three successful businesses, Northrup makes this key point: Attitude is everything. Right now, your company gets the results - good or bad - that it was designed to get. If your vision of the future differs from your current situation, if you want to get better results, then you must change the way you do things. If you don't, how can you expect results that are any different from what you've already achieved?

Accomplishment vs. excuses - what a concept. Among the pay-off areas that Northrup perceives are these:

1. Develop strategically, and with purpose.
2. Focus on your core competencies first.
3. Get in control and stay in control, and use systematic improvement to increase the performance of the tasks your people do to succeed.
4. Target opportunities intentionally, instead of reacting to problems.

5. Change, by systematic methods, the way things get done. (Northup's definition of a status-quo rut: "A coffin with the ends knocked out.")

6. Be the leader - be the role model. Develop an environment in which leadership qualities flourish in all employees because of your leadership example.

7. Control your strategic planning harness and channel the combined experience, education and perspectives of the collective personnel.

8. Let go of the myth of individualism: "Don't think that you are the only one who can do it all."

9. Focus on doing the right things: "Many managers make the mistake of doing things right, but not by doing the right things." Accountability requires a solid foundation, a clear strategic plan, meaningful specific performance metrics, and regular progress reviews.

10. Embrace change as part of the fabric of the company.

Such highlights scarcely begin to summarize Northup's witty and informative book, which promises to hold up over the long term as a standard reference work.

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