

Foreword
By Bob Cox

Stephen Armstrong is an evangelist for business transformations. Like all evangelists, he is used to facing doubters.

I once witnessed a newspaper editor, a typically cynical and hard-bitten type, challenge Stephen on his language during a meeting. Transformation, after all, is just another word for change, the editor said. So really, all Stephen is talking about is change. So what's the big deal?

Stephen jumped to his pulpit to explain just what transformational change should mean for a company -- how it entails a fundamental examination of how a firm operates and potentially radical changes, and how the results need to become embedded in the way the company operates every day, and in the way every employee thinks and acts.

It was a fine performance. Had there been more time, Stephen could have simply handed the editor this book.

In *Sustaining Continuous Innovation Through Problem Solving*, Stephen Armstrong has documented the approach that he has used successfully to transform companies in industries ranging from food companies to airplane builders.

This approach is not restricted to one type of business – manufacturing, or processing, or service provision. It is an approach that can be taken by any firm that wants to improve overall operations, and engage its staff to meet new challenges in our rapidly changing world.

There were many doubters when Stephen arrived at the *Winnipeg Free Press* in 2006. Newspapers are traditionally conservative places with processes that date back generations. Stephen's approach led to the most exhaustive examination of the paper's processes and operations ever conducted. People had to identify shortcomings, look for root causes to problems, develop solutions and implement them in a way they had never done before. People from all departments worked together for the first time in their careers to achieve improved results for the entire newspaper.

There is still work to be done. As Stephen points out in this book, business

transformations do not happen overnight, and initial enthusiasm can wane. But Stephen's method is a proven way of waking up firms to help them move to the next level and achieve their potential.

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