

## Thriving Ministries Do Something Different Tomorrow than They Did Yesterday

Why is it so hard for organizations to understand what Tony Hsieh [did](#) with customer service at Zappo's? Instead of measuring the call center on calls answered per minute, he insisted that the operators be trained and rewarded to take their time and actually be human, to connect and make a difference instead of merely processing the incoming.

People hear this, see the billion dollars in goodwill that was created, nod their heads and then go back to running an efficient call center. Why?

In the industrial era, the job of the chief operating officer revolved around two related functions:

- Decrease costs
- Increase productivity

The company knew what needed to be done, and operations was responsible for doing it. Cutting costs, increasing reliability of delivery, getting more done with less--From [Taylor](#) on, the job was pretty clear.

In the post-industrial age, when thriving organizations do something different tomorrow than they did yesterday, when the output is connection as much as stuff, the objectives are very different. In today's environment, the related functions are:

- Increase alignment
- Decrease fear

**Alignment to the mission**, to the culture, to what we do around here--this is critical, because in changing times, we can't rely on a static hierarchy to manage people. We have to lead them instead, we have to put decision making power as 'low' (not a good word, but it's left over from the industrial model) in the organization as possible.

As the armed forces have discovered, it's the enlisted man in the village that wins battles (and hearts and minds) now, not the general with his maps and charts. Giving your people the ability to make decisions and connections is impossible in a command and control environment.

And a **decrease in fear**, because this is the reason that we're stuck, that we fail, that our best work is left unshipped. Your team might know what to do, might have an even better plan than the one on the table, but our innate fear of shipping shuts all of that down.

So we go to meetings and wait for someone else to take responsibility. We seek deniability before we seek impact. The four-letter word that every modern organization must fear is: hide.

Our fear of being wrong, of opening up, of creating the vulnerability that leads to connection--we embrace that fear when we go to work, in fact, that's the main reason people take a job instead

of going out on their own. The fear is someone else's job.

**Except now it's not.**

Read more from Seth [here](#).