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Nine Rules for Rebooting Your Business

With the recession on the wane, now is the time to step up as a leader, take control, and change your enterprise for the better

By [Jill J. Morin](#)



Businesses everywhere are rebooting on the heels of the [Great Recession](#). Odds are, your organization is, or will soon be, one of them. As a leader, you must step up and strive, artfully and authentically, for success. Nine rules for making it real:

1. Be willing to let go of the way things are now.

Your current organization likely represents the realization of many hard-earned goals. Still, be prepared to move away from the present and toward a new vision of the future. How much of "all this" are you willing to leave behind? Now is the time to get clear on your answer.

2. Gauge your attention span.

Know thyself. Few leaders admit they've contributed to, or even single-handedly created, a culture based on a short attention span. But if you have a track record of adopting pet projects only to abandon them, own up. Acknowledge your lack of follow-through and appoint a co-leader—someone known for his or her staying power—to help keep you focused and committed.

3. Share ownership in the change.

Leave no one out. Everyone has a part, and everyone has a stake in success. The ability to affect change grows with your willingness to share power with stakeholders. Employees, customers, vendors, suppliers, and other business partners have a role in the change you seek to achieve. It must be a shared vision—an opportunity for everyone to participate in the possibilities.

4. Accept the mess.

Rebooting a business is a slow, iterative process, not an overnight event. Many changes materialize gradually. Others happen quickly but need to be modified. Bottom line: It's a messy

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proposition. Accept the dust, dirt, and debris. They'll be with you for a while.

5. Champion your champions.

Not everyone will be on the side of change. Some people just don't like change, and many others fear what they might lose. Yet if you have even a few champions—individuals or groups energized by future possibilities—you've got the change evangelists you need. Shine a light on them, and even the resisters might see the way forward.

6. Encourage people to speak their minds.

Without [diverse](#) voices and viewpoints, innovation isn't possible. Be resolute in asking people to speak up. Engage everyone, including the doubters and naysayers, to raise issues and share opinions without hesitation or fear. You not only will learn a lot, but you'll also open the doors to true creativity and collaboration.

7. Match your behaviors to the new vision.

Your plan is bound to incorporate changes in how employees relate to one another and to the customer. Model those behaviors yourself, early and often, and in earnest. Your process needn't be complete before you become a genuine role model.

8. Manage your inner control freak.

This is a shared endeavor, and it won't be entirely successful unless you loosen the reins and let go of control. As a leader, you're there to champion the vision and keep people focused on the big picture. Beyond that, you need to sit back and allow others to drive the process. This is a story that everyone must create and own.

9. Plan B: Fuhgeddaboutit.

There is no Plan B. This is it. So if you're thinking you can always fall back on Plan B, think again. Make a commitment to lasting, authentic change and really get real. It will revolutionize how you perform for your stakeholders and how you create and celebrate success. Commit to it—or fuhgeddaboutit.

*Jill J. Morin is chief executive of [Kahler Slater](#), an interdisciplinary design and consulting enterprise that specializes in the process known as Total Experience Design. She is author of *Better Make It Real: Creating Authenticity in an Increasingly Fake World* (Praeger, 2010). You can contact her at jill@bettermakeitreal.com.*

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