

Natural Leadership

When do I get a chance? When do I get to be myself?

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Every day we seem to be hearing more about the “growing American leadership gap.” We hear that leaders don’t “walk their talk.” They’re “inflexible and resist change.” They’re too much into “power and control.” As a result of this leadership gap, we hear that Quality Management is either “failing to deliver its potential, or just plain failing.” W. Edwards Deming tells us, “Not much can happen until and unless management changes its self–image.”

And every day, someone tries to fill these gaps with solutions. We are told to “adopt these seven habits, build these fourteen traits," "develop these six qualities"--or, when all else fails and we can't learn them, at least "walk around a lot." And then there are those dazzling new one-size-fits-all “management styles”- that never quite fit *us*. Finally there are a large variety of training programs that demonstrate step-by-step what to do in a variety of leadership situations. Don’t get me wrong, the ideas advocated in these solutions aren’t the problem.

What do leaders think of all these leadership recommendations think? Well, most are turned off. Managers at chemical giant Hoechst Celanese Corporation call many of those solutions “do-better lists.” Others I’ve talked to admit, “Yes, I have trouble walking my talk, and sometimes I wish I were more flexible. I’m a tough decision-maker, and I just can’t be all things to all people. And frequently my ego does play a big part in solving problems. But changing habits isn’t easy. And frankly, I’m tired of being told what’s *wrong* with me.”

I think they’re saying, “Enough is enough.” Attempts to “change” them into something they perceive they’re not only increases resistance. They seem to be asking, “*When do I get a chance? When do I get to be myself?*”

Natural Leaders

Well, why not “be yourself?” Isn’t that what really good natural leaders are—themselves?

You know the ones I mean: those leaders who “walk their talk” and have the uncanny ability to intuitively facilitate any leadership situation. You know that they’re around when you see dedicated and collaborative people committed to a shared purpose or vision. I call them natural leaders because that is how they got their talent–naturally.

Their impact has as much to do with who they are, their personal qualities, as what they say, more to do with their presence than management authority.

Are they super men or super women? Do they duck into phone booths and emerge as super empowerers? Of course not. *We all* have an extraordinary range of untapped and therefore unsuspected inner resources. Natural leaders stand out because they have tapped *more* of their inner resources. The philosopher Keyserling describes our human resources in this way:

“In each of us can be found, developed and active in various proportions, all instincts, all tendencies and aspirations, all faculties and endowments of mankind.”

Robert Fulghum says, *All I Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. We all have it; it’s what we do with it that matters.

How do natural leaders get that way? For the most part, I think it’s good fortune... in the sense that they have unwittingly cooperated with their own personal integration or evolutionary process. Most naturals developed the traits and characteristics of leaders as a by-product of pursuing diverse goals.

They did not leave behind all the behaviors we thought we had to give up in order to succeed in a

new environment. Instead they integrated those parts for leadership. In doing so, they have become more of who they really are and, as a result, authentic and natural.

What is integration? Random House defines integration as the process of “combining into an integral whole; behavior in harmony with the environment; the organization of the constituent elements of the personality into a coordinated, harmonious whole.” Aren’t natural leaders in harmony with their environment? And don’t they seem secure in themselves, and relatively conflict-free?

Natural leaders are personally *integrated*, and thus they have a naturally *integrative* effect on their environment. By that I mean they have a natural, instinctive inclination to continuously improve their environment by building a shared purpose and vision and then acting congruently. They create collaborative communities. The message is the messenger.

The underlying values expressed in Deming’s 14 points are the same values that emerge naturally in the fully integrated individual.

The new leadership mosaic—Today’s quality and leadership gurus—Peters, Burns, Deming, Bennis, Blanchard, Juran and others all see a part of the new leadership mosaic. Collectively they have accurately identified and reported the behaviors and characteristics of good leadership in today’s world. But their findings are *outcomes*. Their solutions focus on the *products* of processes.

Leadership can’t be “inspected” in ... Their lists of traits, behaviors, and roles are becoming *de facto* standards against which managers are being “inspected.” As we all know, quality cannot be inspected in. Quality comes from facilitating the and continuously improving the *processes* that produce the outcomes... leadership develops in a similar manner.

Two basic processes—

My research shows that there are two basic processes that deal with the internal and external variables affecting leadership.

The internal factors—one's personality traits and qualities are the result of the *Personal Integration Process*.

The external variables are dealt with by organizing what world class leaders do into a definable *Leadership Integration Process*.

The *Personal Integration Process* determines who the leader is and the *Leadership Integration Process* spells out what the leader does. The outcome of the *Personal Integration Process* affects how well one will execute the *Leadership Integration Process*.

The Personal Integration Process

People and organizations evolve, change, and grow throughout their lives towards higher and higher levels of functioning, organization and integration. Nobel Prize-winning biologist Albert Szent-Gyorgyi described these phenomena as a “drive in all living matter to perfect itself.” Another eminent biologist, George T. Ainsworth Land, described it as the “unifying principle of growth.” Abraham Maslow saw it as the “need to self-actualize.” Roberto Assagioli described it as Psychosynthesis.

What gets integrated? In the organization, management integrates resources, people, technology, systems, strategies, and policies. But in individuals, what gets integrated is less obvious because we tend to take our own personal growth and integration for granted.

We assume that our personal integration process will take care of itself as we pursue our goals. Consequently, we pay about as much attention to it as we do to breathing and walking—that is, until some major change in our life comes along and knocks our legs out from under us.

Just as companies have done some crucial soul-searching and as a result have implemented QM, EI or other integrative organizational development practices, *we* as individuals need to start paying attention to our *personal* integration process. It’s too important to leave to chance.

Integrating our “success strategies” - One of the key aspects of this process involves developing and integrating what Roberto Assagioli characterized as sub-personalities. Let me explain.

Multiple roles and “success strategies” ... We change roles as we move through our day. We’re different with our managers than we are with our subordinates. We are different with our peers, different with people of the opposite, different when stopped by a policeman and different at home than we are at work.

As shown in the figure 1, each of us has many “success strategies” (sub-personalities). Most of which are some what autonomous of each other:

The boss ... the hero ... the judge ... the analyst ... the greatest ... the lover ... the good buddy ... the tyrant ... the competitor ... the idealist ... the pragmatist ... the brat ... the crusader ... the striver ... the martyr ... the victim ... the protector ... and more.



Figure 1.
How “success strategies” are triggered ...?

Each of our distinct “success strategies” are spontaneously evoked by circumstances in the environment or by unmet inner needs. Often the shift is beyond our conscious awareness, and sometimes even against our will. They are also a primary source of inner conflict.

The good, the bad and ... Some of these “success strategies”, while well intentioned, have behaviors that are counter-productive in a Quality oriented organization. Others got suppressed and left behind when we began our careers. Many of us assumed that the more emotional and expressive parts were no longer suitable because they didn't fit the mold or norm of our organization or career.

Most troublesome of all, when we fully identify with only one of those roles, we are cut off from the qualities, traits and attributes of all the others, thus limiting our range of responses.

Death to barbarians? For example, if my primary leadership style is a tough barbarian “success strategy” with a compulsion for action, I would find it “unmacho” to pause and *ask* customers and employees what they want before I acted. My tendency would be to tell them or sell them on what I want. Well, so much for employee involvement and quality. But should I get rid of him if I could? No, occasionally let the barbarian loose, but only in situations when tough and powerful action is truly facilitative and appropriate.

The point is, each “success strategies” has something to offer in a specific leadership situation. We have to learn how to integrate them, to harness all of our strengths for leadership.

Natural leaders tend to be generalists, good at many roles, and naturally congruent with Quality Management principles. Their ability to accept, harmonize and utilize their own inner diversity of characters enables them to instinctively manage the diversity of views and people in the workplace.

When faced with cultural differences, they reach inside themselves and find a way to establish rapport and common ground to discover a sense of shared meaning. Authenticity, interest and openness will bridge any cultural gap.

How does personal integration happen? The unfacilitated way is through the pursuit of very diverse goals, which cause people to develop and subsequently integrate many personality elements. So if you've had a closet image of yourself as a dancer, singer and/or an adventurous archeologist, find a way to express the interest.

You can facilitate your own integration ... You can substantially reduce the time it takes to become a natural leader and dramatically improve the outcomes by proactively facilitating the process.

Become aware of your “success strategies” and begin aligning their expression with your purposes. Remember that personal integration is always trying to happen, so a little attention goes a long way. What gets in the way is resistance to change.

Why we resist change - Unfortunately, for most people the path of integration is full of detours and dead ends. One of the most challenging of these appears as resistance to personal change. In my fifteen years of researching and facilitating the personal integration process, resistance to change generally comes down to one of three stances:

- "I don't know how."
- "It's not possible."
- "I don't want to."

It's not possible ... "The "I want to, but it's not possible" stances generally results from being caught in the paradigm that says, "Once we turn 30, we become one - dimensional, immutable automatons."

The danger of this stance is that it can quickly change into "I don't want to."

What's needed to head off that objection is information - evidence, if you will - that shows change is possible and, in fact, is already happening. Once accepted, the stance can move to "I don't know how."

Look deeper when you hear "I don't want to ... " While "I don't want to" has many looks, it is usually accompanied by some form of denial of the need to change. The denial is usually sustained by justifications like, "I got to where I am today because I've been doing things right ... so why should I change now?" Generally this is only a cover for deeper causes.

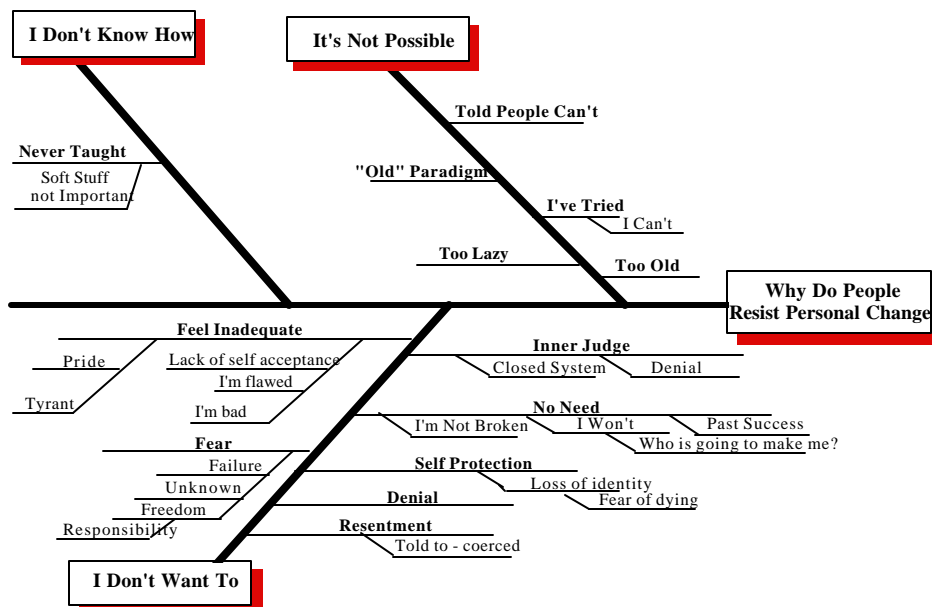


Figure 2.

"I don't know how ... "This is the easier objection to facilitate because there is intention and commitment to change. All you need is a road map, coaching and support. The personal change process can be flow - charted, studied and attended to like any process. There will be potholes and other obstacles, but with a good map and some coaching, personal change is very accessible and an extremely rewarding process.

Researchers at Lutheran University discovered a root cause of “I don't want to” when they tested experienced managers with MBAs and found that, while they rated themselves high in self-worth, they ranked themselves low in self-acceptance. They had a very difficult time accepting their limitations and imperfections.

So when someone comes around and tells them they need to change, they begin to feel inadequate and that something is wrong with them. This frequently leads

to denial and other defense mechanisms and can evoke a tyrant “success strategy” who “shoots the messenger”.

Cooperating with your Personal Integration Process sidesteps this resistance because the initiative direction and the responsibility for the change come from inside you rather than from outside.

Becoming a Natural Leader is about cooperating with a natural process of becoming more of who you are. Increasing self-acceptance, including all your freckles and flaws, is an integral part of that process.

Transforming “success strategies” ...

This development process treats root causes for the lack of self-acceptance by transforming your judge “success strategy” from a heavy-handed, closed-minded critic and self-righteous defender of status quo to a discerning constructive source of feedback for continuous leadership improvement.

But who and what will I be? Another challenging root cause behind “I don’t want to change” is the fear of losing your identity. The function of this fear is to ensure that your current major “success strategy” is not destroyed in the process of change. The Natural Leader Model helps you recognize that you are much more than that one, dominant “success strategy”, making it easier for you to let go with less fear of losing your identity.

Awareness of the inner conflict process eases the task ... The resistance or inner conflict that does emerge is the result of a battle between the parts of you that want to change and those that don’t. Once a leader is aware of this inner conflict, others can facilitate the leader’s change process much more easily. The role of coach is to empower the parts that want to change rather than lock horns with the parts that don’t.

A natural in action: Al Roessert ...

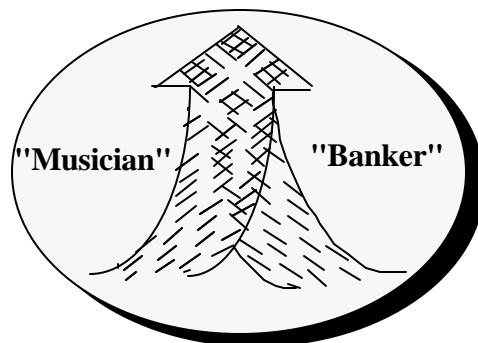
Let’s look at an example of someone who has integrated some of his “success strategies”.

A few years ago, Bank of America implemented a service quality program. One manager, Al Roessert, got extraordinary results. Al’s department reduced the average work time per service transaction by 40 percent while reducing staff 11 percent in the face of

a 43 percent increase in volume. Telephone response time went from 65 seconds to less than five seconds.

The department’s customers were so impressed that they spontaneously started writing letters to senior management. Every person I spoke with about these results said it was chemistry. Al’s leadership was congruent with the principles of Quality Management.

I asked Al about his background. He told me he is a musician in a band, a father, and active in his community. As he talked, it became increasingly clear that Al had unconsciously integrated his major “success strategies” for leadership. He had combined his well-developed analytical side with the emotionally engaging musician who knew “how to connect with people in an audience and gain a following.” He knew how everyone needed to play together, have fun, and share the recognition and credit.



When I questioned Al about his department’s performance, he said what made the biggest difference was the little things, like how well everybody got along, the involvement and recognition. But you have to meet Al to fully appreciate his impact. His long hair doesn’t fit the image of a banker. I asked him how this fared with the norms of the bank. His reply: “I think it’s a statement that it’s okay to be yourself at BofA, to express your uniqueness, even if that means being ‘different’.”

This is the message of the personally integrated natural leader, “Be yourself. Be more of who you are. Bring the best of all of you to your work. Give us all of your potential.” In contrast, the un-integrated leader’s message is: “Be like me.” As a consequence, all differences are seen as weaknesses.

The new skills of a natural leader

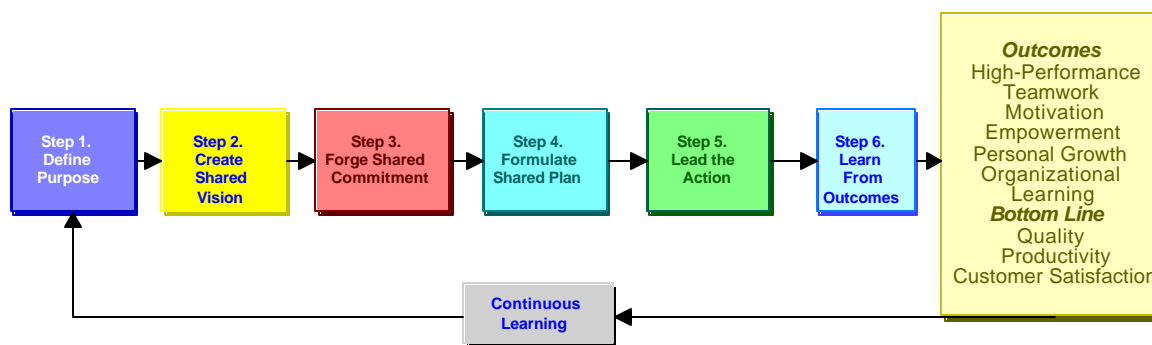
Becoming a natural leader doesn’t boil down to just learning a few skills. Nor is it just putting on a new

management style. And it isn't about reworking someone from the outside; it is about cooperating with what is trying to happen from the inside out. It is about uncovering what is already there. That's why effective natural leaders frequently appear instinctive and intuitive.

It's a long-term, easily accessible process that combines personal integration with Leadership Integration Process skill development.

The Leadership Integration Process

The leadership integration process (shown below) identifies the six steps that Quality congruent leaders take to tap the full potential of the organization



1. **Define purpose.** This essential part of any involvement process provides direction, motivation and context in which to make decisions and innovate and improve customer satisfaction.
2. **Build a shared vision.** By shared vision, I mean a vision or image created by integrating the visions of all organizational members. When done appropriately, its power can motivate and align. The creative process employed lifts people to a place they may have never been before to see the essence or spirit of the organization.
3. **Forge a shared commitment.** This provides juice, power and energy by emotionally embodying the purpose and vision and then turning that investment into an act of will by aligning conscious and intrinsic motivation.
4. **Formulate a shared plan.** This helps everyone understand the plan and their specific role and responsibility in the undertaking.
5. **Lead and facilitate the action.** Facilitate change and lead group actions involves the day-to-day activities-like supporting, recognizing and rewarding peace making, and empowering-that facilitate the work.
6. **Learn from outcomes.** Establish a learning (not blaming) context. Whatever the outcomes, the

question for individuals and the organization are "What can we learn from this experience?"

Beyond the retreat and the posters - Some leaders think they are already doing it. One told me, "Last year we had a retreat and developed a new vision and mission for the organization and then told everyone about it. We even printed the vision and mission on this card and sent one to every employee." Developing a corporate or overall organizational mission and vision and communicating them to the organization are great first steps and should be applauded.

However, to describe it, as a shared vision is a distortion, and to think its eloquence inspires everyone is wishful thinking at best.

Leadership every day... To realize the true power of the leadership integration process, you need to integrate the steps into daily leadership activities. Natural leaders employ this process daily; formally at the beginning of projects and meetings, and informally through conversations.

For example, a natural leader may deepen a commitment to a shared vision by having a conversation with an employee about what it is they really want to do and aligning the individual's vision with the project or organizational vision.

But people just want concrete goals ... I have heard some managers argue. "My people are not interested in soft abstractions like purpose and vision; they want (and need) concrete goals and objectives. "True," I reply, "however creating a shared purpose and vision awakens different motivating forces than those stimulated by goals. They evoke meaning and inspire the heart and the mind to work together."

Moving to Meta - motivation-

When done right a truly shared vision taps what Maslow described as "meta-motivation" - a powerful ego-transcending and self-created force that can accelerate organizational transformation, unity, perfection and interdependence.

Some past management practices such as management by objectives made goals and objectives the operational focus and behavioral norm. While this helped managers and departments to grow by giving them independence, it also led to sub-optimizing the system for personal short term gains which fueled internal competition and mistrust.

Interdependence as a guide ... Interdependence is a fundamental organizing principle of total system optimization. Implementing Quality Management requires leaders take another step.

Will you transcend the limits of independence so you can realize the power of interdependence?

Will you integrate your efforts across organizational boundaries to improve the processes that satisfy customers and employees?

Will you care about, and stay mindful of, how the outcome of your work affects the work of others.

Gaining an individual commitment to interdependence takes a clear purpose, a truly shared vision, commitment and plan, and most importantly leaders who are integrated enough to live it.

The benefits of interdependence ...When interdependence is valued and supported, purpose driven behaviors displace overly self-centered action. Meaning, contribution, service, personal growth, teamwork, creativity, doing things really well, quality relationships, and empowerment become the new motivators. Natural leaders evoke this motivation and inspire quality for the joy of it. Personally integrated natural leaders know the power of these motivators from their own experience. It's what motivates them.

Leadership integration process skills - These skills consist of two primary sets:

1. Behavioral skills that help leaders refine the roles they play - coach, counselor, director, conflict manager, et cetera.

2. Integrative thinking skills that provide leaders with tools to ensure that the leadership process is integrative in its effect.

For example, one of the integrative thinking skills is the integrative visioning process - a tool leaders use in the second step of the leadership integration process to build a shared vision.

An integrative thinking skill example... About four years ago I guided the leadership of Dow Chemical's Western Area Science and Technology Labs (WASTL) through this integrative visioning process. The resulting images not only reflected what they consciously thought was possible for organization, but also revealed what was in their collective sub-conscious minds. The process was so powerful that two years later, Vern May, WASTL's director, told me, "Every good thing that has happened at WASTL since the workshop was traceable to those images."

Why were those images so powerful? Because they came from inside them, reflected the next integrative step of the organization and they evoked meta-motivation. Making those images conscious and embodying them amounted to energizing and facilitating WASTL's evolutionary integration process - the drive in the organization to perfect itself.

A natural leader gives the visioning process a boost. But realizing the full power of the integrative visioning process requires congruent natural leaders like Vern May to lead and facilitate the action.

Vern's career path was spent in science and scientific management in a highly technical organization with strong behavioral norms that valued technical competence and high, no - nonsense task orientation. One would not expect him to be a natural leader. Yet Vern instinctively approaches people with a healthy balance of task and relationship considerations. People describe him as open, emotionally engaging and flexible.

Some might argue, "Vern as a nice guy with a strong need for acceptance from his followers and therefore not tough enough." I think he possesses a very high degree of self-acceptance, which over the years has allowed him to transcend the norms of the organization and be more of himself. He also has a well-developed intuitive sense of the organizing

principles operating in situations, enabling him to respond congruently. In short, he exhibits the presence and skills of an integrated leader.

How this model differs from others – This model differs from other leadership models in at least two important ways:

Becoming a quality, congruent, leader using the Natural Leadership Model is easier because it circumvents most resistance to personal change. The process is natural one that flows from inside the person. All other models are outside - in approaches that either seek to identify and develop certain behavioral skills or just provide guidelines and abstract principles.

Attempts at remaking leaders from outside alone (through role clarification, training and persuasion) fail because they generate resistance, distort authenticity and quash uniqueness.

The Personal Integration Process and Leadership Integration Process are congruent with the principles of Quality Management because they are definable and measurable.

Leadership in the 21 century

Some of the leadership challenges of the next century are already clear and compelling. Leaders must be able to:

1. Continuously effect change in the environment while remaining in harmony with those affected.
2. Manage the complexity of diverse views and people.
3. Build Quality oriented, high-performing fully integrated organizations through a share purpose and vision.

To meet this challenge, leaders must address both the internal and external variables that affect leadership.

What we've been doing, however, is handing leaders integrative structures and systems like TQM without facilitating their own personal integration. That's like giving them a blueprint, hammer, and nails to build a house without helping them develop the hand-eye coordination to hit the nail with the hammer.

The bottom line is this:

To get a Quality oriented, high -performing, adaptive, fully integrated organization, we need congruent, personally integrated leadership.

The ancient philosopher Hermes Trismegistus captured the problem thousands of years ago in his Law of Correspondence: "As above, so below."

The Leadership challenge - As leaders, we must lead. Our personal growth and integration must pace organizational development.

We can do it ... We can change and grow, rather easily, with the right tools and support. But that does not mean we should impress some mold of a good leader onto ourselves, even if that were possible. Rather, we should simplify the job by learning how to facilitate the natural personal and leadership integration processes that are already trying to get us there.

There is only one you, only one person with your unique combination of traits, characteristics and qualities. If you block the expression of who you deeply are, that which you alone could have done will never occur.

Your organization and the world will never receive the benefit of your natural leadership gifts. We need you. We need you to let your essence shine through and help build high performing organizations that work for everyone.

Release your own leadership and that in others ...
Our organizations are full of managers who are, in effect, sitting on their latent, natural leadership abilities - suppressing them like coiled springs. Taken together, those thousands of coiled springs amount to vast inventory of natural leadership just waiting to be released. Those who learn to liberate this asset will not only take their organizations to an entirely new class of performance but will establish and benchmark the next paradigms of Quality.

About the Author

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He has worked with organizations like IBM, Hewlett Packard, Syscon, Dow Chemical, General Instrument, Sun Microsystems, Robert Mondavi Winery and others.

Doctor Stonefield was the principal consultant to Region IX of the U.S. Department of Labor, the 1992 winner of the President's Quality Award (Malcolm Baldrige equivalent in government). Doctor Stonefield has been an electronic engineer and marketing and sales executive for the Bunker-Ramo Corporation.
