Monitoring Your Business Progress

"**Mind the gap**" is a warning phrase, first introduced in 1969 on the London Underground trains. It is issued to passengers to take caution while crossing the gap between the subway train door and the station platform. The phrase "Mind the gap" is used as a visual and auditory warning to advise passengers to be careful in avoiding this gap. It can be found painted along the edges of the platforms as well as heard on recorded announcements played when a train arrives at the Underground stations.

In business organizations, there are processes that must be monitored to avoid gaps in the sequence. Here are three examples of how leaders need to *Mind the Gap* in the organization's processes.

1. Identify the gap between what your company offers and what people want, so you are providing what your customers' value. Any product innovation should be built on customer current and future needs.
2. Inspect the performance process to become aware of work process gaps. Align workforce expectations with a well delineated overall procedures plan. If the operations process is not meeting expectations, make modifications before it is too late.
3. The gaps between how well the employees identify with the organizations values and mission is a clear indication of whether the workforce positively embraces the strategic plan. Gaps in alignment mean gaps in successfully completing the strategy.

Business leaders must develop a process for inspecting gaps that can occur in their organizations. Such monitoring clarifies where the business organization currently stands in relation to where the leadership wants it to be. As a business leader within your organization, how would you answer these questions?

- How you are doing in pursuing your business goals? [review benchmarks for each business function]
- Do the actions of the employees produce the results you desire? [revisit belief statements]
- How are your monitoring and inspection procedures improving performance? [develop a system]
- How do you know what you are looking for before you actually see it? [review your vision statement]

These questions are integral in establishing a performance management system within the organization's work culture. To answer the above questions showing positive results, establish the following criteria guidelines.

- **A set of written criteria that delineates expectations for employees**. This reflects that people initially look at performance management very formally and in a structured manner.

- **Performance management is an individual development plan**. It's not an annual "sit down" but a continuum that evolves over time based on what the employee needs.

- **Monitor performance management frequently.** Performance management is a daily communication system. By offering feedback on a regular basis—even quick weekly updates—you will notice an uptick in performance results.. Performance management should focus on continuous improvement where everyone's voice can be heard and operating efficiencies and quality output is always looked upon for ways to do things better.