

Nanotechnology, managing a high-tech company in turbulence

Abstract

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More and more nanotechnology companies understand that they find themselves in an economic environment of non-stop turbulence. This turbulence is due to social, economical and technological instabilities such as rapid technological changes, innovation, aggressive globalization and geo-political conflicts.

As a result, leading an organization through the nanotechnology turbulence is neither simple nor straight forward. In this environment of constant turbulence survival of an organization can no longer be taken for granted. The main responsibility of leadership of these organizations and of all its employees is to ensure the long term survival of the organization. Nanotechnology companies need to create a new culture “in which the imperative or survival becomes a powerful catalyst for improvisation and innovation.”¹

Turbulence in nanotechnology is also changing the very nature of finding new opportunities making it increasingly less predictable to recognize the most promising ones. Nanotechnology leaders and organizations must cultivate new special qualities in order to leverage random opportunities systematically.

For nanotechnology organizations living in turbulence it is essential to accept complete responsibility for their own survival. We need to find and recognize this delicate balancing act. We need to lead the organization to its survival, on one hand, but, on the other hand, we need to encourage risk taking and know how to mobilize the organization to rise to the occasion when its very survival is threatened.

At Applied Nanotech we continuously strive to identify and address potential threats and recognize new promising opportunities. The principles of managing a nanotechnology company in turbulence and the qualities of leadership needed to succeed will be presented and discussed.

¹ “Leadership the hard way: why leadership can’t be taught and how you can learn it anyway”, Dov Frohman, Robert Howard, a Wiley Imprint, May 2008.