



For Immediate Release

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Report: With economy stalled, companies must equip managers with skills to lead organic growth

Boston, MA, October 14, 2008 – Stymied by global economic turmoil that is severely curtailing performance, companies should focus on five critical actions – readily within managers' control – to motivate their people and meet shareholders' expectations for growth, according to a research-based white paper by The Forum Corp., a global consulting firm that specializes in helping companies execute strategy through people.

The current economic crisis has made organic growth a top priority for most organizations because it is still the most effective way to increase revenues. By contrast, for example, acquisitions, which can yield one-time boosts, are increasingly difficult to execute given the current credit squeeze.

“Our research shows that, very often, companies can't execute organic growth strategies or sustain them because their leaders don't focus well enough -- or at all -- on the few critical actions that influence organic growth. By contrast, companies that successfully execute organic growth strategies have leaders that typically do a great job of focusing on these areas, and enjoy strong financial performance as a result,” said Ed Boswell, CEO of The Forum Corp.

According to Forum's research, the five actions that companies can pursue to successfully implement their organic growth strategies are:

- 1) **Develop specific leadership skills that are critical to organic growth.** These include the abilities to encourage people to challenge the status quo while simultaneously maintaining focus on key current priorities, such as driving profits and managing costs. To lead organic growth, managers and executives must be able to manage these kinds of dilemma.
- 2) **Create a climate for growth.** Changing an organization's climate can be one of the fastest ways to achieve growth because it has a direct impact on motivation, which in turn affects performance. Leaders can manage and change their organization's climate by focusing on its six measurable dimensions: clarity, commitment, standards, responsibility, recognition and teamwork.
- 3) **Forge a better bond with customers.** Companies that successfully execute organic growth strategies learn how to generate additional revenue from existing customers and attract new ones by meeting customers' unmet needs. One way they do so is by delivering a customer experience that is not only consistent and predictable but also differentiated and value-adding.



- 4) **Increase sales force effectiveness** by developing skilled sales managers who can instill a strategic focus among their sales teams, provide in-the-trenches coaching, and create a motivating, high-performance climate.
- 5) **Foster more innovation.** Companies that grow organically must do a good job of anticipating customers' new or unmet needs, which are particularly fertile territory for future offerings that can fuel growth.

"The ability of organizations to take these actions depends on having effective leaders. The good news is that those leadership skills can be learned. Companies that succeed at growing organically know how to develop people throughout the organization who can lead the way to organic growth," said Boswell.

Forum's overview on the topic, entitled *Executing an Organic Growth Strategy*, is the first in a series of 5 white papers that will look at each of the five factors in detail. To obtain a copy of the *Executing an Organic Growth Strategy* or a copy of Forum's ground-breaking research report on growth entitled *One Size Doesn't Fit All*, visit www.forum.com,

About The Forum Corp.

Forum is a world leader in helping companies execute their strategies through people. For 35 years, its work has helped clients increase profitability, market share, revenue growth, and customer and employee loyalty. Forum combines experience and research-based insights in learning design, consulting, and facilitation to bring about changes in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that enable employees to achieve and exceed the desired benefits of a strategic change, to reduce time to improved performance, and to sustain the change over the long term.