

If you know a company — customer, supplier, friend, or your own — that could benefit from improved operations, let us know.

Your best interest is our best interest.

The Finish Strong® monthly e-newsletter is for business leaders who recognize Operations as a strategic function that creates competitive advantage, profitability and brand loyalty in the marketplace.

THEY SAID IT SHOULD HAVE WORKED

But it didn't. Fishing and tourist industries along the Gulf coast will be harmed for years to come. The environmental and economic impacts are far reaching and not yet understood.

Do you have a critical decision founded on "should work" advice?

BP says the blowout preventer (BOP) "should have worked." The flow of oil from beneath the seas should have stopped immediately. The manual effort to engage the BOP "should have worked."

"Should" can be a dangerous word, especially when confidence is important to a decision. Meanings include plan, intend, and expect. They do not include will or verified.

Luckily, when most of us are wrong it doesn't cost lives, industries, and billions of dollars. But when you are making a decision with serious consequences of being wrong, beware the word "should" in the advice you receive.

The next time you are making an important decision, ask your advisors what it would take to change the word "should" to "will." Understand the impact of a wrong decision. It "should" work may be good enough in many cases. But when it's not, listen for "will" and then verify the reasoning behind that confidence. Ask for testing information if appropriate. Don't overlook the confidence, or lack thereof, in the recommendations you are receiving. It's your decision.

HOW CAPABLE IS YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN NOW?

The recent recession caused many vulnerable companies to fail completely. Other companies stopped investing in operations. Many are more fragile than ever.

As the economy begins to recover, cash requirements precede cash receipts. Companies have to buy raw materials, hire labor, and pay utilities to fulfill orders. Many do not have access to money to do that.

Some of your suppliers likely gained new customers as their competitors failed, stressing their ability to meet your needs.

For your critical suppliers, find out now just how stable they are. Work with them to ensure they can meet your needs. Your ability to meet growing market demands is contingent on that of your supply chain.

FINISH STRONG®

The Starting Pistol

David Westin, President ABC News

"More than ever, our decision whether to report a story depends on more than simply whether we are confident of the truth of our story and its importance. Increasingly, we have to consider as well whether ... it's worth someone potentially going to jail."

The Tape

Rebecca Morgan:

"... so a story that 'should be true' won't get reported, and journalists are only risking jail, not lives and economies.

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