

Organizational Management Consulting



Gary Gzik
CEO & Kick Ass
Corporate Consultant

CEOCFO: Mr. Gzik, what is BizXcel?

Mr. Gzik: We consider ourselves a kick ass company, which really focuses on organizational and people growth, management consulting and skyrocketing your business intelligence.

CEOCFO: How does your mission play out day-to-day?

Mr. Gzik: That is one of the questions that people ask us all the time! What we do is we make clients better than they are today. It's that simple. This is what our goal is all about. We look at it very holistically. BizXcel is actually a merger of two organizations. I used to own a company called Volition Alliance Group. It was a people and organizational development and consulting firm. Consulting focused on things like strategic planning, engagement surveys and facilitating conflict situations. The development specialized in creating great leadership, engaged teams, effective communications and powerful people focusing on their own personal growth. Therefore, it was really about the strength and capacity of people to build corporate performance. Woodridge Data Solutions was a customized software programming company finding unique solutions to match the current and future challenges of their clients. Their strength was also in project management, developing eLearning solutions and of course the world of Business Intelligence. What we found out was that we actually needed each other. I found when I would be in talking to a company about obstacles I would hear a lot around people issues, but I also noticed there were patterns appearing around process or a technology issues that were causing people a lot of frustration. Therefore, you had committed people, but they did not have the tools or the systems in place. So performance suffered. Other times the company had the right systems and technology in place, but the people were not engaged. This is the same outcome, poor performance. Therefore this glaring gap needed to be filled and we decided to merge the companies so we could holistically look at the whole organization and really customize the solution to say, "Here is what you need to go from where you are to where you want to go." That could be a people solution. It could be a process solution. What we have really found is that many times it is a business analytic solution; that they just do not have their data that tells them a story, so that they can make confident, evidence based decision making. Again, what we are finding out was that companies were struggling with their agility because their people did not have the tools to be agile, their data was not relevant or their systems were not supported.

CEOCFO: When a company comes to you are they aware that you are handling both sides or is it more that they are pleasantly surprised when they realize the depth of your approach?

Mr. Gzik: They get more pleasantly surprised. We do not want to go off sounding like peddlers and start by throwing everything at them. Usually people contact us for a very specific reason. They have a pain point of some format. What makes us so strong is our diverse business background and that we can really listen carefully. We are not going in there trying to sell one product. We are actually in there looking to identify and present a solution. It has to be about developing a trusting relationship. For us this approach has really worked well. We are international. We organically grew through reputation and word of mouth. The clients that I have had for twenty some odd years are still my clients today. We do not lose clients once we have them. Our job is to continually get better ourselves, so that we can help them get better. To do this we really must understand their culture and respect what their culture is all about. That is because the solution itself cannot be seen as a fly by night. Too many people get frustrated with that. A company tries something new and it comes off as the flavor of the month and when the consultant or firm leaves any momentum or change leaves as well. Solutions really need to be crystallized into the company's own values, mission and their own culture itself.

CEOCFO: Do companies realize that it is more than just getting the latest software?

Mr. Gzik: We had this shift with the drop in the economy. There is a huge shift in the way that people did business. They went more from a focus on growth mode into survival mode. The minute they hit that survival mode they begin to start really cutting those things that support people from really bringing their greatness to the organization. Language, behavior, actions all begin to reflect a survival mode. Although at the time it appears necessary, if not managed properly can have some long lasting negative effects. The most recent Gallup poll study shows that thirteen percent of people are engaged in the organization; eighty seven percent are not. That means 87% are probably spending more time thinking about their weekend then adding value to the company. The study says that 63% are disengaged and 24% percent of them are actively disengaged. That is one out of every four. These people engage in negative behaviors, rumor and gossip. It has really gotten bad over the past few years; because people felt that they have just been thrown by the wayside. I get it. I do not think that organizations intentionally did that. They were just trying to figure it out how to survive in turbulent times. Now they are in that stage where they are looking back and saying, "What do we have to do?" A lot of the time they are relying on what was making them successful five or six or seven years ago. However, as you and I know, the world has changed dramatically over the last five years. The rules that applied five or six years ago do not apply today or do not necessarily apply today. Therefore, it is really about helping companies to look at their situation with fresh eyes and a fresh perspective on what really is going on. People are going in trying to look for that silver bullet that is going to give them the answer. There is no silver bullet any more. It is really about figuring out what are the bad habits that have been created over the last five, six or seven years are and how to replace them with the good, healthy, right habits that are needed to succeed, not only to deal with today's issues, but how to position yourself to deal quickly and confidently with any upcoming issues and challenges. Our business analytic tool arms companies to have the ability to have real time data, to be confident in decisions, to know how they are performing, to look for opportunities for greater profitability and performance and to improve quality and service. Our people approach gives leaders the ability to engage their teams through reports and information that begins to tell a story.

"We help organizations get unstuck from where they are, so that they can generate an environment of growth, collaboration and achieve new levels of greatness." - Gary Gzik

CEOCFO: When you are looking at a company and assessing what they need, what might you pay attention to that others do not realize is important?

Mr. Gzik: Our approach is to build trust with the organization and with the people. Therefore, when we go into a company we talk and explore with whoever is bringing us in and dig deep to understand their pain points and why they thought that we should be there. Then we ask if we can go the next step. We like to really interview other stakeholders when possible, whether that is initially through an online survey where we do some kind of an engagement survey or a climate survey or we just sit there one on one over a cup of coffee. We really just try to understand, not just what people are thinking, but what they are feeling. We identify requirements from an end user perspective and the hurdles they face to performance. We look at the person, the job and the company objectives. This approach really gives us a greater understand of where they are at from an engagement perspective, a company performance level and any information or reporting challenges as it relates to the business analytics side. Then we look at the company challenges with our own team of experts so we can assess the situation from multiple perspectives. It is not a matter of simply just offering a product to solve their problems. We don't rush in and say, "Here are the benefits of this tool." We start with, "What do you need this tool to do?" or "How do you need your day to change to be more rewarding and productive?" What is missing? What would you do better based upon the information that you would get? What do you want it to say? Then we can work backwards from there. Therefore, we do not go in with a predetermined idea of what needs to be done. We actually work backwards.

CEOCFO: Would you give us an example of a typical engagement and then maybe something a little more outside of the box?

Mr. Gzik: Absolutely! We have just created a new program that is getting a huge response from our existing clients and new clients. We were actually just at an HRP trade show and we announced it back in January. We call it Build a Kick Ass Company. We are really using strong words as it relates to building a Kick Ass Company, because we are finding that is what is needed to catch people's attention. Therefore, when people come up to both and say, "That is pretty cool, how do you do that," we engaged them by asking. First of all tell me; what is it about Kick Ass that caught your attention. Often Lynn, they told me the same thing. They said that people just do not have that energy, that passion any more. They just watched it completely be drained over the last few years. Therefore, when we developed the Kick Ass kind of mentality we looked at it from three components. One of them is from the senior leaders where it is all about finding your mojo. As an organization we have to fundamentally make the shift on, "What does that mean to be engaged and what does our mojo really stand for? What is our special sauce, so to speak? What is that one thing that causes people to put their feet on the

floor and run into work?" We have always said that our real mission is to abolish TGIF. Let's get rid of that "Thank Goodness It's Fridays". That is because that means that people are living for Friday, Saturday and Sunday and they cannot wait to get out. Therefore, why do we not abolish that mentality and try to figure out new ways to bring about more of a "Thank Goodness it's Monday." I know Monday always get a bad rap and no one really is always looking forward to coming into work on a Monday, but what if we had a bigger pep in our step. What if we hit the floor running on a Monday morning with an attitude of knowing you are going to accomplish something great that day? This is where we begin to try to make that shift; it is "what should the culture look like." From there then, we like to work with that middle team; the supervisors and the managers. We try to create what we call legendary leaders. How do we build legendary leaders within the organization? These are the ones that really are able to see the greatness in other people who cannot see the greatness in themselves. That is really what leadership is all about. It is being able to see that greatness and then be able to create the environment that allows people to choose to bring their greatness to work. We use that word choose very carefully, because you cannot force people to be great. However, you can create that environment to allow them to make the choice. Therefore, the idea behind legendary leaders is to eliminate that transactional deal mentality, where people come to work for eight hours and trade it for eight hours of pay. Time verses energy. We want people to bring their energy, their collaboration and their creativity that can only be done when they feel that it is embraced and accepted inside the environment. That is what our leaders do for us. Then as we get going, then we support that with what we call "Hell yeah teams." That is really with that whole mentality; that when somebody comes to work they say, "Do you want to be here? Hell yeah! Are you happy to work with these people? Hell yeah! Are we going to produce today? Hell yeah!" The way that we do that is so unique. Most people go forward thinking that you have to focus on the team. We initially really spend a lot of time with the individual. That is because our fundamental belief Lynn is this. You have to have a good healthy, correct, right relationship with yourself first because from that flows all good, healthy, correct, right relationships with other people. I cannot be a great team player if I do not like who I am. I cannot be a great leader if I am not confident and I cannot look in the mirror saying that I like who I see. How can I see greatness in other people if I cannot even see greatness in myself? Therefore, we reverse that whole approach and work with the individual first and the team second. We have all been part of a team. You can have ten people on your team. If you have one person that is negative and nine that are not you are going to find out that those nine will tip toe around that one and that one person will change the behavior of the others. Therefore, why not learn to embrace the individuals first. That shows value to the diversity and the uniqueness that each person brings and then increases the acceptance of this uniqueness within the team itself.

CEO CFO: *That is an interesting approach! How do you do that?*

Mr. Gzik: We've spent a lot of time working with First Nations groups and really learned and experienced a lot around spirituality and connecting with it. Therefore, this influenced me how to incorporate this approach when building strong dynamics within teams. First of all, I start individuals with building their confidence and self-esteem; how they truly view themselves. I work with people on their ability to make good, healthy, confident choices, again, so they eliminate those habits that produce bad results personally or professionally and replace with good, strong, productive and healthy habits. Most companies, when they look at their people, they distinguish between working and personal life. They expect their people to leave their baggage at the door when they arrive at work. We do not think this way. Our philosophy is that It is not about working to live or living to work. It simply is about living. It's about living fulfilled lives at work and at home. We can no longer ignore this ideal if companies want to thrive. You cannot separate the work person from the home person. This is what makes us whole. Both lives are connected and influenced by each other. When we begin to embrace this concept as teams and leadership all new possibilities begin to emerge. Let me give you an example of how they are intertwined. If I have an employee that has been on the road for a week and they are really giving their all and they have been away from their family for a week, I cannot just look at the individual. I have to look at the individual and their life. If they have a family at home, I know their family is also sacrificing for my employee to be on the road. Therefore, not only do I want to appreciate the employee, maybe I want to send flowers to the spouse to thank her or him for their sacrifice that week or maybe I would like to send a gift certificate for the whole family to go to the movies that weekend, to let the whole family know that I appreciate that their spouse or their parent that has been away for the week and we value that as an organization. Therefore, we learned to start looking at that component first and we help people put a lot of that control into their own hands. There are tools that we use to accomplish. When we get that component figured out, then and only then are people willing to be vulnerable and are willing to put trust in their team to rise to higher levels of performance than they ever thought possible. However, it has to start with the individual accepting responsibility for their thoughts, actions, behaviors and commitment first.

CEO CFO: *What might be different a year from now at BizXcel?*

Mr. Gzik: Wow! That is a great question! That is because BizXcel is always looking for growth and new opportunity. We do it through two perspectives. We let our client's influence our decision making and many times can dictate much of where we are going. Therefore, we really engage our clients and listen carefully to what is changing in their perspective

industries. Ultimately isn't this what a trusting relationship or partnership is all about? We must continually challenge ourselves to bigger and better things so we can help are clients achieve bigger and better things. WE can't do this working in isolation from our clients. We immerse ourselves in understanding their current and future challenges and we act as a catalyst to aid in their growth and success. We work with so many diverse industries, so that is a challenging component in itself. Therefore, it is a lot of conversations, many hours of research and training, networking, follow up calls and even some surveys along the way, but it is really about being close to what our customers want. The other aspect of that is that we listen carefully to what our team members want, as well. We believe that you should align people, not only with what they are really talented at, but also with what they enjoy doing. If you get somebody who likes coming to work because they are working on something that they want to do and they are good at it you know your performance is automatically going to increase. Therefore, we listen carefully to what our team is saying, where their expertise and passion thinks their field of expertise is heading. We look for growth opportunities. Many times we win. Sometimes we have not. However, the only way we know Lynn is that, again, we use our business analytics tools and we measure everything. Therefore, as effort is applied we look to see the results right away and that is how we start to tweak it. We do not wait for three or four months. We are checking it on a daily basis. We train our people. Make sure we challenge them so they don't get stuck inside of the proverbial box. We focus on becoming very agile ourselves in order to make that happen. What does all this look like? I know that we are expanding offices right now. We are expanding our talent resources. We are looking at a couple of new locations to set up offices to service clients even better. Our demand for our products and services are throughout North America. We are strategically looking at an effective growth model that will encompass physical locations and virtual service. All I know for sure is that we are in such an exciting business whose success is totally dependent on the success of our clients. What better motivation is there to ensure business relationships thrive!

CEOCFO: Why is BizXcel a noteworthy company?

Mr. Gzik: Choose BizXcel because we put your needs first. We can really look at it from a complete holistic perspective. We use what is call our delta P4 approach, where we can look at your planning, your people and your processes in order to create a greater level of performance for your company. We support the Delta P4 approach with strong business analytics, making data and reporting your competitive advantage. Therefore, we really look at that uniqueness. I don't know of anyone that can look at challenges, offer solutions or build long lasting relationships like we can. There is not a one size fits all solution for any company. Therefore, we really listen well and we look at your immediate and your future needs and we help in making those connections. Basically, what we do is we help organizations get unstuck from where they are, so that they can generate an environment of growth, collaboration and achieve new levels of greatness.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine



BizXcel Inc.

**For more information visit:
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