1

Thriving in the Now

Prepare for Yes

Katy, two years out of engineering school and a new recruit at software developer "Expedite," has just arrived at her Silicon Valley cube for a one-week stint on the graveyard shift as a technical support specialist. She has volunteered for this assignment because she's eager to see what happens on the front lines with customers she would otherwise never meet.

Grabbing her Red Bull, she logs in to Expedite's new management system designed to satisfy customers at the speed of their need.

Katy barely settles in when her Skype rings. Onto the screen pops the clearly irate face of the chief information officer of TexTech, the huge account in Ireland that Expedite won just last week.

"Six of our production facilities are down," bellows the CIO, "because your damned software crashed! We need this fixed, and we need it fixed now!" Katy's heart races. She knows that her actions during the next few minutes will determine whether the CIO decides to stick with the new software or dump it.

"I'll get back to you in 10 minutes," Katy promises.

Immediately she sends an internal distress tweet to the software team in Vietnam. In less than a minute she's on Skype as the engineers in Saigon access relevant documents and data from the cloud. Their real-time conversation includes "tag" searching of blogs, video references, and critical documents. The inference engine suggests the

> **DREAM**
> **Every Opportunity**
> **Every Employee**
> **Every Time**

FIGURE **1.1** Dream

"best-fit" materials to review. The engineers quickly spot the problem, a recently discovered bug that the application maintenance department in Paris had fixed and validated hours earlier; they immediately make the necessary change in their cloud application.

When Katy Skypes the CIO, not only has he calmed down, he's thrilled with the swift response. "I didn't think you guys could solve the problem this fast. You're amazing!"

As Katy finishes the call with the customer, she picks up her Red Bull. "Still cold," she marvels. Her smartphone chimes with a text from her boss.

"Checking in. Everything Okay?"

"All good here," she texts back.

In a traditionally managed organization, Katy would have needed to turn the customer problem over to management, and that would have delayed the solution by hours, if not days. Fortunately, however, Katy works for a company that does *business at the speed of now*.

By design, conventional management systems prevent both speed and customization at a time when employees and customers alike clamor for both. If your business doesn't provide it, your competitors will.

Customers increasingly demand a yes answer to each and every question they ask. They want what they want, and they want it now. This turns the world of management on its head. Managers simply cannot keep using a system that creaks along, getting bogged down in protocol or bureaucracy. Companies must evolve or die. Once the need for speed burst into the business environment, it changed the game. Today, competitive success demands a new approach to management, one that enables employees at all levels to solve problems and seize opportunities autonomously and instantaneously.

Our Love of Speed

An advertisement for the Pony Express printed in a California news-paper in 1860 read: "Wanted. Young, skinny, wiry fellows. Not over 18. Must be expert riders. Willing to risk death daily. Orphans preferred."

The forerunner of Federal Express ran weekly. Instead of over-night, communications took 10 days at 10 miles per hour to get from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California. A half-ounce letter cost $425 in today's dollars. Riders received $100 a month in a time when unskilled laborers earned a mere $4.

Amazingly, the famed Pony Express lasted only 18 months. By 1861, the first telegraph poles began dotting the countryside. And within the decade the tracks of the first transcontinental railroad ran from sea to shining sea. What propelled these developments? A love of speed and, more specifically, a passion to get vital information more swiftly.

Over the past hundred years, farsighted entrepreneurs have invented planes, jets, the fax machine, and, in the past two decades, the internet and mobile electronic devices to support the need for speed. Now anything anyone needs to know can travel at the speed of light, circling the globe 7.4 times in 1 second or traveling to the moon and back in 2.6 seconds (see Table 1.1).

TABLE 1.1 History of Speed

Mode	Speed/mph	Downsides	When
Stagecoach	5	Dangerous and unreliable	1766
Pony Express	10	Expensive and dangerous	1860–1861
Telegraph	4,900,000	Unreliable, few locations	First in 1861, last in 2006
Railroad	5–50	Expensive, few locations	1869 first transcontinental
Airplane	80–600	Expensive to operate	First 1848, common by 1940s
Jet	768	Expensive	First in 1930s, common by 1960
Fax	4,900,000	Specialized equipment	First 1924, popular 1970s
E-mail	669,000,000	Requires computer	First 1965, popular by 1990
Texting	669,000,000	Limited information	First in 1992, popular by 2000

mph = miles per hour

Since nothing moves faster than the speed of light, information will never flow any faster, although bandwidth expansion allows greater and greater quantities of information and richer and richer media (''Yes, there are plenty of apps for that!'') to come speeding down the information highway. Having achieved near-instant access to the information they want and need, both customers and employees now expect speed every second of every day.

The ability to receive information with a single click of the mouse or a tap on the screen sets expectations high for getting anything you want. If you can access the cast and storyline of the latest Academy Award–winning film on your smartphone or iPad, then why can't you get your cable provider to solve a connectivity problem in seconds? Why can't you get that new LCD 55-inch television installed this afternoon? People want all sorts of stuff, and, more and more, they want it now.

Twitter's language of hash tags and short URLs can be used as a window through which millions of people can peer to see what's going on now, whether in the world of celebrities and global corporations or in the lives of friends or colleagues. A follower can access breaking news from CNN, the musings of business icon Jack Welch, details of the latest costumes worn by Lady Gaga, the most recent developments in the NFL or NBA, and the latest news from the Ford Motor Company, not to mention updates from the president of the United States or even the author of this book. (Follow me on Twitter: @johnmbernard.)

What does all this mean to today's business leaders and managers? Quite simply, it means that you must find ways to do business at the speed of everyone's need. You must find better ways to fire up your people, thrill your customers, and race past your competitors— now. This book will explore the principles and practices that leaders and managers can use to thrive in a world where change happens so fast you can only see today in your rearview mirror.

The Power of Yes

''Hello, I'm having trouble with my HD DVR,'' Harley told the DirecTV service representative, who immediately said, ''Thank you for being such a long-time customer.'' For over 15 years Harley

had remained loyal to the satellite television provider that he had championed to all his friends and neighbors on Cape Cod, many of whom also became enthusiastic customers. Whenever he had called with a problem, a DirecTV technician had always solved the problem immediately or quickly escalated it up to someone who could. But not this time.

The technician said, "I see we've run through the troubleshooting protocols. You probably need a new unit, but you'll need to talk with technical support."

"Can't you just authorize a new HD DVR and save me and your company a lot of time?" Harley had grown impatient with trying the same fixes over and over, all to no avail.

"No sir, this is the way we have to do it."

A half hour later Harley had talked to three different people, told the same story to each, ran the same diagnostic tests of the system, and still had not received authorization for a replacement device, even though he was a long-time customer and paid extra each month for a total equipment protection plan.

Finally, the third technician offered to connect Harley to someone in senior management. A senior manager reviewed the case, asked the same wearisome questions, and, finally, authorized the replacement machine.

Harley then asked the woman a simple question: "Why don't you allow your front-line people to make an obvious decision and save me and yourselves a lot of hassle and money? If this happens to me again, you'll turn me into a former customer."

"Well, sir," responded the manager, half jokingly, "Management needs *something* to do."

Subsequently, when one of his tennis buddies asked him about switching from cable to satellite TV service, Harley did not recommend the move.

While reasonable customers don't mind answering a few reasonable questions, no one likes being treated like an idiot or a crook, or being taken on an agonizing journey through the messy decision-making maze of an organization where management "needs something to do." Customers simply don't care about a company's internal procedures and policies; they want a speedy answer to a specific question, and the answer they want to hear is yes!

A company's failure to solve the customer's problem now can mean the beginning of the end of a relationship, as it did for Harley. It can also mean the beginning of a new relationship with a competitor. As happened in the DirecTV example, a long-time loyal customer lost confidence in a firm with which he had enjoyed a 15-year relationship, not over a string of bad experiences but over company procedures and policies that had prevented it from saying yes and saying it now. It happens every day as businesses lose customers for reasons they never even see. In reverse, a surprise accommodation can turn a prospective buyer into a loyal customer.

Yes derives its power from the fact that it saves customers time; and time, like low tide, waits for no one. No one can ever buy more of it; it continually slips away, and when it's gone, it's gone forever. When a customer hears a prompt yes, she can happily move on to something else she needs to do. When she hears no, especially after waiting for over an hour to hear it, she feels as if she's been robbed of something irreplaceable.

Customers also value yes because it respects their needs and makes them feel good, whether they are dealing with an insurance provider or the Department of Motor Vehicles. Can you think of a better definition for customer service than "making the customer feel good?" That feeling lies at the heart of every customer relationship, and yet companies forget that fact all the time when they take loyalty for granted.

My wife and I felt our loyalty taken for granted recently when our long-time insurance company, a name-brand outfit (always top-rated by *Consumer Reports*) failed to say yes. We had always liked the service this company provided, but after an industrial van smashed into my rear bumper while I was stopped at a signal waiting for the left-turn light to turn green, I ran into a snarl of red tape.

Even though my insurer ended up not paying a dime on the claim (the company that owned the vehicle that hit me did), while dealing with the incident, my insurer discovered I had not updated them on the fact that I had recently begun using my personal vehicle for business purposes. Both my wife and I held interminable conversations with a service rep, who implied that we were purposely trying to deceive a firm that also carried our home, auto, umbrella, and life

policies. We paid this company a lot of money, only to listen as its representative made us feel like crooks.

The relationship soured instantly. Why, you might wonder, didn't I express my unhappiness to upper management? The hassle had already cost me more time than it was worth, so instead I began looking for an insurer that would give me the respect a valuable customer deserves.
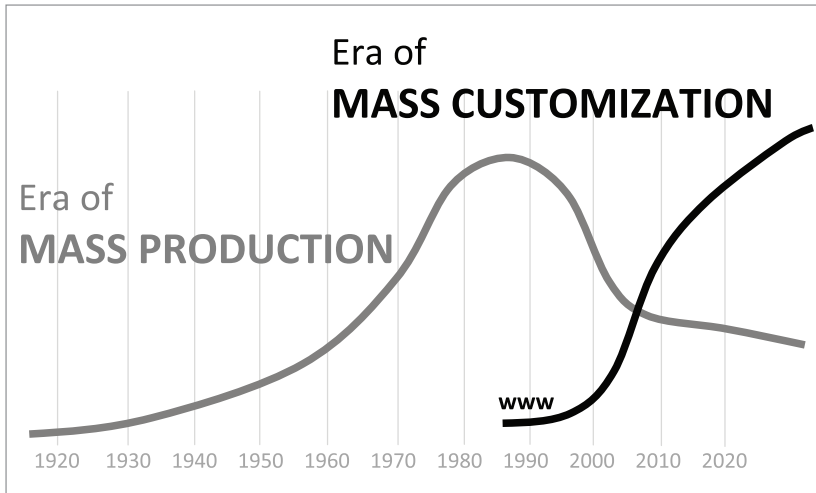
Yes helps maintain beneficial relationships; no gives customers the impression that they are not valued or that the company does not value the relationship.

I Want My Yes Now!

My literary agent and collaborator, Michael Snell, recently installed two new computers in his office, a PC purchased from Dell and a Mac ordered from Apple. When I asked him which system he liked best, he sighed. "Oh, both systems work fine for our purposes, but let me tell you, customer service is night and day. When the PC crashed due to a virus, I spent three hours on the phone with service reps at Dell's facility in Mumbai, first with a computer voice (you know, 'if X press Y, if A press B'), then to someone who routed me to the hardware department, when I really needed help with the software; and finally to 'Rick' who was extremely polite but painfully slow. The fix ultimately took two hours and cost me $59."

Michael then experienced a problem with his Mac's capability to communicate with his office printer. "I called Apple Care," he explained, "and within three minutes I was talking to a technician who recorded my iMac's serial number, then patiently but swiftly walked me through a rather complicated series of steps that involved eliminating a tiny piece of corrupted code in the operating system. That did the trick. The whole affair took 15 minutes and did not cost me a dime."

Both Dell and Apple have access to the same technologies to manage their customer interactions, so why the difference in the customer's experience? One of the companies implements yes now, the other limps along with maybe someday. Technology has enabled a revolution, but you must join it, not sit on the sidelines, because customers *expect* yes now.

Era of
MASS CUSTOMIZATION

Era of
MASS PRODUCTION

www

1920   1930   1940   1950   1960   1970   1980   1990   2000   2010   2020

FIGURE **1.2**   Mass Production versus Mass Customization

Businesses can say yes now because a whole host of new technologies and applications have finally made it possible to do so. Companies now operate in a new Era of Mass Customization, where customers enjoy nearly unlimited options to satisfy their needs and appetites. Mass customization, a term Stan Davis popularized in his 1987 book *Future Perfect*, aptly describes the internet's impact on the marketplace. No longer must they put up with the "one size fits all" approach of the old Era of Mass Production (see Figure 1.2).

In Chapter 2, I closely examine the impact of mass customization on management, but for now just keep in mind this basic definition for the term: The use of computer-aided systems to produce custom output.

Why does that matter? Computer-aided systems change the value-creation game because they combine the low unit cost of mass production with the flexibility of individual customization. While mass production supplied large volumes of identical products produced at a low cost, mass customization offers individually differentiated products manufactured at or near mass production costs. Mass production once drove the global economy, and still plays a major role in emerging economies, but mass customization increasingly defines a new economy, where companies can say yes to customers and give them what they want when they want it. Of course,

businesses have always striven to do that, but now they *can* do it. Three factors are facilitating the transition from mass production to mass customization.

Social Media, Cloud Computing, and the Millennial Mind-Set

Although technological tools are constantly evolving, social media, cloud computing, and the millennial mind-set will continue to advance the progress of this transition because each helps companies satisfy the consumer's appetite for yes.

Social media keeps people connected to information and to each other. Social media, from Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to YouTube, Foursquare, and Groupon, enable users to share their thoughts, activities, accomplishments, and their likes and dislikes, the instant they occur.

Customers can instantly offer feedback or issue complaints. Companies can instantly obtain feedback from customers, or tell them about new products, special offers, and useful tips about using their products. Of course, that free flow of transparent feedback can sometimes prove embarrassing.

Witness the battle between United Airlines and a musician named Dave Carroll. When the airline's baggage handlers badly damaged his $3,500 Taylor guitar on a flight from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Omaha, Nebraska, United's customer service personnel refused to take responsibility for the mishap or compensate Carroll for his loss, claiming he had failed to make a claim within the company's stipulated "standard 24-hour timeframe." Carroll said later, "I alerted three employees, who showed complete indifference toward me." In response, he wrote a song about the incident ("I should have flown with someone else, or gone by car, 'cause United breaks guitars"), which he posted on YouTube. Within a day 150,000 people had viewed it, and within a year it had garnered a whopping 9 million hits. The *London Times* estimated that, in the end, the 18-month-long public relations fiasco cost United Airlines $180 million dollars in lost revenue, plus the expense of rebuilding its reputation.

Interestingly, Taylor Guitar responded to Dave's video with a post on YouTube to help guitar lovers everywhere, explaining that most

airline employees don't know that people are permitted to carry guitars on board, as long as they keep them in their cases, and offering to help any guitar player who may be in need of a repair.

Some companies discover the power of social media the hard way. Aaron Howard, president of Mass Ingenuity and a loyal customer of the car sharing and car club enterprise, Zipcar, suffered a series of bad experiences over a two-day period. While returning a car one evening, Aaron found that not only had someone taken his designated parking space, he could not find any other space to park the car. Zipcar customer service offered no help whatsoever. Thirty minutes later, Aaron finally found a spot to park the car. On his next interaction with Zipcar, he went to the designated space to fetch the vehicle he had reserved, only to discover that another customer had not yet returned that car. Zipcar could offer no nearby alternative. Aaron might have overlooked these inconveniences had Zipcar not announced a big rate increase mere days after a customer service rep had convinced Aaron to "upgrade" to a new program with a 10 percent discount. The higher rate more than obliterated the supposed savings.

Aaron tweeted his dissatisfaction to his followers, including Zipcar. Within minutes 30,000 people and Zipcar itself knew all about Aaron's frustrations. A Zipcar supervisor who had been monitoring Twitter called Aaron within 10 minutes to assure him that the company would redress his grievances. Although, initially, the customer service representatives did not respond properly, social media ended up forcing the company to resolve Aaron's issues. He immediately tweeted his followers to tell them that Zipcar had done the right thing.

The second force, cloud computing, changes the game because it dramatically drives down the cost of computing. Basically, cloud computing involves moving from applications run on a specific computer's hard drive to those run on the internet, or, metaphorically, "in the cloud." When Sherry Swachhamer, the chief information officer of Oregon's Multnomah County, switched her agency from Microsoft's desktop Outlook to Google Apps, a cloud alternative, she achieved an estimated $500,000 reduction in annual costs for the 4,500-employee organization.

In a 2009 white paper titled "The Benefits of Cloud Computing," IBM estimated that cost savings from such a switch would start at

20 percent. A study released the same year by the Silicon Valley–based research and consulting firm The FactPoint Group cited cases where the cloud helped organizations reduce the time it takes to convert to new technology by as much as 80 percent. Still in its infancy, cloud computing represents a solution to the ever-increasing acceleration of costs for traditional approaches to information management. Perhaps more importantly, when you transport data to the cloud, you make it easily accessible to employees who need it in order to act swiftly and avoid customer relations catastrophes like the one United Airlines suffered when it stonewalled Dave Carroll's complaint.

The third, and perhaps most transformative force has resulted from the coming of age of the now generation, the millennials. This generation of consumers and workers has grown up living in the now. Unlike preceding generations, they have never waited for much of anything. Their mind-set, which combines skill in social media and all the latest communication devices with an appetite for instant gratification, has profoundly influenced the workplace and the marketplace. As more and more businesses embrace the "need for speed" aspects of the millennial mind-set, management must change not only the way it operates but also the way it thinks about doing business. Whether you serve as the managing partner of a regional accounting firm, work as the lead software developer in a booming iPhone app company, or manage one small bank, your colleagues and your customers expect you to manage your enterprise in a way that says yes now.

An executive at SupplyWorld, a global supply chain company, explained that he hadn't given much thought to how the millennials and social media were influencing change until he became a grandfather. "My daughter and her husband wanted us to be the first to know that she was pregnant with our first grandchild, so they dropped by the house Saturday afternoon. We were thrilled, of course, but even more delighted when we could share it with the whole family, who arrived at our house after Shannon tweeted everyone that we were celebrating."

When the executive went to his office on Monday morning, the incident clearly in his mind, he peppered the company's chief information officer with questions about how SupplyWorld could take advantage of social media in the marketplace. "What would happen,"

GAME CHANGERS

Millennial Mind-Set

Cloud Computing

Social Media
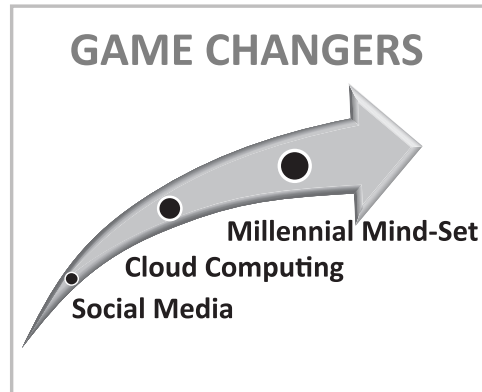
Fɪɢᴜʀᴇ*** 1.3*** NOW Game–Changing Drivers

he wondered, "if we flashed a message out to all of our customers about a big one-time freight discount? How many do you think would 'join the party' and place early orders?"

In Chapter 4, we will more fully explore these three NOW drivers (illustrated in Figure 1.3) and how to leverage them.

Mass–Customize Me, Please!

Suppose you need a logo for your new restaurant, "Sparklefish," which specializes in fresh seafood at affordable prices. You don't know any local graphics artists but learn from a friend that she used 99designs.com to get that lovely logo for her bakery. "Just go to their website," she advises. "You'll be amazed how easy it is to get help from great designers around the world." You like that idea because you cannot afford to waste a lot of time on the project. You're busy supervising installation of the restaurant's new appliances and lighting fixtures and don't have the time to interview various design firms or wait for bids on the project.

Seventy-two hours later, you've invested a scant 20 minutes and $360 on the 99designs.com service and have narrowed your choices down from 144 designs to 2 options that beautifully capture Sparkle-fish's brand and mission. You select an aqua-colored salmon dancing with a bright red lobster.

Sites like 99designs.com allow a business access to a large pool of experts, quickly and affordably, enabling the business to come

away with a unique solution tailored to its needs. Rather than one anonymous customer contacting one equally anonymous supplier, Sparklefish's business owner formed a relationship with 144 providers. Then she picked the designer who best understood and related to her needs. She got her yes, and she got it now.

For a century, consumers have enjoyed the fruits of mass production and welcomed the fact that their new Model T Ford, Motorola television set, or Hoover vacuum cleaner were identical to the ones owned by friends and neighbors. While that market reality still applies to many consumer items, a growing number of options are available for an increasing number of products and services.

The Great Recession of 2008, sparked by careless mortgage financing practices and greedy Wall Street dealings, presented businesses with both a problem and an opportunity. Yes, the economy sputtered and drove the unemployment rate through the roof, but it also forced business leaders to rethink the way they do business, developing leaner operations while at the same time vastly increasing customized solutions for their customers. It forced them to grapple with the facts that globalization enables choice, choice increases the necessity to customize, and competitive pressure drives down prices. Five years from now you may look back and see the recession as a milestone on the path from mass production to mass customization.

The constant development of new technologies, and the changes they bring to the business world, render obsolete the stiff old bureaucratic management systems that dictated business workflows and decision making for over a century. Even before the recession, companies were looking for new ways to do more with less. Social media, cloud computing, and the millennial mind-set aid them in that quest.

Buyers expect more from sellers in terms of product features and reliability, the speed with which new products come to market, the swiftness of after-purchase service, and the agility with which sellers jump on the next big thing.

In November 2010, mere months after Apple introduced the iPad, Samsung launched the Galaxy Tab, with features not available on the iPad: a camera (two, in fact), the capability to run Web videos written in Adobe's Flash software, and multitasking. Apple not only reacted

to Samsung's challenge, the two companies since then probably have raced through three more competitive cycles. Until recently, salespeople at Best Buy only needed to keep abreast of one new model per year from each television manufacturer every year. Now they must get up to speed on new models from such manufacturers as Samsung every four months.

This customization does not come without cost. It can take a significant investment and resources to fashion an organization that can deliver products and services; and it takes time and money to adopt a management system that enables an organization's people to make now a daily reality. Technology greatly streamlines the automation of custom responses, and a proven approach such as Lean simplifies the processes that deliver customization. Lean, which traces its origins to Toyota's Just-in-Time Production System, helps companies do more with less. While it began as a manufacturing philosophy, companies today apply it to every function, including management, in their effort to eliminate waste.

The agility and efficiency a company needs to flourish in a world of mass customization depends on establishing new systems and embedding them deeply in the organization. It's not just the people who meet and greet the public, sell them stuff, or provide after-purchase service and care who must operate in the now. Everyone from the board of directors to the fellow who polishes the lobby floors at night must embrace the now mentality and utilize the tools that enable them to improve everything they do. Like any engine, every part plays an essential role. If you want to know which parts might stall your own organization, look for the weakest ones. Wherever you find constraints that inhibit making decisions and doing business, that's where the system will either slow up or shut down. The new marketplace realities demand the sort of highly agile, waste-free, and cost-effective management system you'll encounter in the pages ahead.

Enabling Your Organization's YESability

Betty Rauch, a marketing and branding consultant in Manhattan, tells a story about a 175-year-old company that has adopted technologies that enable it to move swiftly, respond quickly, and offer solutions at

all levels of the organization. When Betty needed to give a token of appreciation to the retiring executive director of a nonprofit organization, she ordered a small crystal apple from Tiffany & Company, America's oldest and most prestigious jeweler. She wanted the company to etch the gift with a simple "Thank You." When Tiffany delivered the little apple to her apartment, she opened the blue box with anticipation, only to find that the apple bore no inscription. Her heart sank. The nonprofit was planning to present the retirement gift at a Saturday dinner, and there Betty sat at 10:30 on Thursday evening with little time to remedy the situation. "Oh, well," she thought. "They say that their phones are open til 11:00. Might as well let them know they let me down."

To her surprise, when she dialed the number for Tiffany's customer care department, she found herself talking to a real live person, rather than the computer voice she had expected. When she heard "Good evening, this is Tiffany's, how may I help you?" she thought she actually heard a smile in that cheerful voice. After Betty explained her problem, the customer care rep promised to look into it immediately and call back within a half hour. "Yeah, yeah," thought Betty. "Like that's going to happen."

Surprisingly, 15 minutes later, the Tiffany's rep called Betty with the good news.

"We'll have it delivered to your home no later than Saturday morning with the etching you ordered. And, to make up for the inconvenience we have caused a valued customer, please keep the other apple as a gift from Tiffany & Company. You see, Ms. Rauch, you are the apple of our eye!"

What did Tiffany's customer service representative accomplish? She found a way to say yes now. And in the end she not only satisfied an unhappy customer, she created a loyal champion, who will encourage everyone she knows to shop at Tiffany (see Figure 1.4).

YESability depends on many factors, such as front-line responsibility for solving problems, and the communication and system tools needed to solve them; but it begins with management understanding those factors and ensuring that the people who first encounter customer problems possess the tools, skills, information, and authority they need to say yes now. Management must also make sure that all the behind-the-scenes workers who never see a customer (the

**Customer Loyalty
in the Now**

EASY

EASE
OF
YES

HARD

SLOW   SPEED OF YES   FAST
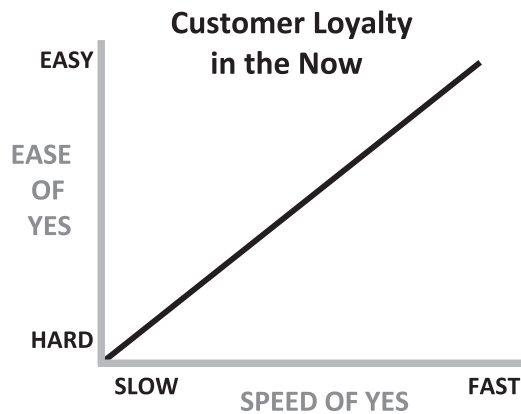
FIGURE **1.4**   Customer Loyalty in the Now

engraver at Tiffany, for example) understand their role in delivering solutions at the speed of now.

In the now, managers do not, as one writer once wryly observed, "herd cats," by which he meant vigilantly overseeing and correcting the effort and progress of all the people under their command to ensure that everyone keeps scurrying in the right direction. Rather, in the Era of Mass Customization, they must implement and rely on a management system that enables each and every one of their people, whether they ever see a customer or not, to make quick, smart, and productive decisions.

For an organization to function in the now, its managers must provide every employee with five crucial elements:

1. Context ("Where are we going?")
2. Accountability ("What role do I play?")
3. Skills ("What abilities must I possess?")
4. Facts ("What data must I access to make decisions?")
5. Authority ("Do I enjoy the freedom to act without fear of reprisal?")

To enable YESability, managers must have put these crucial elements in place before the moment of truth arrives in the form of a first-time order or an angry call from an irate customer. The bottom line? Management's work today should center on enabling immediate
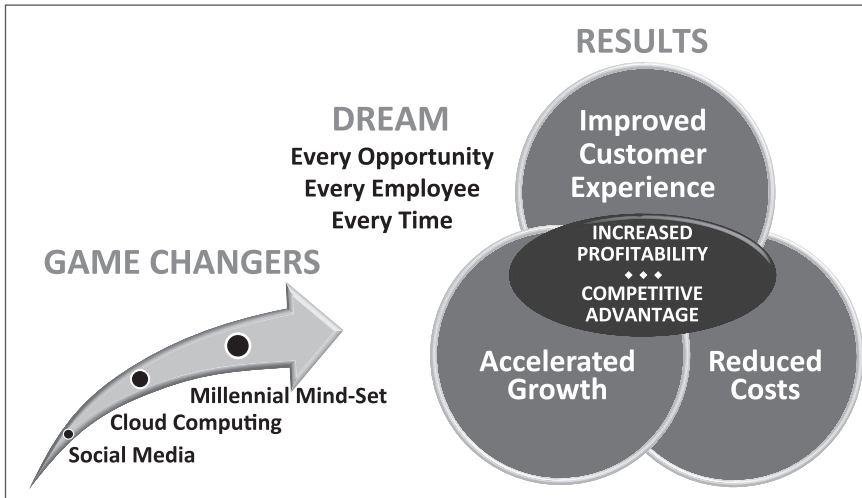
FIGURE **1.5**   NOW Drivers to Results

action and ensuring that all action aligns with the direction and goals of the business. It requires an about-face just as revolutionary as the one managers made at the dawn of the Era of Mass Production.

What makes a Tiffany & Company or an Apple Computer or any other great company tick? Their people quickly seize every opportunity that comes along, no matter how trivial. All those seized opportunities, from the smallest to the biggest, accumulate over time to improve customer experience, reduce costs, accelerate growth, and ensure increased profitability and competitive advantage (see Figure 1.5).

The NOW Speedometer

Throughout the chapters of this book you will find many opportunities to analyze and score your organization's performance across a variety of different competencies, and at the end of each chapter you will find a measuring tool that determines an organization's NOW speed. Your score will indicate the degree to which your organization manages in the *then* or manages in the *now*. As you complete each chapter's NOW Speedometer you can accumulate the scores in the Appendix.

You will get the most out of this tool if you:

◆ *Decide whether to score your team, your department, your division, or the overall organization.* Do only one at a time. Trying to do them all at the same time will cause you to lose focus on the level of the organization that concerns you the most. An entrepreneur might score only one person, herself, while a team leader will score many individuals. A CEO, of course, would score the entire organization, not any single individual.

◆ *Avoid overthinking your answers.* Rely on your gut reaction. Too much thinking can cause you to get hung up on too many details.

Pause a few minutes at this point and try your hand at completing your first NOW Speedometer. An example follows to help you understand how to use this tool.

Example

Here's how one hypothetical manager completed the tool. "Kathy Stiles" runs the plant at "Clean-and-Press" (CP), a large dry cleaning establishment, where she oversees the work of six people. With a passion for delighting every CP customer, Stiles takes a hard look at her team. Her thinking goes something like this:

Item One: Which statement better describes her operation: "We say no to special customer needs," or "We try hard to say yes to special customer needs"? Well, they're not very flexible. Stiles recalls losing a customer recently because the woman did not want CP to iron the collars on her blouses, preferring to do them herself. Stiles's plant couldn't handle that request. Stiles scores her department a –1 in the NOW Speedometer's "THEN –1" column.

Item Two: Stiles asks herself which statement best describes CP: "We *immediately* say no to special customer requests," or "We *immediately* say yes to special customer requests"? Stiles remembers another situation when a local restaurant wanted assurance that CP did not use certain chemicals that irritated

the sensitive skin of one of its waitresses. It took a week to get an answer back to the customer. On the other hand, Stiles almost always responds to customer requests and complaints the same day via e-mail. She records a 0 in the middle column and goes on to complete the Speedometer.

Stiles then completed the Speedometer using this same thinking process (see Table 1.2).

TABLE 1.2 NOW Speedometer Example

Then	−1	0	+1	Now
We say no to special customer needs	−1			We try hard to say yes to special customer needs
We immediately say no to special customer requests		0		We immediately say yes to special customer requests
We only authorize our people to say no	−1			We enable our people to say yes
We treat every customer the same way	−1			We treat every customer as a unique individual
We ban the use of social media at work			+1	We encourage the use of social media at work
We have not developed a cloud computing strategy		0		We have developed a strategy for moving as much as possible to the cloud
We believe that millennials don't understand what it takes to succeed in the real world			+1	We welcome the millennial mind-set
Subtotals	−3		2	
Working in the Now **NET SCORE**			−1	

TABLE **1.3** NOW Speedometer 1: Working in the Now

Then	−1	0	+1	Now
We say no to special customer needs				We try hard to say yes to special customer needs
We immediately say no to special customer requests				We immediately say yes to special customer requests
We only authorize our people to say no				We enable our people to say yes
We treat every customer the same way				We treat every customer as a unique individual
We ban the use of social media at work				We encourage the use of social media at work
We have not developed a cloud computing strategy				We have developed a strategy for moving as much as possible to the cloud
We believe that millennials don't understand what it takes to succeed in the real world				We welcome the millennial mind-set
Subtotals				
Working in the Now **NET SCORE**				

Add this score to the consolidated scorecard in the Appendix.

■ ■ ■

Complete the Speedometer for Working in the Now (Table 1.3) and add your net score to the summary sheet in the Appendix.

Your net score indicates the degree to which your organization either functions in the then or manages in the now. As shown in Figure 1.6, scores can range from −7 to +7. A score of −7 indicates that your organization functions entirely with a mass production mind-set, whereas a score of +7 suggests it effectively manages in the now.

SPEEDOMETER

THEN		NOW

−7 −6 −5 −4 −3 −2 −1 | 0 | +1 +2 +3 +4 +5 +6 +7