



SIR ALAN PARKER

**CHAIRMAN,
BRUNSWICK GROUP**

IT IS, PERHAPS, SOMEWHAT OVERDUE FOR US TO SPEND AN ISSUE OF THE *Brunswick Review* focusing on one of any CEO's and leadership team's top priorities: the human dimension of great performance. We spend a lot of time dealing with external factors. So many are significant and fast-changing, creating massive uncertainty and complexity. However, the business of engaging people within organizations is going through just as profound a change as the worlds of technology and capital markets.

We know that everybody could contribute more and perform better given the right motivation and environment. Our problem is how to achieve this. What's exciting is that attitudes are changing, partly as a result of new ways of working, and also because technology has torn down many of the barriers that prevented leaders from speaking directly to colleagues, creating new opportunities to inform, share and inspire.

Many organizations are powering up engagement with stakeholders by recognizing we are in the age of networks and conversations. Conversations taking place internally are now integrated with external ones, and this presents huge opportunities through new channels and platforms. These can be used not just to make pronouncements or answer questions, but to develop and keep live dialogues going, which can be empowering for everybody involved. The art and science of engaging in productive conversation is very different from the old business of broadcast communications. Using technology alone doesn't necessarily deliver that shift, but it can help us recognize how and where the conversations are taking place, and where the heat in them resides.

A significant part of what we hope we're achieving through better engagement is increased productivity. Again, however, it's not as simple as adding new approaches and technology. One of the great unexplained mysteries of our time is how, with all our new tools, productivity growth in the OECD countries has slowed and stubbornly resists improvement. At our Brunswick gathering this summer, Yves Morieux from BCG gave a brilliant exposition of the power of commitment and collaboration, and I'm delighted we have an excerpt from his speech in the *Review*. His conclusion is deceptively simple: "Companies need to produce something called 'satisfaction at work.'"

A key component of sustained performance is recognizing the importance of a purpose, or an organization's "why." That "why" is the crucial part of any story but is too rarely articulated or shown in action. There's a naval adage: direction is important but movement more so. Momentum facilitates change. Pointing alone doesn't get you there.

Creating a positive, productive culture, with a shared sense of ownership, requires constant effort and invention. Across the world with our clients, we see more creativity and commitment to this crucial area. I hope this edition offers provocations, illustrations and examples that are useful and inspiring.

The business of engaging people within organizations is going through just as profound a change as the worlds of technology and capital markets