

# Who Wouldn't Want to be a Front Runner?

By Gary Tomlinson

“Being a front runner is all about looking forward and has very, very little to do with looking back. Front runners compete with themselves more than anyone else; that is they're able to stay ahead regardless of how stiff or how numerous the competition is.”

“Front runners stay ahead because they refuse to slow down. In good times, they forge ahead; in bad times, they grow their lead over the competition. They turn obstacles into opportunities and they are relentless in finding such opportunities.”

“When the economy, globalization, technology or a fickle buying public threatens to make them impotent, these companies embrace the challenge through change and find a solution that propels them forward double-time. In short, change is what makes them front runners to start with, not what helps them to catch up and take over.”

In his book, *Front Runners – Lap Your Competition With 10 Game-changing Strategies for Total Business Transformation*, Mahesh Rao has written a serious book about how to systematically make your company better through change. We all know that change is inevitable. We also know that change is necessary if there is to be any improvement. What a lot of leaders don't fully realize is just how hard change can be. For example, only 8% of New Year Resolutions get achieved. Only 17% of business strategies get fully implemented. And in change-or-die situations only 11% of people will make the change. Change isn't easy for people.

In their book, *Switch* the Heath brothers say that for behavior to change we've got to influence not only our environment but our hearts and minds too. They go on to say that for change to occur we need to: *Direct the Rider* because what looks like resistance is often a lack of clarity; *Motivate the Elephant* because what looks like laziness is often exhaustion; and *Shape the Path* because what looks like a people problem is often a situation problem. In *Front Runners*, Mahesh Rao shows us that there is a system to follow and that by closely aligning ourselves with his ten steps we will achieve transformation in a logical and orderly fashion. He has written his book in a way that will direct your rider, motivate your elephant and shape your path.

Gary Tomlinson (reviewer) recently had the opportunity to interview the author, Mr. Mahesh Rao.

## **Reviewer: Was there a tipping point for you to write this book?**

**Mahesh Rao:** Yes there was. This book was written by design. As an executive consultant, I began to notice that when I brought up the subject of change or transformation many of the

executives I worked with brushed it off. They would say things like, “Mahesh, we’re doing just fine.” Or “Mahesh, we don’t need to transform.” Yet I never saw them leverage change to their advantage or saw them seek out opportunities in crisis. I came to realize they were managing their companies more than they were leading them. And there is a huge difference between the two. Most of them came up through the ranks as managers. They managed to a budget, they managed by objectives, but they weren’t really leading, they were only managing. In the last few years the economy has really been tough. A lot of these managers had never experienced anything like this before. They didn’t know how to adapt and lead their organizations into opportunities. And for those executives who did understand that transformation was the way to go, they didn’t know where to begin. These are the reasons I wrote this book.

**Reviewer: Did you have any “aha” moments during the process of writing *Front Runners*?**

**Mahesh Rao:** Yes, I had three big “aha” moments. I had originally planned on writing this book for senior executives. To show them how to become better leaders. To help them understand there is both an “art” and “science” to leadership. But after interviewing thousands of managers it was so obvious that everyone was interested in how to become a better leader. This wasn’t a topic that just senior leaders wanted to know more about. In fact, the further I went down the “hierarchy” line, the more interested the managers seem to become. They were hungry for this type of knowledge. Because of this, I wrote *Front Runners* for managers at all levels of an organization.

The second “aha” moment was that this book would be applicable for businesses in all industries and in all countries. Because I was experienced in the hi-tech industry I had first thought I’d write the book for that industry. After interviewing so many people, across different industries and in different countries, it became apparent that the knowledge I wanted to share was applicable to just about everyone, everywhere.

After conducting about 4,000 interviews, my research shed light on one of the most important elements that separated successful leaders from not so successful ones. Successful leaders “*dream*” the fullest potential of their company’s capabilities through intuition and then help *realize* it based on its *strengths*. This was a big eye opener for me and the third “aha” moment.

**Reviewer: What key messages would you like the readers to take away from your book?**

**Mahesh Rao:** Any company can be a front runner in their perspective industry. And whether you like it or not you have to assume that your competition is working on transforming their companies. It’s up to you. Do you want to remain at status quo or do you want to take the lead and become the front runner? Because at the end of the day, front runner status is there for the taking!

We need leaders now more than ever. Not only in the United States but in every country and in every business. Change is not something to be feared, but embraced. Change is a constant in our

operational success. The alternative is failure. Only by embracing change and using it to our advantage will we become front runners in an increasingly challenging and competitive race.

To learn more about *Front Runners – Lap Your Competition With 10 Game-changing Strategies for Total Business Transformation* or to purchase a copy go to <http://www.befrontrunner.com>. This is a serious and informative book used by executives of Fortune 100 companies to transform their organizations into front runners.

*Gary Tomlinson is a business consultant and motivational speaker. He specializes in strategy-execution management. He works with senior leaders to help them clarify, deploy and achieve their organizational initiatives down to an individual level. Gary uses a unique and dynamic methodology that is part process, part software and part roadmap that enables his clients to close the gap between planning and implementation. You can engage Gary at [gary@gary-tomlinson.com](mailto:gary@gary-tomlinson.com). To read his other book reviews visit his website at [www.gary-tomlinson.com](http://www.gary-tomlinson.com).*