

## **FIREFIGHTING: DESTRUCTIVE ACCELERANT**

How many shades of RED are there? Is HOT more important than ASAP, HOT-HOT higher priority than URGENT? Is an order not marked with at least one of those expediting words not worth working on? Is its customer unimportant?

The operations strategy of a successful company does not include expediting, on the floor or in the office. Expediting typically reflects weak processes, volatile priorities, poor communication, and lack of trust. There is nothing wrong with a sense of urgency, of strong commitment to delivering your brand promise to every customer every day with every order. In fact without that any success will be ephemeral. But excellence in effective problem solving, in developing people and processes, and in

understanding your market and your customers is very different from expediting.

Some people are invigorated by the firefight, by dusting their hands off at the end of another rescue. Very different thinking is required to develop the processes that will enable each member of your organization to make good decisions both individually and as part of a team. That combination of high-level and conceptual thinking, vision, attention to detail, and thorough understanding of the decisions being made, coupled with a commitment to positioning each employee to make good decisions, may not have the excitement of expediting and emergencies, but it will create the environment for a job well done: a job well done without the noise of sirens or the mess left behind from another firefight.