

## SOME QUICK REACTIONS

Directions: For each item, place an "X" on one of the seven lines between each pair of statements depending upon how closely each statement matches your own reaction. Respond quickly on the basis of your own first impression.

- |                                                                                                            |                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1. I can explain in general, after some thought, what problems this new model tries to solve. _____</p> | <p>1. I can explain immediately, in some detail, what problems this new model tries to solve. _____</p>     |
| <p>2. I'm clear about what exactly this change means in terms of behaviors expected of me. _____</p>       | <p>2. I'm unclear about what exactly this change means in terms of behaviors expected of me. _____</p>      |
| <p>3. There's a discrete model for change that relates to the survival task of our organization. _____</p> | <p>3. There's a general model for change that relates to the style of our organization. _____</p>           |
| <p>4. My more important doubts are privately felt or misunderstood by others. _____</p>                    | <p>4. My more important doubts are publicly felt and understood by others. _____</p>                        |
| <p>5. In our organization, we vary slightly in our readiness to accept this change. _____</p>              | <p>5. In our organization, we vary greatly in our readiness to accept this change. _____</p>                |
| <p>6. We've been careful to create a valid, objective organizational change experiment. _____</p>          | <p>6. We've been careful to load our organizational change experiment toward success. _____</p>             |
| <p>7. Our current interpersonal relationships may hinder our efforts at change. _____</p>                  | <p>7. Our current interpersonal relationships may help our efforts at change. _____</p>                     |
| <p>8. The incentives in place now tend to favor proposed behaviors and ways of doing things. _____</p>     | <p>8. The incentives in place now tend to favor current behaviors and ways of doing things. _____</p>       |
| <p>9. One, if any, ceremony is needed to create closure and launch new beginnings. _____</p>               | <p>9. Many formal and informal ceremonies are needed to create closure and launch new beginnings. _____</p> |

# Key Pitfalls of Change

## **Feeling No Need or Obligation to Change**

Severe internal and external pressures (crisis) are unknown. Nothing mobilizes influential staff or opinion leaders' energies. No one understands the need for change. Many are satisfied with the status quo.

## **Mastering Words Not Changed Behaviors**

Discussions and training focus on mastery of words without requiring mastery of new skills. Little or no translation of words into specific behaviors to be changed.

## **Lacking a Discrete Model or Vision**

The new program has an intangible model. It's difficult to talk about, understand, illustrate, try out on a pilot basis, or introduce step wise. Change occurs using a high-profile, unidimensional, timebound program.

## **Ignoring Resistance, Failing to See Its Role**

Resistance is particularly mobilized as the change takes definite form. Ignoring the latent opposition that exists leads to reform failure especially towards the end of transition or at particularly difficult junctures. For example, the latent opposition will argue that the new model won't work when the change, being highly specified and creating high expectations, fails to live up to expectations. Or, during tight budgets, those opposed to change will argue for reductions in the transition budget.

## **Rushing Towards Deadlines, Ignoring Differential Readiness for Change**

The acceptance of change is a psychological process that takes time. Rushing to meet deadlines could lead to psychological phases being skipped or to a shift in their order. It is assumed that everyone is at the same phase at the same time. Yet, leaders are more aware of broader issues and are apt to have worked through their transition to acceptance while staff may just be at the point of initial awareness.

## **Working Uphill**

Working alone is uphill when the task could be more easily accomplished with others. Some programs are developed in a way that some are turned on, while others are turned off or left out. That builds resistance as you go. Experiments that ignore conditions negatively affecting results will likely work against change.

## **Jamming Communication**

Interpersonally, it's difficult to begin to change when there is mistrust or unfinished business carried over from previous interactions. Organizationally, leaders that remain close to their office and discuss only the facts will be cut off from any real feedback of how the change is going. Also, failure to set up formal and informal monitoring/information systems will have the same effect. Maintaining a constant level of information flow via a single channel will not fit the requirements of a continuously dynamic change effort.

## **Rewarding "A", Hoping for "B"**

Neither appraisals, promotions, training nor compensation are thought of as ways to reward folks who deal well with change. The reward structure and schedule remains fixed or is given lip service as behavioral expectations change. The sharing of initial positive results is delayed.

## **Forgetting Ceremony and Symbol**

An important part of moving through transitions is acknowledging the crossing of boundaries. Creating a single boundary event or ceremony assumes everyone is at the same level of commitment and acceptance-that everyone is at the boundary and that one closure event is sufficient for everyone to move on. Also, when symbols go unexamined or play a minor role, at best, identification with the change effort is weakened and endings/beginnings are less evident and at worst, identification to the past is strengthened and endings/beginnings are ambiguous.

# Tips to Avoid Pitfalls

## Feeling No Need or Obligation to Change

- Share why-purpose of change, what problems this solves.
- Use diagnostic process to define the task to be accomplished—what the organizational change is supposed to help achieve.

## Mastering Words Not Changed Behaviors

- Describe what new behaviors the words signify.
- Place people in situations that requires trying new ways.
- Talk about what is over and what isn't.
- Involve others in setting and achieving high standards.
- Deal with role, behavior change of top team first.

## Lacking a Discrete Model or Vision

- Have a tangible model (a structure, person etc.) that relates to the task to be done. Find an image, metaphor, or succinct phrase that people can identify with and which represents the model of change.
- Keep reminding others of the destination.

## Ignoring Resistance, Failing to See Its Role

- Leaders surface, accept without criticism all hidden doubts to find out why.
- Determine who will lose what: Turf—physical, organizational influence; Control—personal freedom, security, fear of failure; Attachment—peers, mentors, subordinates; Future Plans, Dreams; Time Schedules; Meaning—how things make sense.
- Acknowledge, negotiate these loses; Be open to revision in order to accommodate these.
- Don't impose successful model on units where it doesn't fit. Maintain voluntarism so invitations are neither commands nor social pressures.
- Adopt the model incrementally, unit by unit, and encourage small scale experiments

## Rushing Towards Deadlines

- Help others to progress through each psychological phase in sequence.
- Prepare for a natural slump in output as the change occurs.  
with the issues raised. One member should have the leaders ear.
- Increase interpersonal communications during times of stress.

Adapted from: Bridges, W. Organizations in Transitions, 1989,. Davis & Salasin. The Utilization of Evaluation. In: Handbook of Evaluation Research, Vol I, 1975. Glaser, Abelson, & Garrison. Putting Knowledge to Use, 1983. Havelock, R.G., The Change Agent's Guide to Innovation In Education, 1973. Shepard, H. A. Rules of thumb for change agents.

# Tips to Avoid Pitfalls

## **Working Uphill**

- Develop informal network of supporters, temporary groupings and reporting relationships to yield partners who are ready and able to work as a team
- Place and promote managers who support the change.
- Use staff for training, coaching and advising; Use externals for a more objective perspective.
- Don't knock the past or current structure.
- Ask, who will this transition program turn off and why.
- Load experiments for success: Take precautions against negative results; Plan in small wins; Begin with those who are predisposed to change; Start in the more promising areas—the more effective teams; Create an umbrella over the experiment—permission to fail, protection from budget cuts, premature judgment, other ancillary changes, constraining policy or from meeting high outputs or demands.

## **Jamming Communication**

- Ask for feedback so that past feelings can be heard and accepted.
- Use leadership by wandering around—leaders are visible and present with everyone to discuss concerns, not just facts.
- Use cross-sectional monitoring teams of 6-10 people to represent functional interest groups and serve as a ready focus (not decision making) group and point of access for the informal network. Report back to the group about what was done with the issues raised. One member should have the leaders ear.
- Increase interpersonal communications during times of stress.

## **Rewarding “A”, Hoping for “B”**

- Provide incentives for early responders and first attempts.
- Change the reward structure to fit with the changed behaviors.
- Actively solicit and provide opportunities for interaction with respected role models.

## **Forgetting Ceremony and Symbol**

- Create boundary events that use ceremony to dramatize the new identity.
- Use symbols to articulate the future vision, structure, roles, etc.

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