

EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

<i>The Luxury Model</i> (from McLagan & Nel's THE AGE OF PARTICIPATION: new governance for the workplace & the world)		<i>The Mid-Sized Model</i> (from Byham & Cox's ZAPP! THE LIGHTNING OF EMPOWERMENT)		<i>The Compact Model</i> (from Blanchard, Carlos & Randolph's EMPOWERMENT TAKES MORE THAN A MINUTE)	
Indicators	Leverage	Destination	Roadblocks	Actions	Results
1. values	egalitarian	1. innovation	tradition	1. share information with everyone	trust leading to collaboration
2. structure	networks	2. teams	bureaucracy		
3. leadership	commitment from the top	3. meaningful messages	misconception		
4. management processes	strategic negotiations	4. good faith	disbelief	2. create autonomy through boundaries	internal transparency, outward solidarity
5. information	disclosure	5. initiative	procrastination		
6. relationships	interdependent	6. optimism	discouragement		
7. competencies	life-long-learning			3. replace hierarchical thinking with self-managed teams	teams take responsibility for task fulfillment & discipline
8. controls	accountability				
9. pay	equity				

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Kenneth H. Blanchard, John P. Carlos & Alan Randolph
EMPOWERMENT TAKES MORE THAN A MINUTE
Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco, 2001

William Bridges
MANAGING TRANSITIONS: Making the Most of Change
Perseus Publishing, New York, 2003

William C. Byham & Jeff Cox
ZAPP! The Lightning of Empowerment
Random House, New York, 1997

Tom DeMarco
SLACK: Getting Past Burnout, Busywork, and the Myth of Total Efficiency
Broadway Books, New York, 2002

Patricia McLagan & Christo Nel
THE AGE OF PARTICIPATION,
Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco, 1997

Deborah Tannen
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT
Ballantine Books, New York, 1986

Daniel Yankelovich
THE MAGIC OF DIALOGUE
Touchstone Books, New York, 2002

Which model is best, and why? Or is there a “best model”? In my view, the Compact Model is the preferable one, for these reasons: (1) Philosopher Alfred North Whitehead concluded that “simplification” was the most effective way to bring new ideas to the public. The Compact Model is the simplest. (2) The only model that recognizes the importance of “boundary creation/maintenance” in the empowerment process is the Compact Model. Boundaryless organizations can never really exist. (3) The Compact Model can actually encompass the other two, whereas they, despite their greater elaboration, are missing the boundary requirement.

Organizational Change according to William Bridges

Shakespeare wrote about the “Seven Ages of Man”. Here are seven comparable stages of organizational life: Dreaming the Dream, Launching the Venture, Getting Organized, Making It, Becoming an Institution, Closing In, and Organizational Death.

The Laws of Organizational Development

1st – those who were most at home with the necessary activities and arrangements of one phase are the ones who are the most likely to experience the subsequent phase as a severe personal attack.

2nd – the successful outcome of any phase of organizational development triggers its demise by creating challenges that it is not equipped to handle.

3rd – in any significant transition, the thing that the organization needs to let go of is the very thing that got it this far.

4th – whenever there is a painful, troubled time in the organization, a developmental transition is probably going on.

5th – during the first half of the lifecycle – through the Making-It stage – not to make a transition when the time is ripe for one to occur will cause a developmental “retardation” in the organization. - William Bridges, MANAGING TRANSITIONS

The Premise of Innovation

Innovation is a socio-technical process – it has aspects of both technological change and sociological change. Overlooking either aspect will undermine the change process.

What innovation’s champions are actually doing is creating a new organization, and to do that they must go back to the start of the life cycle. What we call “innovation” is really a new Dream. - William Bridges, MANAGING TRANSITIONS

Adopting an Innovation

Adopting an innovation requires both organizational change AND psychological transition. Furthermore, the psychological transition is the more important element, and needs to be addressed BEFORE the organizational changes are implemented.

The single biggest reason organizational changes fail is that no one has thought about endings [of previous arrangements] or planned to manage their impact on people. While the first task of change management is to understand the desired outcome and how to get there, the first task of transition management is to convince people to leave home. You'll save yourself a lot of grief if you remember that.

- William Bridges, MANAGING TRANSITIONS

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EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES TO COPE WITH CHANGE

(an interim report on research in progress)

Psychological

Transition:

Before you can effectively manage organizational change you must arrange for the psychological transition of the participants

Source: William Bridges' organizational development research

Phase One of the

Transition: How to get people to let go

"Grieving the loss, and then getting over it."

Phase Two of the

Transition: Through the Neutral Zone

"Calming fears,

consolidating

connections."

Credible rationale: "Who says so, and on what evidence?"

Personal Organizational

Cost-Benefit Audit: calling a

Analysis & halt to mindless

Evaluation change

Change Management: planning and deployment of new technology, tasks, workflow, and chain of command

Options

i. active support

ii. passive support

iii. active resistance

iv. passive resistance

Phase Three of the

Transition: Launching

a New Beginning

"What is the problem? What is the situation that requires this change to solve it?"

Ethical Methodology: grounds for either supporting or resisting change proposals

References

William Bridges, *MANAGING TRANSITIONS*, 2nd edition, Perseus, 2003

John MacDonald, *CALLING A HALT TO MINDLESS CHANGE*, Amacom, 1998

Richard W. Severson, *THE PRINCIPLES OF INFORMATION ETHICS*, M.E. Sharpe, 1997

Davis & Weckler, *A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO ORGANIZATION DESIGN*, Crisp, 1996

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ETHICAL METHODOLOGY

(a heuristic)

(rose-colored glasses can blind a person to alternatives)

1. Get the facts straight: until there is an accurate and neutral description of all of the relevant facts, it is not clear that you either understand or can cope with a situation.

(an entirely "blameless" moral life is only possible in paradise)

(the quality of commitment may trump the quantity of concerns)

2a. Identify the moral dilemma: 2b. Identify the moral dilemma: a choice between the greater of a choice between the lesser of

two goods two evils

3a. Evaluate the moral dilemma: 3b. Evaluate the moral dilemma: which choice has the most which choice has the most collateral support (other intrinsic importance (implicationsprinciples). and consequences).

4a. Test your solution: which 4b. Test your solution: which choice conforms with public choice aligns with the contextual opinion. circumstances.

Necessary choices between the lesser of two evils are at least as important, and often more agonizing than, choices between the greater of two goods.

Many aspects of support for a trivial alternative may not weigh as heavily as one valid reason for an important alternative.

If the public's opinion is fully informed, seeking their approval can be worthwhile - otherwise additional or alternative factors must be considered.

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PERSONAL COSTS AND BENEFITS

What are the Costs?

What are the Benefits?

How much effort will the learning take?

Is the change an actual improvement?

How much time will the learning take?

How much improvement is likely?

How difficult to perform are the new tasks?

Is the improvement (really) worthwhile?

Cost-Benefit Analysis is often used for evaluating investments in macroeconomic projects. Implicitly however, we all use a similar set of concepts for our personal decisions. This recognition was once tested by a local firm that provided computer training. The above results were the major considerations running through peoples' minds when deciding whether or not to volunteer for training on a new version of a system (located on a workstation or larger network).

These questions are often (usually) both asked and answered in each person's own mind, sometimes consciously, sometimes sub-consciously. The comparisons and contrasts are made intuitively. However, the commitment or opposition to change, and the extent thereof, are a result of this "rough and ready" personal cost-benefit analysis.

The findings included this: people want between 10% and 15% improvement in performance, or they are NOT going to be enthusiastic about the training.

ORGANIZATIONAL COSTS AND BENEFITS

What are the Costs?

What are the Benefits?

What resources will the change require?

Is the change an actual improvement?

How much time will the change require?

Will the change improve efficiency?

How much disruption will be involved?

Will the change improve effectiveness?

Parallel criteria apply to the organization as a whole. At this level, what should be avoided is chasing "the flavour of the month". Too many change proposals are simply mindless (change for the sake of change, rather than actual improvement).

At both the personal and organizational level, proponents of change should ALWAYS bear the burden of identifying a real problem, and demonstrating that their preferred solution will actually solve that problem in a cost-effective and timely way, without unnecessary organizational disruption or individual stress. [I would regard ANY hesitancy in this respect as a sign that the change is probably NOT justified, AND that the proponents know it!]

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TRANSITIONS (from "ending the old", through "the neutral zone", to "beginning the new")

(psychological adjustments to social change)

Ending The Old

1. Identify Who's Losing What

- describe the change in as much detail as possible
- what secondary changes will the primary change cause?
- who is going to have to let go of something?
- are the losses concrete or attitudinal?
- is there something that is over for everyone?

2. Accept the Reality of These Feelings

- don't argue with what you hear
- they know how they feel, whether you do or not
- don't recommend an "objective" attitude
- what people feel as real, is real in its consequences
- respect these feelings even if you do not share them

3. Don't be Surprised at Over-reaction

- intensity of reaction depends on the extent of the loss
- so, those not experiencing a loss will not 'over-react', those that do, will
- delay in dealing with loss just lets it fester
- minor complaints may be blown up as substitutes for denied loss
- always look for "deeply-felt" losses

4. Acknowledge the Losses Openly

- resentment comes from denying or belittling losses

- don't pretend the loss doesn't exist or doesn't hurt
- empathize by imagining a loss of your own that did hurt
- sympathize even if you can't empathize
- they don't care how much you know until they know how much you care

5. Expect and Accept Signs of Grieving

- these are the signs of grieving: denial (it isn't really happening)
- an angry response (focused or perhaps diffuse)
- trying to bargain for a reversal (let's start over)
- an upsurge of anxiety (fear of the unknown sets in)
- sadness (the reality of loss begins to sink in)
- disorientation (what, exactly, do we do now?)
- depression (helplessness, hopelessness)

brief grief is normal, lengthy wallowing is not - "You can visit pity city, but you can't live there!"

6. Compensate for Losses

- public displays of gratitude
- status upgrades
- increased remuneration
- career counseling
- professional development
- better equipment/environs

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7. Provide Information Regularly

- prepare the way for change through information
- reiterate messages for those who may have missed (or ignored) them

- tell everyone who needs to know, not just their supervisors
- don't wait until "everything is clear" before sharing
- inclusion will alleviate fears and build trust

8. Spell Out the Change Requirements

- what (exactly) does have to be changed?
- what (exactly) does NOT have to be changed?
- how much of the required change is completed?
- how much of the required change remains to be done?
- set a reasonable pace of change so people don't burn out or get bored

9. Mark Milestones

- the end of an era should be proclaimed
- stage a dramatic event
- burn the boats behind you (so there will be no "back" to go back to!)
- change the environment to symbolize the "new order of things"
- adopt a slogan that exemplifies the new - "This is the way of the future!"

10. Respect the Past (Just Don't Re-live It)

- acknowledge prior accomplishments
- remember personal achievements
- show that present and future prospects depend on previous practices
- don't let reminiscences descend into nostalgia
- remind everyone - "that was then, this is now"

11. Mementos Meet a Need

- tokens of the past can help us get past the past
- sometimes the smallest things can have the biggest meanings

- we don't want to blame ourselves for the way things were
- the past is not a disease we are trying to eradicate
- what is needed is to go on, not to forget

12. Continuity Accompanies Change

- not everything changes
- continuity is our anchor in a sea of change
- what continues is often the larger goal that sets the context for smaller changes
- the past was never as stable as we recall through selective memory
- the larger goal is to make sense of both change and continuity

"Whenever something that is viewed as a break with the past turns out successfully, people forget the loss they felt when the change happened and begin to celebrate it as a tradition. But the status quo is just an innovation brought about by a transition that people have forgotten."

William Bridges, *MANAGING TRANSITIONS*

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Entering the Neutral Zone (Second Phase)

(i) Normalize the Neutral Zone

- people's anxiety rises and their motivation falls
- productivity falters, old problems re-emerge, confusion abounds
- some want to advance, others to retreat;
- stress leads to regrettable but understandable mistakes
- the problem is that neither the old nor the new rules seem to apply
- such a transition period between the old and the new is quite "normal"

(ii) Redefine the Neutral Zone

- replace negative metaphors with positive ones
- make the transition itself a project

- provide benefits for successful completion of this phase

(iii) Provide Support Systems during the Neutral Zone

- try to protect people from unnecessary stress where possible
- clarify policies and procedures whenever possible
- develop new arrangements if they help with the transition
- provide temporary milestones to aim for
- don't over-promise or over-hype
- managers also need training to help them adjust

(iv) Maintain Inter-group Connections

- uncertainty can lead to feelings of loneliness
- regular workplace meetings can help overcome isolation
- a newsletter or "chat room" allows sharing of concerns
- social activities offsite (meals, family events, etc.) build bonds
- make activities as inclusive as possible to avoid perception of special treatment

(v) Use a Transition Monitoring Team (TMT)

- representative of the whole organization
- tasked to raise difficult or "silent" issues
- give an explicit mandate to avoid exaggerated expectations
- TMT can squash rumours by addressing them openly
- TMT can tap the "grapevine" to acquaint everyone with "open secrets"

(vi) Respond Creatively in the Neutral Zone

- give permission to re-think situations and solutions
- promote new ideas by giving opportunities to take stock (reviews, retreats, etc.)
- provide training in discovery and innovation

- encourage experimentation
- transform every problem into a challenge
- brainstorm anything and everything
- avoid premature closure of issues in an attempt to wrap-up too hastily
- let participants figure out their own way to “sort themselves out”

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Beginning the New (Third Phase)

(a) Ambivalence Towards the Beginning

- the “start” is the officially designated “kick-off”
- “real” beginnings only occur when people are committed
- there are occasional reminders of previous positions
- the awareness of a little uncertainty and risk persists
- time to get beyond any sense of drift from the neutral zone

(b) Timing of the New Beginning

- commitments can't be forced, but they can be supported and reinforced
- explain the basic purpose behind the outcome being sought
- create an image of how the outcome will “look and feel”
- prepare a plan for phasing in the outcome
- give each person a part to play in both the plan and the outcome
- since different people will prioritize different aspects, keep support balanced

(c) Clarify and Communicate the Purpose

- provide a credible answer to the question “Why are we doing this?”
- what is the situation that requires this change to solve it?
- who says so, and on what evidence?

- what would be the result of NOT solving this problem?

- what would happen to us because of this result?

(d) Create an Image of the Outcome

- most people are not “idea-conscious” so they need an image, a plan, and a part

- the image must engage peoples’ imaginations

- what will people experience that will be different?

- use visual aids or field trips to convey the image

- the inspirational effects of the image vary from person to person

(e) Prepare a Plan

- outline the transition migration path (getting from here to there)

- start wherever people are and help bring them forward from there

- spell out the personal agendas for change, the process as well as the outcome

- steps and schedule for information, training, and support

- announcements of any transition events (ceremonies, meetings, etc.)

(f) Give Everyone a Part to Play

- what will be each person’s role in the transition process?

- what will be each person’s role in the new work environment?

- what about the configuration of relationships in the new scheme of things?

- by engaging everyone in building the new, they take ownership of it

(g) Rules for Reinforcing: (1) Be consistent (2) Ensure quick successes

(3) Symbolize the new identity (4) Celebrate successes

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EMPOWERMENT IS AS EMPOWERMENT DOES!

"How are we doing with innovation?"

(If you ask them, they will tell you!)