Seeking courses/materials on Change Management

Feb. 2007

I've been asked to develop a training curriculum on Change Management for a client that is rapidly expanding globally (through regular acquisitions) . My knowledge base is a bit outdated, as I haven't worked with this topic in several years. Can you point me to recent references or materials that you have found to be particularly helpful in designing or delivering workshops and/or specific exercises on change management? Thanks in advance for your help.

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Dear Deb,

Managing change is one of the toughest challenges that an individual or organization can face- I believe that is why the 30% figure reigns- 30% of strategic changes are successfully implemented; 30% of people actually comply with treatment recommendations by their health care providers; 30% of mergers and acquisitions are estimated to be as successful as they were intended to be. There may be a reason for this- brain science is suggesting that the mere thought of change is enough to shift our chemistry into full-blown fight-or-flight mode. Some researchers theorize that this is a holdover response from days gone by when we were not endowed with the front part of our brains that allows us to reason abstractly and to think things through. What they hypothesize is that our autopilot response of fight-or-flight is triggered by anything that is new or different- i.e., change- and that in response to novelty and change, our brains and bodies are flooded with the chemistry associated with fight-or-flight and fighting or resisting change because this response ensured the survival of our species in days gone by. The trick today is learning to shut down that flood of chemicals in order to keep the front part of the brain thinking clearly – or thinking at all- because stress, including change, really does makes us stupid. That may very well explain the 30% figure.

Learning to master the internal response to change is critical, and I am a big fan of the work of William Bridges on ‘transitions’. Dave Ullrich is an expert on managing change. In his presentation that I saw last fall, he referenced the work of William Bridges on Transitions- the inner shifts that are critical to successfully managing change. I agree with Ullrich and have been a fan of Bridges’ work for many years- since my earlier career as a clinical psychologist working with trauma victims and then with peak performers in sports (some of whom had to make huge shifts when injuries ended their careers and decimated their dreams). Now, in my coaching and consulting in corporate arenas, I still rely on Bridges’ framework to engage clients with change- to make the shifts that are critical for implementing changes recommended by 360-assessments or feedforward from others, to make the shifts required by growing and merging, for making the changes for really being global.

I will also disclose that I work, now, with Linkage and that we proudly and exclusively represent the work of William Bridges in our training and coaching methodologies. (That is, in part, what drew me to join Linkage.) If you are interested in exploring the model further, you can order one of Bridges’ books from amazon or you can contact me or Nina Coil, our Bridges expert, at Linkage. I really do believe, though, that you will want to include strategies for overriding the natural response to change- resistance or denial- and strategies that engage people with change, that build meaning and momentum to turn strategic changes into strategic actions.

Looking forward,
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