



# Influencing Positive Change

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**Keys to Leadership Success**

**Hire ❖ Develop ❖ Retain**

## Influencing Change

While most people and organizations enjoy stability and constants; change is an inescapable fact in our lives. Technology and the economy demand that we adapt to new and different circumstances on a continual basis. And yet, most people find change threatening and resist it; even positive change. As leaders, you will be creating and facilitating change throughout your organization. It is important that you know the strategies and techniques that can reduce resistance to change and increase the chances of success for you and your team.

### **At the end of this program, you will be able to:**

- identify the types of change that people and businesses deal with.
- describe the impact of change and change management on business results.
- identify the different roles you will play as a change leader.
- describe the stages of change.
- identify the emotional reaction you and your employees may have to change.

*I have known a great many troubles, but most of them never happened.*

-Mark Twain



## Types of Change

Change can take many forms and depending on the type of change it can impact us in many ways. Change can be:

- **Self-Initiated Change:** We perceive the need to change something, for example our behavior, environment, or a process at work and take the initiative to make the change. Sometimes it effects only ourselves, sometimes we need to involve others.
- **Influential Change:** A change occurs in our personal environment and we must modify our thoughts, behaviors, actions, etc. in order to meet the new demands.
- **Societal Change:** A change occurs in the world that we can choose to react to or participate in; but it does not directly impact us.

**What are some examples of the different types of change that have happened to you?**

**Self-Initiated:**

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**Influential Change:**

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**Societal Change:**

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## 10 Common Myths of Change

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## The Impact of Change

Change is never easy – for people or organizations; and yet, change is necessary for survival. Successful organizations must constantly adapt to changing customer demands, competition, economic drivers and shifting technology. We must be successful change managers to continue our growth and success.

When change is not managed successfully, the impact can be significant. Here are a few facts to consider:

- 66% of change initiative fail to achieve desired outcomes (*Harvard Business Review Study – 2006*)
- 57% experience a drop in productivity (*Accenture*)
- Two-thirds of the Fortune 50 have fallen off the list in the last 25 years

### Why Manage Change?

What are the business benefits of managing change?

What might be the risks associated with only reacting to or ignoring change?



## Change Management Roles

As leaders you will play two different roles during the process of change management. The role you play is dependent on the type of change that has occurred. The two roles are:

**Change Agents** – (Self-Initiated Change) participate in the creation or design of the change; are the source of or driving force behind change

**Change Facilitators** – (Influential Change) guide the implementation of a change initiative; execute plans made elsewhere

**Change Victims** – ask “Why is this happening to me?”



## Redefining Our Reality

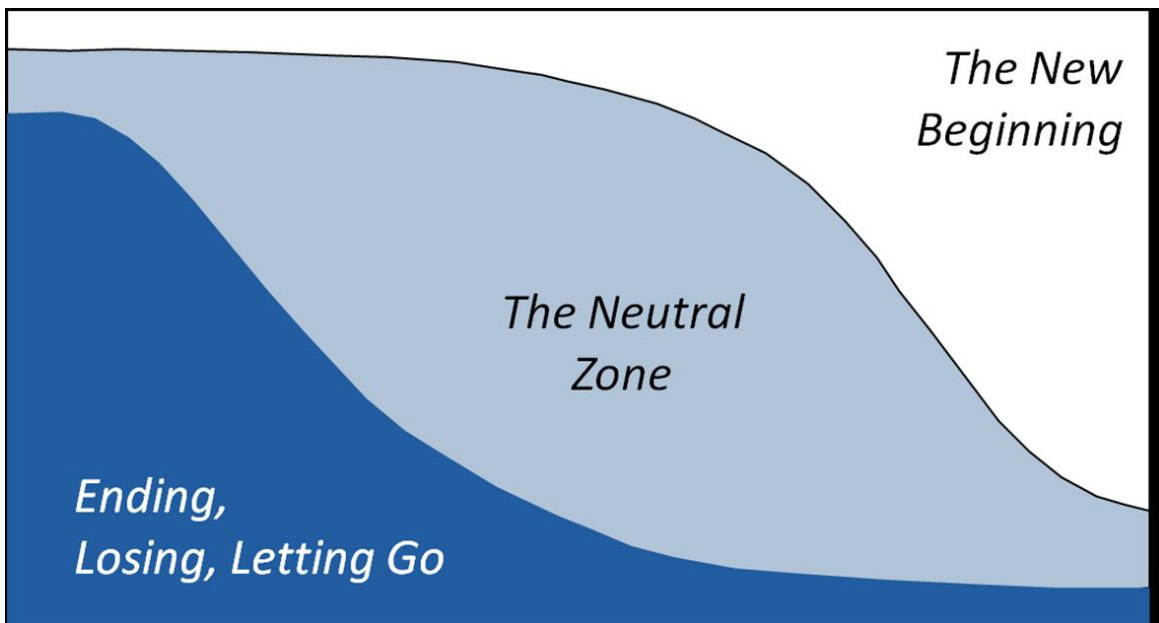
Change requires that we all think about ourselves, our behaviors, our work and our world in new ways. In many ways, as a change manager you are guiding people through the process of redefining their reality. William Bridges, the author of Managing Transitions<sup>1</sup> gives two definitions that can help you in your role as a Change Manager.

**Change:** is situational; it is what is different in our world. For example, the change could be a move to a new location or a new boss. It is what (or will) occur.

**Transition:** is the process people go through in order to accept the new situation both emotionally and mentally. This mental 'reframing' is what can cause resistance, heightened levels of stress, and all the other emotions that can make implementing a change successful.

As both a Change Agent and a Change Facilitator your primary responsibility will be to guide people through **transition**.

## Bridges Transition Model



<sup>1</sup> Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition; William Bridges, PhD. Published Da Capo Press, 2009.



**The Bridges Transition Model has three phases:**

- Phase 1: Ending, Losing, Letting Go. This is the mental/emotional stage when people initially react to the change by acknowledging that the future will be different than it is today.
- Phase 2: The Neutral Zone. This is the 'in-between' time when people are in the process of creating their new mental 'patterns' and learning about the new; but they haven't settled into the new pattern or become completely comfortable with the change.
- Phase 3: The New Beginning. People have emerged from the transition, adapted to the new reality and begin to adapt the new behaviors and ideas that will make the change work.

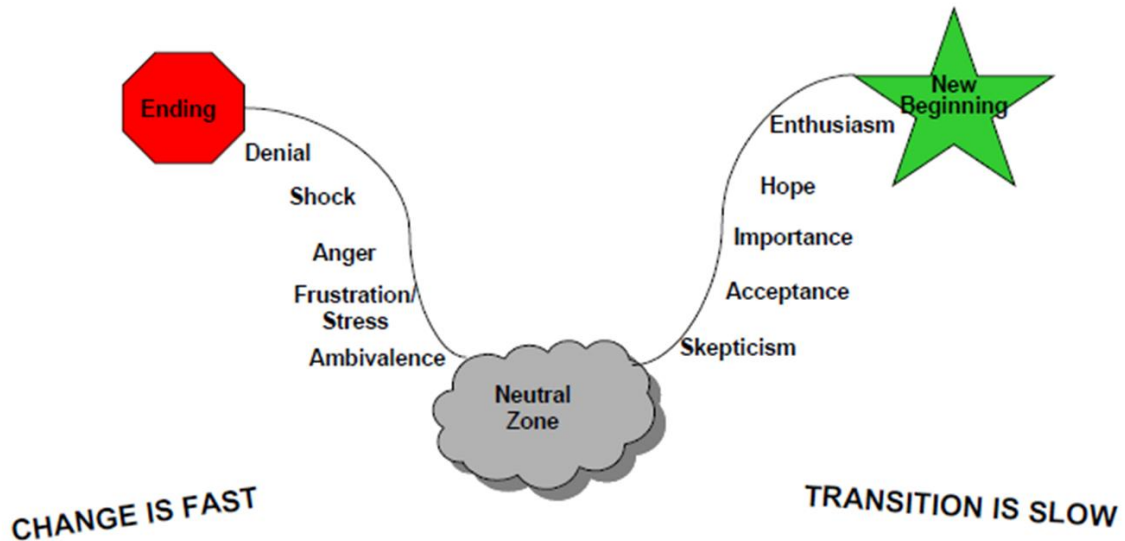
As people adapt to the new situation, they pass through each of these phases. Depending on the change, an individual's need for constancy, and the support people receive, they can go through these stages quickly or slowly. As a leader, you need to acknowledge the phases and provide the support they need to move through them as quickly as possible.

Think back to a change you recently experienced. Can you identify the phases in your personal experience? What helped you move from the 'old' to the 'new'?





## The Emotions of Transition



Transition is the personal process of adapting to a situational change. As you can imagine, change can stir up emotions—both positive and negative. The graph above shows the typical emotions associated with the three phases of change. Of course, not everyone feels all of these and individuals feel them with different intensity; however, can you imagine the impact to productivity and motivation that staying in the emotions to the left of the Neutral Zone would have?

As a leader, you can help people through the phases by providing information, training, guidance and clarity around the change.



## Phase 1: Ending, Losing and Letting Go

You've just learned about a new process that is going to change the way your team reports on its work activity. What's your first reaction? Have you ever thought 'Now what? Why don't they just let us do our jobs!?' Frequently leaders are asked to implement changes that they didn't initiate. In a way, you are 'selling a decision' made by someone else. If you've just learned about the change yourself, how can you help others go through the transition?

Why do leaders have to deal with the change first?

What would be the impact of a leader failing to make the transition?

### Getting You Through Phase 1

There are four steps you can take to help you start the transition and deal with any negative emotions you may have about the change. They are:

**Reflect:** Take the time to figure out what you are feeling. Identifying our emotions is a powerful way to 'defuse' them.

**Question:** What do you think will end? What might you lose? What do you need to let go?

**Explore:** What do you need to learn to commit to the change?

**Model:** What will be different once the change is made? Envision the difference in detail.



## Guiding Your Team through Phase 1

As much as you may be tempted to do so, it's important to recognize and manage the negative emotions that can occur in Phase 1. You are not required to be a counselor, however, there is a lot you can do to help people deal with and move beyond their initial feelings of loss and resentment.

**Communicate** – You can hardly communicate too much. Never assume that a single message has gotten through. Tell the 'change' story multiple times and multiple ways.

**Message with 4P's** – There are four key elements that need to be part of your message:

- Purpose – Why are we making this change? What problem will it solve? What will we gain?
- Picture – What will it look like when the change has occurred? What is our final goal?
- Plan – Do we have a plan to get there? How long is it going to take? Who is in charge? What's the first step?
- Part – What part do I play? Who is going to help me? Where do I go for information?

**Increase Certainty** – Share all you know, when you can as soon as you can. If you don't know something, don't make up an answer! People are 'wired' to want certainty and the lack of it can be perceived as a threat. The more you can give people details about what stops and what starts (and when and how) the more willing people will be to move forward.

**Acknowledge Loss and Endings** – It never helps to imply that the old was 'bad' and the new is 'good'. Give people a chance to say goodbye and note losses. Ceremonies such as ribbon cuttings or 'equipment retirement' can give people a chance to close the door on the past and look forward to the future.



## Phase 2: The Neutral Zone

The Neutral Zone is where people begin to make changes to their processes, behaviors and actions. They've let go of the old, but the new hasn't quite settled in. People typically do not go from old to new quickly; especially when a change is large and significant. Unless managed well, people can stay stuck in the Neutral Zone for a long period and the longer they stay in it...the more negative the results. Here are some steps you can take to make the Neutral Zone as short as possible.

**Acknowledge ambiguity** – Be realistic about what is known and what isn't. New policies may still be under review, a final answer may not have been decided, or organizational structures may not be complete. Don't pretend to a certainty that is not there; it can destroy their trust in you if you have to backpedal.

**Set short term goals** – Productivity typically falls when people are in the Neutral Zone and that can become a self-defeating cycle. Try to set short term goals that the group can achieve so they can feel a greater sense of mastery and control.

**Don't overpromise on productivity** – In the Neutral Zone people are sometimes doing things the old way and the new way while making the transition. The eventual goal of a change may be to increase productivity, but it should not be expected until all the new systems and habits are firmly in place.

**Celebrate small wins** – When people successful make a change or master a new system, celebrate and communicate the small win. This recognition can be just what it takes to let the team know 'it can be done!'

**Train, train, train** – Don't expect people to figure it out. Make sure you are checking with team members to make sure they understand the new expectations, processes, and ideas. Be patient and help people be successful.

**Watch for and deal with stress and resistance.**



## Dealing with Stress and Resistance

Change can be very stressful for some people and when individuals are under stress their behavior changes. What are some of the behavioral changes you might observe when people are dealing with the stress of change?

### How can you help people manage stress?

- Recognize that it exists – give people a chance to talk and ask questions
- Increase certainty
  - Frequently communicate with as much information as possible
  - Lay out a plan
  - Give people chances to ‘test’ the change
- Give ‘em a break
  - Don’t expect change/new processes to be adopted on top of a full plate
  - Prepare for a drop-in productivity and accuracy
  - Increase resources if possible

### How can you handle resistance?

Some people’s negative emotions may translate into resistance. Resistance can be out in the open or hidden. Open resistance can take the form of constant complaints or questioning. Hidden resistance can be someone simply refusing to make the change and hoping they can wait you out. Many of the same steps for dealing with stress work with resistance. It’s very important though that you do not let people take on a ‘victim mentality’.

- Deal with it directly and honestly
- Ask how you can help the person deal with their reaction
- Determine what aspect of the change they are resisting
- Point out the impact of the resistance on the rest of the team
- Reinforce reality



## Phase 3: The New Beginning

As people emerge from the Neutral Zone they experience another range of emotions. They are more positive emotions and they reflect how people are beginning to think about the new 'identity' of their work role and the culture of the organization. It's important to remember that **Starts are not Beginnings**. Many change projects define dates when old systems are replaced by new ones, such as system cutovers, moves to new locations. However, just because a date has passed does not mean people have fully integrated the change.

### Guiding Your Team through Phase 3

**Reinforce the New:** Be consistent with requiring change. Don't accept the 'old version' for very long. Make sure the policies and procedures all reflect the change.

**Ensure Quick Successes:** The Neutral Zone can be quite discouraging to many people. Help people find areas where they can quickly (and fairly easily) be successful.

**Celebrate Wins:** It's just as important to celebrate wins now as it was in the Neutral Zone. People need to see that a change was worthwhile and that new methods are achieving the objective.

**Acknowledge and Learn from Setbacks:** Even the best managed and led change initiatives have problems. When problems are reported don't brush them under the rug; quickly investigate and resolve the problem as best you can. Emphasize learning – not blaming.

**Make Sure Everyone Comes Along:** Remember that everyone moves through the transition at their own pace. Check with each member of your team to make sure they have gotten through Phases 1 and 2.



## Constant and Simultaneous Change

If change occurred as individual, discrete events leading and managing change might be much simpler. However, to many of us, change seems to be constant. Also, multiple changes seem to occur at the same time so it can seem like things never 'settle down'. However, quite often, 'change' (the situation) occurs without us being able to guide or schedule it and we must adapt with it. This leads to people being in several stages of transition at the same time depending on the change they are dealing with.

**Change Agility** is the attribute of being able to adapt quickly and positively to change. It doesn't mean people don't experience Phases 1 and 2, but it does mean that they get through them more quickly and with less stress and resistance. Organizations that are 'change agile' can react more quickly to competition, economic opportunities (and threats), and technological change.

### Creating Change Agility

Increasing people's ability to deal with change positively is a change in and of itself; it requires changing mindsets and countering deeply felt emotions. As a leader, you can support and help to build this attribute in your team in several ways.

- Frame change as the new norm – What people perceive of as 'non-stop' change is a lot of different changes that overlap each other. This has always occurred, but the pace has picked up and won't slow down.
- Focus on purpose, not tasks – When people are clear about the purpose of their jobs, the tasks they perform simply one way to get there. Help people get really clear on the purpose of their role and how they contribute to the corporation and define them less by the tasks they perform.
- Sell problems, not solutions – Organizations stress the concept of 'continuous improvement' and what is that but constant change? When people know what problems the organization faces – and they are encouraged to help solve them – they are much more likely to participate positively in the change process.
- Look back and learn – Take the time to review past change initiatives. What went well, what didn't, what to do more of, and what to do less of.



## What's Next?

### A Message from Michael





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