Effective Change Management

Keeping ahead of changing technology and a changing business environment means adapting and implementing new ideas on a continuous basis to remain successful.

Yet many people tend to shy away from change. People don't *like* changing procedures, processes, and overall change in general. The status quo is comfortable. Change seems hard.

If you are the person in charge of making changes, this is a frustrating ordeal. You are tasked with implementing a new system or product, and you encounter active resistance. What do you do?

How do we overcome the desire to remain stagnant with co-workers, bosses, and employees? We can start by understanding why don't most people like change and then find ways to overcome that opposition.

When asked, people complain about change because:

1. Slow implementation. The organization takes so long to make the change that people lose interest, incur additional costs, add time, and increase reworks.

2. No sense of urgency by leaders. When leaders are not the first ones to embrace the new system, it leads the team to think the change is not important. Remember AOL in 2005? AOL's CEO was Randy Falco – who didn't use e-mail. His secretary printed out his emails for him to review. (Yes, we all wonder how the CEO of AOL didn't use e-mail.) If he doesn't use his own product, how does he relate to his customers and understand the challenges of his own employees?

3. Lack of understanding of employee resistance, attrition, feelings, and considerations. Many employees may feel "they can't make me change" and in some respects they are right. Employees may

To make change work, organizations need continuous improvement, feedback from the users, available help for questions and to process problems, and early and constant relevant training.

Make sure that the change you want to make in an organization is worth the change and clearly communicated. Make sure that leadership is fully behind the implementation, and that the schedule includes ample training time. Make sure that people understand the "why" behind the change and not just the "what." (I just don't believe that the new uniform made me run any faster.)

Real change for improves performance, increases effectiveness, delivers better products or services, and better serves the user.

If you are going to make a change, do it right.

Please make comments on [my website](#)!

Mary's Updates

Are You Prepared?

As many of you know, I live in Colorado Springs where we had the worst wildfire in Colorado history at the beginning of the summer. Heavily involved in assisting people and animals affected by that fire, I had a chance to see first hand how important it is to be prepared for emergencies. It seems this summer has brought more devastating events and natural disasters than usual to various parts of the country. Tonados, hurricanes, draughts... And it prompted me to write [this blog post](#) on "emergency preparedness."

Being organized and prepared can make a big difference when an emergency hits you! To make it easier, I share some free forms you can use to be better prepared. Grab them [here](#) and start getting prepared. :)

Mary's Book of the Month

MAKE DIFFICULT PEOPLE DISAPPEAR
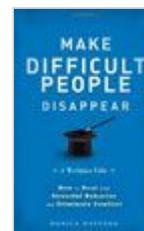
actively work against the change because "it is the way we've always done it." They are comfortable with the current working environment. The people who made 8-track tapes didn't want to learn to make cassette tapes either.

4. No perceived ultimate benefits by the end users. If the advantages of the new system are not obvious, the comparison is going to be negative. "This isn't much better than the old system. Why are we spending all of this time and money on this?" Have you ever bought a new computer update and were disappointed? This leads to lack of morale, loss of productivity, and a sincere lack of effort to adapt.

5. Lack of confidence in the new system or product. There is fear that the new system is going to be even worse or nonfunctional. "This is just as bad as the old system." Employees worry that they will either have to make the change just to change back, or that the new system will be a bridge to yet another new system.

Think back to April 23, 1985. Coca-Cola introduced New Coke amid great hype and enthusiasm. It was such a dismal failure that production of New Coke ended in that same week.

6. Lack of understanding of the time needed to make changes. I was recently at a medical practice implementing a new computer system. Patients (including me) were waiting in excess of an hour as the staff and the "implementation team" that was flown in struggled to manage the federally mandated new computer system. The staff apology and excuse was delivered to patients without a sense of urgency or sincerity. They seemed bored. "This is a new system, we are sorry for the delay" which did little to alleviate the frustration of the patients. One woman asked why she was not notified before her arrival if the office was running over an hour behind schedule. (I though that was a fair point.)

If you are changing systems and it is not of immediate benefit to those inconvenienced, they will become hostile, not only to their own staff, but to customers, too.

7. No clear sense of achievement. As people struggle through new projects, they need measureable steps to make sure they are meeting the requirements. This also gives the teams an occasion to celebrate. A series of small victories helps keep employees focused and motivated.

8. Project fatigue. I know of organizations that spend so much time preparing people about the new changes that they are

Make Difficult People Disappear: How to Deal with Stressful Behavior and Eliminate Conflict
by Monica Wofford

Monica is a talented writer, a terrific presenter, and a tremendous friend. I like all of the personality profile systems, tests and assessments, but Monica's in particular was completely accurate for me. By first understanding the four main personality types in the workplace, Commander, Organizer, Relater, and Entertainer, readers of Monica's book can develop effective strategies to understand, handle, and work with the unproductive behavior of others people. Obviously, Monica does not espouse making people disappear, but by understanding their triggers, we work more harmoniously together. Of course, like all profiles, this book best helped me understand myself.

Twitter and Social Media

Pinterest: In a shameless act of self-promotion, I wanted to "pin" my books. Mark Struczewski, author and speaker at http://markstruczewski.com told me what to do. When you hover over a book title, you'll see an Edit button appear. Click it. When the next window opens up, you'll see a place called Link. Put in your link there and click Save Pin. That's it! :-))) Mary note: Works on a PC. Thanks Mark!

Pet Tip:

Did you know that most dogs and cats shed their summer coats in the fall before their get their winter coat? Most of the time this shedding is light and not very noticeable, but daily or weekly brushing (as needed) should help keep you and your pet happier. Brushing removes the dead hair underneath the top coat, prevents matting, and removes dirt.

Thank You for Reading this Newsletter

constantly "crying wolf" – when it finally does arrive we are tired of hearing about it.

Shortly before my retirement out of the Navy, the Navy brass decided to change the uniform that everyone was required to buy (cost = $45 for the shirt and shorts) and wear for our physical training testing. This was supposed to be an improvement over the old uniform that no one wore. The Navy blue shorts and bright orange shirt are ugly. The users widely despised them, and worse, no one knew why the change was mandated.

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*Would you like to use any of these articles in your newsletter or website? You can, as long as you include this at the end: With over twenty years of leadership experience and a diverse background leading teams in the U.S. and abroad, Dr. Mary Kelly makes leadership a reality for all levels of an organization. Register for her free newsletters at **www.ProductiveLeaders.com***