

Citibooks' Tips and Ideas on...

Change Management

Volume 1

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What Would You Do if You were Not Afraid?

Kevin Dwyer

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When interviewing prospective recruits or to get people focused on what is important to them, I often ask people a simple question to provoke them to think and to talk, although not always in that order. One question I often use is for people to think of themselves on their deathbed and consider "What am I proud of in my life".

The objective of the question is for people to be able to remind themselves what is most important; self-enlightenment, self-career, self-education, friends or family. For many people who are caught up in the hurly burly of day to day life, focusing on what is really important is difficult.

Another question is for people to imagine themselves at their retirement function and what reputation would they be proudest of in their retirement speech. Is it the reputation of being a specialist, a carer of people, a leader, a manager of people or an achiever? The objective being to understand what about their work motivates them the most. The answer is what they concentrate on in their job.

In the world of change management, the book "Who Moved My Cheese?" by Dr. Spencer Johnson (co-author of The One Minute Manager) provides a series of statements and questions provoking the reader into understanding what is stopping them from accepting, embracing and looking forward to change.

The book story is a simple parable of four characters who live in a "Maze" and look for "Cheese" to nourish them and make them happy.

Two are mice named Sniff and Scurry. Two are "little people" - beings the size of mice who look and act a lot like people. Their names are Hem and Haw. "Cheese" is a metaphor for what you want to have in life - whether it is a good job, a loving relationship, money, a possession, health, or spiritual piece of mind.

"The Maze" is where you look for what you want - the organization you work in, or the family or community in which you live.

In the story, the characters are faced with unexpected change. Eventually, one

of them deals with it successfully, and writes what he has learned from his experience on the maze walls.

When you come to see "The Handwriting on the Wall" you can discover for yourself how to deal with change, so that you can enjoy less stress and more success (however you define it) in your work and in your life.

To get a full understanding, you have to read the story, but here is some of the "Handwriting on the Wall."

Change Happens. In the book, they keep moving the cheese. In real life technology changes, aging populations, easy capital movements, migration flows and the ever increasing ability to access knowledge ensures that change will continue to happen.

Anticipate Change. In the book, the characters who anticipate change find the new cheese first. In real life those who can anticipate change beat the competition whether it is coaching methods in sport, share market movements or career.

Monitor Change. In the book, the suggestion is to smell the cheese often so you know when it is getting old. In the real world it may be about sensing when you or your organisation is in a rut and life is changing around you.

Adapt to Change Quickly. In the book, the characters, except for Hem, learn that quicker you let go of old cheese, the sooner you can enjoy the new cheese. In the real world, we often carry the baggage of fixed positions inappropriate for a changed environment.

Change. Move with the cheese. In the book, the characters who move with the cheese find new cheese and prosper whilst Hem fades into obscurity. In real life the people who actually make the changes needed in their life to accommodate changes in their environment succeed more often than those who do not.

Enjoy Change. In the book, the mice learn to move to the new cheese by trial and error, learning to anticipate change without thinking. Haw learns to savour the adventure of change and the taste of the new cheese. In real life the journey of change can be enjoyed with the repeated excitement of doing something new once it is mastered.

Be Ready to Quickly Change Again and Again. In the book, the cheese keeps

moving. In real life, change is not even constant. It is accelerating as technology grows exponentially.

If you are managing change consider the following from the book; “If you do not change, you can become extinct”. Use the statement to provoke a reaction and get a discussion going.

Then ask the people you are managing and yourself the question; “What would you do if you were not afraid?” Their answers and your answer may surprise you.

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Kevin Dwyer is a Director of Change Factory. Change Factory helps organisations who do not like their business outcomes to get better outcomes by changing people's behaviour. Businesses we help have greater clarity of purpose and ability to achieve their desired business outcomes. To learn more or see more articles visit <http://www.changefactory.com.au> or email kevin.dwyer@changefactory.com.au ©2006 Change Factory

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Does Your Marketing Plan Need Changing?

Joy Gendusa

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Change is good, right? Not always. But when is it bad? Is it a question of good or bad? Sounds philosophical. Maybe it is.

Philosophize on this...why would one take something that is going good - no.. great - and change it? Obvious answer is to make it better. Not!

In business or in marketing, change is not always good. When you have certain promotional actions that are in place making things happen, or in better terms, making you money - don't change them! Why do I say this? Because I see it time and time again. Someone has a marketing campaign that is bringing in a good return on investment and they up and decide to change their postcard! What?!?! Change your postcard - why???" "Er uh, we just decided to do something different."

And then some three or four months down the road, they call back with their tail between their legs and ask - no demand to have everything back the way it was before. In this latter case - change is good.

I am not just saying that to say that one should always keep their postcard marketing campaign the same and never change it. Quite the contrary. Change your marketing, change your habits, change your way of life when it warrants it. There is really some truth to the old adage "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Maybe it is human nature to want to change everything once something gets going just the way they planned it. Who the heck knows? All I can say is step outside the human-nature box. Change only when things are drastic or when change is warranted.

Drastic circumstances deserve drastic measures. But how do you determine drastic? Sometimes that is really easy. Your company's income is crashing. Do something! Change! Or better yet, figure out what you changed and get it back to what was working.

How about a plateau? Does that deserve change? Depends on how long that plateau lasts. I have never seen things leveling off and staying level forever. It either goes one of two ways - up or down. I know an optometrist who had a very successful practice in small town USA. He never really marketed. He

never really had to. People knew of him from miles around. Mainly he did PR stuff - a fundraiser here, networking there, etc., etc. His good works made him well known and respected and the community ooo'ed and ah'ed over him so much the paper loved printing it.

But things changed. Malls started opening up. People started shopping out of small-town USA and into the bigger cities. The environment changed. But he didn't. He still kept a good practice, but you could see something interesting - his gross income started to plateau. And over time - many years - that plateau gradually started to show where it was really going. I actually don't have to say where - you've got the picture.

Now, would that demand drastic measures? Taking into account inflation, cost of living and other factors that are on the rise - yes, I would say that would demand drastic measures. Did he take them? Not until the direness became all too apparent. But yes, he finally did take them. He started postcard marketing his you-know-what off!

I have another client that is just a dream. They have had the same list for the past 5 years, ever since they have been in business - thirty thousand physical therapists they mailed to over and over and over and over and ... They never changed. They figured if it was bringing in the income it was the thing that was working. And it worked and it still works. And today - they made Entrepreneur's 100 Hot List for 2005.

So, next time you think about changing your marketing plan, look to see if it needs it. Look at your numbers. Are they improving? Declining? If your income is going up - don't change one single thing. But if it is going down or flat lining - for heaven's sake, change!

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About the Author :

Joy Gendusa founded PostcardMania (www.PostcardMania.com) in 1998, her only assets a computer and a phone. By 2005 the company did over \$12 million in sales, employed over 100 people and made Inc. Magazine's prestigious Inc 500 List as one of the 500 fastest growing companies in the nation. She attributes her explosive growth to her ability to choose incredible staff and her innate marketing savvy.

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Leading Change: Four Principles for Staying in Control

Kevin Dwyer

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When leading a change programme, the bare minimum requirement of a leader is to be seen to be in control.

The people you are leading will have a range of anxieties about the change which different individuals will feel to a different depth. The nature of the anxiety and the depth of the anxiety will change over time, sometimes precipitously.

The leader, however, must be seen to be in control. More than that, except for the odd private lapse of confidence which bedevils the best leaders, the leader of change must be in control.

My observations from being affected by and leading change are that there are a few guiding principles for maintaining control.

Principle One: Focus on the goal

Day-to-day, leaders will receive good news and bad about the activities which make up the programme of change. Some activities will be ahead of where you thought they should be, some will be falling behind, or under seemingly impossible challenge to actually be completed.

Getting excited about activities which are ahead of progress and getting despondent or activating a reactionary process about activities which are not going well is sure way of communicating a lack of control.

Celebrating progress in a change programme is an important part of a change programme communication strategy. However, the celebration should be for progress towards the goal. The progress should always be measured as a balance of good and poor progress against the goal, where we have come from and the challenges which lie ahead of us.

Keeping a calm focus on the goal whilst encouraging overall progress and providing specific resources and guidance to fix problematic activities will give the team involved in the change increased courage and determination.

Reacting positively to good news and negatively to bad news only increases anxiety.

Of course, this principle assumes that the goal is clear and well understood. If it is not, take urgent action to clarify the goal of the change, its delivery date and ensure it is communicated in the languages and styles that the recipients will be most comfortable with and the mediums they have easiest access to.

Principle Two: Understand the building blocks of the change

Any change will have some key building blocks without which the change will not be affected. Building blocks will include items, for example, such as changing the competence of people, building infrastructure, purchasing equipment, implementing software changes, changing processes, developing products or gaining market understanding.

As a leader, focus a heavier proportion of your time ensuring the key building blocks of change are given the resources and management thinking time necessary to make sure they are completed.

Ensure more effort is spent on planning the building blocks. Demand more rigorous understanding of the critical path to completing the building blocks on time. Be prepared to spend more budget to complete the elements when problems arise which require more resources. Insist on a detailed risk management strategy being developed and executed.

Leaders who do understand the building blocks of the change they initiated ensure not only that the organisation as a whole is seeing the wood for the trees, but will coach others to act similarly in their sphere of influence almost without knowing it.

Principle Three: Develop and execute a risk management strategy

If we all had a crystal ball that worked, we would not need to develop a risk management strategy. Unfortunately, for leaders of major change programmes, a working crystal ball has yet to be found. Further, change programmes, more so than any other project, are full of uncertainties and ambiguities.

The main reason for the uncertainty and ambiguity is that change programmes always involve or impact people. They impact one or more of customers, shareholders, employees including team leading the change, public servants,

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