

Leading and Facilitating Change

Change is a recurring and constant part of life, in everyone's personal and professional life. In preparing to write this article, I challenged myself to list twenty changes or challenges that I observed this week. I was amazed to see that the more I increased my awareness of change, the less resistance to those changes I felt.

The changes I noticed fell into two main groups, adaptive and technical. Being aware of the difference between the two is an important leadership skill. The technical changes were mostly short-term and ones that I had the necessary know-how and solutions to navigate. Some of the things I put on my technical list ranged from construction that necessitated a new route to a scheduling change that had a domino effect on the remaining events on the week. There were emotions tied to them but with self-awareness I could minimize the emotional effects. The adaptive changes were ones where I needed to change my attitude, behavior or the way I solved the problem. These were harder for me to identify and required more emotional energy. One example I identified was collaborating with another executive coach to redesign a training program for a client whose business model has shifted since the last workshop I did for them. Looking at my week from a change perspective, also gave me chance to evaluate my problem-solving methodology and critical thinking skills.

In adaptive change there is a gap between the way things are and the desired state. There might be multiple perspectives on the issue and new learnings that need to happen. People are the key to solving adaptive challenges and that will require a longer time frame than a technical problem. Another way you can categorize change is external versus internal forces of change.

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When thinking about change, I try to remember the old saying about crossing the road that I learned as a child, "stop, look, and listen." It is the pause and reflection that creates space for identifying the right problem to be addressed, success of the outcome and personal resilience.

In the Harvard Business Review article, "Don't Just Tell Employees Organizational Changes Are Coming — Explain Why," Morgan Galbraith says studies show that companies with high effectiveness in change management and communication are three and a half times more likely to significantly outperform their industry peers than firms that are not effective in these areas. The article says that for successful change, you should focus your efforts on the following four things.

Inspiration – Present a compelling vision for the future. The vision needs to be the base of how you communicate the change and you need to start with a narrative that can be clearly articulated and understood. Morgan says, "You want to answer: How are the changes you make today helping you achieve your vision for tomorrow?"

Information - Provide regular communications to all level of employees. Consistency is a necessity and a key factor in success. Find multiple ways to get the initial message and progress updates out. If there are answers you do not have, be transparent with where you are in the process.

Empowerment – Lead by example is the most effective way to support the change. Senior managers need to empower other leaders and managers to also lead through the change. Morgan says they need to, "help them understand the fundamentals of change, including how to be an effective leader during times of change, how individuals react to and navigate change, and how to address roadblocks or areas of resistance."

Engagement – Find creative ways to involve employees in the change. Identify change advocates as well as potential saboteurs, but tailor positive feedback to advocates. Review whether a town-hall meeting, in person or virtually, could help get employees get involved and communicating with each other. Encouraging employee feedback can also increase engagement.

Resiliency

Regardless of how your organization navigates change, there are things you can do to survive or thrive during times of change. Resilience is a muscle you can strengthen when you realize that you are the only one who has the power, and the responsibility, to adapt to change. The following are key characteristics of strong resiliency. Assess your resiliency capacity.

Self-Control: How good are you at making rational decisions, suspending your judgment, and acting (rather than react) to provocation? Are you good at solving problems logically? Do you “read” people well and adapt to various personality styles in non-judgmental way? Do you calm yourself and focus on taking useful actions during a crisis?

Adaptability: How good at you at improvising, exhibiting creativity and inventiveness? Do you bounce back from difficulties? Do you recover emotionally from losses and setbacks? Do you express feelings to others, let go of anger, overcome discouragement, and ask for help? Do you convert misfortune into good fortune or discover the unexpected benefit?

Optimism: How good are you at maintaining a positive outlook on issues, finding solutions and adapting with enthusiasm and passion? Do you see difficulties as temporary, and expect to overcome them, and have things to turn out well? Is it easy for you to access your sense humor, laugh at self, chuckle?

Self-Sufficiency: How good are you in trusting your own talents and solutions? Do you think up creative solutions to challenges? Do you feel self-confident, enjoy healthy self-esteem, and have an attitude of professionalism about work? Do you feel comfortable with inner complexity (trusting and cautious, unselfish and selfish, optimistic and pessimistic, etc.)?

Persistence: How good are you at persevering and continuing to work on something even after the

excitement has worn off? Do you constantly learn from experience and from the experience of others? Do you anticipate problems to avoid them and expect the unexpected? Do you keep on going during tough times with an independent spirit?

As an executive coach, one of my focuses is on helping clients navigate positive change. Everyone is faced with ambiguity and uncertainty about situations. A key to resilience is the ability to navigate change. Being curious, asking questions, wanting to know how things work, and experimenting are traits that foster resilience. I encourage my clients to stay present in the current situation, even if it is uncomfortable so they can learn to move forward. When you are aware of something and reflect on it, you will be in a better place to act upon it. Leaders are made stronger and better by difficult situations. Working with a coach can help you pause the automatic-pilot tendencies that we all have and create space for choice, change and presence in action.

Harmony helps individuals and organizations navigate change effectively and efficiently through 1:1 coaching, Facilitating & Managing Change workshops, the helping leaders add coaching and communication skills, The Coaching Clinic, to their leadership toolkit. The next Coaching Clinic workshop is Oct 16 & 17. Sign up for Coaching Clinic If you're interested in exploring any of these services contact Bill Burtch at Harmony for a consultation at 901-272-7390 or bburtch@harmonycc.net



Bill Burtch
PCC, SPHR, SHRM-SCP

1650 Faxon Avenue
Memphis, TN 38112
Tel: 901-272-7390

bburtch@harmonycc.net
www.harmonycc.net

Schedule of Public Courses

The following courses are being offered to the public by Harmony Coaching & Consulting. Click on the associated link for more information on the program or to register.

Course Title	Date(s)	Time	For More Information/Registration
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[*The Coaching Clinic*](#)

[*Oct 16 & 17*](#)

[*8:30 am – 5:00 pm*](#)

