

Change Management - shift gear and keep up with the pace

By Lyndsay Swinton

Change management is a hot management topic for one reason: change happens - continually. Like death and taxes, change is a fact of life, and therefore so is change management. Effective change management is essential because when change happens too fast or in too many areas of our lives, it can all get a bit much. Together we will take a look at the dynamics of change and give you useful practical insights into handling change successfully.

Change never stops, it only changes speed

Managing change is like driving. Flooring the accelerator speeds you up until you "red-line" the engine and can go no faster. Rushing around at maximum revolutions is a buzz until the engine gets hot and starts to break down. Then maybe it's time to change gear?

As all drivers know, changing up a gear maintains your speed, conserves fuel and is easier on the engine. And you've still got the accelerator capacity to go even faster.

So whether you're a classic vintage or a speedy sports car, you may want to consider a few things;

- What's your "red-line"?
- Can you change gear?
- How much fuel do you keep in reserve?

Finances, skills, experience, resources or other factors may limit our capacity for change and cause us to "red-line". And what's easy for you may be a stretch for others. When pushed to the maximum, the best thing to do is throttle back or to change gear.

How to change gear

Changing gear may require more effort. Do you need to update that qualification? Can you negotiate additional resources? Can the project scope be changed?

And can you change your attitude to change?

“Wei Gi” – changing danger into opportunity

The Chinese character for crisis is “Wei Gi”, can mean both danger and opportunity. We all have our own take on the positive and negative aspects of change, so start by examining your own attitude and the attitude of those around you.

Looking on the bright side of change can help you shift up gears effortlessly and give you spare capacity to deal with unexpected events. Maintaining a strong vision of your destination serves as both a source of purpose and guidance system to reestablish perspectives following significant disruption.

Seek out the people who view change as challenging and opportunity filled, and make them your allies. These will be the people you fall back on when it gets tough.

Seek out the people who put up the biggest barriers to change and understand their concerns. Extreme pessimists are skilled at spotting areas that might go wrong, and you never know, you might pick up something you’ve overlooked.

Save time - be selective

For all the people in-between – ignore them! Stop wasting valuable energy! These people will eventually get there, dragged along by the enthusiastic acceptors of change.

And be organised. Take major action only after careful planning and set goals to translate confusing, conflicting changes into simple efforts with a central theme. Neither sexy nor glamorous, but you won’t go far without them.

So with a little attention to the mechanics of change, you can cruise along life’s highway admiring the view, while managing change like a pro.

By Lyndsay Swinton
Owner, Management for the Rest of Us
www.mftrou.com

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