

Managing Transitions

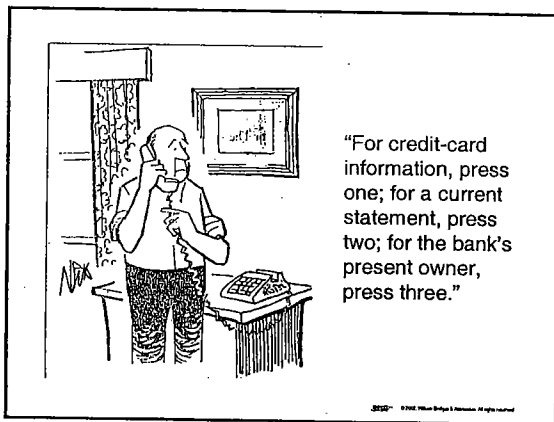
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People talk about the pace of *change*, but it is really the repeated *transitions* that cause the difficulties within an organization.

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Change vs. Transition

Change and Transition are not the same

- Change = a shift in the external situation
- Transition = a psychological process that people go through to assimilate a change

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"The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their right names."

Classical Chinese saying

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Transition Has a Distinctive Three-Phase Form

- The **first phase** is ending the old way: people have to *let go*
- The **second phase** is a hiatus, when the old way is gone but the new isn't working yet: people have to get through this time and use it creatively
- The **third phase** is a new beginning: people come out of a successful transition with a sense of purpose that is realigned and renewed energy

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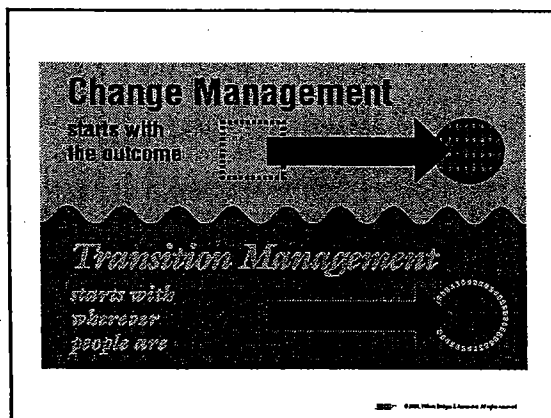
Resistance

It is the transition—not the change—that leads to “resistance.” What people resist is transition’s three phases:

1. The loss of their identity and of their “world.”
2. The disorientation and uncertainty of the neutral zone.
3. The risk of failing in a new beginning.

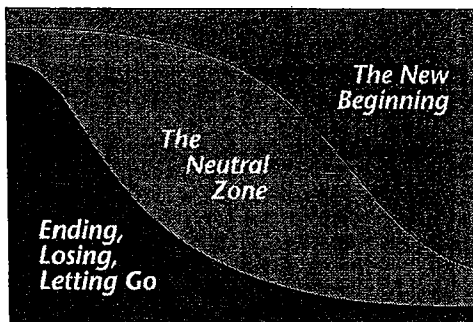
Why Transition Matters

- If people don't make a transition, the change won't work.
- Changes-without-transitions make people resist and blame the changes for what they are feeling.
- Unmanaged transition disrupts operations and distresses people.
- Unmanaged transition also polarizes groups and causes leaders to be mistrusted.
- Because of these things, unmanaged transition causes productivity and effectiveness to decline.



The Moral of the Story:

Change management is important, but transition management is critical. Without it, the change not only may *not work*, but it may actually *weaken the organization*. What is done to save the organization may end up contributing to its destruction.



So, Regarding The Changes You Face...

1. What is ending?
2. Who's going to lose what?
3. What can we [who?] stop doing?
4. What is it time [for who?] to let go of?
5. What is it time [for who?] to say goodbye to? How do they do that?

