

*The following material has recently been used to great success with management and leadership teams. If you'd like to learn more, please review our Programs and contact us at [www.leadershiptransformationgroup.com](http://www.leadershiptransformationgroup.com)*



## MANAGING CHANGE

### Why Do People Fear Change?

Some people worry a lot about the changes in their profession. Others seem to thrive on change, developing new services and skills. Why are people so different in their reactions to change? Understanding fears about transition is the first step in dealing with the fears themselves. There are legitimate reasons why people fear change.

**Leaving the “comfort zone”.** Many people face a routine each day that they know well and have become good at over time. Change means that one has to leave that routine and do something else. People fear that they will not be as good at the new thing. On the other hand, comfort zones often turn into ruts, and after a time, experienced individuals are not as good as they think because the rut is no longer fun or challenging.

**Loss of position.** Probably the worse-case scenario following a change is a job loss. Fear of job loss has been a factor behind some of the negative behaviors surrounding efforts in reengineering, outsourcing, enterprise software systems, and e-commerce. These behaviors run the gamut from non acceptance of a change to outright sabotage. When a manager or consultant walks in the door and announces major change, many people resist, either overtly or covertly.

**New responsibilities.** Sometimes change means more work. Information systems can complicate matters because they provide so much information to review and analyze. Routines are built into personal lives over time and can be affected by workplace changes. The need to work overtime, a shift in hours, variability in levels of responsibility impacting stress levels, and relocation are changes that are likely to hit us at home.

**Higher expectations.** The threat of change fosters self-doubt. The boss may be extolling the wonderful opportunities when proposed changes are enacted, but employees may be thinking about whether they are up to the challenge. An important part of change management involves retraining people for their new jobs and demonstrating to them that the reward structures are tied to a performance measure they have some control over.

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**Loss of power and influence.** Change may create a sense of insecurity because individuals fear losing power and influence either as a direct outcome or an inevitable consequence of change. Control of information or processes is often a source of power in an organization. Change can create anxiety because it can affect who controls information or processes. In addition, transition often causes a reallocation of scarce resources.

**Past experiences.** Most of us have faced change at one time or another. Imagine an organization that has seen its management announce every new thing from TQM to Reengineering with great fanfare, only to see each project take a lot of time and yet fail. If prior change efforts have failed, new change efforts become less appealing.

## The Change Management Process

Change management is a process, a series of steps designed to move a person from point A to point B; from a legacy system to a resource planning system. A prescribed process is useful in managing change (see Exhibit).

Nothing is more important for successful and lasting change than open, two-way communication between management and stakeholders throughout the change process. If some jobs will be lost through outsourcing, management should admit it. If employees fear that their status will deteriorate with a proposed change, they should inform management of their concern.

During the implementation, problems often develop that reduce the project's initial excitement. If things are not going right, management should solicit input from employees, who often have a better feel for exactly what is wrong and may be able to make constructive suggestions for fixing the problem.



## EXHIBIT THE CHANGE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

