

Part Five

Facilitating a Change Initiative

Becoming an Adaptive Leader

Leadership experts Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky define leadership as “*the activity of mobilizing people to tackle the toughest problems and do the adaptive work necessary to achieve progress.*” Leadership would be an easy and safe undertaking if organizations and communities only faced problems for which they already knew the solutions. Everyday, people have problems for which they do, in fact, have the necessary know-how and procedures—what leadership experts Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky call *technical problems*. But there are also a whole host of problems that are not amendable to authoritative expertise or standard operating procedures. They cannot be solved by someone who provides answers from on high. Heifetz and Linsky refer to these problems as *adaptive challenges* because they require experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization or community. Without learning new ways—changing attitudes, values, and deep-seated behaviors—people cannot make the adaptive leap necessary to thrive in the new environment. The sustainability of real change depends on having the people with the problem internalize the change itself.

Sharon Daloz Parks, in *Leadership Can Be Taught*, describes the distinction between technical and adaptive issues:

Technical problems (even though they may be complex) can be solved with knowledge and procedures already in hand. In contrast, *adaptive challenges* require new learning, innovation, and new patterns of behavior. In this view, leadership is the activity of mobilizing people to address adaptive challenges—those challenges that cannot be resolved by expert knowledge and routine management alone. Adaptive challenges often appear as swamp issues—tangled, complex problems composed of multiple systems that resist technical analysis and thus stand in contrast to the high, hard ground issues that are easier to address but where less is at stake for the organization or the society. They ask for more than changes in routine or mere performance. They call for changes of heart and mind—the transformation of long-standing habits and deeply held assumptions and values. (Parks, 10)

Technical problems are well defined: Their solutions are known and those with adequate expertise and organizational capacity can solve them. For example, a church that sees the participation of children and their families decline in the summer, can develop a multi-week vacation Bible school program that engages children and their parents during the summer months. It is a technical problem because the resources are available for purchase and the implementation tasks, while requiring plenty of work, are well known and within the existing skill-set of the church’s faith formation leadership.

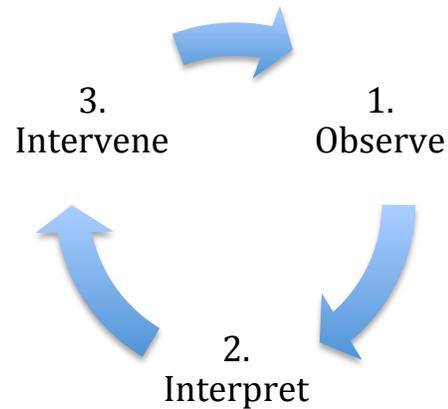
Adaptive challenges are entirely different. The challenge is complex and not so well defined; and the answers are not known in advance. Adaptive challenges require innovation and learning. For example, developing a plan for the faith formation of Baby Boomers in a church is an adaptive challenge today. People in this generation present a whole new set of challenges and opportunities for churches. They bring new spiritual and religious needs, and are creating a new “stage of life” that combines work, retirement, volunteerism, and family. There are few established models or resources for faith formation

with this generation. This adaptive challenge will require creating new models and approaches, experimenting, evaluating, redesigning, and continuous learning.

Adaptive leadership is an iterative process involved three key activities:

- 1) *observing* events and patterns around you;
- 2) *interpreting* what you are observing (developing multiple hypotheses about what is really going on; and
- 3) *designing* interventions based on the observations and interpretations to address the adaptive challenge you have identified.

Each of these activities builds on the ones that come before it; and the process overall is iterative: you repeatedly refine your observations, interpretations, and interventions.



In the view of Heifetz and Linsky, leadership is mobilizing a congregation to engage its own most pressing problems and deepest challenges. Leadership builds capacity and sustainability within a congregation as it mobilizes a congregation to engage and make progress on its deepest challenges. Leaders help people understand the changed nature of their situation, and develop new ways of doing faith formation and being church. Mobilizing people for adaptive work is to help them enter into that zone of risk where new learning and new self-understanding, as well as new ways of acting, can be discerned.

“What Heifetz describes as adaptive work is, at its heart, spiritual work. It involves the central dynamics of the spiritual life and of transformation, which includes loss, risk and trust, even death and resurrection. Our sacred Scriptures, sacraments and our symbols are all powerful resources for adaptive challenges and adaptive work that we face at this time. No program, effort at restructuring, or ‘right’ pastor alone will meet this challenge. It involves our own changes of minds and hearts” (Robinson, 45).

Resources on Adaptive Leadership

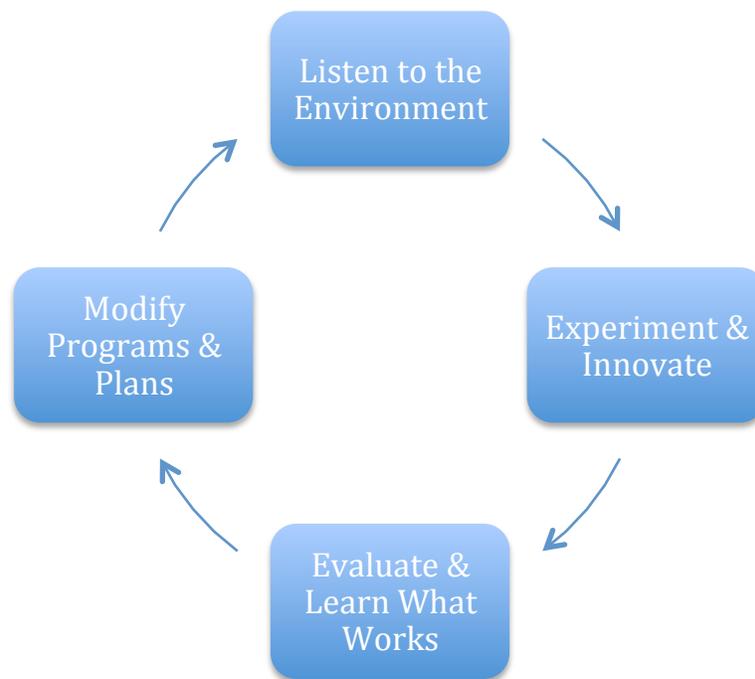
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Video Presentations by Ronald Heifetz on Adaptive Leadership

- Faith & Leadership (Duke University): www.faithandleadership.com/multimedia/ronald-heifetz-the-nature-adaptive-leadership
- Institute for Educational Leadership (Ontario, Canada): www.education-leadership-ontario.ca/videos06-07.shtml
- Vimeo Video Presentation: <http://vimeo.com/13117695>

The Cycle of Adaptation

(From: *Forces for Good: The Six Practices of High-Impact Non-Profits*. Leslie Crutchfield and Heather McLeod Grant. Jossey-Bass, 2008.)



1. **Listen:** Stay tuned to external clues from the environment and ideas generated within the organization, and perceive opportunities for change.
 2. **Experiment and Innovate:** Develop new ideas for programs (product innovation) and constantly improve your programs, and how you deliver them (process innovations). Innovate around promising practices, programs, or processes.
 3. **Evaluate and Learn:** Rigorously assess what works and what doesn't work. Test how the innovation is doing; evaluate results and learn; decide what needs to change.
 4. **Modify:** Alter future plans based on the results of evaluation. This can include changing the overall direction of the organization, or sharing knowledge across existing sites to improve all programs.
- **Repeat the Cycle:** Continue to learn, innovate, learn, and modify as necessary.
 - **Focus on Results, not Tactics:** Stay focused on closing the gap between your performance and what you are trying to achieve.

Q&A

Surviving Leadership with Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky

When you lead people through difficult change, you challenge what people hold dear—their daily habits, tools, loyalties, and ways of thinking—with nothing more to offer perhaps than a possibility,” write Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky. Their new book, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading*, provides a sobering analysis of how organizations connive to oppose change—and how leaders get bruised, or even destroyed, in the process. Heifetz, founding director of the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, and Linsky, faculty chair of many of the school’s executive programs, recently spoke with *Harvard Management Update* editor Loren Gary about how leaders can overcome organizational resistance.

How does resistance to adaptive work—work that requires people’s hearts and minds to change, not just their routine behaviors—manifest itself?

RH: When exercising leadership, you encounter four forms of resistance: marginalization, diversion, attack, and seduction. When people resist adaptive work, their first goal is to shut down leadership in order to preserve what they have. An adaptive challenge requires an organization to separate what’s precious—what should be held onto—from what is expendable. At the start of such work, many people feel everything is precious; they’re reluctant to give up anything.

Each form of resistance has its subtleties. For example, women in male-dominated institutions can get marginalized when they have to carry the gender issue for everyone—that is, do all the lobbying for pay equity or work/life issues.

People at the top can also get marginalized by colluding unwittingly with those who are trying to delay the pain of a necessary transition.

ML: With diversion, there are many ways in which communities and organizations will consciously or unconsciously try to make you lose focus. They sometimes do this by broadening or overwhelming your agenda, but they always have a seemingly logical reason for disrupting your game plan. When you're attacked, the goal of the attackers is to submerge the issue you are advancing by turning the subject of the conversation to your character or style, or even to the attack itself. Seduction, the fourth form, connotes any process by which you get taken out of action by an initiative that has a special appeal to you.

Your underlying point about all four of these forms is not to take them personally, but to understand the function they serve.

RH: Yes, these forms of resistance reduce the disequilibrium that would be generated were people to address the adaptive issues. They seek to take the adaptive issues off the table, to maintain the familiar, restore order, and protect people from the pains of adaptive work.

ML: Leaders are rarely neutralized for personal reasons. The role you play or the issue you carry generates the reaction. For the most part, people criticize you when they don't like the message. Still, it's difficult to resist responding to the personal attack. But exercising leadership often means bearing such scars.

So what are some of the strategies and tactics for mobilizing adaptive work?

RH: It starts with getting on the balcony. This image captures the mental activity of stepping back in the midst of action and asking, "What's really going on here?" Few tasks strain our abilities more than putting this idea into practice. Without some perspective on the bigger picture, you are likely to misperceive the situation and make the wrong diagnosis, leading you to misguided decisions about whether and how to intervene.

ML: We all get swept up in the action, particularly when it becomes intense or personal. Picking up the overarching patterns is very tough when you're also taking part in the action—the most difficult part to notice is what you do yourself. When you're on the balcony, try not to jump to familiar conclusions. See who says what. Watch the body language. Watch the relationships and see how people's attention to one another varies: supporting, thwarting, or listening.

And after you've climbed up to the balcony?

RH: You have to return to the dance floor if you want to affect what's happening. Staying on the balcony in a safe observer role is as ineffective as never achieving that perspective in the first place. The process must be iterative, not static. Next, you need to understand where people are—otherwise you can't lead them forward. Both your survival and your success depend on your reaching a true understanding of the varying perspectives among the factions.

ML: You also need to listen to the song beneath the words. People naturally, even unconsciously, defend their habits and ways of thinking and attempt to avoid difficult value choices. Thus, after hearing their stories, you need to take the provocative step of making an interpretation that gets below the surface.

RH: Read the behavior of the organization's authority figures for clues. The trap is thinking that they are operating independently and expressing personal points of view. In fact, they are trying to manage all the various factions, and what you observe is a response to the pressures they're experiencing.

What do you mean when you write that "the merits of a cause and the strategy used to move it forward are relevant but not controlling"?

ML: Successful leaders in any field emphasize personal relationships. Leaders have to think politically—in particular, they need to find partners. Admittedly, there can be internal pressures, inside of you, that resist joining forces. Partners might push their own ideas, compromising your own; connecting with them takes time, slowing you down. And working with a group might dilute your leadership—that can be a drawback if it is important that you get the credit for an initiative, or if you want to reassure yourself and others of your competence.

RH: Still, you need partners. And partners who are members of the faction for whom the change is most difficult can be especially significant. But partnerships are not unlimited, unconditional, or universal. A natural ally agrees with you on your issue and is willing to fight for it, but that doesn't mean she'll abandon all other commitments. If you forget about how these commitments influence your partner, you run the risk of undermining your effectiveness and destroying the alliance.

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The Perils of Adaptive Change

LEADERSHIP WOULD BE AN EASY AND SAFE UNDERTAKING if organizations and communities only faced problems for which they already knew the solutions. Everyday, people have problems for which they do, in fact, have the necessary know-how and procedures—what Heifetz and Linsky call technical problems. But there are also a whole host of problems that are not amendable to authoritative expertise or standard operating procedures. They cannot be solved by someone who provides answers from on high. The authors refer to these problems as adaptive challenges because they require experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization or community. Without learning new ways—changing attitudes, values, and deep-seated behaviors—people cannot make the adaptive leap necessary to thrive in the new environment. The sustainability of real change depends on having the people with the problem internalize the change itself.

People cannot see at the beginning of the adaptive process that the new situation will be any better than the current condition. What they do see clearly is the potential for loss. People frequently avoid painful adjustments in their lives if they can postpone them, place the burden on someone else, or call someone to the rescue. When fears and passions run high, people can become desperate as they look to authorities for the answers. This dynamic renders adaptive contexts inherently dangerous.

When people look to authorities for easy answers to adaptive challenges, at best they get short-term order at the expense of long-term progress. They expect the person in charge to know what to do, and under the weight of that pressure, those in authority frequently end up faking it or disappointing people, or they get spit out of the system in the belief that a new “leader” will solve the problem. The deeper the change and the greater amount of new learning required, the more resistance there will be and the greater the danger to those who lead. For this reason, people in positions of authority understandably often try to avoid the dangers, either consciously or subconsciously, by treating an adaptive challenge as if it were a technical one. This is why we see so much more routine management than leadership in our society.

The single most common source of leadership failure—in government, community life, business, or the nonprofit sector—is that people treat adaptive challenges like technical problems.

In times of distress, when everyone looks to authorities to provide direction, protection, and order, this is an easy diagnostic mistake to make. In the face of adaptive pressures, people don't want questions; they want answers. They don't want to be told that they will have to sustain losses; rather, they want to know how you're going to protect them from the pains of change. And you naturally want to fulfill these needs and expectations, not bear the brunt of their frustration and anger at the bad news you're giving.

In mobilizing adaptive work, you have to engage people in adjusting their unrealistic expectations and in learning new ways, rather than try to satisfy them as if the situation were amenable primarily to a technical remedy. You have to counteract their exaggerated dependency and nurture their courage and resourcefulness. This takes an extraordinary level of presence, time, and artful communication, but it may also take more time and trust than you have.

When you are in a position of authority, there are also strong internal pressures to focus on the technical aspects of problems. Most of us take pride in our ability to answer tough questions that are thrown our way. We get rewarded for bearing people's uncertainty and want to be seen in a competent, heroic light. Yet raising questions that go to the core of people's habits goes unrewarded, at least for a while. You get booed instead of cheered. In fact, it may be a long time before you hear any applause—if ever. Leadership takes the capacity to stomach hostility so that you can stay connected to people, lest you disengage from them and exacerbate the danger.

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Leadership ON THE Line

Staying Alive through the
Dangers of Leading

Ronald A. Heifetz
Marty Linsky

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Visit our Website: www.hbsp.harvard.edu

Contact: Sharon Rice, Publicity Manager
(617) 783-7764 • srice@hbsp.harvard.edu
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Orchestrate the Conflict

WHEN TACKLING A TOUGH ISSUE, there will always be conflict—either palpable or latent. Most people have a natural aversion to conflict, but exercising leadership usually involves surfacing and working with conflict rather than squashing it. Conflicts generate distress and often casualties as well. But deep conflicts, at their root, consist of differences in fervently held beliefs, and differences in perspective are the engine of human progress. People are passionate about their own values and perspectives, which means that outsiders are threats. When that is the case, the texture of the engagement can move quickly from polite exchange to intense argument and disruptive conflict. Thus the challenge of leadership when trying to generate adaptive change is to work with differences, passions, and conflicts in a way that diminishes their destructive potential and constructively harnesses their energy.

Orchestrating the conflict may be easier to do when you are in an authority role because people expect those in authority to manage the process. However, Heifetz and Linsky offer four options for people who seek to enact change but are not necessarily in a senior position of authority: first, create a holding environment for the work; second, control the temperature; third, set the pace; and fourth, show them the future.

Create a Holding Environment

WHEN YOU EXERCISE LEADERSHIP, you need a holding environment to contain and adjust the heat that is being generated by addressing difficult issues or wide value differences. A holding environment is a space formed by a network of relationships within which people can tackle tough, sometimes divisive questions without flying apart. Creating a holding environment enables you to direct creative energy toward working the conflicts and containing passions that could easily boil over.

A holding environment will look and feel very different in different contexts. It may be a protected physical space you create by hiring an outside facilitator and taking a work group off-site. It may be characterized by a clear set of

rules and processes that give minority voices the confidence that they will be heard without having to disrupt the proceedings to gain attention. A holding environment is a place where there is enough cohesion to offset the centrifugal forces that arise when people do adaptive work. In a holding environment, with structural, procedural, or virtual boundaries, people feel safe enough to address problems that are difficult, not only because they strain integrity, but also because they strain relationships.

Control the Temperature

CHANGING THE STATUS QUO generates tension and produces heat by surfacing hidden conflicts and challenging organizational culture. It's a deep and natural human impulse to seek order and calm, and organizations and communities can tolerate only so much distress before recoiling.

If you try to stimulate deep change, you have to control the temperature. There are really two tasks involved. The first is to raise the heat enough that people sit up, pay attention, and deal with the real threats and challenges facing them. Without some distress, there is no incentive for them to change anything. The second is to lower the temperature when necessary to reduce a counterproductive level of tension. Any community can only take so much pressure before it becomes either immobilized or spins out of control. The heat must stay within a tolerable range—not so high that people demand it be turned off completely, and not so low that they are lulled into inactivity. Heifetz and Linsky call this span the productive range of distress.

Pace the Work

LEADERSHIP ADDRESSES emotional as well as conceptual work. When you lead people through difficult change, you take them on an emotional roller coaster because you are asking them to relinquish something that they hold dear. People can only stand so much change at any one time. You risk revolt, and your own survival, by trying to do too much, too soon. Pacing the work is not a new

or complicated idea. Change involves loss, and people can only sustain so much loss at any one time.

Yet pacing the work is often difficult because your own commitment and that of your enthusiasts push you forward. True believers are not known for their sense of strategic pace. Pacing the work can be ethically complicated because it can involve withholding information, if not outright deception. Pacing typically requires people in authority to let their ideas and programs seep out a little at a time, so they can be absorbed slowly enough to be tested and accepted. This kind of patient withholding must be done carefully, with an openness to the testing and revision of one's ideas, lest it be interpreted as deceitful or misleading.

Show Them the Future

TO SUSTAIN MOMENTUM through a period of difficult change, you have to find ways to remind people of the orienting value—the positive vision—that makes the current angst worthwhile. As you catalyze change, you can help ensure that you do not become a lightning rod for the conflict by making the vision more tangible, reminding people of the values they are fighting for, and showing them how the future might look. By answering, in every possible way, the “why” question, you increase people's willingness to endure the hardships that come with the journey to a better place.

It is not always possible to show people the future. It might not exist. You might not even be able to envision it yourself. But if it is possible, revealing the future is an extremely useful way to mobilize adaptive work and yet avoid becoming the target of resistance. If people can glimpse the future, they are much less likely to fixate on what they might have to shed. Confidence in the future is crucial in the face of the inevitable counter-pressures from those who will doggedly cling to the present, and for whom you become the source of unwanted disturbance. Showing the future is another way of staying out of the conflict yourself, and thereby helping the parties deal with the stresses of adaptive change. To survive and succeed in the exercise of leadership, you need to orchestrate the conflict rather than become it.

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Becoming a Change Leader

(From: *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard*. Chip Heath and Dan Heath. Broadway Books, 2010)

In their book *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard*, Chip and Dan Heath, authors and professors, ask the question why it's so hard to make lasting changes in our companies, in our communities, and in our own lives. The primary obstacle, say the Heaths, is a conflict that's built into our brains. Psychologists have discovered that our minds are ruled by two different systems—the rational mind and the emotional mind—that compete for control. The rational mind wants a great beach body; the emotional mind wants that Oreo cookie. The rational mind wants to change something at work; the emotional mind loves the comfort of the existing routine. This tension can doom a change effort—but if it is overcome, change can come quickly. They propose a framework that sets out three ways change happens.

1. **Direct the Rider** (the conscious mind), eliminating what looks like resistance but is more often a lack of clarity by providing crystal-clear direction.
 - Following the bright spots: investigate what's working and clone it.
 - Script the critical moves: don't think big picture, think in terms of specific behaviors.
 - Point to the destination: change is easier when you know where you're going and why it's worth it.

2. **Motivate the Elephant** (the subconscious), eliminating what looks like laziness but is more often exhaustion by engaging emotions to get people on the same path as you.
 - Find the feeling: knowing something isn't enough to cause change. Make people feel something.
 - Shrink the change: break down the change until it no longer spooks the Elephant.
 - Grow your people: cultivate a sense of identity and instill the growth mindset.

3. **Shape the Path** (the situation), eliminating what looks like a people problem but is more often a situation problem, by making the environment more conducive to the change you seek.
 - Tweak the environment: when the situation changes, the behavior changes. So change the situation.
 - Build habits: when behavior is habitual, it's "free"—it doesn't tax the Rider. Look for ways to encourage habits.
 - Rally the herd: behavior is contagious. Help it spread.

Heath, Chip and Dan Heath. *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard*. New York: Broadway, 2010.

Heath, Chip and Dan Heath. *Switch Your Organization: A Workbook*. Download from <http://heathbrothers.com/resources>.

Website: Heath Brothers: <http://heathbrothers.com>

A Framework for Change

<i>Direct the Rider (the conscious mind):</i> eliminating what looks like resistance but is more often a lack of clarity by providing crystal-clear direction.	
	Ways to use this in your project
1. Following the bright spots: investigate what's working and clone it.	
2. Script the critical moves: don't think big picture, think in terms of specific behaviors.	
3. Point to the destination: change is easier when you know where you're going and why it's worth it.	
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	Ways to use this in your project
7. Tweak the environment: when the situation changes, the behavior changes. So change the situation.	
8. Build habits: when behavior is habitual, it's "free"—it doesn't tax the Rider. Look for ways to encourage habits.	
9. Rally the herd: behavior is contagious. Help it spread.	

For things to change, somebody somewhere has to start acting differently. Maybe it's you, maybe it's your team.

Picture that person (or people).

Each has an emotional Elephant side and a rational Rider side. You've got to reach both. And you've also got to clear the way for them to succeed. In short, you must do three things:

➔ **DIRECT** the Rider

FOLLOW THE BRIGHT SPOTS. Investigate what's working and clone it. [Jerry Sternin in Vietnam, solutions-focused therapy]

SCRIPT THE CRITICAL MOVES. Don't think big picture, think in terms of specific behaviors. [1% milk, four rules at the Brazilian railroad]

POINT TO THE DESTINATION. Change is easier when you know where you're going and why it's worth it. ["You'll be third graders soon," "No dry holes" at BP]

➔ **MOTIVATE** the Elephant

FIND THE FEELING. Knowing something isn't enough to cause change. Make people feel something. [Piling gloves on the table, the chemotherapy video game, Robyn Waters's demos at Target]

SHRINK THE CHANGE. Break down the change until it no longer spooks the Elephant. [The 5-Minute Room Rescue, procurement reform]

GROW YOUR PEOPLE. Cultivate a sense of identity and instill the growth mindset. [Brasilata's "inventors," junior-high math kids' turnaround]

➔ **SHAPE** the Path

TWEAK THE ENVIRONMENT. When the situation changes, the behavior changes. So change the situation. [Throwing out the phone system at Rackspace, 1-Click ordering, simplifying the online time sheet]

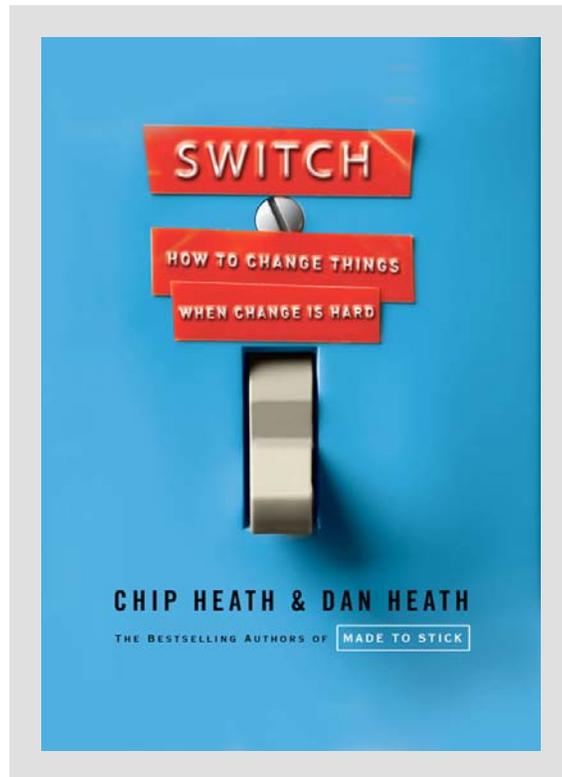
BUILD HABITS. When behavior is habitual, it's "free"—it doesn't tax the Rider. Look for ways to encourage habits. [Setting "action triggers," eating two bowls of soup while dieting, using checklists]

RALLY THE HERD. Behavior is contagious. Help it spread. ["Fataki" in Tanzania, "free spaces" in hospitals, seeding the tip jar]

SWITCH

YOUR ORGANIZATION

A Workbook



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Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard
by Chip Heath and Dan Heath

Direct the Rider

FIND *the* BRIGHT SPOTS

Ask the Exception Question.

When does the problem you're fighting not happen? I.e., when does your teenager not talk back? When have the two warring departments collaborated instead of feuding? When does your front-line employee show a "customer-service focus"?

Ask the Miracle Question.

You wake up in the morning and your problems are solved. What's the first small sign that things have changed? Remember, you're not defining the miracle itself—e.g., it would be a miracle if your marriage was great, you got a big bonus at work, and your community experienced a big economic turnaround (like the opposite of a Country & Western song, except your dog would also have to come back). Rather, you're trying to find something concrete you can work toward and the first small sign will do this for you. The Exception Question is the most useful question to start with, but the Miracle Question will help if you can't think of any existing bright spots.

Make sure your bright spot is about YOU.

Bright spots are not the same as benchmarking. The fact that your competitor is outperforming you on some front does not mean that they're a "bright spot." (It wouldn't be helpful, after all, to tell an alcoholic that a sober person is a "bright spot.") People resist being told, "Why aren't you more like your sister?" Bright spots are specific to you and your team. Where are YOU succeeding now, or where have YOU succeeded before? By pinpointing those moments, you can avoid triggering the "not invented here" reaction. You can reassure people that they're capable of solving their own problems.

What is working today, and how can you do more of it?

Are there certain teams or units that are leading the way? Are there certain managers or salespeople who exemplify the direction you're headed? If so, those are your bright spots. Like Jerry Sternin and the mothers in Vietnam, you should go shadow them and figure out what they're doing that's making their performance better than other groups.

The Recipe *for* Bright Spots

Example: Jerry Sternin and mothers in Vietnam

1. **Gather data on the issue.**
Record the height and weight of all the kids in the village.
2. **Study the data to find the bright spots (the unusually positive performers).**
There were several kids who were perfectly healthy for their age, despite being very poor.
3. **Make sure you understand the "normal way" things are done.**
Jerry Sternin and the mothers knew that most families served 2 large bowls of white rice.
4. **Next, study the bright spots to see what they're doing differently.**
The bright-spot moms were serving 4 small meals, and using uncommon foods like sweet potato greens and tiny shrimp.
5. **Make sure none of those practices are "exceptional" in some way.**
For instance, if one of the healthy kids had been receiving extra food from a rich relative in another area, then that's not a scalable technique.
6. **Find a way to reproduce the practices of the bright spots among other people.**
The moms formed cooking circles where they could learn the new practices from each other.

Remember...

Bright spots don't have to be shining success stories. Remember the story of Bobby, the troubled teen, in the book. There was NO time when he was an Eagle Scout.

You're just looking for situations when things are working better than others. Don't look for "perfect," because you may not find it. Look for "the best of what's available."

SCRIPT *the* CRITICAL MOVES

Be clear about how people should act.

This is one of the hardest—and most important—parts of the framework. As a leader, you're going to be tempted to tell your people things like: "Be more innovative!" "Treat the customer with white-glove service!" "Give better feedback to your people!" But you can't stop there. Remember the child-abuse study? Do you think those parents would have changed if the therapists had said, "Be more loving parents!" Of course not. Look for the behaviors.

Pick one place to start.

You may have a list of 20 things you'd like to accomplish but can you rank-order them? What would be the most cost-effective way of making progress? Remember, you don't need to develop the complete battle plan, you just need to take a substantial step toward your final destination. Buying 1% milk didn't solve the diet problems of West Virginians, but it was a really important first step.

If you can't nail it exactly, consider the best approximation.

For a change effort to work, leaders have to transform aspirations into actions. And there isn't always a neat, elegant translation. For instance, at Shearson, the manager's aspiration was to have one of the best research teams in the industry. But that's not an action. It's not even close. So he had to think up some behavioral approximations.

Imagine saying the following sentence to your people: If we act this way— _____—then we can't help but get closer to the goal. How would you fill in the blank? For the Shearson leader, that approximation was for his team to make 125 calls per month. He knew that if they made that many calls, they couldn't help but get a lot smarter about their coverage areas, make lots of contacts, etc. What's the best approximation for your team?

Kill the abstractions exercise.

Take your change appeal and put a squiggly line under every abstraction (i.e., everything that wouldn't create a clear mental picture in the mind of your grandmother, front-line employee, customer, etc.) How many abstractions can you just get rid of? For the few critical concepts that remain, can you come up with a specific example?

Evaluate your critical move candidates.

If you're trying to decide between different "critical moves" for your team, try assessing your options using the following checklist. Put checkmark beside how many features a particular move would have. Give priority to critical moves that evoke more parts of the framework. As an example, we have filled out the checklist as if we were the Shearson leader, considering whether to ask our team to make 125 calls per month. You can see that it scores very well.

Checklist: Do You Have the Right "Critical Move"?

Example: Shearson's 125 Calls Per Month Guideline

- ✓ **Does it evoke emotion? (Find the feeling)**
No. 125 calls per month is not emotional.
 - ✓ **Does it feel do-able? (Shrink the change)**
Yes. It was really hard but within the team's grasp.
 - ✓ **Was it a part of success stories in the past? (Find the bright spots)**
Yes. Past analysts who succeeded had made many more calls than unsuccessful analysts.
 - ✓ **Will your team see the connection with the big picture? (Point to the destination)**
Absolutely. The destination was "I.I. or Die." The phone calls were intended to vault them toward that destination.
 - ✓ **Would it provide a quick win? (Grow your people)**
Possibly. The "quick win" was not certain, but it was much more likely with a high volume of customer calls.
 - ✓ **Would it create positive peer pressure? (Rally the herd)**
Yes. The manager publicized the number of calls each analyst made, creating a sense of competition.
 - ✓ **Is it consistent with the way people think about themselves in the firm? (Grow Your People)**
Yes. The analysts thought of themselves as being hard workers and good networkers. (Even though they weren't performing very well, their identity was consistent with the challenge.
-

Does your change pass the “video test”?

In other words, have you made your request so specific and behavioral that a 3rd-party outsider could watch a video of your audience and confirm whether they’d heeded your recommendation or not? The recommendation to “buy 1% milk” would have passed the video test, because

you could imagine a grocery-store video camera that captures people as they make their milk purchases. The instructions for child abusers would also pass the “video test,” since you could easily compare their actions to their instructions. How would your change efforts fare on the test?

POINT *to the* DESTINATION

Can you paint a rich, detailed picture of what the right destination looks like?

Laura Esserman described a vision of a breast care clinic with everything under one roof—a woman could come in for a mammogram in the morning and, if the test discovered a growth, she could leave with a treatment plan the same day. Notice what’s so effective about this destination: (1) It’s concrete: You can see it in your head. You can imagine the clinic, and you can imagine the woman coming and going. (2) It’s motivational: You can understand why it’s a destination worth chasing. But what if Laura Esserman had blown it? Consider these alternate “destination postcards”:

“We are going to revolutionize the way breast cancer is treated and create a prototype of the next-generation breast cancer clinic, a place that will be the envy of clinics worldwide.” Problem: This is motivational language, but it’s not concrete. You can’t picture the destination. What will make the clinic different and better?

“We are going to reposition radiology as an internal, rather than external, wing of the clinic, and we will reconfigure our space to make that possible.” Problem: You can envision what this would look like—it’s concrete—but it’s not motivational. Who cares where radiology lives? Only in the context of a woman’s care does that become meaningful.

Avoid metrics as destinations.

Metrics make poor destinations. SMART goals are fine but they should also be inspiring enough to motivate the Elephant. Same goes for financial goals—“return on equity” or “gross margin” targets are not going to inspire many people.

Does it pass the Champagne Test?

Is your destination clear enough that people will know when to celebrate? This has been called the Champagne Test. Would you know when to crack the bottle of the champagne? Consider JFK’s 1961 call to “put a man on the moon.” It’s pretty obvious when the champagne should flow! Does your destination pass the test?

Consider moving from process to outcome.

“100% handwashing compliance” may not motivate doctors and nurses to wash their hands as much as “0% hospital-acquired infections.”

If “backsliding” is a problem, consider a B&W goal.

Do people consistently miss/ignore/underperform the behaviors that are expected of them and then try to rationalize away the failure, in the way that people on a diet do? (“It was such a hard day that I needed that ice cream.”) If so, then consider setting a B&W goal. Set a goal that brooks no dissent. It’s always or never, all or nothing. “Always return a support call within 24 hours.” “Never send an email that’s over 500 words.”

But B&W goals create a danger of demoralization if you don’t meet them consistently. For instance, think of the dieters who blow their diet a few times and then give up, going back to Cheetos and Ben & Jerry’s on a daily basis. To avoid that kind of overreaction to failure, see the section on the growth mindset.

Motivate the Elephant

FIND *the* FEELING

Can you make the need for change visual?

Things you see are more likely to evoke emotion than things you read. If you are trying to encourage your team to provide more consistent service, for instance, could you splice together video footage of your customers talking about bad customer service experiences? Robin Waters at Target showed her colleagues photos of well-designed displays so they could see what was possible. What could you show your colleagues that would show them what's possible? What could you show them that would get their competitive hackles up?

Negative vs. positive emotion.

Negative emotions are effective to motivate people to tackle short-run challenges that require clear, forceful action. They're less effective when people need to think flexibly or creatively. Which do you need? If you need to inspire positive emotion, can you point to a bright spot that reminds people that they've succeeded in the past?

The camera crew thought experiment.

Imagine that, in making the case for change to your people, you weren't allowed to speak to them directly. Instead, you had a camera crew at your disposal who would film anything you wanted them to film, and you could pick any 10 minutes of footage that they shot. What would be happening in that footage?

Build your own shrine.

You read the "glove shrine" example in the first chapter. What kind of "shrine" could you put in the conference room that would wake up YOUR colleagues?

The pivotal testimonial.

Imagine that you can show your colleagues a video of one person talking, and the video has to persuade them that change is necessary. Who is the person? An employee who's seen problems firsthand? A customer who's sick and tired of the status quo? A competitor who is light-years ahead of you on something?

SHRINK *the* CHANGE

Can you put 2 stamps on your team's passbook?

(Remember the car wash loyalty card study.) Here are some candidates for the two stamps: How far have you come in the last quarter? Year? Decade? Does looking at the historical overview give you confidence that you can tackle the current challenge which may look small in comparison?

Think in terms of ones.

Remember Julie, the overweight mother, who agreed to walk in place for 1 minute each night while watching TV. When people dread change, shrink it down as much as you can. Can you try a new approach on one customer? Can you spend one minute practicing the new sales pitch?

Kick the ball forward.

You read about the 5-Minute Room Rescue. Imagine that, at the end of your next staff meeting, you set a 5-minute timer. What could your people do during those 5 minutes that would "kick the ball forward" for your change? What about 30 minutes? 3 hours?

Plan for small wins.

Burnout happens when a team confronts the same problems, over and over, without feeling progress. What is a clear milestone that you'll recognize enough to celebrate?

Don't let success feel too distant.

Bill Parcells said that his team doesn't focus on winning the Super Bowl, they focus on more immediate goals, like great special teams play. Are you being that specific with your goals? How long does your team have to wait before they have a sense of how they're doing? If the answer is months, you have the wrong goals. If it's hours or days, that's great.

GROW *your* PEOPLE

Cultivating identity.

“I aspire to be the kind of person who would make the change.”

Would most of the people on your team agree with that statement? If so, you don’t have an identity challenge. If not, you do.

The adjective test.

What do people pride themselves on in your organization? Which one adjective would most flatter your boss? Creative? Hard-nosed? People-focused? Customer-obsessed? Honest? Frugal? Etc. If that adjective seems like one that many people in the organization would value, then you’re probably on the right track toward finding the right identity.

Speaking to a Shared Identity.

If you’re trouble identifying the “identity” that your colleagues share, consider the following approaches:

Can you appeal to an identity that already exists?

Doctors and nurses respond to identity as “healers.”
Parents respond to their identity as Moms and Dads.
Citizens will respond to their identity as Houstonians, Californians, St. Lucians.

Is there a common history?

HP employees all know that HP was founded in a garage, so it would be easy to appeal to that shared story to emphasize virtues of frugality and innovation.

Is there a competitor you can highlight?

Warring departments at a car company might pull together in the face of a threat by a formidable foreign or domestic competitor.

If there’s no existing identity, can you help people create an identity that they would admire?

Brasilata helped production workers see that they could be “inventors.”

Is there some public action that could foster an identity?

Signing a petition or posting a sign about safe driving (or beautifying the state) helped Palo Alto residents see themselves as “Concerned Citizens”.

Is there a habit that you can build to reinforce the identity?

Brasilata’s inventors submitted over 100 suggestions each per year. Football fans have their identity reinforced by rooting for every football game.

Build the growth mindset.

Steal IDEO’s graphic.

At the beginning of your project, steal the U-shaped curve speech from IDEO. Give the talk to your people. It will help them respond positively to the inevitable setbacks you’ll face. Try to anticipate hurdles that you’ll face and address them specifically: I.e., “At first, we’re probably going to have some customers push back on this new approach. When that happens, we can’t throw our hands up and quit.”

Lead a discussion about the growth mindset.

Give your team Carol Dweck’s 4-question test from our book. Let people diagnose whether they have the fixed or growth mindset. Share some of the research showing that

the growth mindset is essential to realize your potential. If people have a fixed mindset they may see hard work and effort as signs that the problem is intractable or that they are not the right kind of people to tackle it—can you help them understand that they are building “muscle” that will pay off in the future?

Can you instill in your team the idea that failing is often the best way to learn?

Remember the study of the hospitals who tried to adopt Minimally Invasive Cardiac Surgery (MICS). The hospitals who succeeded adopted what the researcher Edmondson called the “learning frame”—they knew that success would rely on diligent practice and constant learning.

Shape the Path

TWEAK *the* ENVIRONMENT

Emphasize “tweak.”

You don’t need to rearrange the walls in your building. You don’t need to change the compensation structure of your business.

Do a 5-min rescue on your environment.

What one thing can you shift to make the right behaviors more likely?

Do a “motion study”.

If you’re trying to make a behavior easier, study it. Watch one person go through the process of making a purchase, filing a complaint, recycling an object, etc. Note where there are bottlenecks and where they get stuck. Then try to rearrange the environment to remove those obstacles. Provide signposts that show people which way to turn (or that celebrate the progress they’ve made already). Eliminate steps. Shape the path.

Can you run the McDonalds playbook?

Think of the way McDonalds designs its environment so that its employees can deliver food with incredible consistency, despite a lack of work experience (or an excess of motivation). They pay obsessive attention to every step of the process. The ketchup dispenser, for instance, isn’t like the one in your fridge. It has a plunger on top that,

when pressed, delivers precisely the right amount of ketchup for one burger. That way, if you have to deliver 10 burgers in a minute, you don’t have to think at all. You just press the plunger 10 times. Have you looked at your own operations through that lens? Have you made every step as easy as possible on your employees?

Avoid the Fundamental Attribution Error.

Think about the people who are resisting the change efforts at work. Are you guilty of the Fundamental Attribution Error with them? (I.e., have you concluded that they are “foot-draggers” or “fossils”?) Remember the story of Amanda Tucker—the Nike manager who became a better communicator when her office was rearranged to eliminate email distractions. As a thought experiment, ask yourself, in what environment might be “foot-dragging” colleagues suddenly become change champions?

Can you 1-Click your process?

Amazon has made millions of dollars because of its 1-Click Ordering button. All that button did was remove 1 or 2 steps from the normal checkout process. What 1 or 2 steps can you remove from the normal course of business for your employees?

BUILD HABITS

Set an action trigger.

Don’t forget the very compelling research that demonstrates the effectiveness of action triggers. The power of action triggers is that decisions are “pre-loaded.” If you want to act in a new way (adopting a new exercise plan, being more diligent about your managerial reviews, etc.), picture the exact time and situation when you will execute the plan. For instance, I will check in on Julie’s progress tomorrow morning right after I’ve poured my first cup of coffee. (Note: the best action triggers are unique. Putting up the fifth Post-It note on your desk, or the 23rd calendar reminder in your email program is unlikely to act as a good cue.)

Can you piggyback a new habit on an old one?

It’s easiest to start a new routine when you can build it onto an existing routine that happens at a regular time and place. If you often forget to take your vitamins in the morning, put the vitamin bottle on top of the toothpaste.

You know you’re going to remember to brush your teeth, so you can “piggyback” your vitamin habit on your tooth-brushing habit. Similarly, it might be easier for hospitals to get doctors to wash their hands if they put sanitizer levers beside the trays where they pick up a patient’s chart—squeeze and rub before picking up the chart.

Create a checklist.

Suppose you had a five-item checklist for the most important routines in your business. What 5 things do you need to do every time? (Note we’re not advocating long checklists. The preflight checklist to launch a 747 is less than a page!)

Stand up your meetings.

We discussed the power of the “stand-up meeting” as a way to keep discussions brief and focused. Given the way your meetings have evolved, what habits have you implicitly encouraged (whether good or bad)? Are there ways you could alter the format of your meetings—the routine—to make them more effective? If so, set an action trigger—I’m going to pilot this new “meeting style” next Thursday with the staff meeting.

Publicize your action triggers.

What is the aspect of your change efforts that people tend to put off, or that tends to get displaced in favor of more “urgent” work? Ask your team to set action triggers – and to announce their intentions publicly in a meeting.

RALLY *the* HERD

Be smart about social pressure.

If the majority of people on your team are already following the new plan, then publicize that fact. Social pressure will influence the others to conform. But beware if only a minority is doing something. Publicizing this fact may lead others to slack off. Solution: Can you set up a free space to protect your pro-change minority from being squelched or co-opted? (In essence, a free space turns a minority into a majority.)

If people embrace change, make sure their actions are visible.

People who resist change may tend to cluster together and create a kind of “echo chamber.” They may conclude, falsely, that most people dislike the new direction as much as they do. As a manager, you can help fight the echo chamber by showcasing people who are actively supporting the change. Shine a spotlight on the early signs of success. If there’s a bright spot, make sure everyone knows about it.

Design a free space.

Remember the medical interns whose afternoon rotations served as a “free space,” allowing them to build strength and plan their approach. There are many ways to create a free space. The “skunkworks” – a totally separate, offsite facility – is a dramatic version of a free space. But there are less dramatic methods that can still be effective. ? Maybe you can reserve a temporary workspace for them to occupy. You could set up a “war room” for them where they can meet and coordinate every day (even if it’s just a conference room). You could encourage them to take a “working lunch” every day where they could coordinate over a meal. Or perhaps they could meet an hour earlier (or later) than most people are in the office.

4

Process: How Do We Make Change?

All change is difficult. Changing education is notoriously difficult (viz. the often unhappy history of educational reform). Changing education in synagogues — institutions that are both voluntary and religious — is perhaps in the same league as quitting smoking: not impossible, but damned difficult. And yet, such change is clearly happening. This reflects the fact that over the past two decades the initiatives reviewed have developed quite sophisticated processes for catalyzing and supporting change.

These processes are hardly identical. This is not surprising given the differences in goals and in the scope and scale of change being sought among the initiatives. The differences in approach reflect differences of viewpoint, some pragmatic, some philosophical, concerning what strategies and tactics work best for specific purposes. They also reflect to an extent tensions that may be inherent in any guided change process, e.g., between “customization” and “curricularization,” that show up not only among initiatives, but within them as well.

Nonetheless, there are a number of themes that cut across the approaches taken and the learnings reported by the various initiatives. Though constituting less than a “formula” or “recipe” for how to implement congregational educational change, they clearly provide extensive guidance on what to do, what not to do, and what to expect. Together, they bespeak a sophisticated understanding of what successful change requires and entails.

1

Substantial change takes time and does not proceed smoothly. Deep change is hard work. The process is time-consuming, creating tensions that need to be managed between the need for process and the desire for visible results, and between the time needed to root change and how long one can maintain enthusiasm. Change has its own rhythms; it’s not a straight line. Adoption will always be uneven, and luck and idiosyncratic events play a role. The process is never finished.

2

Take action and be ambitious. Perhaps precisely because change is difficult, “just doing it” is important. Congregations need to “think big and act boldly.” Action and results are a window into reflection and vision. Be willing to experiment and don’t set expectations too low. Change is messy, and attempting to proceed at a “moderate” pace may produce the worst of both worlds (drawn-out process, few visible results).

3

In a systemic approach to change, vision, action, reflection, and conversation feed off one another to drive the process forward. Combining these elements is the key to a successful change process. A guiding vision is important, but so is creating facts on the ground. Envisioning what might be and encountering concrete examples of “the

[continued >](#)

Emerald City” provide both inspiration and impetus to try to close the gap between the ideal and the current reality. New programs and activities, even at early stages in the change process, in turn help people see what is needed and possible more clearly and can be used as levers to drive further and deeper change through capacity-building and referral back to the vision. Conversation at every stage is critical, as long as it is purposive and linked back to the vision and Jewish values. At its best, this becomes a spiraling process of continuous learning and growth, with each element feeding the others.

4

Getting (the right) people engaged and empowering them is critical. Bring a broad-based group of leaders together to do the planning and make sure they are listening to the community. Respond to what’s coming from the congregation. Find the “Nachshons” and cultivate them to lead. Keep moving people to higher levels of engagement. Rabbis, parents, and educators are key stakeholders in any change effort. They need to be engaged directly and sometimes separately if the process is to work. Lay leaders are also key. Their personal growth is often tied to and a spur for institutional growth. Getting and keeping stakeholders — those driving the change process, congregational leadership, and those affected by change — on the same page is an ongoing challenge. So too is keeping those most involved from burning out. Leadership transitions pose a challenge as well. Teachers need particular attention. They should be included early on and given the professional development and support they need to work in new ways.

5

The change process is powered by and largely about learning. Learning is taking place on multiple levels throughout these change initiatives: learning about Jewish education, the congregation, leadership, process, people, the relevance of Jewish texts. Jewish learning plays a unique role, modeling the outcomes being sought, helping participants to grow Jewishly (and feel

the satisfaction of doing so), and anchoring conversations in Jewish values.

6

Quality outside assistance can help the process tremendously. Consultants, facilitators, mentors, and evaluators can provide invaluable guidance and support for many aspects of the process. But, they need to be good at what they do — and there are too few good consultants currently available. Building a relationship of trust is critical. Consultants and mentors need to be an active but not overbearing presence, and if more than one is involved in different aspects of an initiative, to work as a team. Calibrating the right type and amount of support to provide may be a challenge. Ideally, there should be a balance between providing ongoing support and preparing a synagogue to take charge of the change process itself. The most effective outside support, it would appear, is aimed both at supplying the perspective (and occasionally mediating the conflicts) that insiders have difficulty achieving and at building internal capacity in the synagogue.

7

Because change is complex, a multi-pronged support system is needed. While some congregations have been able to make substantial change in their educational programs on their own, most appear to require some type of outside assistance in order to initiate and negotiate a serious change process successfully. Even for apparently straightforward changes (such as introducing a new curriculum), and certainly for multi-dimensional systemic change, support needs to come in multiple forms: assessment, tools, training, site visits, networking, inspiration. It needs to be both individualized (targeted at the specific congregation and often at sub-groups or individuals within the synagogue) and collective (bringing the congregation and change-makers into relationship with others similarly engaged). Conferences, classes, formalized curricula, publications and other resources, consultation, communities of practice, networking (including online) all play a role and can be deployed in

various combinations. Support should be available from the outset and ideally would be ongoing even beyond the active phase of a change initiative. However, those providing support also need to give congregations room to take ownership of their own change and adapt it to their needs. There is a potential tension between “turnkey” support (“we’ll give you everything you need”) and empowering synagogues to pursue their own directions and develop their own resources.

8

Financial resources can help “lubricate” change. All change requires resources, and new funding, whether internally or externally generated, can certainly help to make the change pathway smoother. A challenge is to ensure that new funds help to create the infra-structure for sustainable change, not just new short-term programs. If more funding were available to the change initiatives themselves, their ability to support congregations in their processes could be significantly strengthened.



These eight themes certainly do not exhaust the learnings about the change process from the initiatives reviewed. But, they demonstrate that the current state-of-the-art with respect to congregational educational change is quite sophisticated, and that there is substantial agreement among the initiatives about the requisites (or, at least, the desiderata) for successful change.

In practice, there are differences in how these principles are implemented. Even initiatives that aim to promote “systemic” change start in different places and employ different tools: Some begin with broad visioning, and then move to experiments. Some begin with action projects that aim to be systemic in microcosm, and then try to use these to generate deeper reflection about larger issues. Some tackle multiple dimensions of the change process (visioning, leadership development, professional training, curricular change) almost simultaneously. Others address these sequentially. Some

provide highly explicit processes for synagogues to follow; others are looser. Some place great emphasis on gatherings of participating congregations. Others focus more resources on intensive consultation.

As we have noted throughout, there are also “tensions” and “tradeoffs” built into the entire change process between:

- “customization” and “curricularization,”
- “turnkey” support and an emphasis on process,
- fostering autonomy and maintaining an ongoing support structure,
- concentrating on specific elements (curriculum, teaching, leadership) and seeking broad systemic and cultural change,
- deliberative visioning/planning and quick action steps/new programs.

These are best seen not as either/or propositions, but rather as “eilu v’eilu” options with valid rationales for both alternatives. And, indeed, though some initiatives clearly incline toward one end or the other of these tensions in their practice, a number work hard and with some success to embrace both — to create a balance or synthesis, rather than simply a trade-off.

The differences among the initiatives with regard to how best to generate and support change are not unimportant, and there is room for a great deal of additional sharing and learning about what works best, with whom, for what purposes, under what circumstances. But, these realities should not obscure another: much has been learned and much agreed upon, perhaps enough to allow us to say (with some caution) that we now know how at least to start congregations on the road to substantially improving or even transforming their educational programs, practices, performance, and culture. With this achievement as the backdrop, we can turn to the final question we will explore: Where does the work of congregational educational change go from here?

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Organizations & People: The Essentials from Booz & Company

Making Change Happen, and Making It Stick

Five factors make the greatest difference in fostering the new behaviors needed for a transformation. All of them reflect the basic importance of people in implementing and embedding change.

by Ashley Harshak, DeAnne Aguirre, and Anna Brown

Few organizations have escaped the need for major change in the past decade, as new technologies and global crises have reshaped entire industries. However, the fact that change has become more frequent does not make such changes any easier.

Change is, at its core, a people process, and people are creatures of habit, hardwired to resist adopting new mind-sets, practices, and behaviors. To achieve and sustain transformational change, companies must embed these mind-sets, practices, and behaviors at every level, and that is very hard to do — but it has never been more important.

Some organizations have managed to develop approaches to change management that address change comprehensively. A successful business transformation effort must capture the hearts and minds of people who need to operate differently to deliver the desired results. The good news is that it can be done.

What Is Change Management?

Change management is both a capability and a set of interventions that deliver the people-oriented side of a change effort. Successful change management targets leaders but also engages people across the organization, while adjusting key enabling processes such as performance management. It helps employees make the transition to new behaviors, and it helps sustain the benefits of the new post-transformation enterprise.

Most business leaders have come to understand the importance of the people component in implementing and embedding change. According to a survey conducted by Booz & Company of 350 global executives charged with leading major transformation programs, senior leaders now recognize that people initiatives usually spell the difference between success and failure.

However, there was broad consensus among the respondents that this sort of change management is often undertaken too late and too lightly to be effective. To achieve a successful change effort, people issues need to be identified and incorporated in project management plans from the start and then revisited again and again throughout the implementation process to ensure the desired strategic outcome.

The Five Success Factors

Each of the following five key success factors should be considered vital by those designing a change management program. These are the actions that can make change happen — and make it stick. All five should be evident in the program's implementation.

1. Understand and spell out the impact of the change on people. A prerequisite to any viable change program is a clear-eyed assessment of the impact it will have on various populations in the organization. This analysis identifies the type and scale of changes affecting each segment of employees (as defined by role or business, for example). This assessment also provides a basis for communicating with the team members about what the change means for them personally — the predominant concern of every employee in a business transformation.

A well-known global energy firm did exactly that when it produced a change impact analysis with a “heat map” illustrating the intensity of change for each group of employees, and a detailed description of the changes each role would need to deliver. As a result, the leadership team was able to focus and redirect the transformation program to address the challenges facing those in the roles most affected. Moreover, project teams identified areas of potential overlap and conflict in the impact of various initiatives. Finally, the analysis informed the plans and sequencing of the overall transformation program and became the basis for communications with managers. In cascade fashion, managers received the message from their supervisors and then delivered it to their teams.

2. Build an emotional and rational case for change. Many leaders excel at building the rational case for change, but they are less adept in appealing to people’s emotional core. Yet the employees’ emotions are where the momentum for real transformation ultimately lies. Change management communications need to be targeted to each segment of the workforce, and delivered in a two-way fashion that allows people to make sense of the change subjectively.

If you are asking people to adapt to a new reality, they need to understand the emotional case for the change so they can feel truly committed to the transformation. It can’t be presented as another “program of the month” that they will have to live through. Bringing the details of what will change — and what won’t — into the presentation allows leaders to paint a vivid picture of what the change means for employees personally, not only why it benefits the business.

3. Ensure that the entire leadership team is a role model for the change. Companies start their transformations from the top. Senior executives must be not only “on top” of the change program, but also “in front” of it, modeling the new behaviors they are asking their people to adopt and holding one another accountable for the initiative’s success. When executives talk about creating a performance culture, they must demonstrate through example what that means.

An aligned and committed leadership team is the foundation for any major corporate undertaking. When executives lead by example, the impact can be profound. One senior director found that it was only after he introduced ongoing performance discussions with his direct reports that his team started to hold similar sessions with their own direct reports. This requires consistent attention, but that level of engagement will make the difference between success and failure.

4. Mobilize your people to “own” and accelerate the change. The blunt truth is that most change initiatives are done “to” employees, not implemented “with” them or “by” them. Although executives are pushing behavior change from the top and expecting it to cascade through the formal structure, an informal culture left to instinct and chance will likely dig in its heels.

To counteract this undermining force, companies should leverage what Booz & Company Senior Partner Jon Katzenbach calls the informal organization — the network of peer-to-peer interactions. People need to be encouraged and motivated to change their behavior by those around them as much as they need incentives from the top.

This does not mean that companies should forgo a centrally driven program with a clear road map that lays out the formal elements of the new organization. But they must not overlook the informal organization either. Pride, commitment, and purpose reside here. If you use powerful emotional motivators, invite employees to contribute ideas and perspectives, and provide the kind of informal support and recognition that makes it easier to take ownership of new behaviors, you can accelerate and intensify the impact of the change initiative.

5. Embed the change in the fabric of the organization. Sponsors often declare victory too soon, diverting leadership, commitment, and focus from the ongoing effort. To embed the change and ensure that it sticks, you should acknowledge the lessons learned. You also should investigate how to engage and involve employees over the long term and how to institutionalize best practices to capture the full benefit of this change and any future changes.

The human resources function plays a critical role in this process. To enable lasting change, all HR systems, structures, processes, and incentives must be aligned and consistent with the goals of the transformation. You need to articulate clearly the various people-oriented elements of the future organization — not just its structure, but also employee value propositions and individual and team roles, as well as required competencies, skills, and behaviors. Things like performance management, learning and

development, workforce strategy, and retention programs are key enablers of the change program.

The challenge is to rethink not only how HR can help people support the change but also how it can contribute to embedding and sustaining the change. This requires HR to understand the business and its long-term requirements as both a strategic partner and a change agent.

Navigating Change Successfully

A comprehensive approach to change management requires all five of these success factors. Together, they enable you to take the necessary steps for change. First, clearly define the business objectives the change is intended to deliver. Next, understand the current organization — its culture, its capabilities, and its experiences (both successful and unsuccessful) with change — and then conduct the change impact analysis and make a clear case for change, including the reasons why change in people’s behavior is needed. The main thrust of the change program follows with a series of tailored interventions that drive change through both formal and informal levers. This should not be a fixed or formulaic methodology but rather one that accelerates success by selecting the most efficient tools and techniques for the specific circumstances of the client organization.

At each step, all five of the success factors should be considered. Indeed, they provide a useful checklist. Have you spelled out the impact of the change on people? Have you built both an emotional and a rational case for change? Is your leadership team — all the members, yourself included — acting as a role model? Are your people “owning” and accelerating the change? And how deeply is the new behavior embedded in the fabric of the organization?

In today’s business environment, change is an imperative. A change management approach such as this can help companies enhance their overall transformation capability, increase the speed of implementation, and improve the probability of success.



AUTHOR PROFILES:

Ashley Harshak is a Booz & Company partner based in London. He specializes in change management, organizational development, and large-scale transformations across many industries.

DeAnne Aguirre is a senior partner with Booz & Company based in San Francisco. She is an expert in organizational and talent effectiveness and change leadership and has led transformations in both U.S. and global corporations.

Anna Brown is a Booz & Company senior associate based in London. She specializes in change management, culture change, leadership, and organizational development work designed to deliver the objectives of large-scale transformation.

Making the emotional case for change: An interview with Chip Heath

In conversation and in excerpts from his recent book, a leading expert on organizational behavior explains why change often stalls and how top executives can use psychology to keep it going.

Chip and Dan Heath's new book, *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard*, shows how managers can catalyze change more effectively by drawing on an enormous body of research from psychologists on how the brain works. In *Switch*'s first chapter, the authors report that they hope most of all to help "people who don't have scads of authority or resources." But the book's ideas have enormous relevance for senior executives as well. In this interview with McKinsey's Allen Webb, Heath interprets *Switch* for denizens of the C-suite. Supporting the interview are two case examples excerpted from the book.

The Quarterly: *Could you please quickly summarize the core ideas in Switch for the benefit of those who have not yet read it?*

Chip Heath: The core idea is that there are two sides to the way human beings think about any issue. There's the rational, analytical, problem-solving side of our brains, which may think, "I need to eat less." But there's an emotional side that's addicted to impulse or comfortable routines, and that side wants a cookie. At work, the rational side may say that the company needs to go in a different direction. But the emotional side is comfortable with the old ways of thinking and selling, and it has great anxiety about whether the company can change successfully.

My favorite metaphor for this dynamic comes from the psychologist Jonathan Haidt, who talks about a human riding atop an elephant.¹ The Rider represents our analytical, planning side. The Rider decides, “I need to go somewhere, here’s the direction I want to go,” and sets off. But it’s the Elephant, the emotional side, that’s providing the power. The Rider can try to lead the Elephant, but in any direct contest of wills the Elephant is going to win—it has a six-ton advantage. So part of achieving change, in either our lives or in organizations, is aligning both sides of the brain by pointing out the direction for the Rider but also motivating the Elephant to undertake the journey. Of course, the Path the Elephant walks down matters too. High-ranking executives can shape that Path, that environment, and make the journey easier even when the Elephant is less motivated.²

The Quarterly: *In helping companies to work through these conflicts and smooth the road to change, how useful is a senior executive’s formal power?*

Chip Heath: The Rider–Elephant conflict may be a reason not to press too hard on formal levers. It’s not enough for people to intellectually understand that an organization must start moving in a different strategic direction. People need to be motivated.

Our typical way of communicating speaks primarily—and in a lot of cases almost exclusively—to the Rider. It builds an intellectual case for

¹ *The Happiness Hypothesis: Putting Ancient Wisdom to the Test of Modern Science*, London: William Heinemann, 2006.

² In *Switch*, the words *Rider*, *Elephant*, and *Path* represent characters in the mental play that the book describes.

Chip Heath



Vital statistics

Married,
with 2 children

Education

Graduated with a BS in industrial engineering in 1986 from Texas A&M University

Received PhD in psychology in 1991 from Stanford University

Career highlights

Currently a professor of organizational behavior at Stanford Graduate School of Business

Fast facts

Coauthor with his brother Dan Heath of *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*, which has been translated into 27 languages; has published research in such academic publications as *Cognitive Psychology*, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, and *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, and his research has been reviewed in publications including *Scientific American*, *Financial Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Vanity Fair*

Serves on editorial board of *Stanford Social Innovation Review*

change and relies on formal authority. In government, legislators have formal authority to change the rules of the system. The US Congress once changed the national speed limit to 55 miles an hour, for example. Did that automatically change behavior? As a parent, does formal power change the behavior of your teenagers?

It's not enough to show intellectually that we need to change and then to decree what those changes will be. If it were, a lot more organizations would succeed in making strategic shifts. Formal power is tremendously useful, but if we *start* by wielding it we probably haven't aligned the Rider and the Elephant. And if we rely *only* on the formal levers of power to lead, we may get too far ahead of people—they understand that they must change, but the motivation hasn't kicked in.

The Quarterly: *What's an example of the kind of formal power you think executives mistakenly exercise and an alternative that might be more effective?*

Chip Heath: Consider how change initiatives are typically rolled out. In many organizations, a change initiative consists of 35 slides in a PowerPoint deck analyzing the reasons for change. There's nothing in the deck that helps employees believe that "We're the kind of people who can successfully make this change."

GE overcame this problem when they started talking about "ecomagination." CEO Jeff Immelt said, "There's a broad social trend toward finding more sustainable ways of doing business, and if we can take advantage of that, we will be well-positioned for the future." GE did a green audit, looking for places where they already had industry-leading green products, and started highlighting those existing products for employees. One was an LED³ lighting system that produces great light with 10 percent of the electricity used by other systems. GE then said, "We're the kind of people who can succeed in this new business environment that's more and more focused on sustainability." That motivates the Elephant.

The Quarterly: *In Switch, you use the term "bright spots" to describe internal success stories like GE's LED system. Could you say a bit more about the power of bright spots?*

Chip Heath: Many companies try change themselves by benchmarking other organizations and borrowing their procedures or practices. The irony of benchmarking is that we're essentially telling organizations to be more like GE or Apple or Nike. As Dev Patnaik, the author of *Wired to Care*,⁴ said to me one time, we know this doesn't work on a personal

³Light-emitting diode, a semiconductor light source.

⁴*Wired to Care: How Companies Prosper When They Create Widespread Empathy*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: FT Press, 2009.

level: we resist when members of our families say, “Be more like your brother.” The principle of bright spots is that you shouldn’t try to be more like Apple; you should try to be more like yourself at your best moments. Think about what you’ve done in the past, or what you’re doing now, that has worked tremendously well.

People have a tendency, especially in a change situation, to focus on the negative. Lots of research supports this negative focus—for example, if you ask sports fans what happened over the weekend, they dwell on the games their favorite teams lost. Companies too focus on the problems and not the bright spots.

I won’t say there’s no value in benchmarking. But if you believe that organizations differ in their cultures, capabilities, and structures, there’s something fundamentally odd about saying that you want to be more like another company that has a very different culture, structure, and set of capabilities. At the very least, the idea of looking to your own bright spots is a useful addition to your tool kit.

Excerpt from *Switch*: Inventing an identity

Brasilata—a \$170 million Brazilian producer of steel cans—actually *invented* the identity that became the engine of its success. Can manufacturing is a relatively mature industry—not much growth or excitement. But Brasilata defies the boring, stuck-in-its-ways stereotype. In fact, it has one of the best reputations for *innovation* of any company in Latin America.

How does a metal can company become known as an innovator? Brasilata’s founders were inspired by the philosophy of Japanese car manufacturers like Honda and Toyota, which empowered their frontline employees to take ownership of their work. In 1987, the founders launched their own employee-innovation program.

A new identity was its core. Employees became known as “inventors,” and new hires were asked to sign an “innovation contract.” This wasn’t just feel-good language. Employees were challenged to be on the lookout for ideas on how to create better products, improve production processes, and cut costs. Systems were developed that made it easy to submit ideas. The program succeeded beyond reasonable expectations. In 2008, a total of 134,846 ideas were submitted—an average of 145.2 ideas per inventor!

These suggestions often led to new products. In late 2008, for instance, the company came up with a new approach for a steel can designed to carry flammable or otherwise dangerous liquids. To meet UN standards, such cans must withstand



The Quarterly: *What's your view of the notion that change is easier when you have a "burning platform" from which to motivate it?*

Chip Heath: That is one of the silliest pieces of business jargon. The idea of the burning platform is that people only change when they're scared. But fear, as an emotion, creates tunnel vision. Police officers call this "weapon focus": crime victims can often give great descriptions of the weapon, but nothing about whether the assailant was tall or short or had facial hair, because they focus on what evoked their fear.

That kind of tunnel vision is devastating in times of change. If you're doing everything basically right and you just need to improve execution, you can scare people and they'll execute better and faster. But that's not true of most change situations, where you need to be doing something new. Fear is the worst motivator here because it makes people work harder at what they did in the past.

The Quarterly: *In Switch, you talk a lot about "identity." Why is that important?*

a drop from about four feet. Most companies had solved this problem by thickening the metal layers, which used up more raw material. And even the reinforced cans were prone to split if they landed on an edge. Brasilata's inventors suggested a new design, inspired by car bumpers that collapse on impact. The new cans deformed slightly on impact, reducing stress on the critical seam. They resisted falls better while also reducing the amount of steel in the can.

Inventors have also led the company through emergencies. In 2001, a severe energy crisis forced Brazil's government to give businesses a strict quota of electricity. In response, Brasilata's employees dreamed up hundreds of power-saving ideas. Within a few weeks, Brasilata's energy

consumption had fallen by 35 percent, reducing it below quota, so the company could resell the extra energy.

Let's remember something: this inventor identity, which has fueled the company's business success and employee satisfaction, was made up. None of Brasilata's employees was born an inventor. This identity was introduced to them, and they decided it was a mantle worth wearing—a source of pride and strength.

Excerpt from **Switch**: Making bad behavior impossible



Rackspace hosts Internet sites for other companies, and it has won an armload of trade awards for service. But it wasn't always so customer friendly. Originally, says the company's founder, Graham Weston, Rackspace had a "denial of service" business model. Customer service interactions were viewed as costs to be minimized—the more roadblocks that could be erected to keep the phone from ringing, the better profits would be.

Then, in the autumn of 1999, came The Call. A customer tried to telephone Rackspace for support. He pressed 5 to get help, but instead he got a voice mail that said, "Feel free to leave a voice mail here, but we don't check it very often, so you're better off sending us an e-mail." He grudgingly sent one, but Rackspace never answered it. After a few more of these irritating cycles, the customer was furious, and with a bit of legwork he tracked down Graham Weston at the office of a real-estate business Weston owned. Weston promised to investigate.

He reviewed the long, increasingly angry chain of e-mails. "Something hit me," said Weston. "It was something

that we could do very easily that he couldn't do. So the question in my mind was, "Why are we not serving the customer happily?" Weston knew his team couldn't sustain a business based on dodging its customers. "We made a 180-degree turn."

Weston hired David Bryce as head of customer support. At his first meeting with the team, Bryce announced that Rackspace would transform itself from a company that dreaded customer support into a company that was passionate about it. He posted an aspirational banner on the wall: "Rackspace Gives Fanatical Support." The phrase stuck immediately.

This was just talk, of course, but there was action to back it up. Weston started by overhauling the company's business model. Providing great service would inevitably cost more, and if Rackspace offered both premium service and cutting-edge technology it would have to set prices too high. So, remarkably, Weston pushed for the company to become technologically dull. "We don't want to be on the bleeding edge of technology. We believe in standardization. We want a

Chip Heath: My Stanford colleague Jim March says there are two very different kinds of logic for making decisions. One is the logic of consequences. We're great in business at changing behavior by changing consequences. If we want customers to buy more, we lower prices. If we want salespeople to sell more, we increase their bonuses. But the second kind of logic is the logic of identity. Many of the most profound decisions we make in life are made because of identity, not consequences. When our newborn child cries at night, we don't undertake a net present value analysis of how much more valuable an hour of sleep would be. We get up because we are a committed mother or father.

narrow focus; these are the things we do, and these are things we don't do," he said—clear direction for the Rider.

Perhaps the most dramatic change Weston and Bryce made was also the simplest. Rackspace, like all hosting companies, had a call-queuing system. ("Your call is important to us. Please press 1 for recorded tips that don't address your problem, 5 to leave us a message we won't return, and 8 to repeat these options.") The call queue is perhaps the most basic customer support tool. Weston threw it out.

"When a customer calls, that means they need our help, and we've got to answer the telephone," he said. Without the queuing system, there was no safety net; the phone would keep ringing until somebody picked it up. To Weston, this was a critical symbol of the service ethic—when customers have a problem, we should deal with it when it's convenient for them, not us. Weston made it *impossible* to dodge the customer.

Subsequently, the company launched the "straightjacket awards," including actual straightjackets as trophies,

which were presented to employees who'd been so fanatical about service they'd become downright insane. (That's an identity appeal for the Elephant: *we are zealots—that's what makes us special.*) Not coincidentally, in 2008 Rackspace was named, for the second time, among the companies in *Fortune's* list of Best Places to Work.

By 2007, Rackspace was talking to customers three times a week, on average. The focus on service paid off. In 2001, the company became the first Internet-hosting firm to turn a profit, and over the next six years it *averaged* 58 percent annual growth. By 2008, it had passed AT&T as the industry's highest-grossing company.

What transformed the character of Rackspace's customer service people? Nothing. They were just operating in a new environment. The old behavior (ignoring customers) had become harder and the new behavior (serving customers) easier. What looks like a character problem is often an environment problem.

That's useful in business, especially in a change situation: if we can harness the power of identity, it helps motivate the Elephant to undertake a long, arduous journey. In a change situation, you want creativity and flexibility—and that's more likely to come from identity than from consequences. Consequence-based logic is great at narrowing people's focus, but it can backfire for the same reason. If you give people incentives to sell a lot of mortgages, for instance, they will do so. But they're not necessarily selling the right mortgages to the right people.

Most successful companies have a distinctive identity in our minds. I can picture the identity of a Wal-Mart or a Southwest or an IBM

employee. I have a harder time picturing the identities of some of their competitors. Intel recently has been running a national ad campaign that features its own employees. It's called "Our rock stars aren't like your rock stars." Ajay Bhatt, one of the coinventors of USB, is shown walking into a company canteen and being surrounded by adoring employees. The point is that what they value at Intel may be different from what's valued in the outside world, but if you're the next Ajay Bhatt, you want to work for Intel, where your talents will be respected. Another great example of a company that motivates employees by giving them a sense of identity is Brasilata.

The Quarterly: *How can senior executives create appropriate identities?*

Chip Heath: They don't have to be invented from whole cloth, because, again, you can build on bright spots. For example, when Lou Gerstner came to IBM it had a long tradition of selling "big iron," or large mainframe computers. But there was also a division selling solutions that might or might not involve IBM hardware. Its employees had an identity as problem solvers for customers. Gerstner seized on that existing expertise and rolled it out as IBM's strategy.

As a top leader, you want to use your platform to celebrate people, like Ajay Bhatt, who create and sustain your company's identity. At Brasilata, they tell stories about great innovations from frontline employees. In identity-based logic, we think about how "people like us" behave in order to uphold an identity. Celebrating case studies of success is exactly what a company should do.

The Quarterly: *You said earlier that the Path the Elephant walks down matters. Could you elaborate?*

Chip Heath: One company we studied was Rackspace, an Internet-hosting company. Graham Weston, its chairman, used his power to clear away a barrier in the Path—a call-queuing system that made employees respond to customers in lazy ways. He also used his power to simplify the strategy by moving away from cutting-edge technology. Especially for a technology company, that seemed scary. But Weston said that we want plain-vanilla technology because we're going to excel in service.

Lots of research in behavioral economics shows that too much choice is paralyzing. Especially in a change situation, a big part of freeing up the creativity needed for change may be simplifying internal processes. Once Weston became clear about his strategy, he simplified the engineering world at Rackspace and raised the prominence of the customer service people.

The Quarterly: *Sometimes change is harder. How do leaders create an environment where people view failures along the road as learning opportunities?*

Chip Heath: In any organizational-change situation, there will be setbacks, times of confusion. In the change plans of big organizations, there is a planning phase and an execution phase, but no slot in the middle for a wandering-around-in-the-dark phase. We pretend we'll jump straight from planning to brilliant execution. As a top leader, you should make people realize that there will be difficulties, but that those difficulties aren't going to prevent ultimate success.

In *Switch*, we discuss the design firm IDEO, which deals with this problem a lot because it often tries to train entrenched bureaucratic organizations to design more innovative products. An IDEO designer

sketched a mood chart predicting how employees feel at different phases of a project. It's a U-shaped curve with a peak labeled "hope" at the start and a peak labeled "confidence" at the end. In between is a negative valley labeled "insight." In IDEO's experience, there is always a moment when an

innovation team feels demoralized. Yet eventually an answer will appear, so if the team keeps working through that frustration, things will get better. Every manager in a change process should steal IDEO's chart because every change process goes through that same sequence of mood changes.

The Quarterly: *What messages do you want to leave with senior executives who are seeking to catalyze change?*

Chip Heath: Pay attention to creating an emotional case for change, not just an analytical one. Scale up bright-spot successes. And use your power as a top leader to smooth the path to change. Your people are ready to step up to the plate, but if systems or procedures are getting in the way of change, you are the one with the power to eliminate them. ○



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