



Becoming a Change Leader

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

*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 organizations, 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. In this excerpt from Chapter One of their book, they describe the three elements of change that can be applied at every level of life—individual, organizational, and societal.*

Maybe you want to help your brother beat his gambling addiction. Maybe you need your team at work to act more frugally because of market conditions. Maybe you wish more of your neighbors would bike to work.

Usually these topics are treated separately—there is “change management” advice for executives and “self-help” advice for individuals and “change the world” advice for activists. That’s a shame, because all change efforts have something in common: For anything to change, someone has to start acting differently. Your brother has got to stay out of the casino; your employees have got to start booking coach fares. Ultimately, all change efforts boil down to the same mission: Can you get people to start behaving in a new way?

We know what you’re thinking—people resist change. But it’s not quite that easy. Babies are born every day to parents who, inexplicably, welcome the change. Think about the sheer magnitude of that change! Would anyone agree to work for a boss who’d wake you up twice a night, screaming, for trivial administrative

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This article is excerpted from Chapter One, Three Surprises of Change in *Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard* (New York: Broadway Books, 2010). Used by permission.

duties? (And what if, every time you wore a new piece of clothing, the boss spit up on it?) Yet people don't resist this massive change—they volunteer for it.

In our lives, we embrace lots of big changes—not only babies, but marriages and new homes and new technologies and new job duties. Meanwhile, other behaviors are maddeningly intractable. Smokers keep smoking and kids grow fatter and your husband can't ever seem to get his dirty shirts into a hamper.

So there are hard changes and easy changes. What distinguishes one from the other? We argue that successful changes share a common pattern. They require the leader of the change to do three things at once. We've already mentioned one of those three things: To change someone's behavior, you've got to change that person's situation.

The situation isn't the whole game, of course. You can send an alcoholic to rehab, where the new environment will help him go dry. But what happens when he leaves and loses that influence? You might see a boost in productivity from your sales reps when the sales manager shadows them, but what happens afterward when the situation returns to normal? For individuals' behavior to change, you've got to influence not only their environment but their hearts and minds.

The problem is this: Often the heart and mind disagree. Fervently.

Your Brain Isn't of One Mind

Our built-in schizophrenia is a deeply weird thing, but we don't think much about it because we're so used to it. When we kick off a new diet, we toss the Cheetos and Oreos out of the pantry, because our rational side knows that when our emotional side gets a craving, there's no hope of self-control. The only option is to remove the temptation altogether.

The unavoidable conclusion is this: **Your brain isn't of one mind.**

The conventional wisdom in psychology, in fact, is that the brain has two independent systems at work at all times. First, there's what we called the emotional side. It's the part of you that is instinctive, that feels pain and pleasure. Second, there's the rational side, also known as the reflective or

conscious system. It's the part of you that deliberates and analyzes and looks into the future.

In the past few decades, psychologists have learned a lot about these two systems, but of course mankind has always been aware of the tension. Plato said that in our heads we have a rational charioteer who has to rein in an unruly horse that "barely yields to horsewhip and goad combined." Freud wrote about the selfish id and the conscientious superego (and also about the ego, which mediates between them). More recently, behavioral economists dubbed the two systems the Planner and the Doer.

But, to us, the duo's tension is captured best by an analogy used by University of Virginia psychologist Jonathan Haidt in his wonderful book *The Happiness Hypothesis*. Haidt says that our emotional side is an Elephant and our rational side is its Rider. Perched atop the Elephant, the Rider holds the reins and seems to be the leader. But the Rider's control is precarious because the Rider is so small relative to the Elephant. Anytime the six-ton Elephant and the Rider disagree about which direction to go, the Rider is going to lose. He's completely overmatched.

Most of us are all too familiar with situations in which our Elephant overpowers our Rider. You've experienced this if you've ever slept in, overeaten, procrastinated, tried to quit smoking and failed, skipped the gym, gotten angry and said something you regretted, abandoned your Spanish or piano lessons, refused to speak up in a meeting because you were scared, and so on. Good thing no one is keeping score.

The weakness of the Elephant, our emotional and instinctive side, is clear: It's lazy and skittish, often looking for the quick payoff (ice cream cone) over the long-term payoff (being thin). When change efforts fail, it's usually the Elephant's fault, since the kinds of change we want typically involve short-term sacrifices for long-term payoffs. (We cut back on expenses today to yield a better balance sheet next year. We avoid ice cream today for a better body next year.) Changes often fail because the Rider simply can't keep the Elephant on the road long enough to reach the destination.

The Elephant's hunger for instant gratification is the opposite of the Rider's strength, which is the ability to think long-term, to plan, to think beyond the moment (all those things that your pet can't do).

But what may surprise you is that the Elephant also has enormous strengths and that the Rider has

crippling weaknesses. The Elephant isn't always the bad guy. Emotion is the Elephant's turf—love and compassion and sympathy and loyalty. That fierce instinct you have to protect your kids against harm—that's the Elephant. That spine-stiffening you feel when you need to stand up for yourself—that's the Elephant.

And even more important if you're contemplating a change, the Elephant is the one who gets things done. To make progress toward a goal, whether it's noble or crass, requires the energy and drive of the Elephant. And this strength is the mirror image of the Rider's great weakness: spinning his wheels. The Rider tends to overanalyze and overthink things. Chances are, you know people with Rider problems: your friend who can agonize for twenty minutes about what to eat for dinner; your colleague who can brainstorm about new ideas for hours but can't ever seem to make a decision.

If you want to change things, you've got to appeal to both. The Rider provides the planning and direction, and the Elephant provides the energy. So if you reach the Riders of your team but not the Elephants, team members will have understanding without motivation. If you reach their Elephants but not their Riders, they'll have passion without direction. In both cases, the flaws can be paralyzing. A reluctant Elephant and a wheel-spinning Rider can both ensure that nothing changes. But when Elephants and Riders move together, change can come easily.

Self-Control Is An Exhaustible Resource

When Rider and Elephant disagree about which way to move, you've got a problem. The Rider can get his way temporarily—he can tug on the reins hard enough to get the Elephant submit. (Anytime you use willpower you're doing exactly that.) But the Rider can't win a tug-of-war with a huge animal for long. He simply gets exhausted.

To see this point more clearly, consider the behavior of some college students who participated in a study about "food perception" (or so they were told). They reported to the lab a bit hungry; they'd been asked not to eat for at least three hours beforehand. They were led to a room that smelled amazing—the researchers had just baked chocolate-chip cookies. On a table in the center of the room

were two bowls. One held a sampling of chocolates, along with the warm, fresh-baked chocolate-chip cookies they'd smelled. The other bowl held a bunch of radishes.

The researchers had prepped a cover story: We've selected chocolates and radishes because they have highly distinctive tastes. Tomorrow, we'll contact you and ask about your memory of the taste sensations you experienced while eating them.

Half the participants were asked to eat two or three cookies and some chocolate candies, but no radishes. The other half were asked to eat at least two or three radishes, but no cookies. While they ate, the researchers left the room, intending, rather sadistically, to induce temptation: They wanted those poor radish-eaters to sit there, alone, nibbling on rabbit food, glancing enviously at the fresh-baked cookies. (It probably goes without saying that the cookie-eaters experienced no great struggle in resisting the radishes.) Despite the temptation, all participants ate what they were asked to eat, and none of the radish-eaters snuck a cookie. That's willpower at work.

At that point, the "taste study" was officially over, and another group of researchers entered with a second, supposedly unrelated study: We're trying to find who's better at solving problems, college students or high school students. This framing was intended to get the college students to puff out their chests and take the forthcoming task seriously.

The college students were presented with a series of puzzles that required them to trace a complicated geometric shape without retracing any lines and without lifting their pencils from the paper. They were given multiple sheets of paper so they could try over and over. In reality, the puzzles were designed to be unsolvable. The researchers wanted to see how long the college students would persist in a difficult, frustrating task before they finally gave up.

The "untempted" students, who had not had to resist eating the chocolate-chip cookies, spent 19 minutes on the task, making 34 well-intentioned attempts to solve the problem.

The radish-eaters were less persistent. They gave up after only 8 minutes—less than half the time spent by the cookie-eaters—and they managed only 19 solution attempts. Why did they quit so easily?

The answer may surprise you: They ran out of self-control. In studies like this one, psychologists have discovered that self-control is an exhaustible resource. It's like doing bench presses at the gym.

The first one is easy, when your muscles are fresh. But with each additional repetition, your muscles get more exhausted, until you can't lift the bar again. The radish-eaters had drained their self-control by resisting the cookies. So when their Elephants, inevitably, started complaining about the puzzle task—*it's too hard, it's no fun, we're no good at this*—their Riders didn't have enough strength to yank on the reins for more than 8 minutes. Meanwhile, the cookie-eaters had a fresh, untaxed Rider, who fought off the Elephant for 19 minutes.

Self-control is an exhaustible resource. This is a crucial realization, because when we talk about "self-control," we don't mean the narrow sense of the word, as in the willpower needed to fight vice (smokes, cookies, alcohol). We're talking about a broader kind of self-supervision. Think of the way your mind works when you're giving negative feedback to an employee, or assembling a new bookshelf, or learning a new dance. You are careful and deliberate with your words or movements. It feels like there's a supervisor on duty. That's self-control, too.

Contrast that with all the situations in which your behavior doesn't feel "supervised"—for instance, the sensation while you're driving that you can't remember the last few miles of road, or the easy, unthinking way you take a shower or make your morning coffee. Much of our daily behavior, in fact, is more automatic than supervised, and that's a good thing because the supervised behavior is the hard stuff. It's draining.

Dozens of studies have demonstrated the exhausting nature of self-supervision. For instance, people who were asked to make tricky choices and trade-offs—such as setting up a wedding registry or ordering a new computer—were worse at focusing and solving problems than others who hadn't made the tough choices. In one study, some people were asked to restrain their emotions while watching a sad movie about sick animals. Afterward, they exhibited less physical endurance than others who'd let the tears flow freely. The research shows that we burn up self-control in a wide variety of situations: managing the impression we're making on others; coping with fears; controlling our spending; trying to focus on simple instructions such as "Don't think of a white bear"; and many, many others.

Here's why this matters for change: When people try to change things, they're usually tinkering with behaviors that have become automatic, and changing those behaviors requires careful

supervision by the Rider. The bigger the change you're suggesting, the more it will sap people's self-control.

And when people exhaust their self-control, what they're exhausting are the mental muscles needed to think creatively, to focus, to inhibit their impulses, and to persist in the face of frustration or failure. In other words, they're exhausting precisely the mental muscles needed to make a big change.

So when you hear people say that change is hard because people are lazy or resistant, that's just flat wrong. In fact, the opposite is true: Change is hard because people wear themselves out. And that's the second surprise about change: ***What looks like laziness is often exhaustion.***

When You Break Through to Feeling Things Change

Jon Stegner believed the company he worked for, a large manufacturer, was wasting vast sums of money. "I thought we had an opportunity to drive down purchasing costs not by 2 percent but by something on the order of \$1 billion over the next five years," said Stegner, who is quoted in John Kotter and Dan Cohen's essential book *The Heart of Change*.

To reap these savings, a big process shift would be required, and for that shift to occur, Stegner knew that he'd have to convince his bosses. He also knew that they'd never embrace such a big shift unless they believed in the opportunity, and for the most part, they didn't.

Seeking a compelling example of the company's poor purchasing habits, Stegner assigned a summer student intern to investigate a single item—work gloves, which workers in most of the company's factories wore. The student embarked on a mission to identify all the types of gloves used in all the company's factories and then trace back what the company was paying for them.

The intrepid intern soon reported that the factories were purchasing 424 different kinds of gloves! Furthermore, they were using different glove suppliers, and they were all negotiating their own prices. The same pair of gloves that cost \$5 at one factory might cost \$17 at another.

At Stegner's request, the student collected a specimen of every one of the 424 different types of gloves and tagged each with the price paid. Then all

the gloves were gathered up, brought to the boardroom, and piled up on the conference table. Stegner invited all the division presidents to come visit the Glove Shrine. He recalled the scene: What they saw was a large expensive table, normally clean or with a few papers, now stacked high with gloves. Each of our executives stared at this display for a minute. Then each said something like, “We really buy all these different kinds of gloves?” Well, as a matter of fact, yes we do. “Really?” Yes, really. Then they walked around the table. . . They could see the prices. They looked at two gloves that seemed exactly alike, yet one was marked \$3.22 and the other \$10.55. It’s a rare event when these people don’t have anything to say. But that day, they just stood with their mouths gaping.

The gloves exhibit soon became a traveling road show, visiting dozens of plants. The reaction was visceral: *This is crazy. We’re crazy. And we’ve got to make sure this stops happening.* Soon Stegner had exactly the mandate for change that he’d sought. The company changed its purchasing process and saved a great deal of money. This was exactly the happy ending everyone wanted (except, of course, for the glove salesman who’d managed to sell the \$5 gloves for \$17).

Let’s be honest: Most of us would not have tried what Stegner did. It would have been so easy, so natural, to make a presentation that spoke only to the Rider. Think of the possibilities: the spreadsheets, the savings data, the cost-cutting protocols, the recommendations for supplier consolidation, the exquisite logic for central purchasing. You could have created a 12-tabbed Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that would have made a tax accountant weep with joy. But instead of doing any of that, Stegner dumped a bunch of gloves on a table and invited his bosses to see them.

If there is such a thing as white-collar courage, surely this was an instance.

Stegner knew that if things were going to change, he had to get his colleagues’ Elephants on his side. If he had made an analytical appeal, he probably would have gotten some supportive nods, and the execs might have requested a follow-up meeting six weeks later (and then rescheduled it). The analytical case was compelling—by itself, it might have convinced Stegner’s colleagues that overhauling the purchasing system would be an important thing to do . . . next year.

Remember that if you reach your colleagues’ Riders but not their Elephants, they will have

direction without motivation. Maybe their Riders will drag the Elephant down the road for a while, but as we’ve seen, that effort can’t last long.

Once you break through to *feeling*, though, things change. Stegner delivered a jolt to his colleagues. First, they thought to themselves, *We’re crazy!* Then they thought, *We can fix this.* Everyone could think of a few things to try to fix the glove problem—and by extension the ordering process as a whole. That got their Elephants fired up to move.

We don’t expect potential billion-dollar change stories to come dressed up like this. The change effort was led by a single employee, with the able help of a summer intern. It focused on a single product. The scope of the presentation didn’t correspond in any way to the scope of the proposal. Yet Stegner’s strategy worked.

That’s the power of speaking to both the Rider and the Elephant.

What Looks Like Resistance Is Often a Lack of Clarity

It’s true that an unmotivated Elephant can doom a change effort, but let’s not forget that the Rider has his own issues. He’s a navel-gazer, an analyzer, a wheel-spinner. If the Rider isn’t sure exactly what direction to go, he tends to lead the Elephant in circles. And as we’ll see, that tendency explains the third and final surprise about change: ***What looks like resistance is often a lack of clarity.***

Two health researchers, Steve Booth-Butterfield and Bill Reger, professors at West Virginia University, were contemplating ways to persuade people to eat a healthier diet. From past research, they knew that people were more likely to change when the new behavior expected of them was crystal clear, but unfortunately, “eating a healthier diet” was anything but.

Where to begin? Which foods should people stop (or start) eating? Should they change their eating behavior at breakfast, lunch, or dinner? At home or in restaurants? The number of ways to “eat healthier” is limitless, especially given the starting place of the average American diet. This is exactly the kind of situation in which the Rider will spin his wheels, analyzing and agonizing and never moving forward.

As the two researchers brainstormed, their thoughts kept coming back to milk. Most Americans

drink milk, and we all know that milk is a great source of calcium. But milk is also the single largest source of saturated fat in the typical American's diet. In fact, calculations showed something remarkable: If Americans switched from whole milk to skim or 1% milk, the average diet would immediately attain the USDA recommended levels of saturated fat.

How do you get Americans to start drinking low-fat milk? You make sure it shows up in their refrigerators. And that isn't an entirely facetious answer. People will drink whatever is around the house—a family will plow through low-fat milk as fast as whole milk. So, in essence, the problem was even easier than anticipated: You don't need to change *drinking* behavior. You need to change *purchasing* behavior.

Suddenly the intervention became razor-sharp. What behavior do we want to change? We want consumers to buy skim or 1% milk. When? When they're shopping for groceries. Where? Duh. What else needs to change? Nothing (for now).

Reger and Booth-Butterfield launched a campaign in two communities in West Virginia, running spots on the local media outlets (TV, newspaper, radio) for two weeks. In contrast to the bland messages of most public-health campaigns, the 1% milk campaign was punchy and specific. One ad trumpeted the fact that one glass of whole milk has the same amount of saturated fat as five strips of bacon! At a press conference, the researchers showed local reporters a tube full of fat—the equivalent of the amount found in a half-gallon of whole milk. (Notice the Elephant appeals: They're going for an "Oh, gross!" reaction.)

Reger and Booth-Butterfield monitored milk sales data at all eight stores in the intervention area. Before the campaign, the market share of low-fat milk was 18 percent. After the campaign, it was 41 percent. Six months later, it held at 35 percent.

This brings us to the final part of the pattern that characterizes successful changes: If you want people to change, you must provide crystal-clear direction.

By now, you can understand the reason this is so important: It's so the Rider doesn't spin his wheels. If you tell people to "act healthier," think of how many ways they can interpret that— imagine their Riders contemplating the options endlessly. (Do I eat more grains and less meat? Or vice versa? Do I start taking vitamins? Would it be a good trade-off if I exercise more and bribe myself with ice cream?

Should I switch to Diet Coke, or is the artificial sweetener worse than the calories?)

What looks like resistance is often a lack of clarity. Before this study, we might have looked at these West Virginians and concluded they were the kind of people who don't care about their health. But if they were indeed "that kind" of people, why was it so easy to shift their behavior?

If you want people to change, you don't ask them to "act healthier." You say, "Next time you're in the dairy aisle of the grocery store, reach for a jug of 1% milk instead of whole milk."

Three-Part Framework for Change

Now you've had a glimpse of the basic three-part framework, one that can guide you in any situation where you need to change behavior:

- **Direct the Rider.** What looks like resistance is often a lack of clarity. So provide crystal-clear direction. (Think 1% milk.)
- **Motivate the Elephant.** What looks like laziness is often exhaustion. The Rider can't get his way by force for very long. So it's critical that you engage people's emotional side—get their Elephants on the path and cooperative. (Think of the cookies and radishes study and the boardroom conference table full of gloves.)
- **Shape the Path.** What looks like a people problem is often a situation problem. We call the situation (including the surrounding environment) the "Path." When you shape the Path, you make change more likely, no matter what's happening with the Rider and Elephant.

We created this framework to be useful for people who don't have scads of authority or resources. Some people can get their way by fiat. CEOs, for instance, can sell off divisions, hire people, fire people, change incentive systems, merge teams, and so on. Politicians can pass laws or impose punishments to change behavior. The rest of us don't have these tools (though, admittedly, they

would make life easier: “Son, if you don’t take out the trash tonight, you’re fired”).

As helpful as we hope this framework will be to you, we’re well aware, and you should be, too, that this framework is no panacea. For one thing, it’s incomplete. We’ve deliberately left out lots of great thinking on change in the interests of creating a framework that’s simple enough to be practical. For another, there’s a good reason why change can be difficult: The world doesn’t always want what you want. You want to change how others are acting, but they get a vote. You can cajole, influence, inspire, and motivate— but sometimes an employee would rather lose his job than move out of his comfortable routines. Sometimes the alcoholic will want another drink no matter what the consequences.

So we don’t promise that we’re going to make change easy, but at least we can make it *easier*. Our goal is to teach you a framework, based on decades of scientific research, that is simple enough to remember and flexible enough to use in many different situations—family, work, community, and otherwise.

To change behavior, you’ve got to direct the Rider, motivate the Elephant, and shape the Path. If you can do all three at once, dramatic change can happen even if you don’t have lots of power or resources behind you. For proof of that, we don’t need to look beyond Donald Berwick, a man who changed the face of health care.

Saving Lives: A Story of Change

In 2004, Donald Berwick, a doctor and the CEO of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), had some ideas about how to save lives—massive numbers of lives. Researchers at the IHI had analyzed patient care with the kinds of analytical tools used to assess the quality of cars coming off a production line. They discovered that the “defect” rate in health care was as high as 1 in 10—meaning, for example, that 10 percent of patients did not receive their antibiotics in the specified time. This was a shockingly high defect rate—many other industries had managed to achieve performance at levels of 1 error in 1,000 cases (and often far better). Berwick knew that the high medical defect rate meant that tens of thousands of patients were dying every year, unnecessarily.

Berwick’s insight was that hospitals could benefit from the same kinds of rigorous process improvements that had worked in other industries. Couldn’t a transplant operation be “produced” as consistently and flawlessly as a Toyota Camry?

Berwick’s ideas were so well supported by research that they were essentially indisputable, yet little was happening. He certainly had no ability to force any changes on the industry. IHI had only seventy-five employees. But Berwick wasn’t deterred.

On December 14, 2004, he gave a speech to a room full of hospital administrators at a large industry convention. He said, “Here is what I think we should do. I think we should save 100,000 lives. And I think we should do that by June 14, 2006—18 months from today. Some is not a number; soon is not a time. Here’s the number: 100,000. Here’s the time: June 14, 2006—9 a.m.”

The crowd was astonished. The goal was daunting. But Berwick was quite serious about his intentions. He and his tiny team set out to do the impossible.

IHI proposed six very specific interventions to save lives. For instance, one asked hospitals to adopt a set of proven procedures for managing patients on ventilators, to prevent them from getting pneumonia, a common cause of unnecessary death. (One of the procedures called for a patient’s head to be elevated between 30 and 45 degrees, so that oral secretions couldn’t get into the windpipe.)

Of course, all hospital administrators agreed with the goal to save lives, but the road to that goal was filled with obstacles. For one thing, for a hospital to reduce its “defect rate,” it had to acknowledge having a defect rate. In other words, it had to admit that some patients were dying needless deaths. Hospital lawyers were not keen to put this admission on record.

Berwick knew he had to address the hospitals’ squeamishness about admitting error. At his December 14 speech, he was joined by the mother of a girl who’d been killed by a medical error. She said, “I’m a little speechless, and I’m a little sad, because I know that if this campaign had been in place four or five years ago, that Josie would be fine.... But, I’m happy, I’m thrilled to be part of this, because I know you can do it, because you have to do it.”

Another guest on stage, the chair of the North Carolina State Hospital Association, said: “An awful lot of people for a long time have had their heads in

the sand on this issue, and it's time to do the right thing. It's as simple as that."

IHI made joining the campaign easy: It required only a one-page form signed by a hospital CEO. By two months after Berwick's speech, over a thousand hospitals had enrolled. Once a hospital enrolled, the IHI team helped the hospital embrace the new interventions. Team members provided research, step-by-step instruction guides, and training. They arranged conference calls for hospital leaders to share their victories and struggles with one another. They encouraged hospitals with early successes to become "mentors" to hospitals just joining the campaign.

The friction in the system was substantial. Adopting the IHI interventions required hospitals to overcome decades' worth of habits and routines. Many doctors were irritated by the new procedures, which they perceived as constricting. But the adopting hospitals were seeing dramatic results, and their visible successes attracted more hospitals to join the campaign.

Eighteen months later, at the exact moment he'd promised to return—June 14, 2006, at 9 a.m.—Berwick took the stage again to announce the results: "Hospitals enrolled in the 100,000 Lives Campaign have collectively prevented an estimated 122,300 avoidable deaths and, as importantly, have begun to institutionalize new standards of care that will continue to save lives and improve health outcomes into the future."

The crowd was euphoric. Don Berwick, with his 75-person team at IHI, had convinced thousands of hospitals to change their behavior, and collectively, they'd saved 122,300 lives—the equivalent of throwing a life preserver to every man, woman, and child in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

This outcome was the fulfillment of the vision Berwick had articulated as he closed his speech eighteen months earlier, about how the world would look when hospitals achieved the 100,000 lives goal:

"And, we will celebrate. Starting with pizza, and ending with champagne. We will celebrate the importance of what we have undertaken to do, the courage of honesty, the joy of companionship, the cleverness of a field operation, and the results we will achieve. We will celebrate ourselves, because the patients whose lives we save cannot join us, because their names can never be known. Our contribution

will be what did not happen to them. And, though they are unknown, we will know that mothers and fathers are at graduations and weddings they would have missed, and that grandchildren will know grandparents they might never have known, and holidays will be taken, and work completed, and books read, and symphonies heard, and gardens tended that, without our work, would have been only beds of weeds."

The Framework Applied

Big changes can happen.

Don Berwick and his team catalyzed a change that saved 100,000 lives, yet Berwick himself wielded no power. He couldn't change the law. He couldn't fire hospital leaders who didn't agree with him. He couldn't pay bonuses to hospitals that accepted his proposals.

Berwick had the same tools the rest of us have. **First, he directed his audience's Riders.** The destination was crystal clear: *Some is not a number; soon is not a time. Here's the number: 100,000. Here's the time: June 14, 2006—9 a.m.* But that wasn't enough. He had to help hospitals figure out how to get there, and he couldn't simply say, "Try harder." (Remember "act healthier" versus "buy 1% milk.") So he proposed six specific interventions, such as elevating the heads of patients on ventilators, that were known to save lives. By staying laser-focused on these six interventions, Berwick made sure not to exhaust the Riders of his audience with endless behavioral changes.

Second, he motivated his audience's Elephants. He made them feel the need for change. Many of the people in the audience already knew the facts, but knowing was not enough. (Remember, knowing wasn't enough for executives at Jon Stegner's company. It took a stack of gloves to get their Elephants engaged.) Berwick had to get beyond knowing, so he brought his audience face-to-face with the mother of the girl who'd been killed by a medical error: "I know that if this campaign had been in place four or five years ago, that Josie would be fine." Berwick was also careful to motivate the people who hadn't been in the room for his presentation. He didn't challenge people to "overhaul medicine" or "bring TQM to health care." He challenged them to save 100,000 lives. That speaks to anyone's Elephant.

Third, he shaped the Path. He made it easier for the hospitals to embrace the change. Think of the one-page enrollment form, the step-by-step instructions, the training, the support groups, the mentors. He was designing an environment that made it more likely for hospital administrators to reform. Berwick also knew that behavior was contagious. He used peer pressure to persuade hospitals to join the campaign. (*Your rival hospital across town just signed on to help save 100,000 lives. Do you really want them to have the moral high ground?*) He also connected people—he matched up people who were struggling to implement the changes with people who had mastered them, almost like the “mentors” found in Alcoholics Anonymous. Berwick was creating a support group for health care reform.

Whether the switch you seek is in your family, in your charity, in your organization, or in society at

large, you’ll get there by making three things happen. You’ll direct the Rider, motivate the Elephant, and shape the Path.

Resources

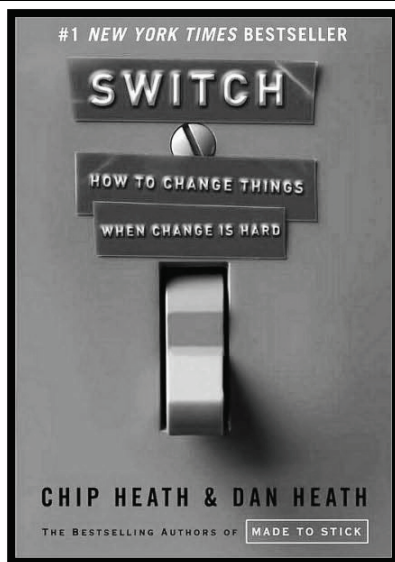
Heath, Chip and Dan Heath. *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard*. New York: Broadway, 2010.

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

Switch Podcasts: 1) Managers, 2) Marketers, 3) Social Sector, 4) Personal Change

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Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard Chip Heath and Dan Heath (New York: Broadway Books, 2010)

Switch asks the following question: Why is it 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. In *Switch*, the Heaths show how everyday people—employees and managers, parents and nurses—have united both minds and, as a result, achieved dramatic results:

- The lowly medical interns who managed to defeat an entrenched, decades-old medical practice that was endangering patients.
- The home-organizing guru who developed a simple technique for overcoming the dread of housekeeping.
- The manager who transformed a lackadaisical customer-support team into service zealots by removing a standard tool of customer service

In a compelling, story-driven narrative, the Heaths bring together decades of counterintuitive research in psychology, sociology, and other fields to shed new light on how we can effect transformative change. *Switch* shows that successful changes follow a pattern, a pattern you can use to make the changes that matter to you, whether your interest is in changing the world or changing your waistline.

A Guide to Facilitating Change

Use the process developed by Chip and Dan Heath in *Switch* to develop a plan for preparing to implement a new project (how you would use each step) or to conduct an evaluation of a new project that you have already implemented (how you did or did not use each step). For practical checklists for each step of the process download *Switch Your Organization: A Workbook* at <http://heathbrothers.com/resources>.

The Switch Framework

1. <i>Direct the Rider</i> (the conscious mind), 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
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. <i>Motivate the Elephant</i> (the subconscious), eliminating what looks like laziness but is more often exhaustion by engaging emotions to get people on the same path as you	
	Ways to use this in your project
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. <i>Shape the Path</i> (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	
	Ways to use this in your project
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.	

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.
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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.

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.