

THE FIRST REPORT

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Don't expect the change process to handle itself automatically after the kickoff. Anticipate obstacles and new developments along the way and be ready to adjust the plan to deal with them.



MAINTAINING EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT TO CHANGE

You've probably experienced it first hand. An employer used all the bells and whistles to introduce a new initiative. Surveys were taken, middle managers were invited to special meetings designed to gain their support, top leadership climbed on board, brochures and buttons were printed and big kickoff assemblies were held.

Three months later, the initiative was dead in the water, the objectives weren't reached and life went back to normal. Funny thing, except for the leaders who wanted the change, no one was surprised.

Why is change so hard to accomplish within organizations? Perhaps because emphasizing the kickoff above all else is misguided. Research indicates that accomplishing successful change is more about keeping employees' support than getting it in the first place.

At both top performing and less successful companies, enthusiasm for change typically drops off after the first month. But top performing organizations recognize the downturn and quickly take steps to reverse the trend, while less successful ones take longer to refocus on the change initiative and sometimes can't recover.

According to a study by OnPoint Consulting in New York, dealing quickly with a drop in commitment is critical to change efforts. Unless a company can get back on track within one to three months, it's unlikely the initiative will be successful, its research indicates.

Here are some things companies can do to maintain commitment to change:

Keep talking. Leadership must find ways to communicate often and directly with employees about the pros and cons of making the change, why change is important and why they believe the organization can make the shift successfully.

Make leaders models. Everyone in the

organization must publicly support the directive. If key managers are allowed a different set of rules than employees, the initiative will lose credibility.

Recognize middle managers' ongoing role. Although most companies know they need the support of mid-managers initially, it's important to keep them involved throughout the process.

Stay focused. Don't expect the process to handle itself automatically after the kickoff. Anticipate obstacles and new developments along the way and be ready to adjust the plan to deal with them.

Don't set the bar too high. Being overly ambitious with your milestones can cause employees to become discouraged. Establishing realistic goals and announcing their attainment will help maintain enthusiasm for the cause.

Set aside adequate resources.

Research indicates that underestimating the resources required or trying to accomplish too many changes at one time can doom an initiative to mediocrity.

Give employees the tools and time they need to do what you're asking.

Keep cheering. Most organizations kick off big initiatives with meetings, give-aways and other fanfare. Continue to maintain interest by celebrating major accomplishments or goals and communicating regularly with employees.

Tie change to compensation. High performing companies link key objectives to pay, particularly in management bonus-award programs. But incentive plans increasingly are being offered to non-management employees. Link these to organizational goals as well, and also use spot bonus awards — both monetary and otherwise — to rally support.

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MOST BOSSES ARE — WHAT ELSE? — MALE AND CAUCASIAN

More than three-fourths of U.S. workers report to a Caucasian boss, and just one-third say their manager is a woman, according to a Hudson diversity-in-the-workplace survey. Hudson, a New York-based staffing firm, conducted the survey of about 5,000 employees in January. Government workers are most likely to have a female boss, with about 43% in this group saying they report to a woman.

Employees are unsure whether diversity initiatives create job advancement and salary opportunities for women and minorities, with one-third of workers saying they do, one third saying they don't and one-third unsure. About 20% of all surveyed workers say they know someone who was denied a job, promotion or pay increase because of their race, but 46% of African American workers believe they know someone who has been a victim of this type of discrimination.

While 70% of employees say having a diversity policy is "very" or "somewhat" important, almost two-thirds (65%) of African American and 51% of Hispanics believe it's very important to have such a policy, Hudson reports.

WHY BAD APPLES ARE ALLOWED TO KEEP ROTTING ORGANIZATIONS

Why do negative employees who drag down morale and disrupt workplaces have the staying power of Superglue? They may be good performers and great manipulators and companies don't want to lose them, or employers may fear legal retribution if they're fired, says Joanne G. Sujansky, president of KEYGroup, a consulting firm in Pittsburgh.

Even if bad apples are a small percentage of most workforces, they require more management time than other employees. To keep organizations productive, managers need to find ways to confront these problem employees, says Ms. Sujansky. Bad apples try to blame others, so one tactic when confronting them is to stay focused on the problem at hand, not on what the bad apple says to deflect blame.

To nip problem attitudes among employees, provide balanced feedback that includes mentioning positive and negative behavior and foster a culture that rewards helping others. By following sound HR practices, firing an employee should not result in legal consequences, Ms. Sujansky adds.

WOMEN RECEIVE EXECUTIVE COACHING LESS OFTEN THAN MEN

Some women executives complain that corporate attitudes keep them from advancing to higher levels. A study indicating that women receive executive coaching at a lesser rate than men seems to support this contention.

The survey of 3,000 HR executives by Novations Group, a consulting firm based in Boston, indicates that about 20% of companies offer executive coaching to women at a lower rate than to men. About three-fourths offer executive coaching to women at the same rate as to men, while just under 6% of employers provide executive coaching to women at a higher rate than men.

Women should be assertive about seeking coaching, says Novations senior consultant Deborah Felton. "Men generally have stronger informal networks and understand the 'unwritten rules' of the organization, so coaching is that much more crucial for women, who sometimes find it hard to ask for help because of their socialization," she says.



EMPLOYEES: COMPANY SIZE DOESN'T MATTER THAT MUCH

For many staffers, employer size doesn't matter as much as you might expect. A study of 3.5 million employees conducted during the past two years found that the benefits of working at large companies (more than 10,000 workers) or smaller ones (less than 10,000 staffers) are the same in many areas.

Here's where Kenexa Research Institute in Wayne, Pa., found that large companies rated at least 10% better than smaller ones with employees:

- Communication of company goals;
- feeling valued by the organization;
- the job itself (kind of work performed);
- chance to improve skills;
- being treated with respect;
- workload reasonableness;
- recognition received; and
- pride.

Here's where employees rated smaller companies 10% better than larger companies to work for:

- Compatibility with workers' values;
- internal support from other departments;
- "my manager helps me to grow and develop";
- communicating a clear vision of the company's future;
- encouragement to serve customers in innovative ways;
- personal decision-making authority;
- structure to support customer service; and
- being kept informed.

And here's where employees noted no difference between large and small company sizes:

- work and personal life balance;
- feeling part of the team;
- access to resources needed to work effectively;
- being given information required for their jobs;
- amount of manager feedback;
- organization's commitment to ethical conduct;
- no fear of reprisals for reporting ethics violations; and
- accessibility of their manager.



REFERRALS REMAIN TOP SOURCE OF EXTERNAL HIRES

Companies need look no further than their own employees to find good job candidates. Job hunters need look no further than their networking contacts to find good jobs.

These are the primary conclusions of the 2007 Source of Hire survey conducted by CareerXroads, a recruitment consulting firm in New Brunswick, N.J. The firm received responses from 40 corporations employing more than 1.2 million staffers.

For the fourth year in a row, referrals remained the best source of external hires, eclipsing all other sources. Most hires in this category (95%) were due to employee referrals. The remaining 5% represented referrals from vendors, suppliers, alumni or "friends," reports CareerXroads. In a supplementary survey, the firm found that referrals are effective as well as popular, with as few as three referrals leading to a new hire.

The 2007 results point to the growing popularity of rehiring former employees or "Boomerangs". This is due partly to changing attitudes toward former employees and the current ability to stay in touch with company alumni via technology. In 2006, rehired employees comprised 5.2% of externally-sourced recruits, according to the survey.

For job hunters, the survey shows why contacting search firms is an inefficient way to job hunt. Less than 5% of all positions were filled by third-party firms in 2006.

The impact of the Internet is so pervasive that CareerXroads researchers Gerry Crispin and Mark Mahler believe that almost every source of hiring has an Internet component. These may range from the initial research done on candidates to application methods to communications with candidates during the hiring process. Candidates recruited as a result of job boards made up 12% of external hires, with Monster.com, CareerBuilder and HotJobs emerging as the most popular Internet job-search sites in 2006.

Although respondents said 20% of external hires are from the company's Web site, the researchers dispute this finding, saying that Web sites are a destination, not a source.

The findings clearly indicate that for companies, the most inexpensive and effective way to find candidates is by boosting referrals from employees and by widening referral programs to include suppliers, customers and

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other company "friends". For candidates, it's clear that the best way to shorten a search is by meeting people who can make referrals – also known as networking.

Sources of Hires (as a % of external hires only)

SOURCES	2006	2005	2004	2003
Referrals	25.6%	27.1%	31.7%	28.5%
Company Web site	20.7%	12.2%	15.8%	20.6%
Job boards	12.3%	12.6%	11.8%	10.3%
Print/Media	6.9%	4.6%	5.5%	3.8%
Direct sourcing	6.4%	7.4%	6.0%	2.6%
Re-hires, Boomerangs	5.2%	Not Surveyed		
3rd party agencies	4.8%	5.2%	3.2%	1.2%
College	3.8%	8.0%	5.6%	2.4%
Career fairs	2.7%	5.2%	3.2%	2.8%
Temp-to-hire	2.3%	3.2%	Not Surveyed	
Search-engine advertising	2.0%	Not Surveyed		
Walk ins	0.5%	4.2%	Not Surveyed	
All other	7.0%	10.5%	15.2%	26.9%

Source: CareerXroads, Kendall Park, N.J.



Our day-to-day activities, our dealings with each other and our relationships with customers/clients must be governed by a passionate and unwavering commitment to a set of values, which are:

QUALITY

Take time to do things right the first time.

SERVICE

Render intelligent, timely and considerate service to all.

CONCERN FOR PEOPLE

Treat clients, program participants and employees with honesty, trust, fairness and respect.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communicate with our clients, program participants and employees in ways which will assure mutual understanding.

CONSISTENCY

Insure that our behavior each and every day supports our values, goals, and standards.

SIMPLICITY

Conduct our business in an easily understood manner.

REALISM

Acknowledge that our success will come through intelligence, hard work, patience and experience.

RECOGNITION

That our clients and participants trust us with the most highly confidential information they have.

RESPONSIBILITY

Encourage individual responsibility and decision making.

FLEXIBILITY

Recognize the necessity to be open to change for the mutual benefit of our clients, program participants and our organization.

RESPECT FOR TRADITION

Understand what created past success.

INTEGRITY

Consistently practice the utmost modesty and integrity in serving our clients, our participants and ourselves.

COMMITMENT

Take the plauge - there is truth in the theory that there is "strength in numbers."

And finally, never sacrifice these precepts for the short-term.





*People are capable of
doing far more than
they believe they can,
so why aren't they
fulfilling their promise?
It's because they
don't have faith
in themselves.*



HELPING EMPLOYEES CHANGE NEGATIVE SELF-TALK

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Given a choice, would you rather spend time with a negative or positive person? Most people would say they'd prefer to be around someone who sees the glass as half full, not half empty.

But sometimes, we can't avoid being around people with negative attitudes, especially if they're family members or co-workers. These individuals seem to gain energy by sapping it from the people around them. Ironically, negative people can complain about things they don't like until the cows come home but they seldom do anything productive to fix these concerns. Blame and an inability to take responsibility are other key hallmarks of negative personalities. They also hate change.

Most of you know I'm in the glass is half full camp. But I bring up negative influences because of an item on the second page of this issue about what companies can do to weed out bad apples who demoralize others. There's also our article on the front page about successfully implementing change. Negative people seldom support change and often downright resist it, which is further reason to weed them out.

Managers often fear confronting negative people. They should receive training and support on nipping this behavior and building positive environments. While I'm on the topic of employee training, here's another pet peeve of mine: Why don't companies do more to help employees reach goals?

I mean this in a psychological sense, not an operational sense. People are capable of doing far more than they believe they can, so why aren't they fulfilling their promise? It's because they don't have faith in themselves. Organizations would benefit if they did more to help their people to believe in themselves because productivity would increase.

What I'm proposing requires minimal investment. Instead of a workshop on, say, retirement planning or the 401(k) plan, jump on the bandwagon with the new DVD, *The Secret*, and offer a seminar with a catchy title, such as *Unlocking Your Inner Power*. Then teach employees to visualize their goals, focus on them and believe they can reach them. Now that's positive thinking!

Russ Jones



FIRST¹ TRANSITIONS

First Transitions, Inc. has been a provider of career-transition services since 1981. We have completed consulting assignments for more than 500 organizations in 36 states. Our uniqueness has been in the caring, nurturing approach we have taken in assisting individuals in attaining life goals, personal and professional.

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