

Rollercoaster of Change™:

The natural, normal and highly predictable cycles of life

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Whether you are dealing with change at the individual, team, family, organization, community or societal level, the Rollercoaster of Change explains key concepts of how change occurs. It is a simple representation of a complex reality.

LIFE IS FULL OF CYCLES

Life is full of natural and normal cycles. They include:

- **Natural Environment** (day/night, moon phases, seasons)
- **Historic Eras** (hunting and gathering, agricultural, industrial, digital ages)
- **Economic** (bull/bear business cycles)
- **Life** (birth/death, food chain, growth/decline)
- **Industry** (start-up, maturity, decline, renewal)

These cycles are natural, normal, and historically documented facts of life. The speed of change is increasing. Therefore, it is critical to understand how to manage change successfully.

THE REALITY OF LIFE

Many people talk of “organizational change.” Change is an individual, emotional, and psychological process. Therefore, organizational change is the accumulation of the change experience of each employee. It is even more difficult to get everyone to focus on the customer during change. This is because during change the focus is on oneself alone. Because the focus is internal and not toward the customer, things like productivity, quality and results often decline.

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The Rollercoaster of Change™ is a Haines Centre model to show how individuals experience change and how leaders can help each employee move forward in the change process.

This Rollercoaster is a simple way of understanding the dynamics of how to effect successful change of all types. Cycles of stability, change, instability, new stability and change all over again are normal and natural. Leaders shouldn't fight the cycle, but understand it and use it to their advantage.

When employees are experiencing change, so are leaders. Leaders must lead themselves through the six stages of the Rollercoaster before leading others through it.

Each person will go through the stages at different speeds, depths and times. A leader must lead their employees from where they are – not where the leader is or where he or she wishes they were.

WELL-PLANNED TRANSITION

Leaders of change, managers and employees will all experience change, but may go through it at different times and pace. Therefore, the leaders must be prepared with a plan and clear expectations before they give notice regarding the desired changes. In advance of announcing the change, we recommend leaders spend time with an expert in change management to help develop a well-planned transition management process. A well thought out plan can significantly reduce the impact of change on morale and productivity.

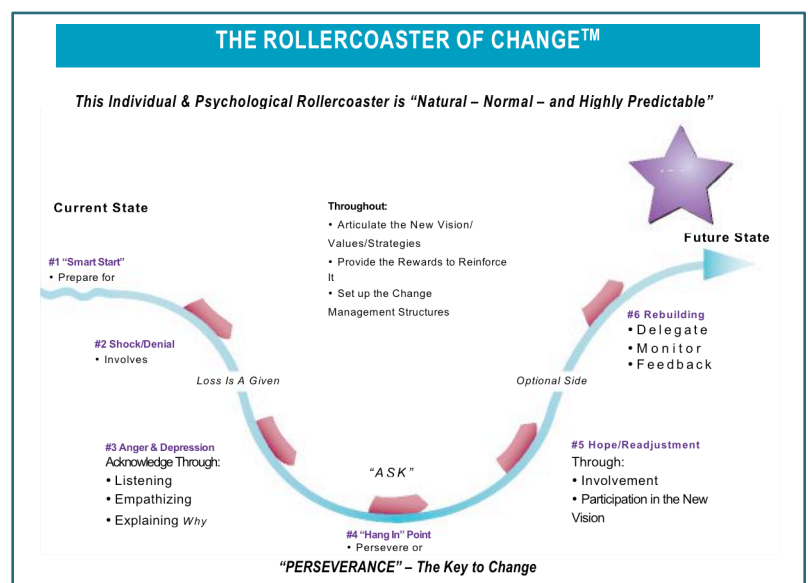
Stage 1: Smart Start

A Smart Start ensures leaders get educated, assess the situation, and organize and tailor the change process **before** they begin it.

Stage 2: Shock and Denial

After announcing the changes, leaders must be available to others to communicate the desired changes and their rationale—over and over again, face to face as often as possible.

It is a given that each person will



experience Stage 2 (*Shock and Denial*) and Stage 3 (*Anger and Depression*). Employees need to understand why the change is needed so that they can decide to participate in the optional stages of change on the rising side of the Rollercoaster. Reinforcing the reasons for change and what the future will look like is the key behavior of leaders in Stage 2.

Therefore, the question is not whether employees will go through the Rollercoaster, but When? How deep? How long will it take? and *Will they successfully reach the other side?* The goal of a planned, deliberate transition management process is getting the maximum number of employees to the other side of the Rollercoaster (i.e., achieving full functioning) with the least impact on morale and productivity.

Because Stage 5 (*Hope and Readjustment*) and Stage 6 (*Rebuilding*) are optional, success requires an effective individual or team with a strong understanding of the dynamics involved to lead the change process.

Ways to Exit Shock & Denial

As soon as people learn about the desired change, they experience Stage 2 (*Shock and Denial*). The key to helping people move through this stage is to help them understand “why.” Some ways include:

1. Explain the business reasons for the change
2. Share what competitors are doing
3. Explain the organization’s financials
4. Share the organization’s vision and future ideal
5. Discuss changes in the environment that impact the organization
6. Explain the organization’s Strategic Plans and direction and why they were chosen
7. Share employee data and problems, such as turnover, production errors, etc.
8. Discuss customer feedback

Stage 3: Anger and Depression

In Stage 2 (*Shock and Denial*), leaders tell why the change is needed and what the future looks like. In Stage 3 (*Anger and Depression*), leaders must change from telling to listening first.

Listening helps people through the anger, depression and other emotions of Stage 3. Leaders start with listening before moving onto asking, empathizing, teaching and explaining. Leaders need to ensure that employees are armed

DEPRESSION

To Help People Through Stage 3:

- 1 Listen.
- 2 Ask questions.
- 3 Empathize.
- 4 Explain the vision and why it is significant (over and over).

with the knowledge and abilities to implement the desired changes.

Just as anger and depression are normal and to be expected, so is resistance to change. The worst thing an executive can do is to push people or tell them they “*should not feel that way.*” People naturally resist the losses associated with change.

How to Help the Team through the Change Successfully

Stage 3 (*Anger and Depression*) is a time of high uncertainty and anxiety. Thus leaders and managers need to spend a great deal of time assisting all of their employees through this change. Some strategies for helping include:

1. Communicate frequently about the changes and change process.
2. Develop two-way feedback mechanisms to discuss employees’ questions and concerns.
3. Empathize and understand employee concerns and resistance. Don’t react emotionally. Let people talk it out.
4. Make sure people have a clear understanding of why the change is necessary.
5. Give people occasions to talk through their feelings of loss.
6. Provide training on how to manage change.
7. Develop a positive climate about the change by evoking a clear and positive “vision” of what the future will look like.
8. Relate the change to the organization’s values.
9. Work closely with the informal peer leaders of the organization.
10. Assume there will be some obstacles and challenges early on and hold regular troubleshooting sessions to allow affected employees input to solutions

Stage 4: Hang In

Stage 4 (*Hang In*) is the decision point for each employee. They can decide to:

1. Try the optional rebuilding side of the Rollercoaster
2. Leave the organization
3. Stay in *Anger and Depression*

Leadership should be prepared to equip each employee with reasons to persevere through Stage 5 (*Hope and Readjustment*).

Stage 5: Hope And Readjustment

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At Stage 5 (*Hope and Readjustment*), leaders must help each person fulfill his or her new roles and performance expectations, with training, coaching and reinforcing correct behaviors. People will slip back on the Rollercoaster many times, and reinforcement will help them keep progressing.

Leaders also help employees understand their own WIIFM (What's In It For Me) - what they gain in helping achieve the organization's new vision.

We believe that involvement of people is the key to a successful change. Get people involved in how they will contribute to the new vision.

BUY-IN

Involving people in the change is essential for adjustment, hope, and rebuilding.

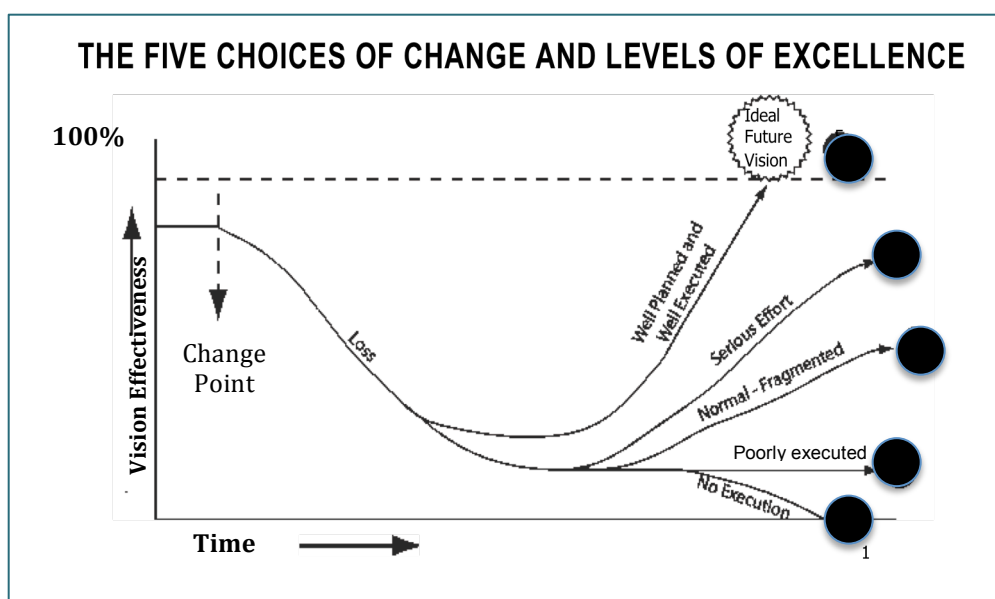
"People support what they help create."

Stage 6: Rebuilding

Stage 6 (*Rebuilding*) is where employees are committed and working toward the new vision. People are getting accustomed to the "new" organization. This is a time to celebrate accomplishments and delegate work.

Rebuilding does not mean the organization is perfect. Leaders need to continue to monitor progress and listen to feedback to make any needed modifications.

Some employees never make it to Stage 6 (*Rebuilding*). This shows the importance of not only obtaining their "buy-in," but also getting people to "stay-in" throughout the Rollercoaster.



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Ways to Institutionalize Changes in an Organization

There are ways to ensure changes are successfully completed and maintained. They include:

1. Conduct an organizational assessment to see the status of the changes and identify problems
2. Conduct refresher training courses on the change topic
3. Include change improvements as part of senior management's goals
4. Review and update your reward system to ensure consistency with the changes
5. Measure the change effectiveness
6. Create ways to discuss and reinforce the changes at recurring meetings
7. Update and monitor policies and procedures
8. Use a variety of communication avenues and processes for feedback on the changes
9. Set priorities and deadlines for short-term improvements to the changes
10. Examine key environmental trends to be sure they are reinforcing the changes
11. Review and update all organizational systems support the changes
12. Continue to communicate the goals and benefits of the changes
13. Assess the potential dangers and unintended consequences of the changes and develop specific approaches and plans to manage them

A SUMMARY: THE ROLLERCOASTER OF CHANGE™ (THE NATURAL CYCLES OF LIFE AND CHANGE)

In dealing with the Rollercoaster of Change™, plan around these major questions, for both yourself and others:

- Not if, but when will we go through shock and denial?
- How deep is the trough?
- How long will it take?
- Will we get up the right side and rebuild?
- At what level will we rebuild?

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- How many different Rollercoasters will we experience at once?
- Will we hang in and persevere?
- How do we deal with normal resistance?
- How do we create a critical mass for the desired change?

Some Principles of Change

1. Any change in any one part of the organization affects all other parts of the organization. This is the “Ripple Effect.”
2. Change that people initiate is viewed as good, needed, and valuable. Change that is forced on them is met by resistance, no matter what the nature of the change.
3. People need predictability—physical, psychological, and social.
4. People need to hear things many times. They will feel awkward, ill-at-ease and self-conscious during changes and, therefore, need information and reassurance over and over again.
5. People will think first about what they will have to give up—their losses. Leaders should allow time for people to cry, mourn, and grieve the loss.
6. People will feel alone even though others are going through the same change. Leaders should structure interactions and involvement for people to feel a sense of community.
7. The communication power in explicit vision and values is enormous. People want to believe.
8. People like simplicity. Only one to three themes should be chosen in order to focus people on the change.
9. People change at different rates and depths; they have different levels of readiness for change. Each person should be treated as an individual.
10. Change needs to be led. The group that leads and manages the changes should meet frequently and regularly.
11. People can only handle so much change; overload causes paralysis. Change can be accomplished in phases if necessary.
12. The stress of change on people is enormous . . . but it can and must be managed for successful change to occur.

13. Leaders should open themselves to feedback on the changes. It may be painful, but can also be growth inducing.
14. When pressure to change is removed, people will revert back to old behaviors; relapses are natural and will occur.
15. Everyone reacts to change in predictable ways. The Rollercoaster is the key!

***Excellence is doing 10,000 little things right—that's
Strategic Management in execution.***



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