



## An OAD LLC Article Managing Change (Made Relatively Simple)

Over the past few years much has been written about managing change. Frankly, the more articles I have read the more confused I get and, to be honest, some articles are just silly.

Let's make it simple, which is not to say change can be managed simply with little effort.

1. Change starts at the top. If the top tier is ambivalent and sends out mixed signals about the necessity for change – products and services – then all that is going to be accomplished is cynicism, doubt, and cya. If this isn't controlled, then forget about it. If change is necessary, OK. If it's pursuing the latest fad? Well, you lost credibility a long time ago.
2. The top tier is a mix of personalities and that is good. Some are venturesome, some are cautious, some think a "tell" is best, others think a "sell" is best, and some have no opinion or feel very strongly both ways. We have all been to these meetings, and thank the gods for Valium.
3. The top people have to be informed and sold in various ways depending on personalities –
4. The **Higher D** personalities (using OAD jargon to describe the financial people) have to be confronted with data. Higher D's live and breathe data.
5. The **Higher P's** hate change. They live by systems, procedures, and predictability. In this case they have to be reassured that changes will be introduced at a pace with sufficient learning so they can adjust to change.
6. The **Higher E** extroverts usually are not a problem. If it looks and smells good, they're OK.
7. The **Higher A** risk-takers are running the change. They have to understand that if they don't get the top tiers and the troops behind them on board they are going to spend a lot of time smashing their heads against a brick wall. The result is either abandoning change or forcing it through with the rest of the company looking for opportunities to sabotage the whole thing. No riots in the streets, just passive-aggressive resistance until everyone is so worn out that no one cares anymore. Not exactly a motivated workforce.
8. The **Higher Versatility (VL)**, **Higher Emotional Control (EC)**, and **Higher Creativity (CR)** people can cope with change well, as long as the change makes sense. Don't try and schmooze these people, they're ahead of you.

### Bottom Line –

Change has to make sense and about everyone has to buy into it. Yes, the unions are going to jump up and down, but unless they are completely out of touch you can work with them. If not? Decide whether you want a battle or simply say, "OK, that's it. Good bye." This is a rare scenario these days, for better or worse for the working man. But that's a different story.

Introducing change has to get into some specifics. This whole generalized mission statement stuff is for the birds. Instead - "What has to be changed? Why?" How? What's the time span? How are we going to train people to mesh with the new world? What interior and exterior training programs are available?"

Look at the sub-cultures in your organization. In other words, look outside of yourself and like-minded people.

Production is Higher P and D. You have to spend a lot of time reassuring them and offering them training to get up to speed. Reasonable people will go through training. Unreasonable or hopeless causes will not, but you did your best and you're going to get less flak than if you simply dumped people and started outside searches. Yes, this is time consuming, frustrating, and expensive. The alternative is more expensive.

Keep the Higher E extroverts on message. Extroverts want to be accepted by everyone and ignore the details, so they send out contradictory noises depending on who they are with. Lightly hit them with a bag of flowers (or whatever) to keep them on message. If someone cannot, meaning he/she sees a danger in sales commissions, then perhaps he/she would be happier elsewhere.



If a Higher A (assertive) personality buys in and then starts a passive-aggressive campaign, have a chat. If this doesn't work....

**Be sensitive to other personalities and cultures. What may seem as the long road is the short road.**

I have been consulting to companies for 35 plus years and witnessed many companies successfully change (e.g. Coghlin Companies) and manage mergers/takeovers well to one extent (Bank of America). By the way, in spite of what a company might say, a merger is not a merger. One party wins, others lose. But, again, that's another story.

One has to understand that the unknown creates fear, fear creates animosity, and animosity creates resistance. However, if the unknown is explained, needed training is offered, and there is patience, then change is successful.

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