

Progressions Inc.

Sales Training & Consulting



Leading Change in the Workplace

CHANGE a word that typically creates resistance in most any audience. People don't resist change... they resist BEING changed!

People embrace and thrive upon change when the change is on their own terms.

When we feel as if we are in the “driver’s seat” we tend to see change as our ally, especially when seeking out learning, opportunity and growth.

When change addresses the adage WIIFM (What’s in it for me?) it is seen as a welcome commodity. It’s often said, “The one thing we can be sure of is change.” In today’s workplace change is a constant. If we are to exceed and succeed, we must be willing to change and embrace it.

So why all the resistance?

- People resist change because of the unknown.
- People resist change based on previous experiences.
- Sometimes people resist change because in the end “it’s the thing to do.”

Leading change then becomes a significant challenge and an important aspect in the growth of any company today.

Helping people through change can be accomplished by understanding the following seven principles set out by Stephen Covey.

Seven Dynamics of Change

1. People will feel awkward and self-conscious.
2. People initially focus on what they have to give up.
3. People will feel alone even if everyone else is going through the same change.
4. People can handle only so much change.
5. People are at different levels of readiness for change.
6. People will be concerned they don’t have enough resources.
7. If you take pressure off, people will revert back to their old behavior.



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To effectively change we must look at our capacity for **resilience**. Another way of phrasing this would be our “**bounce back**” abilities.

If we see change as adversity or a creator of stress, resilience becomes an important part of accepting change. Consider these eight different dimensions of resilience and ask yourself how you score in each of these areas.

- 1) Self-assurance. Resilient people have a deep belief in their own capacity. They understand that the world is a complex and challenging place and they believe that they have what it takes to deal with whatever comes their way.
- 2) Clarity of personal vision. Resilient people have a clear sense of what they want to accomplish in life. For some people their purpose is their family, for others community, and others work. Clarity creates drive, drive creates results.
- 3) Flexible and adaptable. Those who are most resilient have the ability to adjust their actions and behaviors to changing circumstances. They pursue their personal vision in ways that accommodate and respond to realities of the world.
- 4) Organized. Resilient people create a level of structure and stability that they need to create order and focus. They set realistic goals and find personal strategies that enable them to cope with the challenges that they face.
- 5) Problem solver. Understanding the root cause and anticipating set backs is important to critical thinking. Collaborating with others and viewing failures as opportunities for learning and growth creates resilience.
- 6) Interpersonal confidence. This dimension involves demonstrating empathy for others, laughing at ones self, seeking out other’s perspectives and displaying emotional intelligence.
- 7) Socially connected. Those that are most resilient tend to have strong social connections with others. They do this by reaching out, building bridges, and discovering a common ground that contributes to the welfare of others.
- 8) Proactive. Resilient people focus on what they can do to effectively engage with the world rather than focusing on what others have done to them. They confront whatever challenges lie before them and put their attention on specific action plans. They focus forward versus on the past.

Smart leaders find ways to tap into one's natural inclination towards change. They work hard to put those affected by a change, *in charge of change* and therefore in support of it. When leaders understand that self-directed change is something that humans naturally strive for they are able to approach the task of introducing change in a different and positive way.

Follow these principles to effectively lead change.

- 1) Create a sense of urgency. When you simply push people into change it leads to resistance. Effective change leaders work hard at creating a deep awareness of why the organization needs to change and that it needs to be "now." They help people see how change benefits them and the organization and portray the consequences of not changing.
- 2) Introduce solutions. Once people are awake to the need for change the next stage is introducing solutions. Proposing ideas that solve the challenges that have lead to the need for a sense of urgency. Effective change leaders recognize that introducing change involves far more then simply selling and sharing a vision. They create buy in and ownership by introducing solutions to the challenges of both individuals and company.

The most powerful agent of growth and transformation is something more basic than technique: a change of heart.

*John Welwood, PhD
Author Psychotherapist*

It is never to late to become what you might have been.

George Eliot

You must be the change you wish to see in the world.

Gandhi



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