

## **Tips for Innovative Meetings/ Events (T.I.M.E.)**

**Topic: Change, Change Management and Communicating Change**

**February 2001**

**Written and Published by Sue Tinnish, 847.394.9857, [stinnish@ameritech.net](mailto:stinnish@ameritech.net)**

**U. S. Library of Congress ISSN: 1539-1833**

---

Welcome to T.I.M.E. A month of surprises, unexpected emails, revised project deadlines, travel delays – why all those things are CHANGES – causes it to be month-end as we publish this newsletter. How appropriate to be talking about change management and communicating change!

If you are a new subscriber to T.I.M.E., welcome! We hope you enjoy this monthly e-newsletter that we fill with ideas for experiential, innovative meetings, training events and conferences.

An index of our past issues is included in the last section.

---

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1) Change as a Way of Life
- 2) Making Change
- 3) Personal Coping Strategies
- 4) Don't live in the Past Anecdotes
- 5) Tracking Success
- 6) Future T.I.M.E. (Upcoming dates and administrative details)

For your ease, sections are numbered and separated with “\_\_\_’s”; Scroll down or use Ctrl +f to locate a specific section.

---

### 1. CHANGE AS A WAY OF LIFE

The world is so chaotic that the only thing we know for sure is that the way we are currently doing business will change and then change again. Four forces on organizations cause change to be “a way of life”:

- Globalization
- Information Technology
- Industry Consolidation
- Competition

In today's world, all organizations, from the Fortune 500 to nonprofit associations, need to be more nimble. They need to be more adaptable to change. They strive to be more

fluid, inclusive, and responsive. Organizations need to manage complex information flows, grasp new ideas quickly, and spread those ideas throughout the enterprise.

Nimbleness is the ability for an organization to consistently succeed in unpredictable environments by implementing important changes more efficiently and effectively than its competitors.

Leaders of organizations in change need to have strong analytical skills, they need good management skills, they need to grasp the systems within their organization (computer and other). But most importantly, these leaders need to have good people skills.

Thomas W. McKee, a change management consultant, writes, “One of the most significant essentials for success is teambuilding. Leaders that can challenge, motivate and empower their teams through change are successful. Most change disrupts teamwork. The leaders who can keep their work teams focused during changes will have organizations and businesses which thrive.”

Change can look like:

- Organizational changes
- New Product Introduction
- Senior Management Changes
- Adjustments to the Compensation
- Employee Layoffs or Plant Closings
- Acquisitions and Mergers (or even rumors of said event)

Even though these are commonplace occurrences, when they are happening to you in your organization, these events don't feel “commonplace”.

---

## 2. MAKING CHANGE

No, I am not thinking about 4 quarters for a dollar! When an organization is in the middle of change the most important things a leader can bring to a changing organization are passion, conviction, and confidence in others. Executives cannot simply announce a plan, launch a task force, and then simply hope that people find the answers -- instead of offering a dream, stretching their horizons, and encouraging people to do the same.

Communicating

Passion

Conviction

Confidence

occurs best when done

Face to Face.

Communicating passion, conviction and confidence must be a continual process. One meeting is not sufficient.

Organizations are first and foremost social systems. Without people there can be no organization. When facing change, recognize that change takes its toll on people and good social or political skills are necessary to manage change

When planning a meeting or event for an organization involved in change, what questions do you need to consider to properly position the agenda and issues?

**Degree of Resistance:** Determine how resistant people will be

**Scope:** How many people are affected?

**Timeframe:** How long will this transition take?

**The Stakes:** What will happen if we don't change?

Ready to communicate. Here's what needs to be communicated:

- **Acknowledgement.**  
People's discomfort must be acknowledged.  
The need for change must be acknowledged.
  
- **A focused vision.**  
The team must have a unified mission.  
The mission is for the staff  
The team mission must be developed by the staff; they must own the vision  
Without communication and acceptance, the team mission is a false hope
  
- **Faith**  
Doubt and skepticism will erode the team spirit.  
A dynamic team must have strong faith and trust in the mission.
  
- **Initiative**  
Peter Drucker says that "sooner or later all plans degenerate into work."  
Motivation is internal to each person.  
You can't motivate someone – you can only insure that each person is doing the part of the whole where they feel they can best contribute to the overall mission.  
Initiative must be directed otherwise it is misguided energy.

---

### 3. PERSONAL COPING STRATEGIES

Acknowledgment is the first line of defense in the struggle with constant change. This might sound obvious, but we can often delude ourselves into believing that things can remain static.

By making change a way of life, people stay competitive, make themselves more valuable, and reduce their own stress level

Here are ways to be a shining star during chaotic, change-ridden times:

- Be willing to innovate.
- Display resilience. Resilient people are positive that they can succeed in unfamiliar circumstances
- Possess the professionalism to perform. Be determined to execute flawlessly and deliver value
- Find order within what appears to be chaos
- Remain focused on objectives during times of confusion,
- Be open to collaboration. Make connections with new people, new partners, new teams

Display an attitude of life long learning and you will be a survivor.

---

#### 4. DON'T LIVE IN THE PAST ANECDOTES

Don't live in the past. Here are a few examples of leaders who made the wrong bet when predicting the future:

An excerpt from a letter to President Andrew Jackson, dated January 21, 1829 from Martin Van Buren, then Governor of New York, who later became President of the United States:

"The canal system of this country is being threatened by the spread of a new form of transportation known as 'railroads' and the federal government must preserve the canals.... If canal boats are supplanted by 'railroads,' serious unemployment will result. Captains, cooks, drivers, hostlers, repairman, and lock tenders will be left without means of livelihood, not to mention the numerous farmers now employed growing hay for the horses.... As you may well know, Mr. President, 'railroad' carriages are pulled at the enormous speed of 15 miles per hour by 'engines' which, in addition to endangering life and limb of passengers, roar and snort their way through the countryside, setting fire to crops, scaring the livestock and frightening women and children. The Almighty certainly never intended that people should travel at such breakneck speed."

In 1943, Thomas Watson, then chairman of IBM said, "I think there is a world market for maybe five computers."

1977, Ken Olson, former president, chairman and founder of Digital Equipment Corporation asserted, "There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home."

In 1949, Popular Mechanics, forecasting the relentless march of science, announced to a stunned and amazed readership, "Computers in the future may weigh no more than 1.5 tons."

---

## 5. FREEBIES: The Three Questions

Getting to the heart of the matter. Change management can be viewed within the framework of problem solving. It's moving from "here" (Point A) to "there" (Point B). Use these three questions to get to the heart of the issue.

### **Ask HOW?**

How do we change from...

How do we...

How do I get my children to be more...

This helps direct attention to the MEANS.

### **Ask WHAT?**

What are we trying to accomplish?

What are the indicators of success?

What changes are necessary?

This focuses on the GOAL.

### **Ask WHY?**

Keep asking WHY until you get to the ultimate "end" of the desired change

Consider this hypothetical dialogue:

Why do we have to change the way we do things?

Because they cost too much and take too long.

Why do they cost too much?

Because we pay higher wages than any of our competitors.

Why do we pay higher wages than our competitors?

Because our productivity used to be higher, too, but now it's not.

Why does productivity need to be improved?

To increase profits.

Why do profits need to be increased?

To improve earnings per share.

Why do earnings per share need to be improved?

To attract additional capital.

Why is additional capital needed?

We need to fund research aimed at developing the next generation of products.

Why do we need a new generation of products?

Because our competitors are rolling them out faster than we are and gobbling up market share.

Oh, so that's why we need to reduce cycle times.

To ask “why” questions is to get at the ultimate purpose and opens the door to finding new and better ways.

For a list of common reasons organizational change fails, email us. Send an email to [stinnish@ameritech.net](mailto:stinnish@ameritech.net) with the words “Change Bombs” in the subject line.

---

## 6. TRACKING SUCCESS

Managing an organization during upheaval is challenging and draws on the talents of the leaders of the organization. When planning a gathering of the troops during such a time, it may be helpful to use a teambuilding activity, participate in an interactive workshop or use a “simulated, pretend” world as a metaphor for dealing with change.

On Track offers workshops and simulations that help organizations address change. We can help if you are:

- Bringing two different organizations together in a merger or acquisition
- Need people to “rethink” who are an “insider” versus an “outsider”
- Want to explore the processes and meaning of collaboration

If you would like to learn how we can help you meet your business objectives, or to learn more about On Track, our clients, and our programs, please contact Sue Tinnish, 1415 N. Salem Blvd., Arlington Heights, Illinois 60004, 847.394.9857, email [stinnish@ameritech.net](mailto:stinnish@ameritech.net) or visit our website at [www.ontrackusa.com](http://www.ontrackusa.com).

---

## 7. FUTURE T.I.M.E.

We welcome any comments or suggestions about the newsletter or topics you would like to read about. Our March 2001 issue will discuss the new approaches to building meeting agendas.

Please forward this newsletter to your associates and colleagues! Your recommendations are key to our success. Or anyone can subscribe by sending an email to [stinnish@ameritech.net](mailto:stinnish@ameritech.net).

Past issues of T.I.M.E. can be requested by emailing us. Here is an index of topics and “freebies” offered in the past:

May: Teambuilding and (freebie) New York Times reprint and summary on why teambuilding programs miss the mark.

June: Green Meetings and (freebie) list of books that have 20-30 minute exercises for meetings and events.

July: American (Values) and (freebie) Meeting Analysis, a 1-page document that will outline the scope and needs analysis for your next meeting.

August: Minimum/Minimal Meetings and (freebie) Web Winners (web resources to make you and your meetings more productive).

October: Evaluations and (freebie) sample evaluation questions.

November: Politics and (freebie) on-line experiences.

December: Toys and (freebie) brainstorming ideas.

January: Sales, Award Presentations and (freebie) sales tips.

T.I.M.E. is published monthly. Copyright© 2001, all rights reserved. You may copy or distribute T.I.M.E. by including this copyright notice and including full information on contacting the author, Sue Tinnish. Contact her at 847.394.9857 or [stinnish@ameritech.net](mailto:stinnish@ameritech.net).

We support a spam-free Internet. You may have received this issue based upon a recommendation from a colleague or associate. To unsubscribe, send a request (simply type "CANCEL" in the subject line) to [stinnish@ameritech.net](mailto:stinnish@ameritech.net) and your address will be immediately and permanently removed.