

Leading and Learning, Inc.® is a 45-member **organizational management consulting firm** based in Los Angeles with clients across the U.S., Canada, Europe and Asia. We support leaders during change processes with focus on organizational change management, leadership development, and personal, professional effectiveness. Our client roster includes CEOs and other leaders in corporations and organizations spanning **banking, utilities, manufacturing, hospitality/entertainment, hospitals/health systems, technology/ aerospace, service industries, government and nationally-based nonprofits.**

EACH MONTH, LEAD-ZINE®, the on-line electronic leadership newsletter of Leading and Learning, Inc., focuses on a specific leadership/management topic.

Articles are contributed by Dr. Billie Blair, President of Leading and Learning, Inc., and the LLI team of organizational professionals. Other professionals with specific expertise join the LLI staff each month to offer additional perspectives. These combined views provide informative and balanced perspectives on the **Lead-Zine®** topic-of-the-month to our readers – approximately 250,000 CEOs, executives, and other leaders. Leaders and managers are continually planning, or executing, or controlling change. Each **Lead-Zine®** issue looks at another important aspect of change that is of current interest.

This month's focus continues the discussion on: "Adjusting to Turbulence in Today's Marketplace."

♦ For those wishing to contribute to a Lead-Zine® issue contact the Lead-Zine® editor, Eli Isaacs:
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*"When things change,
you have to change things!"*

June 2008 – "Economic Downturns, Organizational Challenges and Effective Management"

Billie G. Blair, PhD

Lead Zine® continues a third-in-a-series of articles to provide timely specifics for leaders who are experiencing challenges. We offer ideas for a leadership focus that can allow business to be managed well and successfully during times that offer challenges ranging from economically to organizationally-driven stimulus.

► Earlier this month I spoke on the topic of organizational change to a group of veterinarians at the annual meeting of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine. I think you'll find the challenges that they listed as instructive because these well-reflect the challenges that organizations of all types are facing at this time. Those challenges mentioned most frequently during our discussions included:

- Finding and keeping talented people
- Making the right business decisions in questionable economic times
- Maintaining quality while expanding
- Motivating long-time staff to participate in newer methods of practice
- Aligning multiple practice partners to new practice directions
- Taking the opportunity to expand veterinary practice options to embrace the right mix of services.

► The management of organizational change requires that attention is paid to all aspects of the organization while focusing on a given change direction. It is appropriate, therefore, that this group of managers mentioned the need for finding good service staff; re-training longer-serving staff and business partners; and the need for maintaining quality while at the same time expressing the critical aspects of making the right business decisions for expansion and practice enhancement. Not surprisingly, all of these elements must proceed together – one element or segment of the organization cannot be singled out to be favored with specialized attention while ignoring the changes necessary in other areas.

► The theory relating to **ALL THE MOVING PARTS** of an organization holds that changes in one of the five major areas require changes in each of the other four – Coordinated changes throughout the organization much be accomplished so that change moves fluidly and smoothly throughout the entire organization.

► In critical times, it is tempting to move hastily to institute stand-alone changes. Before any changes are attempted, however, it is absolutely vital to develop a sound, comprehensive plan to steer the course of the needed changes and to allow their measurement.

** See: Dr. Blair's latest book*

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ADJUSTING TO TURBULENCE IN TODAY'S MARKETPLACE

WE ARE JOINED THIS MONTH BY CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

Steve McKee
President, McKee Wallwork

Julie Zinn, PMP
Project Management Director
ESI International

Barry Moltz
Author, Entrepreneur

ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES AND EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT, Continued

Last month, Steve McKee, president of McKee Wallwork of Cleveland offered some quick points on managing during times of change. These five points were useful to our readership and bear repeating in this issue.

- 1 – Don't lose your head – be smart and thrifty, but don't panic.
- 2 – Don't cut back your marketing – that's a sure way to give up ground to competitors.
- 3 – Don't lose focus by chasing business you wouldn't normally want.
- 4 – Don't discount – you can lower your margins, but don't advertise it.
- 5 – Don't neglect your people – let them know that you have a plan.

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MANAGING BUSINESS CHANGE **Julie Zinn, Project Management Director** **ESI International**

Successfully adapting to change is a non-negotiable skill in today's business world. To simply state that change is a constant force is an understatement. Today, individuals and organizations must deal with change on a global level such as mergers, acquisitions, economic variance, and marketplace reactions, as well as micro-level changes such as staffing, internal processes, and constantly changing stakeholder and customer requirements.

To be truly "change savvy," organizations must develop change agents and employ sound change leadership practices. Change agents are individuals who will proactively and positively help organizations and individuals transition from the "as is" state to the various "to be" states. Toward that end, change agents – as good change leaders – effectively consider the following variables that should be addressed for any kind of organizational change.

- Leadership, sponsorship, vision and strategy
- Communication and engagement
- Business process and technology
- Human transition
- Organization alignment

Change agents can only be successful when an organization is providing strong leadership and vision for specific changes. Without the clear direction, no change will be successful. Given a clear vision and strategy for achieving that vision, however, change agents can work their magic to affect grass roots change. These individuals are the early adopters of change and provide leadership to help transition their sphere of influence toward a specific change.

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MANAGING BUSINESS CHANGE, *Continued from Page Two* Julie Zinn, ESI International

Change agents are key to the critical function of change communications. In short, it's unlikely that a manager can communicate too much with employees during an organizational transition. The more frequently that consistent and clear messages are heard by everyone in the organization, the more likely a successful change will occur. With change agents carrying the message, these individuals can get people engaged and enthusiastic about change.

Another consideration of successful change is ensuring that organizational infrastructure, including business processes, procedures, and supporting technology is sufficiently addressed and in alignment with the "to be" state. Too often, the "old way" of doing business creates a very real barrier for individuals to adopt a new change. By modifying process and technology variables upfront, a change is more likely to take root quickly.

The human element of organizational change is frequently forgotten. As a general rule, most people don't like change – at least, they don't like change when they don't know what's going on, how they will be individually impacted and their daily lives affected. This is why people resist change. When change agents are adequately prepared to deal with the turbulent cycles of the individual change process, as well as making sure that employees know what they need to know, people are surprisingly adaptive.

Organizational alignment is critical to ensuring that all the pieces of the "to be" state are in place. The ripple effect of change can be significant and often surprising to organizations. It is critical to go through a thinking and aligning process where the implications of various changes are considered – both long-term and short-term. A thoughtful approach to organizational alignment will help any organization from experiencing unwanted surprises.

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HOW DO YOU BOUNCE DURING CHANGING ECONOMIC TIMES? Barry J. Moltz, Author, Entrepreneur

- 1 – Sometimes Failure Just Stinks!** We need to let go of the long-held belief that we can always learn from failure or that we can always build and duplicate our success. Holding on to this idea keeps us stuck and prevents an action that can move us to a new place where success again is possible.
- 2 – Face Your Fear.** Forget about having "No Fear." Failure is an option and it is okay to fear failure. But to handle the potential outcome, you must act despite your fear.
- 3 – Give Up Shame.** Grieve failures and wallow in it for 24 hours if you need to, but then let go of the shame. Realize that life is not a straight line. We all have been in that place. *Good times don't last forever, but then neither do bad times.*
- 4 – Failure Gives Choices.** It provides a conclusion so that we can move on to something else that gives us another opportunity for a successful outcome. Life is a series of ups and downs. It is change. Regardless of the outcome, success or failure, we can always position ourselves for another success by *bouncing*, or, taking a new action.
- 5 – Downsize Your Dreams.** Decide what your definition of success, including but not limited to money. Define your own brand of success. What are your money-plus goals? Devise your own measurement system so that you can celebrate when you get there.
- 6 – Set Patient Interim Goals.** Just get a toe hold! Make some small progress. *Small successes will give you the confidence to achieve your long term goals.*
- 7 – Strive for Minimal Achievement.** Focus on one thing at a time. It will provide you incredible power in your current work. This is becoming a difficult ability to achieve because we are a multitasking culture. Multitasking actually reduces your productivity by 50%.
- 8 – Value Action.** Stop analyzing every action to the point where you're waiting for the perfect moment when you have an ideal amount of information. Act decisively to sell customers on your product or service. Experience builds confidence.