

# Myth on change management

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Bill, lost his job recently. It seems his company was downsized, his well developed skills were no longer required. It's tempting to claim his company was at fault. But the fault was his and his alone. Let me explain why.

Things are changing incredibly fast. Yesterday's idea, is an emerging technology today, mainstream news tomorrow and history by next week. And... everyone contributes to the speed of change.

There's a myth about management, since we're responsible for so much change, we must be good at coping with it. I've observed the exact opposite. Managers have great difficulty accepting change. They tend to get complacent in their 'secure' status quo. They believe the skills they've acquired, will serve them well into the future, in spite of all

Take a close look at business magazines. Each issue offers something new, something different. Each advertisement promises to increase productivity, to increase efficiency, to inflict change upon our unsuspecting organization. Used properly, magazines are a guidepost to the future. Ignore them and they'll get you downsized.

Bill acquired his management skills in the trenches. He worked his way up through the ranks. He acquired a set of skills, and over the years, deepened them. He began to believe his tool kit of management techniques was complete. They'd served him well in the past, and would suffice in the future.

Bill's error was not in his judgment of whether or not a particular skill was long lasting. Bill's error had little if anything to do with 'management skills.'

His error lay in his world view. He believed his world would stay the same. Somehow he's protected from change. Somehow he alone is immune.

Shielded in immunity, he gives no thought to a 'different' tomorrow. He leans on his illusion of status quo, even while destroying the status quo of others. He's not alone in this. He's joined by politicians, unions, successful companies, staff, by anyone and everyone who's comfortable with past achievements.

How do you prepare for the future? Step one is trivial... Acknowledge uncertainty. That alone, will keep you from being complacent. That alone, will have you thinking about alternatives. That alone, will remind you that you're not alone. Everybody is faced with the same uncertainty. Welcome to the future!

Next - you're not your business card. No matter what your title, no matter what your function, you're more than a 'box' on an org chart. You're a collection of skills with the ability to learn new ones.

These steps do little to change the future. Accepting uncertainty and solid self assessment is a good strategy, but without a plan of action, they'll add up to nothing.

Assume you're fired tomorrow, what would you do? Sounds drastic, but it happens every day to thousands of people from 'every walk of life.' So why not to you? What better time to contemplate it, than today, when you still have a job, and time to plan?

Bill lost his job because he couldn't see beyond his status quo. Don't make that same mistake, contemplate this issue of Words of Mouth devoted to Change. Ask the question... " What's my place in the uncertainty I'm helping create?" Then leap into your future.

What is the only thing constant in our lives? CHANGE impacts everything we do and is never-ending. Whether technological, psychological, physical or emotional in nature, we must learn how to deal with change effectively if

In programs I have conducted for clients, their most frequent requests are in two areas:

1. What do I do with negative people?
2. How can I get people motivated?

It could be argued these two areas have always been important. I have noticed the need for assistance with these areas is in direct proportion to the changes the organization is experiencing.

We all go along our " merry-little-way" until one day and ... boom ... change appears. The change is sometimes our own doing but more often beyond our immediate control. When this occurs, the response is sometimes demonstrated in negativity or in an unwillingness to move. This constant newness is outside many people's comfort zones and they are confused as to how they should respond. My clients know change is inevitable and yet have staff who are reluctant to embrace the constantly changing environment. It may be management themselves who are reluctant to

adopt the changes necessary for organizational success.

Management and staff must deal with technological, psychological and personal changes, all of which impact on performance. People handle change in different ways. It is estimated as high as 78% of people are followers ... they do not want to be first at anything. They would rather wait until something happens and then copy what they see. Approximately 5% are leaders. The remaining 17% have no idea where everybody else went! I work with the 5 percenters who want to learn approaches which will produce the best results through encouraging the 78% to follow and drag along the 17% who aren't quite sure what is happening.

I will never suggest all change will be enjoyable. I believe we have to learn to adapt to it. The good news about change is it happens so quickly that if you don't like the change, just wait and it will change again soon. The bad news is if you do like the change you had better enjoy it now because it will not be here very long. What can we do?

I have found one of the biggest roadblocks to personal adaptation to change is the belief we can just relax in what I call the coast mode. Do you know anyone in the coast mode? Just coasting, coasting? The problem is there is only one way you can coast and that is downhill. The last person to realize you are coasting is usually yourself. Each of us knows at least one person in our personal lives who is going downhill and has not realized it yet. Your staff sees you every day and will very quickly recognize which way you are going. In a terrific book I recently read entitled *Flight Of The Buffalo* by James A.

Belasco and Ralph C. Stayer, the realization of managers that " I Am The Problem" is the first step in overcoming the " What do I do with negative people or How do I motivate people?" problems.

Demonstrating calculated risk-taking and encouraging staff to do likewise creates a different mind-set towards change. People who are not encouraged to take risks will not. All of us have failed at least once in our lives. What do we remember longest... good experiences or bad? The bad ones discourage us about additional attempts. Overcoming our negative programming about failure is a key step towards meeting the challenge of change. Working with, or worse still, living with someone who does not want to change can be a very frustrating experience.