

The Accountability Revolution Continues

Mark Samuel on getting fit for change

Change is all around us and it can be so disruptive. But we must learn to cope with the disruption effectively for changes to succeed. It's hard sometimes, but we need to avoid victim behaviors, like finger pointing, and be prepared to assume our role in the change effort, especially when changes come from outside our sphere of influence. Sometimes being ready for change means anticipating or initiating other changes so that we stay ahead of the game. Take these steps to be prepared:

Step 1: Keep Moving: Responding to change is like any athletic endeavor: you must keep limber and loose, so that your body can respond without pulling a muscle. So practice personal changes often to stay fit. For instance, identify one thing that you would like to change each week — it doesn't have to be complex. Make the change an uplifting experience; one you can feel proud of after it's made.

Step 2: Stay Aware of Change Around You: Keep your ears and eyes open for changes involving the people who impact you. Start by asking your customers and internal suppliers about changes they experience, the frustrations they encounter and the goals they achieve. This will serve as a "heads-up, change is in the air" for you so you're not surprised.

Step 3: Prepare for Change: Based on the anticipated changes around you, take time now to prepare for the ones that could impact you directly. For instance, if you see teams forming in your workplace, attend a team building class, or ask your manager and peers to provide you with feedback on your team skills. Ask yourself: "What training or skill development do I need to respond to current trends in my industry?"

Step 4: Give Up Control, Not Command: Giving up control without losing command can be a freeing experience. Few of us ever master this particular step, but we can still reap the rewards (with regular practice) like less stress, less crisis, greater joy and greater peace. Practice by allowing others in your life to make some of the decisions that you normally make. Accept their decisions even if they weren't what you would have chosen.

Practice these steps and you'll be ready for change when life deals a wild card. Being ready is ultimately an internal process that you can develop and strengthen through flexibility, feeling your emotional responses without reacting and by observing the wonderful things that happen in your life that you didn't anticipate or prepare for beforehand.

CASE STUDY: Dealing With Change Rebels

Problem: A medical center involved in a four-year-long series of changes to move it toward more patient-centered care, cross-functional problem solving teams and greater accountability ran up against a department of rebels. The pharmacists simply refused to participate in the changes and were unified as a group of negativists and intimidated everyone else.

Failed Fix-It Attempts: Training sessions and various communications efforts failed to convince the pharmacists to participate.

Solution: An intervention workshop was held for everyone in the department. Although most pharmacists didn't participate, their support staff did. In fact, this group, which previously had no voice, created strategies and agreements for making the needed changes. They left the workshop empowered as a team.

Outcome: Within a few weeks, other departments called the pharmacy to congratulate them for major improvements. Before the pharmacists had time to start complaining about the latest changes, a level of success had already received public notice, which those negativists eventually accepted. Some even became cooperative.

SAVE THE TREES, SAVE THE PLANET, USE E-MAIL INSTEAD!

Every year more than 400 million trees are cut down for the U.S. postal bulk mail industry. You can reduce this consumption and decrease the billions of tons of waste that clog our landfills by using e-mail. Be accountable for our environment!

SHARE WITH A FRIEND

If you know a colleague or friend who may want to receive this information, feel free to forward the entire newsletter. To subscribe or unsubscribe, or to change your email address, go to our Web site at <http://www.impaqcorp.com>

CONTACT US

IMPAQ Corporation © 2001
800-332-2251
info@impaqcorp.com

July 2001