

Change Management

Change—the reason most of us are in business. Whether you are a consultant who assists organizations in implementing corporation-wide changes, a trainer who helps employees change how they are performing, a coach who guides individuals through personal growth changes, or one of a host of other change agents, the topic du jour is change.

Although the topics for this book have been listed in alphabetical order, I couldn't have planned for a better topic as the first chapter. The ability to change is the single most important element of successful organizations today. Planning for change, implementing change, having a positive attitude toward change, and understanding the reasons for change are actions that all of you are involved in every day.

Change management isn't easy. It is an all-encompassing task that requires you to understand all the forces affecting the decision for change. This includes external forces, such as customer expectations and competitor strategy; internal forces, such as employee involvement and leadership skill; and environmental and global impacts as well. Although the topic is huge, you can plan for and address all the forces that you know will position your clients and yourself for a better future.

A quick glance at the objectives of the first four activities of this book shows you how well they will meet your needs for addressing change.

As I mentioned in the second paragraph, I couldn't have planned for a better topic as the first chapter. Further, I couldn't have planned for a better activity to lead off this chapter and the book as a whole. Phil Grosnick shares an activity created by Peter Block that I have observed on several occasions. The activity forces participants to examine the personal choices they make and the results that accrue due to their choices. I've been a part of the discussion that follows. This activity may very well be one of the best ever designed. We are all fortunate that Phil chose to share it with us. What a way to begin this book!

Peggy Hutcheson shows us a practical way to increase stakeholders' awareness of what they have to gain from a change and how to surface and address resistance. Muralidhar Rao (India) takes us through a lively exercise that allows the participants to experience the impact of change and learn how to cope with it. Joanne Sujansky leads us to respond constructively to people's hot buttons. Doesn't this list of possibilities make you want to jump up and create some chaos so that you can address the change with one of these activities?!?

Managing change and, moreover, assisting others in managing change are daily challenges that bring with them powerful responsibility. They are neither easy nor often appreciated, and they are usually expensive. Unfortunately, the alternative—failing to recognize the need to change—is far more costly and is rarely an acceptable choice.

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Choosing Structure to Fit Intentions

Submitted by Phil Grosnick

Objectives

- To demonstrate the influence of the physical space we occupy on how we operate within it.
- To place choice and accountability in the hands of those participating in a meeting.
- To provide an opportunity to deal with the tension between choices people make that is always part of any change effort.

Audience

Any size audience can participate, although very small groups (fewer than 6) may provide less creativity and fodder for discussion.

Time Required

45 minutes, including discussion, and it can be open-ended:

- 5 minutes to set the context and give the instructions.
- 5 minutes (or 10 if you prefer) to rearrange the room.
- 5 minutes for reflection.
- The remainder for discussion.

Materials and Equipment

- Flip charts may be helpful to present the questions for reflection and discussion, but are not required.

Area Setup

Until this activity is introduced, the room should remain set up in its default (initial) arrangement.

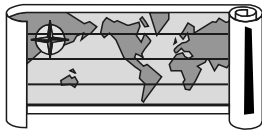
Process

1. Present the context for the activity. Say,
What we do in this room is a metaphor for what we do in the “larger room” of our workplace. If there is no change in this room today, there will be no change in that room tomorrow. The design of a room is the visible expression of the kind of learning and community we plan to create. We are mostly unconscious of the influence of physical space on how we operate. The space we occupy has usually been designed by someone else. It is an example of what the default culture has passed on to us. In every change effort, we are asked to examine the legacy of the default culture to decide whether it suits our current intentions.
2. Provide instructions to the participants by saying, “Take the next 5 minutes to rearrange this room and your place in it to better fit your intentions.” Allow about 5–10 minutes for this step.
3. Once the participants have completed the task, say, “Now take some time to reflect on how the room has changed and what meaning this has for you. Even if you are now in the exact same place as you were in the beginning, your choice to stay put has meaning. Take 5–10 minutes to reflect on these questions” (posted on a flip chart):
 - What did you do with the freedom handed to you?
 - How did you respond to the ambiguity of the assignment (especially in the moment of confusion or void as the exercise first began)?
 - What changed in the room?
 - Is the room any less structured now than it was before?
 - What was the impact/effect on
 - Energy?
 - Ownership?
 - Emotions?
 - Involvement?
 - Role of leadership?
 - Sense of community?
 - What was your intention?
 - How did the way you managed the exercise reflect the way you manage your life right now?
4. After 5–10 minutes of reflection, collect thoughts and insights with open-ended questions to the participants.
5. Provide concluding remarks that transition to your next topic.

Editor's Note



I have seen Peter Block conduct this activity with almost one thousand people in a room. It generates excellent discussion.



Insider's Tips

- This is *not* a good first exercise. Let the group members get to know each other first. The early afternoon of day one or the morning of day two works well.
- Resist the urge as the facilitator to reduce confusion or provide more instruction. Let the group do its own thing.
- Even if the furniture is fixed and cannot be rearranged, people can rearrange themselves to better fit their intentions.

Source

This exercise was created by Peter Block and is an integral part of Designed Learning's workshop Building Accountability and Commitment. This exercise is also published in the participant manual for the Building Accountability and Commitment workshop.

Phil Grosnick is president of Designed Learning, Inc. His mastery of consulting skills has been central to the growth of Designed Learning. He has led Designed Learning in refining and adapting workshops to keep pace with the changing marketplace. Through his guidance and competence, Flawless Consulting, the well-known concept based on the book *Flawless Consulting*, by Peter Block (Pfeiffer, 1999), has reached all categories of organizations and all parts of the world. Phil's expertise is in successfully navigating the day-to-day problems facing staff groups making the transition to consulting units. In addition to leading Designed Learning's management team, Phil provides consulting and training for Designed Learning client companies to support their commitment to developing ownership and responsibility at every level. His work with clients affirms the belief that the person is central to the success of every organization. He is personally committed to living out the values he teaches, including authentic relationships, the confrontation of difficult issues, and the belief that courage and compassion are essential to optimum organizational performance.

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Benefits and Risks

Submitted by Peggy G. Hutcheson, Ph.D.

Objectives

- To increase awareness of what stakeholders have to gain from a change or a new program.
- To surface resistance so that it can be addressed (if appropriate).
- To provide participants with an opportunity to establish ways to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks of change efforts.

Audience

This works with groups up to about 30 and can be adapted for any size group. Participants work in teams of 5–6.

Time Required

45–60 minutes, depending on discussion time.

Materials and Equipment

- Flip chart and markers for each team of five to six people.
- Handout (or workbook page if part of a workshop) to capture key points.
- Instructions—either on the handout or on a slide.

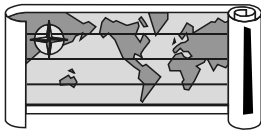
Area Setup

Table groups with flip chart, stand, and markers for each.

Process

1. Prior to the session, identify the stakeholders. For example, if you use this activity for a mentoring program or a coaching training, the stakeholders are the person being mentored (or coached), the mentor (or coach), the manager of the person being mentored (or coached), and the organization.
2. If the group has fewer than twenty participants, assign one stakeholder group to each team to identify the benefits and the risks of the new initiative for that stakeholder group. For larger groups, you can assign benefits to one team and risks to another for each stakeholder group.

3. Tell the teams that they are to brainstorm as many potential benefits and risks as possible in the next 15 minutes. Tell them to write these on the flip charts as they identify them and to be prepared to report to the full group.
4. After the brainstorming period, have each team report out to the larger group.
5. Lead a discussion on how to maximize the benefits and minimize or mitigate the risks.



Insider's Tip

- Be careful to keep the discussion realistic. Avoid leading the group toward the conclusion that the benefits will eliminate the need to pay attention to potential risks. This isn't true, and participants should not leave the activity with this assumption.

Peggy G. Hutcheson, Ph.D., is president of the Odyssey Group, Inc. She works to help organizations manage and develop talent, with a focus on mentoring, coaching, and career and leadership development in business, government, and nonprofit organizations.

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Change—But Don't Drop the Customer

*Submitted by Muralidhar Rao, B.Tech, PGDM,
with Max Rodrigues, M.Sc., LL.B, Dip Ind'l Mgt.*

Objectives

- To experience the benefits of the team's adhering to a process.
- To experience the impact of change in the environment and to learn how to cope with it.

Audience

12–25 participants, divided into 2–4 teams with 6–10 team members on each team. Each team must have an equal number of team members.

Time Required

60–90 minutes, depending on the number of teams.

Materials and Equipment

- Six tennis balls or plastic balls of the same size for each team.
- One small plastic bucket to collect the balls for each team.
- One scoring sheet for each team.
- Flip charts or whiteboard with scoring sheet drawn.
- Markers.
- Six different-size balls or marbles for each team (optional).

Area Setup

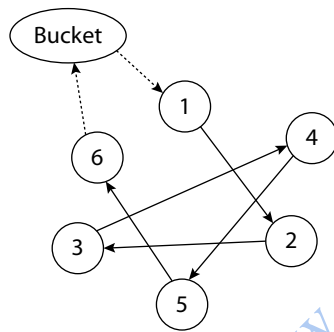
Use the center of the training room if the seating arrangement is U-shaped. This activity can also be conducted outdoors if weather permits.

Process

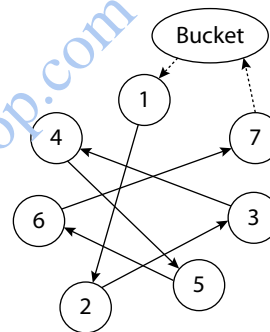
1. Divide the group into teams and have them sit in a circle with the bucket off to one side. There should be an arm's-length distance between team members.
2. Brief the teams on the objective of the game and the rules. Explain that each team will play six periods and that each period lasts for 2 minutes. The goal is to have as many completed rounds as possible during each period. A completed round is defined as one ball passing through the hands of every team member and being placed in the plastic bucket by the last team member. The

rule of passing is that a member cannot pass the ball to either of his or her immediate neighbors. Every member has to receive the ball once and pass it within a round (except the last member, who places it in the bucket). Repetitions are not allowed. If the ball is dropped by any member, it is counted as a drop, and the ball is out of play.

3. Explain the scoreboard on the flip chart or whiteboard.
4. Invite the teams to practice the game with only one ball being used at a time.
5. Give the teams 3 minutes to set the target for the number of completed rounds of the ball in 2 minutes and also to estimate the maximum number of drops during the 2 minutes. Tell them they must work out the sequence of passing the ball to complete a round. (See the diagram for the correct sequence.)



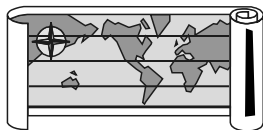
Even number of team members



Odd number of team members

6. On the flip chart, note the targets for the first period as given by the teams. Start the first period by handing the ball to the first person of each of the teams.
7. Call time at the end of 2 minutes. Record the scores of completed rounds and drops for the first period.
8. For the second period, add two more balls so that three balls are simultaneously in play. Repeat Steps 5 through 7.
9. For the third and fourth periods, add three more balls so that six balls are in play simultaneously. Repeat Steps 5 through 7. (Optional: play a fifth and sixth period with six additional dissimilar balls.)
10. Have the teams return to the large group and conduct the debriefing, asking these questions:
 - How was the target set?
 - Did you underestimate your potential? Why?
 - Did you overestimate your potential? Why?

- Did everyone understand the process? Was their understanding checked?
- Was the methodology for exceeding or achieving the target for the completed rounds discussed? (Or did the team jump into action without doing this?)
- Did the methodology include how to minimize or avoid drops?
- Did the team invest in time after a cycle to analyze performance and adherence to the methodology? Did the analysis lead to action and improvement in subsequent cycles?
- What was the team's reaction when I introduced additional balls (change in rules of the game)?
- Did the team recognize the need to modify the methodology? Was it effective?
- How are the balls analogous to customers in real life?
- What role does change play in this activity?
- What lessons do you take away from this activity?



Insider's Tips

- You may use metaphors and tell teams that each round is the equivalent of a year in the industry. Tell them that each ball is a customer. A team's dropping a ball is tantamount to the inability to deal with the customer. It is not only the number of customers handled that matters but also the retention of customers.
- Constantly challenge the teams to set higher targets than the performance recorded in the previous cycle.

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Scoring Sheet

Period	Number of Balls in Play Simultaneously	Targeted Number of Completed Rounds in 2 Minutes	Estimated Drops in 2 Minutes	Actual Number of Completed Rounds in 2 Minutes	Actual Number of Drops in 2 Minutes
1	1				
2	3				
3	6				
4	6				
5	6 + 6 balls (different size and material)				
6	6 + 6 balls (different size and material)				



Hot Buttons

Submitted by Joanne G. Sujansky, Ph.D., CSP

Objective

- To practice responding constructively to people’s “hot buttons” as a way of influencing their participation in a common goal or activity.

Audience

Unlimited number of small groups of 4–6.

Time Required

30–45 minutes.

Materials and Equipment

- A flip chart and markers for the facilitator.
- Paper and pencil or pen for each small group.
- A set of Hot Buttons cards (copy and cut from the master handout).

Area Setup

Small group breakout areas within a larger space, or a table for each small group.

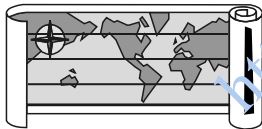
Process

1. Discuss the concept of “hot buttons” with participants as follows: effective influencers analyze their listeners’ point of view. Influencers attempt to determine what makes their listeners “tick.” You are influencing your listeners by
 - Addressing their problems, opportunities, hopes, and fears.
 - Considering the benefits and disadvantages, *from their perspective*, of your proposal.
2. Ask group members to form small groups of four to six. Distribute one Hot Button card to each group.
3. Direct each group to take 10 minutes to list the “hot buttons” of the audience described on the assigned card. Remind the groups to identify (a) the problems and opportunities for their audience; (b) the hopes and fears of their audience; and (c) the benefits or disadvantages, from the audience’s perspective, of what the group is proposing.

4. List these three categories on a flip chart.
5. Explain to the groups that they will be sharing the results of their list with the entire group. Ask them to appoint a scribe for recording answers.
6. At the end of 10 minutes, ask one member of each small group to read the audience description aloud to the entire group and then report the potential hot buttons that his or her group identified.
7. At the completion of the discussion, debrief the activity by asking why the skill of influence is important in getting others to work with you.
8. Remind them that, as leaders, they should be considering hot buttons when influencing others. Unless employees are given a sense of the vision—the ultimate goal of an initiative or need for change—and where they fit in, they are going to respond with fear, denial, resistance, stubbornness, anger, resentment, suspicion, ambivalence, and withdrawal. It's critically important that leaders share the vision with employees. Having a vision—and communicating it—can make the process easier.

Explain that people don't see the value in changing if they feel the change has no value for them. When faced with a change, people can't help but ask the question, "What's in it for me?" If someone tells employees why a change has value to them, that might help them accept and, in fact, make the required change or participate constructively, whatever the initiative.

9. Ask what hot buttons participants anticipate facing. Ask how they will use what they learned in this activity to address these hot buttons.



Insider's Tip

- My experience has shown that participants are better able to give attention to what the hot buttons might be when they are not actively focused on their current workplace issues. However, should you wish to add scenarios that are workplace focused, consider the following:
 - Persuading managers to cut their budget to sustain the business.
 - Persuading employees to take on new responsibilities for which they are not yet trained.
 - Persuading employees to work longer hours to meet identified customer demand.

Source

This activity was published in my book *Activities to Unlock Leadership Potential* (KEYGroup, 2005).

Joanne G. Sujansky, Ph.D., CSP (Certified Speaking Professional), has over twenty-five years of experience helping leaders increase organizational growth and profitability. A member of the National Speakers Association, she holds the organization's highest earned designation, Certified Speaking Professional. She is also past national president of ASTD and recipient of ASTD's honorable Gordon M. Bliss Memorial Award.

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Hot Button Cards

Persuading a budget committee to invest in new equipment or computer technology	Persuading members of a professional organization to get more involved in growing and expanding the organization
Persuading a group of potential investors to provide capital for your business venture	Persuading a group of concerned citizens to approve an environmental waste incinerator in their community
Persuading a group of elderly community residents that an increase in school taxes is essential	Persuading a group of business colleagues to volunteer their time for a community project
Persuading local corporations and business owners to give money to a charity	Persuading the school board to require high school students to volunteer 100 hours of public service before graduation
Persuading the human resource department to include a gym membership as a company benefit	Persuading city council members to prevent the destruction of a 100-year-old landmark

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