

## Reading Assignment - Managing Transitions, Part Two - The Solution, Chapter Three...

### How to Get People to Let Go

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In the first two chapters the author discussed “The Problem[s]” associated with change transitions. In this chapter attention turns to “The Solutions.” The first priorities are getting people to let go of the way things have been. The general lack of emphasis on worth – of:

informing employees about things that are important,  
clarifying lines of authority at and beyond the immediate job boundaries,  
holding people accountable at all levels,  
cultivating valuable relationships with colleagues across organizational boundaries, and  
understanding about how the organization runs.

All organizations must find an appropriate balance between complementary **efforts** that deliver “capability” to outside customers *using a structure having legitimate authority* and cultivate “capacity” to find and solve internal problems in such a way that it garners workforce commitment *using a less formal parallel structure having only discretionary influence*.

- 1. Accept the Reality and Importance of Subjective Losses.** Unabated resistance to change depletes the organizational energy available to tackle and solve problems that must be overcome during the change initiative.
- 2. Don’t Be Surprised at Overreaction.** Learning and applying the new way of effectively dealing with “two” structures – normal legitimate authority and a new parallel structure of team influence will likely cause some overreaction in both structures. Seek to overcome difficulties.
- 3. Expect and Accept the Signs of Grieving.** Letting go of any strong habit resembles the grief that comes with a death: Anger, Bargaining, Anxiety, Sadness, Disorientation, and Depression. Some people will need help to get through it.
- 4. Compensate for the Losses.** Some may think that their responsibilities have been diminished by the new way of doing business. Actually new roles are created for everyone.
- 5. Give People Information, and Do It Again and Again.** People in transition are starved for information. Give the workforce information needed and wanted repeatedly – not just about what is new – but about those things that are routine as well. Use facilitated meetings to do it.
- 6. Define What’s Over [Ending] and What Isn’t.** Be as clear as possible about that needs to STOP, what will CONTINUE, and what will START. Habits are hard to break. Be supportive of each other during transition and be prepared to increase levels of commitment as the transition period comes to an end.

*Summary based on the book, Managing Transitions by William Bridges, Da Capo Press, 1991, 2003*