

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

Leading People Through the Neutral Zone

In the previous Chapter the author presented the case for helping people to let go of the conditions that have become part of the organization condition. He continues in this Chapter to clarify what can and must be done to fill the period between “letting go of the past” and “preparing for the new conditions of the future.”

- 1. A Very Difficult Time . . . But Also a Creative Time.** Typically, people become more anxious and tend to lack motivation. The feelings of being overloaded are often overwhelming.
- 2. Normalizing the Neutral Zone.** Transitions provide the time to create and stabilize new processes that will help the organization when transition subsides.
- 3. Redefining the Neutral Zone.** Put a new name and incorporate practical "to do items" on a new definition of the neutral zone period.
- 4. Creating Temporary Systems for the Neutral Zone.** Provide team decision-making opportunities to tackle difficult problems and install solutions into the fabric of the culture.
- 5. Using a Transition Monitoring Team.** Ask groups to monitor transition status from their perspective to help ease arrival at the end-of-transition finish line.
- 6. Using the Neutral Zone Creatively.** Fight the transition zone dip in capacity development with concrete activity to overcome the "immune to change system" with progress. Think about and be prepared to discuss (as we approach and conduct the Tab 4 session) what has been done, particularly in the context of T3 activity, to launch and leverage antibodies to the "change-resistant immune system" that has had a strong and retarding grip on the organization culture.
 - a. Table 1 - Provide opportunity [for T3 members] to step back and take stock.
 - b. Table 2 - Provide opportunities to others [subordinates] to step back and take stock.
 - c. Table 3 - Provide training in techniques of discovery and innovation.
 - d. Table 4 - Encourage experimentation [to try new and different things].
 - e. Table 5 - Embrace losses, setbacks, or disadvantages [as new opportunities].
 - f. Table 6 - Look for opportunities to address old problems [in a new way].

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