

Reading Assignment - Managing Transitions, Part One - The Problem, Chapter Two...

A Test Case

Chapter 2 begins with a "test case" and a checklist that challenges the reader to select the things that need to be done in five potential categories. In this summary we will discuss only those things that tend to be in the "Very important. Do this at once." category. The seven "very important" things that rise to the surface are:

1. Figure out what and who will have to change (Red).

Determine specifically what will have to stop and who will have to make the changes. This is best created as a specific list of observable behaviors and describable attitudes.

2. Determine who will "lose" something under the new way of doing business (Red).

Although everyone is apt to have to shift the way they work in some way, the first waves of change are apt to involve leaders, managers, and supervisors. Often people at the "top" and "bottom" of the organization chart want conditions to improve the most. The middle ranks have often made a high investment to get work done that requires a shift and are reluctant to change.

3. Sell the problem first and the solution second (Blue).

People need and want to know "why" change is necessary before they will effectively participate. The "why" is best described as the existing problem that needs to be solved. There may be and usually are a wide range of potential solutions that emerge from those who understand "why."

4. Put those who must change first into contact with those who are disgruntled (Green).

Members of the LMS ranks can and ought to interact with those who are "driving" the change (top and bottom of the organization chart). One-on-one dialog with those on par with subordinates with a sincere promise of confidentiality will be important.

5. Talk with people who are going through changes to determine specific actions (Green).

As change unfolds, talk with people (superiors, peers, and subordinates) about what they are going through and help them succeed by creating specific actions to support their needs.

6. Talk about what transition does to emotions and work routines (Red, Green, and Blue).

As changes are made, be open about the impact of how the transition impacts people and work. Tell your stories and listen to others having difficulty. Some people will need validation.

7. Start holding team meetings on a regular basis (Green).

Meetings provide a necessary opportunity for people to interact and learn about what is going on in the change effort. Encourage dialog. Use facilitators who will speak for those with issues when they may be too uncomfortable speaking for themselves.

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