



Managing Transitions

“It isn’t the change that people
resist;
it is the transition.”

- William & Susan Bridges



Change vs. Transition

Change is situational:

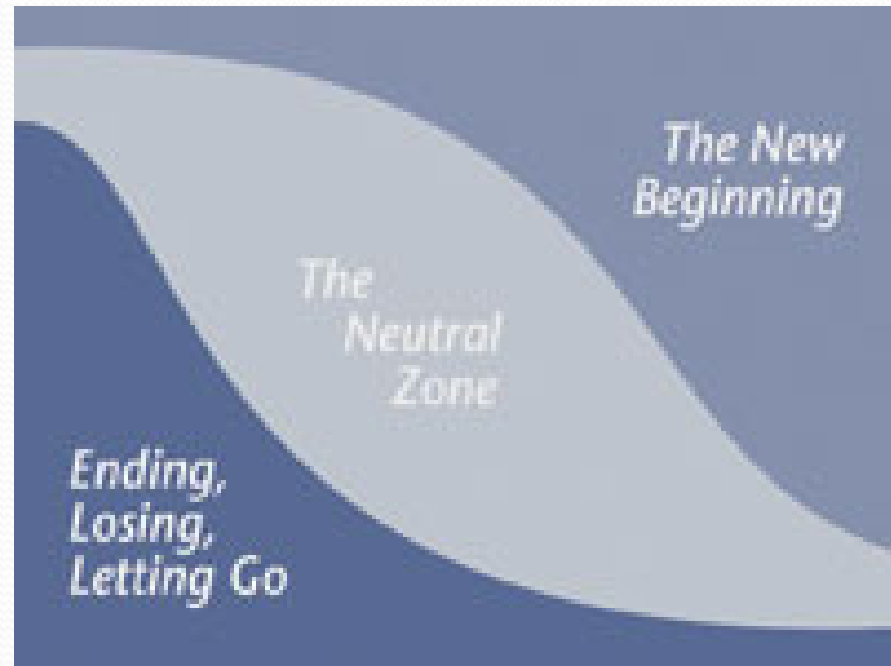
The move to a new site, assignment to a new team, new organizational structure, merger of two affiliates, changing strategies to incorporate NRI

Transition is psychological:

Is the three-phase process people go through as they internalize and come to terms with the details of the new situation.

Three Phases of Transition

- An Ending
- The Neutral Zone
- A New Beginning



An Ending

- The first phase of transition is an ending. Letting go of the old ways and the old identity.
- Results in a loss.
- People go through the stages of loss and grieving; that is, the natural sequence of emotions that occur when losing something that matters to them.

The Neutral Zone

- The in-between time when the old is gone but the new isn't fully operational.
- A chaotic time, lacking clear systems and signals.
- Bridges uses a “wilderness” metaphor when describing the Neutral Zone.

The Neutral Zone

It's not so much that we're afraid of change or so
in love with the old ways, but it's that place in
between
that we fear...

it's like being between trapezes. It's Linus when his
blanket is in the dryer. There's nothing for us to
hold on to."

- *Marilyn Ferguson*

The Neutral Zone

Dangerous because:

- Ambiguity causes anxiety to rise.
- Communication can break down.
- Productivity sags.

Creative opportunity because:

Break in normal routines provides opportunity to think of ways to do things differently or better.

A New Beginning

- When people develop the new identity, experience the new energy, and discover the new sense of purpose that makes the change begin to work.
- An emotional commitment to do things the new way.
- Can only occur after proceeding through the Neutral Zone

The Four Ps

To make a new beginning, people need the four Ps:

- The Purpose
- A Picture
- The Plan
- A Part to Play

Managing the Transition

Understanding the process can help.

A transition begins with letting go of something: an ending. Endings result in loss; loss triggers grieving.

Passing through the Neutral Zone is necessary for a new beginning. The Neutral Zone can be a creative opportunity.

Leading Change

J. P. Kotter -- 8 Steps to Address 8 Common Failures

Step #1: Establish a Sense of Urgency

Step #2: Create a Guiding Coalition

Step#3: Develop a Vision and Strategy

Step #4: Communicate the Change Vision

Step #5: Empower Employees for Broad-Based Action

Step #6: Generate Short-Term Wins

Step #7: Consolidate Gains to Produce More Change

Step #8: Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture

What is the purpose?

“If you don ’t know where you are going any road will take you there. ” Cheshire Cat in Alice in Wonderland

- How do we aspire to be different than we are now?
- What do we want to accomplish on this change journey?
- What aspirations do we hold?
 - ✓ Welcome lengthy debates and conflicts
 - ✓ Invite people to shape specifics.



Who needs to be involved?

- Defines the natural boundaries of the system.
- Leadership only or various groups of stakeholders?
- Numbers are important.
- Rationales:
 - ? Buy-in and less resistance
 - ? More perspective and wisdom
- Possible invitees:
 - ✓ Those who will be affected
 - ✓ Those who can influence
 - ✓ Those with resources to contribute



What conversations are needed?

Conversations among stake-holders move the organization toward the future it yearns to have.

Change is more than an event: it is a journey that unfolds as people come together.

The journey continues after the event.

Converge – diverge. Events allow a critical mass of people to focus in “real time,” becoming aware of their connections, clarifying aspirations and agreeing on pathways.



“Change is disturbing when it is done to us, exhilarating when it is done by us.”

--Rosabeth Moss Kanter