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Editorial: by Angelina Eynon

If you are anything like me, you are probably tired of hearing about 'the global financial crisis' and all the doom-saying that goes along with it. The media sure do love a good 'bad news' story and until recent events in Victoria gave us all of reality check on 'bad news', we were bombarded with 'GFC' news from all angles.

Our Xplore team in Melbourne is fortunate to all be safe and largely unaffected by the bushfires. However, most of us here know 'someone who has lost something', (or worse someone), in these fires and we, along with everyone else, are feeling shocked and saddened. When we got together as a team and talked about what we might be able to do to help, our discussion quickly shifted to sharing all of the 'good' stories that we had heard about true grit, courage and resiliency at its finest. As one Kinglake man said on TV, 'We are not victims, we are survivors': this from a man who had lost his home and who knows how many of his community. Much of our conversation focused on how elevating it feels to be part of communities, companies, professions, cities and a nation that has come together to help and support those in need.

When we first came up with the topic for this edition, we wanted to talk quite tactically about change, in particular in the context of economic changes. We couldn't have anticipated that for some in our community, (whether it is in Victoria or in Qld with the floods), that change could be quite so dramatic.

Without making light of the change that is occurring in many organisations – the restructuring, the shift in client needs & focus and for some organisations, 'downsizing', (which is just a removed way of saying, real people losing jobs) – recent events have given us some perspective on what is important, what resiliency looks like in action, (and the lessons from this will increase over time), and also, how different people respond to 'change' so differently. In this edition, we want to look at change and its important partner, transition. Some of the things we'd like you to consider are:

- Change – by its nature – is challenging. It involves endings and new beginnings.
- Change doesn't happen right away – the most important part of change is the transition from the old to the new.
- Successful change depends upon handling that period of transition well – and transition often takes one or more years, (yes, that's years!).
- Understand & respect your own style, and that of others, and the impact that has on how you, and they, respond to change.
- Support is vital – people & organisations do not change on their own.
- Understand your organisation/ industry and the cycles of change. Know that 'this too shall pass' and that people & companies can grow through change.

Xplore News – Bushfire Donations

We are pleased to announce that raffles at our recent Xplore breakfasts in Canberra & Melbourne raised \$1000, (which Xplore is doubling to \$2000), for the Whittlesea CFA - one of the many valiant CFA brigades fighting fires and saving lives in Victoria. One of our SCR participants is a key member of this CFA & expressed the brigade's gratitude and thanks. All of the money is being used to replace vital firefighting equipment that has been damaged during recent events.

Xplore News – Fitted for Work

In Sydney our fundraising raffle raised almost \$500 which will help to cover the costs of the fit-out of the new Sydney centre.

Women's Breakfast Mini-Workshops

Friday 1st May

Xplore Women's Breakfast & Mini Workshop Sydney

Wednesday 6th May

Xplore Women's Breakfast & Mini Workshop Melbourne

Friday 8th May

Xplore Women's Breakfast & Mini Workshop Canberra

Enroll at

<http://www.xplore.net.au/networking.htm>

Xplore Public Programs

Xplore offers public programs in Sydney and Melbourne at two levels Career Resiliency and the more senior program Senior Career Resiliency.

See <http://www.xplore.net.au/whatson.html>

for future public programs, bookings & fees/prices

Books & Articles of Interest

Transition: A Personal Path through change, by William Bridges.

A short summary maybe be found at the website: <http://www.aps-online.net/pdf/Transition.pdf>

Newsletter edited by Angelina Eynon & Diana Ryall.



Change – Initiating, managing & thriving

By Diana Ryall

There is no doubt that change makes people uncomfortable – even for those of us who don't like to admit to it! Different styles of people respond to change in different ways and it is important to keep this in mind and respect different styles. Change by nature is challenging as it means a stopping of 'what is today' and beginning anew. Just consider how uncomfortable it is if you are asked to swap your writing hand over from here on.

This article looks at change from three different perspectives. Firstly, if you are in a position where you know change has to happen and it is your responsibility to initiate it. Secondly, when you as a manager have been given the task of bringing change into your team, and thirdly, when change comes upon you with little room for discussion or negotiation.

Leading change

One of the hallmarks of good leaders is that they can often anticipate when change is required. Conversely, one of the traps leaders often fall into is to then simply charge ahead with the change agenda when those around them may not understand or even agree that change is required. It is important that the need for change is discussed and agreed before a new path is finalised. Therefore, the most important step in initiating change is that you work with the team around you to get 'buy in'. Until you have their 'buy in' it will be difficult (near impossible) to leave the old behind and move forward.

Initiating change is most likely to fail if the people are not on board! If the team at every level is on board then the most difficult barriers will be overcome as the team uses its initiative to move in the new direction.

There are, however, times when changes cannot be discussed with everyone. Tricky situations where the edict comes from head office or overseas that 'XXX head count' needs to be reduced from the organisation. In these times, good leaders get their information together quickly and communicate the reality and the impacts with the organisation as quickly as possible. This avoids leaving people in the lurch, wondering, for weeks on end, if they are the ones losing their jobs. The latter seems to happen frequently these days as organisations make announcements to the market place, (to boost their share price), and then wonder why nobody does anything in the following months, (except for stressing, shredding, coffees & lunches as people ruminate on what's happening, and good people hone their CVs and find better jobs).

When you are given a directive that change needs to be communicated and to take place within in your team, it is important that you first take the time to consider exactly what this means to you and how you feel about it personally. It will be difficult for you to remain authentic in your position as leader if you have not worked through why this is important, but more importantly how you can accept that this change is something you are committed to lead. You do not have to like the change to be able to lead through it, however, you do have to be able to make sense of it for yourself and to support your team in moving through it.

You may consider if there is any room for discussion with your manager about the way in which you can implement this change or you may need to be better briefed in the background need for this change.

You may want to reflect on how you could move into a more strategic position to provide input before future changes are finalised. Ask yourself: Could you become more involved in the context that has lead to this need for change? Did you see it coming and if not is it because your organisational network needs more focus? Are you watching the changes in your industry sector?

For instance, in the current climate a manager may be given the directive to save 10% of your costs by reducing headcount. If you are confident that your team consists of high performers that would be difficult to replace when a turnaround occurs you may want to discuss other options with your manager.

Take the time to go back and talk through both the short-term and long-term outcomes that the senior leaders are expecting. Talk through other options such as pay-cuts (this already has precedents in some organisations), reduced work week (9 day fortnights would give you a 10% reduction), asking your team to take a week without pay in the next 10 weeks or there may be some of your team who would like an extended break without pay. All of these solutions solve today's problems but ensure you are ready for the return of buoyancy in the market.

Sometimes the senior leaders, in their drive for a speedy solution take the option that appears easiest and fastest.

What happens when change is thrust upon you?

For many people, the change simply appears with little or no pre-warning. Perhaps you are made redundant or given a new role or asked to take on an additional workload, as others have been made redundant.

How can you ensure that you move into a positive frame of mind! You may want to read "Transitions" by William Bridges (see booklist). In his model, he speaks firstly about spending time reviewing 'what was'. Ask yourself what is finishing, what will I lose from this and what impacts will that have on my life. It is important to understand both what you will lose and also the components of your life that will continue after the change. The second stage is 'limbo-land' where you have not quite left the old nor started the new and thirdly to look to the new. He makes great use of the DISC profile to identify how people of different styles will react.

For example, if you are made redundant, you may initially feel that you have lost your job, your friends, your usefulness and your confidence. It is important that you allow yourself to look objectively on the impact of redundancy on your motivation and confidence. In the second stage, you can take stock of your skills, your motivators, reconnect with your friends and network. Then in the third stage you will identify what you want for the future and how you can approach achieving these goals confidently. Many people find that an external coach will help guide you through to the confident future. Many people also say that sometimes those changes that have been 'forced' upon us give us a needed opportunity to re-evaluate and make career choices that truly suit us and our lives.

Xplore offers three-hour workshops on Change and Transition as well as one-on-one transition coaching. Contact us for details and costs.