



Welcome,

In this edition of The Xplorer we look at the effects of change and give you some practical advice on how to prepare for it.

Managing change effectively can result in positive changes in individuals, teams and organisational culture. Understanding the effects is key to the smooth transition from the current state to a desired future state.

We hope this inspires you to make some positive changes in your life.

The Xplore Team

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HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO CHANGE?

I think our personal response to change is an interesting one. Each of us responds differently and it is based on a foundation of how we view our environment and how we view change.

For some of us, we constantly seek new ways of doing things and new ideas. This leads us to be more open to change but may also mean that the proposed change is not considered sufficiently, or the planning of implementation does not get the focus it deserves. In the rush to embrace new ideas, others around us may be left behind, planning may leave pit-holes and possible negative outcomes or risks may not be considered.

For others, change is something that needs extended and in-depth consideration before embarking on the new direction. This may lead to a situation where change is not embraced quickly enough for the organisation to keep abreast of the market, leading to reduced innovation, lack of competitive approaches and a general feeling of lack of action.

There is however, no ideal way to approach change it is yet another example of how diversity of thought by building diverse teams will provide the most likelihood of success. A team made up of some members eager to test and implement new ideas balanced by others who seek more thought and planning before commencement, is more likely to lead to effective outcomes.

So why is it that so many teams simply bring in more and more members with similar thinking styles? It has been shown that nearly everyone has a natural propensity to attract others of similar style and approach rather than seeking others who will openly challenge our thinking and actions.

This, in my opinion, is one of the major barriers to many Australian organisations not embedding the need to embrace diversity. In board positions in Australia, almost two-thirds of open positions are filled by others already in the board member's network and thus likely to be of similar style and background. Only about one-third go to search with

clear criteria of the skills, attitudes and background that will round out the board's skill sets and ensure the discussions and decisions are based on vigorous debate.

Although the statistics are less available in the selection of executive positions in Australia, it would seem selecting a candidate who will make the others feel comfortable is still alive and well. I still hear many stories of executive positions being filled by the 'tap on the shoulder' or the 'look in the mirror for the right person'.

Perhaps this explains why women hold less than 10% of executive positions and ASX200 board positions in Australia, far behind the US, UK and the Scandinavian countries. Further to that we now have a culturally diverse population who are not well represented at senior levels. Until we seriously embrace diversity of style, cultural background and gender, Australia's data will continue to be embarrassing to me and many other Australians.



PARENTAL LEAVE - PREPARING FOR CHANGE

It is almost certain that becoming a parent will impact on your entire life, including your work. It is difficult to predict what it will be like working during your pregnancy, how long you will be able to work and when will you want to return to work after the baby is born.

It isn't always possible for women to negotiate a situation that is flexible at work, but it is worth trying and being prepared for all possible outcomes.

PREPARING FOR YOUR CAREER BREAK

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Assess your career and workplace

Flexibility is often an important component of a career break, and an assessment of your current work context is crucial in evaluating the flexibility of your workplace. As part of this process it is important to consider:

Your organisation's policies in relation to parental leave and flexible work options. Research what policies are applicable to you and the entitlements you are eligible for.

The culture of your organisation, including the values, beliefs and attitudes of both employers and co-workers. Has your team genuinely supported co-workers who have taken parental leave, or is such leave viewed as a burden?

Your team leader's attitudes and beliefs regarding career and family responsibilities.

The evaluation process can assist you in deciding whether you will be able to balance both career and family responsibilities in your current working environment, or whether you need to explore other options.

Know your legal right and entitlements

When you are considering taking a career break it is important that you are aware of your legal entitlements and the legislation in place to protect you from discrimination.



Proposed changes to parental leave entitlements are currently being implemented in Australia, [read more here](#).

Plan for your time out of the workplace

The negotiation and development of a return to work plan, and strategy for maintaining contact with your workplace during the period of your career break, are recognised as the most critical components of effectively managing a career break.

A communication strategy that sets out arrangements for maintaining contact with your workplace during the period of your career break is important in ensuring that you have access to relevant workplace information and career development opportunities.

When establishing communication arrangements, you may like to consider:

- Requesting to stay informed about promotional opportunities, and training and development activities.
- Ensuring that you are consulted in any significant decision-making processes relevant to your workplace or projects.
- Receiving copies of workplace newsletters and invitations to relevant industry events.



Parental Leave - Preparing For Change (continued)

Developing a return to work plan with your manager or work team can assist in developing a shared understanding of your future working arrangements and relationships. Ideally, a discussion regarding options can commence before you start your leave.

A return to work plan may include:

- A negotiated period of flexible working arrangements on your return to work.
- An agreement regarding flexibility in emergency situations.
- Specific and detailed information about your roles and responsibilities on your return to work.

How do I negotiate a flexible or part time job?

Negotiating a flexible return to work after being on maternity leave is a fantastic way for you to cope with the balancing act. Any time is a good time to sound out your manager about flexible work options. The trick is to be proactive. Have a think about the tasks you perform. Could your role be done part time or could it be a job share role? What about working from home for some of the week? Prepare your case in advance and remember to consider how your suggestions will impact on your colleagues and the business.

Connect with co-workers who have taken a career break

Develop a support network of colleagues and speak with other women and men from your organisation who have taken a career break. Having a strong support network provides an excellent forum for establishing and fostering contacts, supporting and encouraging other women and discussing common issues.

DURING YOUR CAREER BREAK

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Network and stay connected to your industry

Some women choose to stay in regular contact with industry networks during their career break and others

do not. If you would like to stay connected to your industry during the period of your career break, approach your industry contacts to request information about upcoming networking and professional development events, and to receive email updates and newsletters.

Review and re-negotiate your return to work plan

Before you return to your workplace, it is essential that you review your return to work plan. A lot may have changed since you originally developed this document and you may wish to re-negotiate your transition back to work with your manager (for example, you may wish to change the amount of days you work on your return). You may feel you have different needs than you originally anticipated that need to be accommodated. A flexible return to work plan will assist you to have the conversation with your manager.

Be prepared for change, the organisation you return to may be different to the organisation you remember. Your communication strategy may be a way to manage change. Staying in touch with colleagues or your manager, or attending networking functions and industry events, may be a way to stay abreast of change and developments.





TOP TIPS FOR GETTING A PROMOTION

One of the biggest challenges people find in their career is how to approach getting a promotion. If you have felt overlooked in the past, you might find that the only barrier to change is you. Take some positive steps to get what you want.

HERE ARE SOME PRACTICAL TIPS ON HOW TO SET YOURSELF UP FOR A PROMOTION

Network within your organisation.

Get to know people around the business and what they do. Identify areas you are interested in.

Be clear about what you want.

Too often people are overlooked for a promotion because their manager isn't aware that they are open to the role. Make sure you are clear about your career path and what you want to achieve.

Understand and keep updated about corporate priorities.

The more knowledge you have about your organisation the better, you will then be able to position yourself where you are most needed.

Make it easy for management to promote you.

Hit your targets, keep a distance from potentially damaging situations, stay visible and build a business case for your promotion.

Find a mentor.

A strong relationship with a manager or someone higher up in your department can open a lot of doors for you. For one thing, you'll likely learn a lot about the organisation and about the jobs you might want to get in the future. For another, you'll have an ally who will be willing to go to bat for you when you do decide to apply for a new opportunity. Finally, your mentor may groom you to succeed him or her when they move up or retire.

Give yourself credit.

Who said shameless self-promotion never pays off? Letting others know what you've accomplished can surely help you get that promotion. Be sure to get the credit you deserve and voice your actions.

Develop yourself into your next role.

Long before you even ask for a promotion, observe the kind of job you want, figure out what it takes to do the job well, and work toward that.

Show your face.

Telecommuting is not a good idea when you're hoping for a promotion. Neither is communicating mostly by email with bosses and coworkers. It's all about 'face time,' Communicating in person whenever possible is imperative for success seekers.

Replace yourself.

Being 'irreplaceable' can hold you back. There are times when managers do not promote great employees due to the time, hassle, and stress of having to train a replacement. If you can, train a potential replacement so this won't be an issue.

Seek employment elsewhere.

If, for whatever reason, you seem to be at a dead end with your current employer, it's time to look for better opportunities elsewhere. This can be hard if you feel a loyalty to your employer, but you do need to do what is in the best interest of your career or you will become unhappy with your job.

Have you got any tips for getting a promotion? Join the [Xplore for Success group LinkedIn discussion](#).





BUILDING A SUPPORT NETWORK FOR TIMES OF CHANGE



Look around you now. Do you have people in your life on a daily basis who support your dreams, your goals and your daily activities? Do these people make you laugh, make you smile and help you feel better about yourself?

Are these people able to truly listen to your needs, especially it when it comes to your work? With the right support network new ideas can flourish, new dreams can become real, and new energy for life becomes available.

Take the first steps now to build the right network for you.

Make a list of new people you could meet, and or network with, who are interested in the same things you are interested in (your passions). Make sure you stay in touch with them weekly. You can meet these people in your neighborhood, in on-line discussion groups, and or at networking events. Make a second list of people who are both interested and supportive in what you want to do. These people will bring you ideas as you start your journey.

The third step is to find someone who believes in you and your work. This is a person who becomes your mentor, your friend, your coach – someone who is interested in your welfare and your success.

Consider a program of executive coaching sessions to assist with the identification of your support network and advice on how to approach building your network. Xplore would be happy to discuss your needs, [click here](#) to find out more.

Studies have shown that being "pro-active" and seeking advice and support from others who have already become successful creates a more positive mind set. Make sure that you listen to your gut and only allow those who give you a positive outlook to become part of your personal support network.

Once you start allowing positive people and experiences into your life you will be surprised at the dramatic change in your sense of empowerment.

NETWORKING EVENTS

August 2010

Xplore's Women's Breakfasts are already filling up for 2010. Be sure to secure your seat at the next events in August:

Sydney

Friday 13th August
7:30am to 9:30am
[Register now](#)

Melbourne

Wednesday 18th August
7:45am to 9:30am
[Register now](#)

Come along and share your thoughts and ideas with like-minded professionals.

XPLORE SUCCESS STORIES



**Get to know...
NATASHA
ABULAFIA**

Natasha believes support for her development and flexible working conditions have made it possible for her to achieve her career goals. Learn about the impression Xplore's Career Resiliency Program left on Natasha.

To continue reading [click here](#) to visit our website.



DRESS FOR SUCCESS SYDNEY NETWORKING EVENTS

Dress for Success Sydney have two fantastic events to invite you to attend in August:

EVENT ONE

'DREAM JOB (JUST FOR A DAY) Auction Dinner Monday 16th August

It's going to be a fantastic evening of excitement and fun with a panel of inspirational guest speakers:

Ann Sherry AO
CEO, Carnival Australia

Naomi Simson
Founder & CEO, Red Balloon Days

Peter Baines
Founder, Hands Across the Water

There will be an auction of dream jobs you can bid for and experience... just for a day! Don't miss out on these once-in-a-lifetime experiences you can't buy anywhere else. To book, visit the [website](#).



EVENT TWO

STATEMENT PIECES Exhibition Tuesday 17th August

Why not network and see some great jewellery at the same time!

Register online for this evening and enjoy wine and canapes whilst you chat and admire this wonderful jewellery. This event is also a fund-raiser for Dress for Success (half of every ticket will be donated to the charity). As well, as a part of your registration, have a chance to win a \$200 voucher to spend on the jewellery.

Statement Pieces is a new company that represents contemporary jewellery designers from around Australia. Julie Ankers, who has been a speaker at many Xplore programs, is the entrepreneur behind Statement Pieces and has always had a love of beautifully designed and crafted jewellery. She has sought some of Australia's best artisans for this display of bold, elegant, distinctive and accessibly priced pieces. Prices start from as little as \$100.

When: 6.00pm to 9.00pm
Tuesday 17th August 2010
Where: Gaffa Gallery
281 Clarence St Sydney
Cost: \$25 per person (RSVP by August 12th)
RSVP: [Click here](#)



Xplore for Success is a proud sponsor of Dress for Success Sydney



In the next edition of The Xplorer...

We will be covering "Embedding Diversity".

Feel free to send us your recommendations of topics to discuss thexplorer@xplore.net.au.