

## NEW PERSPECTIVES ON MASTERING CHANGE

by Jeff Davidson, MBA, CMC

By now, you've figured out that ever-increasing change is here to stay. Moreover, it's not likely that society will return to a time when the pace of life moves along at an even keel, or that what you learned yesterday will be good far into the infinite future. The reality of our times dictates that each of us be more fluid and more open to new procedures and systems for effectiveness in the workplace and beyond.

A fine observation, but what does it mean, particularly in terms of how you can be more effective in embracing the changes all around you?

### Learn, Unlearn, Relearn

In his 1970 book *Future Shock*, Alvin Toffler told us that the traditional way of incorporating new information was to learn, learn more, and then learn more. The tasks before us, however complex, allegedly would be solved if we simply worked a little harder, studied a little longer, and applied ourselves more. Today, and I hesitate to use the word, that learning paradigm is gone. As Toffler suggests, what's necessary today is to approach your work and life from the perspective of learning, unlearning, and relearning. If you've ever switched from a DOS-based PC system to a Windows system, you can readily relate to this.

When I switched from WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS to WordPerfect 7.0 for Windows, most of what I knew about the earlier software was of little value when it came to using the new software. I had to unlearn--forget what I had known--and march into completely new territory. Fortunately, the operation was a success, and I wouldn't go back, but it was painful, and gave me moments of great anxiety.

The next time you need to make a major software change, more fully embrace the concept of learning, unlearning, and re-learning --let go of what you used to know. You'll be far more proficient.

### When Every Square Inch Is Taken

A curious yet predictable phenomenon occurs as virtually every square inch of the earth is trod upon and, perhaps, inhabited. The true meaning of economics kicks into place. Economics really is nothing more than the allocation of scarce resources. Until resources are scarce (i.e., there is no more land available) you really don't have economic societies. The moment all land is taken up, you have scarcity. The price of things gets bid up. People are more concerned about conservation and holding on to things.

So it is in your life. All around you, you see scarce resources--i.e., highway road systems, Internet linkages, and key positions within your organization. They are all highly coveted by others -- i.e., the road systems are clogged; there are delays in finding the information you want on the Internet; and only a few people can make their way to the top of any organization. Now add in the constant changes you face in terms of having to learn new software, new routines, new ways of approaching the marketplace, and new ways of serving constituents. You quickly see that living in an economic society, an era in which we'll vigorously compete for scarce resources, adds to the pressure in your life.

The stress and anxiety people exhibit when competing for scarce resources, added to personal challenges and changes they confront, yields a scenario in which anyone is likely to feel overwhelmed.

A key to mastering change now, and one that will grow in importance in the future, is maintaining perspective--recognizing that relatively all career professionals are up against the same hurdles as you. They understand that this generation of professionals in particular is facing challenges unlike any generation before it.

Those who succeed learn to be resilient. They understand that, at last, economics is at the root of all social interactions. They learn to compete effectively, or better yet, create a niche so as to reduce the need to compete. They also learn to take things in stride.

*Copyright 2000. Jeff Davidson, MBA, CMC is a professional speaker and author. He has been helping people in corporations, associations and government agencies manage information and communication overload for over 16 years. For life-changing, high-content presentations for your next event, contact Jeff at 919-932-1996 [www.BreathingSpace.com](http://www.BreathingSpace.com)*

