

When Mastering Change is a Near Daily Event

by Jeff Davidson, MBA, CMC

Consider the many changes impacting the automotive industry including *ever-shifting customer values, new competition, new corporate ownership and new facilities*, plus recurring dilemmas such as *hiring and retaining good help, managing conflict, and team building*. Is it any wonder that constant change has become the monster under the bed? What can one do?

Embrace Change

The reality of our times dictates that each of us has to be more fluid and more open to new procedures and systems for effectiveness. What we learned or did yesterday will not be sufficient far into the future. Embracing change, rather than resisting it, needs to be the new norm. Why? It's likely that we'll never return to the "good old days" when things happened at a slower pace.

Maintain Perspective

Everyone in the industry largely faces the same hurdles as you. Those who succeed learn to be resilient. They do their best at handling things in stride. In his 1970 book, *Future Shock*, Alvin Toffler wrote about the traditional way of incorporating new information: learn, learn more, and then learn even more. Today we need to learn, unlearn, and relearn. For instance, if you've experienced a change of direction with a new General Manager, you can readily relate to this. You've had to unlearn the ways of the former General Manager and adapt to his incumbent's new priorities and goals.

They say that time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.

Andy Warhol

Manage Your Pace

Do you believe you can somehow "save time" by reading, walking, talking, and working faster than is comfortable for you? While this could temporarily help with mastering some of the changes confronting you, ultimately it's a poor strategy. When you alter the rate of basic bodily functions, tumultuous results are predictable! Walk, talk, work, and eat at a pace that's reasonably comfortable for you, and sleep the hours you need so that when the changes you face seem overwhelming, you'll be at your best.

Find the Trailblazer

Your ability to master change often is governed by your ability to find a trailblazer: someone who can save you hours if not days of frustration. Find someone who has learned the software you're trying to learn, mastered the new procedure for handling customer complaints, or figured out how to make the scanner work.

Two Steps Forward, One Step Back

Actually reading about "change" helps one to see it as a less anxiety-laden topic. Few things in life progress at an even pace. Much of the success you'll achieve comes in a "two steps forward, one step back" fashion. Nearly always, the one step back isn't fatal, but rather a predictable component of venturing where you haven't gone before.

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