

THE CHANGE CHALLENGE

.....A Newsletter About Change

Dear James,

Welcome to the August edition of The Change Challenge. Acknowledging comments from several readers, this month's feature article on the Presidential Campaign deals with the constant use of the word change by both candidates. The newsletter also contains articles on Making Change Work and Personal Change. An article on Results Through Relationships will return next month. As always, your feedback is appreciated via email or The Change Blog at www.DickStieglitz.com.

Sincerely,
Dick



Dick Stieglitz Ph.D

Business Consultant, Author & Motivational Speaker

Featured Article

IS CHANGE A CLICHÉ, OR IS IT REAL?

The candidates seem to be using the word change because they know that's what we want. But Change has become a euphemism for "do it my way instead of theirs," rather than a fresh set of ideas and strategies. Obama offers the same Clinton-Kerry positions we've heard before and calls them a change from Bush politics; while McCain cites minor nuances as changes from the policies of the last eight years. In my opinion, we as voters aren't getting a choice for real change. Our choice is an oscillation back to the Clinton days, or a continuation of the current direction. Neither of which will resolve our country's growing economic, infrastructure, and world perception issues. We urgently need something new!

In the July newsletter, I

Change Topics

Making Change Work

On The Personal Side

Featured Article

"Making Change Work"

RISING TAXES

Maryland, my home state, implemented the largest tax increase in its 200 year history, including a 20% increase in state sales tax. My property taxes also went up 15% even though the value of my house went down 10%. Why? We don't receive better services? In fact, the quality of services has deteriorated. The answer is the state funds a cornucopia of programs oblivious, for the most part, to analogous programs at the Federal and local levels. As a group, the programs are economically unsustainable, so taxes must rise and rise and rise as a percentage of our income. But this problem isn't unique to Maryland.

The argument for integrating government programs isn't new, but it is more urgent today because our problems are growing faster than the resources to solve them. For decades, governments have sought a holistic approach to the challenges of defense, social services, education, the environment, employment, and infrastructure. A few agencies have won Innovation in Government awards for holistic thinking. They deserve our congratulation and thanks. But such programs are an exception rather than the rule in a Congress and state legislatures that push partisan positions and pet programs instead of real change.

Governments must operate more like businesses. Businesses have three advantages. First, they are adept at joint ventures and partnerships. Second, businesses can terminate products without public outcry. Indeed, to survive they must eliminate products when demand falls. And lastly, businesses face a brutal performance test: Before every purchase, we as consumers ask "Is this worth what I'm paying?" If the answer is No, we buy something else or don't buy at all. But there is no alternate supplier for government services, and most agencies are hard-of-hearing when it comes to feedback about performance gaps. If you're in the business of government, make joint programs the core of your strategy. If you're in

introduced the Change Quotient (CQ) to rate the candidates from zero to 100 on their ability to effect change. The three main criteria of the CQ are ideas, relationships, and execution; and each criterion has three sub-factors. For example, the sub-factors under execution are: (1) consistent programs, (2) viable plan for core issues, and (3) a track record for getting things done. During the past month, the ratings for Barack Obama and John McCain have changed as follows:

Change Quotient (CQ) Ratings

	July	August
Obama	75	76
McCain	73	72

By comparison, Presidents Johnson and Reagan (the most effective Presidents in accomplishing change in my experience) rated a 90 and 91, respectively.

In the last month, Obama's CQ rating increased one point in "Viable Plan For Core Issues" (a sub-category under Execution) because of his successful trip to the Middle East, specifically the support he received from Iraqi leaders on the 16-month withdrawal timetable. Obama's trip more than made up for: (1) his convenient decision to decline public financing after claiming to support campaign reform, and (2) reversing his position on gun control by supporting the Supreme Court's ruling to strike-down the District of Columbia's gun control law. McCain also flip-flopped by dropping opposition to off-

business, make full use of your three advantages.

"On The Personal Side"

MANURE PILES

Whenever we try something new, we risk landing in life's manure piles. As a teenager, I attended a boarding school in upstate New York and worked on the dairy farm to help pay tuition. I had never seen a cow up close until my first day on the farm. Grumbling about a 4am wake-up call for the morning milking, I helped herd the cows from the pasture into the milking stalls. Then, as the newest member of the crew, my job was to clean the gutters. There was a special shovel for the job, 12 inches wide with two inch sides. It fit perfectly into the gutter under the rear ends of the cows. I shovelled the cow manure and urine into a wheel barrow, wheeled the sloppy mixture to the manure spreader, pushed the wheel barrow up a plank, and dumped the mess into the spreader.

The dragons of change left me feeling uncomfortable in the strange, new surroundings. I wanted to impress the old hands on the crew, and I didn't want to look stupid. The third time up the ramp, the wheel barrow slipped off the plank, the manure spilled on the ground, and I fell into it. The crew laughed for 10 minutes, which was my worst fear. My clothes were ruined. Even after two showers, the stench remained on my body. Despite that horrible experience, I enjoyed working on the dairy farm. Nothing is sweeter than the rich flavour of warm milk fresh from the cow.

In the 45 years since that incident, I've laughed many times about falling in a manure pile. There is a high probability that you too might fall into the proverbial manure pile whenever you attempt something new. Don't let that stop you from trying. Manure piles aren't fatal, and falling into them can produce some of life's most valuable lessons and precious moments. Some day you may be lucky enough to have your worst fear come true. It probably won't be as bad as you feared. Laugh at the experience.

shore drilling and lending support to make the Bush tax cuts permanent. Since McCain didn't have a major plus to offset those two changes, his CQ lost a point for "Clear Communications" (a sub-category under relationships) because shifting positions have made his messages ambiguous. Whatever their position on any particular issue, consistency is essential because accomplishing change in Washington takes years. For example, Obama's execution ratings will continue to increase if he provides further detail about how he would bring the troops home in 16 months. McCain's or Obama's CQ could increase if either of them offered a viable recovery plan for our economy - so far, neither of them has.

The ratings will change as the candidates' programs gain clarity (or not) and they build consensus (or not). With both party conventions scheduled in August, a lot can change. For example, if one of them selected a Vice President from the other party and embraced a truly bipartisan platform that would be change we could believe in! Is either party committed to change enough to do that? In September's newsletter, I'll update the CQ to evaluate the Presidential candidates and their running-mates as a team. Hopefully, the platforms will contain specifics on the economy (the #1 issue) in a program that's creative and viable, and could be supported in Congress. Register your opinions on these questions by logging onto the blog at

Friends & Colleagues,

In the next month, the 2008 Democratic and Republican National Conventions will be history and the candidates will have selected their running mates. I'm hopeful that their platforms will provide details about how they will accomplish the changes they promise, which will increase their CQ ratings. We'll see.

Good luck implementing the changes you want to make in your organization and your life! Contact me if I can help you with those changes or provide a motivational presentation on the subject of change.

Sincerely,
DICK

P.S. If you enjoyed this newsletter and found it useful, forward it to a friend. If you didn't like it, please let me know why at dick@dragonsofchange.com.

www.dickstieglitz.com.

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