

## THE CHANGE CHALLENGE.....A Newsletter About Change

April 2009

Issue: 12



### Welcome to the Change Challenge Newsletter

One concern about Barack Obama voiced during the presidential campaign was that he lacked executive experience. Well he's getting it now and doing fairly well in facing the "dragons of change." That's my vernacular for the resistance that executives meet when they attempt to implement significant change. If you've lead the implementation of change, you can empathize with President Obama as he deals with the expected resistance from Republicans--but also encounters push-back from some of his staunchest supporters, his own party, and the public.

Resistance to change takes the form of criticism, conflict, uncertainty, and speculative concerns about the future. Techniques to deal with resistance is the theme of the feature article in this month's e-letter, "**President Obama Meets The Dragons of Change**," and the Leading-Change article titled "**Dealing With Dragons**." The On-The-Personal-Side article titled "**Wack-a-Mole**" addresses the trap we fall into by implementing concurrent changes without a unifying strategy.

Your feedback and suggestions to improve this e-letter are always appreciated via return email or The Change Blog at [www.dickstieglitz.com](http://www.dickstieglitz.com).

Sincerely,  
Dick

DICK STIEGLITZ, PhD  
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& Motivational Speaker

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**Wondering how to**

## Feature Article

### PRESIDENT OBAMA MEETS THE DRAGONS OF CHANGE

With a clear election victory, high approval ratings, and strong international support, President Obama has every right to expect his new policies and programs to be embraced with open arms. But several appointees withdrew under fire, the stimulus package was a tough sell, and his 2010 budget is being widely criticized. As President Obama said on the Jay Leno show: *"Being president is like being on American Idol, except the critics are all Simon Cowells."*

Being president is very different than campaigning for president. One big difference is the dragons of change. While campaigning, it's easy to inspire the masses with chants and promises to:

- Change Washington politics,
- Roll-back NAFTA and bring jobs home to America,
- Eliminate our dependence on foreign oil,
- Cure chronic diseases through stem cell research,
- Restore bi-partisanship in Congress, and
- Make decisions based on reason, not anger,

Yes we can! Who could disagree with such wonderful changes?

But the dragons of change present other realities when it comes to implementation:

- A 2009 spending bill with over 8,000 earmarks,
- Retaliatory tariffs from Mexico on American exports,
- Cancellation of auctions for off-shore drilling rights,
- A research policy that leaves scientists unsure about ethical boundaries,
- Adjusting rules so the 2010 budget can be passed without Republican support,
- Congressional action to recoup bonuses in response to public outrage.

Real change, it turns out, is a lot more difficult than campaign promises because resistance and roadblocks flow from many different factions.

Experienced executives know that dealing with resistance is the core challenge of change. They initiate change with great promise and fanfare, but prepare to face a prolonged and difficult implementation. Resistance is a common human reaction to change, so don't be surprised or angry when it happens in yours. Instead, deal with resistance by: (1) anticipating resistance in every change initiative, (2) identifying the sources of and reasons for resistance, (3) listening to and empathizing with the resisters, and (4) making adjustments to accommodate their recommendations and concerns. Such behaviour in Congress would be called bi-partisanship.

Today's economic upheaval is making change more difficult than ever. The world is changing so fast and so broadly that business strategies and practices (e.g., bonuses and corporate travel) that once were standard now are unacceptable. The old rules don't apply any more, but it isn't clear yet what the new rules will be. Even executives with long experience implementing organizational change are finding things difficult. When the recovery establishes the new normal, we will find ourselves in a world that is strikingly different from the one we knew just a year ago. To stay on top through such sweeping change, you can't just react to change. To succeed you must anticipate the next change, embrace the implications of that change, and use it to your advantage. To do that you, like our president, must tame the dragons of change. To voice your views on these matters, log onto the change blog at [www.dickstieglitz.com](http://www.dickstieglitz.com).

## Leading Change

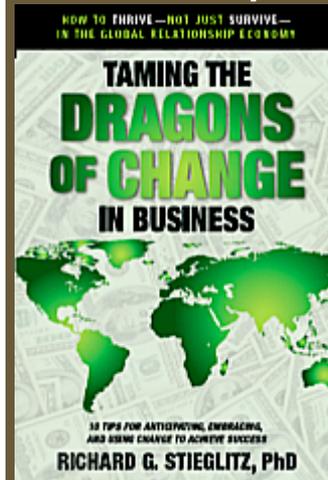
### DEALING WITH DRAGONS

White House folklore says that when General Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected president, President Truman said, *"Poor Ike. As a general, he gave a command and it was done. Now he'll sit in the Oval Office, bark an order, and not a damn thing will happen."* President Truman was describing the dragons that cause people to resist change. It isn't that generals have more power than presidents. Rather, military leaders learned long ago that orders alone don't accomplish change, so they use techniques like after-action reports to verify execution. Execution suffers in organizations that don't have an effective process to find and eliminate the resistance to change.

To achieve change in your organization, you must tame several different kinds of resistance dragons. People resist change for many reasons, including:

- They don't believe the need or urgency for change,
- They resent not having a role in shaping the change,
- They don't understand exactly what the change will be,

deal with resistance to  
change inside your  
organization? This  
book will help!



Global competition, new technologies, acquisitions, out-sourcings, and downsizings have produced a world of perpetual change. Today, ideas travel at the speed of light. You can communicate with anyone, anywhere, at any time, on any subject. To stay on top, you must do more than react. You must anticipate, embrace, and use change to your advantage. **THAT'S WHAT THIS BOOK IS ALL ABOUT!**

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- They doubt that the change will work,
- They are angry because change disrupts the status quo,
- They disagree with the change and want something else, or
- They are afraid of failing or losing status after the change.

But when leaders deal with it correctly, resistance to change can make the change work better. Open, two-way communications are a vital tool. Explain as many times as is necessary why the organization must change to grow and prosper, why this particular change will be effective, and how their future will look after the change is implemented. Let people openly voice their fear of change. Frequently they will answer their own questions, and their concerns will dissipate without any help from you. Furthermore, sometimes they will suggest useful improvements to the change initiative. Act on those ideas, and be sure they know you used their ideas.

On the other hand, two insidious dragons will erode the health of your organization if they aren't dealt with early and decisively. They are:

- Victim dragons who deny responsibility for results and blame others, and
- Insurgent dragons that aggressively resist change and recruit others.

These behaviours are dangerous because they are contagious. To tame these dragons, confront them and explain that such behaviours are unacceptable. Request them to change their position and support the change. If they refuse, firmly encourage them to be childish in someone else's organization. Your decisiveness in dealing with these two dragons is vital to the success of your change.

Successful execution of a change depends on how effectively you identify and deal with resistance. By embracing resistance, understanding it, and leveraging it to improve the change process, you significantly increase your chances for success. Every change is about relationships, even when it doesn't affect the org chart. Practice seeing the change through your people's eyes. Use your heart as well as your head. That insight will chart the course for managing resistance, executing the change, and reaching your organization's goals.

## On The Personal Side

### WACK-A-MOLE

Today's economic recovery efforts remind me of the Wack-A-Mole arcade game I play on the boardwalk in Ocean City, Maryland. The game board has nine moles arranged in three rows of three. The moles pop up their heads in random order, and I score a point each time I hit a mole on the head with a wooden mallet. After the game, I'm exhausted but my intense efforts don't eliminate the moles. Toxic assets, executive bonuses, mortgage defaults, bank insolvencies, interest rates, taxes, unemployment, money supply, etcetera are the moles of the economic Wack-Mole game. When there is no unifying strategy, multiple changes feel like playing Wack-A-Mole - lots of vigorous activity that produces inconsistent and unsustainable results.

Could the same be true in your organization? Do you have people who work at a frenzied pace, but produce less than the desired results? And, when defending their weak results, do they recite a long list of activities they performed? Change leaders provide a strategy that tames the activity dragon by defining quantitative goals, establishing specific priorities, and setting a clear direction for everyone to follow.

Having a strategy prevents problems, so you don't have to fix them in a crisis. In the industrial age of mass production, companies could focus on activities because, in general, more activity produced more results. In today's global economy, however, companies must focus directly on goals and results because activity by itself may be like "wacking a mole" (i.e., it produces few results).

Given that execution is the cornerstone of extraordinary results, pay more attention to your people's results than to their activities. To build a culture of world-class execution, measure results and hold people accountable, but give them clear goals and the freedom to decide how to achieve them. When you measure results like market share, sales, customer satisfaction, and product quality, you'll improve execution and gain confidence that things are getting done in the prescribed way. That will allow you to identify deviations early in the process, isolate weak spots, take corrective action, and reward the high performers.

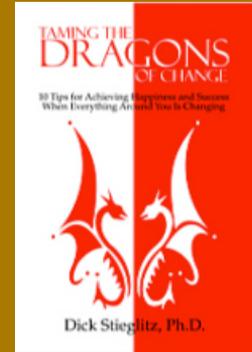
## Friends & Colleagues,

If you found this newsletter to be useful, forward it to a friend who also would enjoy it. If you didn't, tell me why at [dick@dragonsofchange.com](mailto:dick@dragonsofchange.com). Since many organizations are confronting the dragons of change these days, if you're looking for a way of to use change to your advantage, send me an email to schedule time to discuss new possibilities. The first phone consultation is always free!

Until Next Month,  
Dick

[www.DickStieglitz.com](http://www.DickStieglitz.com)

## ON PERSONAL CHANGE



**TAMING THE DRAGONS  
OF CHANGE**  
10 Tips For Achieving Happiness  
and Success When Everything Around You  
Is Changing



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