

Fall is here, and that means lots of change!

Greetings PDWG Team Members. With the seasons slowly transitioning from summer to fall, lots of change comes with it. The weather changes from hot to cooler; leaves begin to change color; parents' and their children's schedules and routines change as the kids head back to school. In addition, as a society, we are all dealing with change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This month's *Practitioner* is all about change. We share an article from PM Times on how to effectively communicate change in uncertain times. We also look at some examples of business failures because due to lack of change. If one thing is certain, it is that change is inevitable, especially in the realm of project management. Hopefully these articles will help you perceive and accept change when it is necessary, and communicate that change to your project team to avoid a disaster.

Five Strategies to Effectively Communicate Change in Uncertain Times

Written by Gregg Brown, M.Sc, CTDP, PMP

As we know from the last few months, change can happen in an instant. All of us are being called to step into the new vision that is being asked of us.

Those of us fortunate enough to be working, also find we have to ramp up our communication virtually and there's no single correct way to engage people.

You might find this troubling! Fortunately, there are several approaches you can take to remedy the situation, whether the unique challenges you face are the results of corporate, legislative, mandated, or politically-driven changes.

Here are five key principles to effective change communication that will keep your team and colleagues positive, motivated, and on-board during the process.



Continued on next page

Five Strategies to Effectively Communicate Change in Uncertain Times

Continued from previous page

These work whether you have direct reports or if you're on a project trying to influence others to get them engaged in your change.

1. Speak to people, not at them

Real communication is about process, content, and delivery. To help ensure that your colleagues understand your message, avoid using buzzwords and industry jargon. Instead, opt to be honest, specific, and relatable in your language.

Also, only communicate relevant information. If you bog down your communications with a lot of extra, unnecessary content, it could be perceived as just another information dump.

You can deliver your communication verbally, in written form, or both. However you communicate, make sure your messaging is concise and with no ambiguity. Remember, 'having a meeting' is not communication!

2. Validate your instincts with data

Your instincts are telling you that your project team isn't engaged with the change. But without qualitative data to back it up, you can't devise a strategy to improve the situation.

The best solution to gather the data you need is simple: go out and talk to your colleagues! Track the qualitative feedback you get, and turn it into quantitative data by tracking keywords.

For example, if 7 out of 10 people told you, "I don't understand why there will be a change," you can easily determine that 70% of the people you spoke to don't understand why you're changing. That's hard data you can use to come up with a plan to correct this.

3. Have a feedback loop

High-performing organizations provide channels for upward communication. In other words, they use employee input for decision-making.

Ask for feedback to help roll out the change initiative. Include the change targets, and other internal and external stakeholders. Check with other staff to get input. Above all, make sure that the right part of the organization owns the feedback, which might not be the human resources department!

4. Take a proactive approach

You may think you're solving skepticism among your colleagues by putting a positive spin on the change by saying something like, "Everything will be better in the long run." This may be a true statement, but it also demonstrates that you're denying that negativity exists. This could shut down communication.

Putting a positive spin on change creates an environment of false positivity, and could hurt your change and project management strategy

Continued on next page

The PRACTITIONER

Published monthly for the
EFCOG's Project Delivery
Working Group by:

Craig Hewitt

(writer/editor)

(509) 308-2277

Craig_T_Hewitt@rl.gov

Adam Russell

(publisher)

(509) 376-5742

Adam_Russell@rl.gov

Tony Spillman

(managing editor)

(509) 372-9986

Anthony_W_Spillman@rl.gov

For questions, comments,
story ideas or other
correspondence, call or e-
mail Craig Hewitt at the
contact information above

Five Strategies to Effectively Communicate Change in Uncertain Times

Continued from previous page

before you even begin. Plus, your staff will recognize when they're being misled, which will cause further acrimony.

You might be surprised to learn that taking a positive approach actually involves embracing the negativity so you can get past it. Have a timed discussion with your team about what they perceive as the negative aspects of the change, and then move to positive action, knowing that the negative sentiment might persist.

5. Create behavioral change with technology

No matter what kind of change your organization is planning, be it process, technical, or organizational, there will be some sort of behavioral change required on the part of your colleagues. Changing people's behaviors can be difficult, especially if they've been doing things the same way for years.

You can use technology to develop simple ways to adjust the team's behaviour to a way that's aligned with the change, such as encouraging them to question their own actions every time they log on to their computer. For example, try using a series of screensavers with a short scenario and a question, such as:

- Is this legal?
- Does this follow organizational policy?
- Is this moral or ethical?
- How would my manager feel if they knew?

These scenarios and questions will engage your staff, get them thinking, and create interest in a policy or ethical question. To further feed their interest, link the content of the login screen to a place on your intranet that has more information about the change.

You can also use a login screen to create a "What if?" scenario to increase policy or compliance legislation learning and awareness. For example, ask employees to consider what could happen if there wasn't a policy about Internet usage within the organization.

Always remember to keep the questions and scenarios quick and to the point. Chances are your people will be logging in first thing in the morning, so by making things simple you won't be holding them back from starting their day (or having their morning coffee!).

Regardless of your role in your organization and what initiative you are leading, we are all leading alongside our teams during these times.

Pick one or two of the above strategies and start using them and watch the magic happen!



Gregg Brown pursued his Project Management Professional (PMP) designation from the Project

Management Institute. He holds a Master Degree from the University of Leicester in the UK, with a focus on organizational psychology, leadership and performance.

— From the [Project Times](#)

Check out the latest DOE Project Management newsletter!

(Click on the banner below)



Or have it delivered directly to your inbox every month!

1. Click [HERE](#) and a new email will open.
2. Just press SEND – Do not edit anything.
3. Click the provided link in the confirmation email you receive.

(An unsubscribe link is provided in each newsletter email.)

It is Not One World — What We Do and How We Do it Matters!

Autopsies of Big Change Management Failures Can Provide Great Insights

If you resist learning and change, your career and your company are probably not set up for success. Here are a few examples from decades of change management consulting projects of now-defunct organizations whose big change management failures show they did not adequately foresee the necessity for change soon enough or Adapt in a way that made good business sense.

1. Borders Bookstore

The first of our autopsies of big change management failures focuses on Borders Bookstore. Borders began as a standard bricks-and-mortar bookstore in Michigan in 1971 and grew to employ almost 20,000 workers before it ceased operations in 2011. The company failed on multiple fronts. Yes, the “old fashioned” bookstores all struggle to compete with online book sales, but Borders had additional challenges they failed to meet.

For one, instead of establishing their own online sales site, they partnered with Amazon, a formidable rival. And then, they continued to pour money into expanding their physical facilities. The third and final nail on the coffin was that they didn’t read their market right – a fatal change management mistake.

Their customers would have used them for books from small publishers, not CD or DVDs and not books from large presses to the exclusion of small.



2. Hummer

Hummer, the out-sized, rugged, status-symbol of a GM product failed to see the writing on the wall. They received early success because of the early American desire for big vehicles that could travel over any terrain in the world. But tastes change and, as they did, Hummer didn’t pay attention. Consumers no longer believed that big was good. They began to worry about the impact of gas guzzlers on the environment and the rising expense of fuel.

Hummer lost its brand desirability because they did not change or adapt to the external environment.



3. Blockbuster Video

Blockbuster was doing great as the leader in video rentals. Viacom purchased them for a whopping \$8.4 billion in 1991. Then they seemed to lose their way. They began to charge stiff late fees and alienated their customers.

Then Netflix began to erode Blockbuster clients with a “no late fee” policy. Blockbuster wasn’t paying attention to what mattered



Continued on next page

Autopsies of Big Change Management Failures Can Provide Great Insights

Continued from previous page

to their customers – one of the devastating change management failures to make with internal or external stakeholders.

4. Kodak

A company that was founded in 1888, Kodak made multiple missteps over its century-long life. Kodak was famously sued by Polaroid when Kodak’s version of an instant developing camera was deemed an illegal knock-off, did not stay price competitive against low-cost mass distributors, lost their film market in good part to Fuji, and bought into the pharmaceutical industry with little idea of how the business works.



But many would say that Kodak failed because they didn’t foresee how quickly and completely digital cameras would take over the industry that depended on film sales. They were caught behind the times.

What Do These Big Change Management Failures Have in Common?

All different industries – all eventual failures. Do they have anything in common? One could say that they were ineffective at foreseeing and adapting to major changes. They were, like many participants in our change management simulation, caught off guard.

The Bottom Line

Maybe not all of these big change management failures could have been averted. But had they been better at foreseeing and adapting to change, we might have enjoyed a Borders website for specialty books; or a smaller, more fuel-efficient version of the Hummer; or a more user-friendly source for videos; or the kind of quality camera Kodak was famous for now in digital format.

– From the [LSA Global blog](#)



Is your data and info
Current, Accurate,
Complete, Repeatable,
Auditable and Compliant®?

©2019, CT Hewitt Consultants

Just for Fun: September's Notable Events and Famous Birthdays

1 — Singer Conway Twitty was born (1933), World War 2 started when Germany invaded Poland (1939), TV host Dr. Phil was born (1950), pitcher Masanori Murakami became the first Japanese major league player (1964), Muammar al-Quaddafi overthrew the Libyan government (1969), and the Soviet Union shot down a South Korean airliner (1983).

2 — **World War 2 ended as Japan officially surrendered to the Allies** (1945), quarterback/sportscaster Terry Bradshaw (1948), actor Keanu Reeves (1964) and actress Selma Hayek (1968) were born, and the first ATM opened (1969).



3 — The American Revolution officially ended with the Treaty of Paris (1783), actor Charlie Sheen was born (1965), and a siege in a Russian school ended with more than 300 people dead (2004)

4 — Apache chief Geronimo became the last Indian warrior to surrender to U.S. troops (1886), the first coast-to-coast telecast of a presidential speech was broadcast (1951), swimmer Mark Spitz won a then-record 7th Olympic gold medal (1972), singer Beyoncé was born (1981), Google became incorporated (1998), and Kelly Clarkson won the first American Idol (2002).

5 — The first Continental Congress convened (1774), Sioux chief Crazy Horse was killed (1877), comedian/actor Bob Newhart was born (1929), terrorists attacked Israeli athletes at the Olympics — the event resulted in 18 deaths (1972), President Gerald Ford survived an assassination attempt (1975), and Katie Couric debuted as the first solo female network news anchor (2005).

6 — Ferdinand Magellan completed the first circumnavigation of the globe (1522), the first military tank was built (1915), and baseball "ironman" Cal Ripken played in his 2,131st consecutive game (1995).

7 — The U.S. government was nicknamed "Uncle Sam" (1813) and musician Buddy Holly was born (1936).

8 — Singer Patsy Cline was born (1932), Italy surrendered to the Allies (1943), American troops occupied southern Korea (1945), President Gerald Ford pardoned former president Richard Nixon (1974), the Oprah Winfrey Show was televised nationally for the first time (1986), and Mark McGwire broke the major league single-season home run record with his 62nd (1998).

9 — The "United States of America" is named by Congress (1776), California became the 31st U.S. state (1850), **KFC founder Colonel Sanders was born** (1890), Esther Cleveland became the first presidential baby born in the White House (1893), singer Otis Redding was born (1941), a Japanese pilot conducted the only air attack on the U.S. mainland at Mt. Emily in Oregon (1942), and quarterback/sportscaster Joe Theismann (1949) and actor Adam Sandler (1966) were born.



10 — The first-ever DUI arrest was made in London (1897), golfer Arnold Palmer was born (1929), the guillotine was used for the last time (1977), and the grunge era began as Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" was released (1991).

11 — Football coaching legends Bear Bryant (1913) and Tom Landry (1924), and actor/singer Harry Connick Jr. (1967) were born, Pete Rose broke the major league record for career hits with his 4,192nd (1985), and "Never Forget" (2001).

12 — Track champion Jesse Owens (1913) and singer Barry White (1944) were born.

13 — "The Star-Spangled Banner" was written (1814), physician Walter Reed (1851), World War 1 general John J. Pershing (1860), and author Roald Dahl (1916) were born, a four-day riot at New York's Attica Prison ended with 39 deaths (1971), and rapper Tupac Shakur died after being shot six days earlier (1996).

14 — Theodore Roosevelt became president after the death of William McKinley, who was shot eight days earlier (1901), the Soviet Union sent the first man-made object to the moon (1959), and **pitcher Denny McLain became the last 30-game winner in the major leagues** (1968).



15 — President William Taft was born (1857), transcontinental mail service began (1858), author Agatha Christie (1890), actor Tommy Lee Jones and director Oliver Stone

(1946), and quarterback Dan Marino (1961) were born, four black girls were killed in a bomb blast at a church in Birmingham, Ala. (1963), and Muhammad Ali became the first boxer to win the world heavyweight title three times (1978).

16 — The Mayflower departed England for the New World (1620), the Mexican War of Independence began (1810), General Motors was incorporated (1908), blues musician B. B. King was born (1924), the Selective Service and Training Act was signed by President F.D. Roosevelt (1940), and a gunman killed 12 people at the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C. (2013).

17 — The U.S. Constitution was signed (1787), the Battle of Antietam was fought, resulting in nearly 23,000 casualties (1862), actor John Ritter was born (1948), **NASA unveiled its first space shuttle** (1976), and a peace agreement between Israel and Egypt was signed (1978).



18 — The cornerstone of the U.S. Capitol was laid (1793), and cycling champion Lance Armstrong was born (1971).

19 — President James A. Garfield died from a gunshot wound he received two months earlier (1881), New Zealand became the first country to allow women to vote (1893), the first underground nuclear explosion was conducted in Nevada (1957), and TV host Jimmy Fallon was born (1974).

20 — Author Upton Sinclair was born (1878), Chester Arthur became U.S. president (1881), and actress Sophia Loren (1934) and hockey star Guy Lafleur (1951) were born.

21 — France's monarchy was abolished and the First Republic established (1792), and authors H.G. Wells (1866) and Stephen King (1947), actor Bill Murray (1950), and singer Faith Hill (1967) were born.

22 — President Lincoln delivered the Emancipation Proclamation (1862), baseball manager Tommy Lasorda (1957) and singer Joan Jett (1960) were born, the Peace Corps was established (1961), President Ford survived a second assassination attempt (1975), the first Farm Aid concert was held (1985), and the sitcom *Friends* made its debut (1994).



23 — Neptune was discovered (1846), and singers Ray Charles (1930) and Bruce Springsteen (1949) were born.

24 — The Supreme Court was established (1789), Muppets creator Jim Henson was born (1936), and the Honda Motor Company was incorporated (1948).

25 — The Bill of Rights was approved by Congress (1789), TV journalist Barbara Walters (1931), actor Michael Douglas (1944), and rapper/actor Will Smith (1968) were born, and Sandra Day O'Connor became the first female Supreme Court justice (1981).

26 — Composer George Gershwin was born (1898), the first American soldier was killed in Vietnam (1945), West Side Story opened on Broadway (1957), the first televised presidential debate was held between JFK and Nixon (1960), and the Baltimore Orioles became the last major league team with four 20-game winners (1971).

27 — Founding father Samuel Adams was born (1722), the Axis powers were formed (1940), and singers Meat Loaf (1947) and Shaun Cassidy (1959) were born.

28 — Painter Michelangelo (1573) and TV host Ed Sullivan (1901) were born, Ted Williams became the last major league player to hit .400 (1941) and hit a home run in his last career at-bat (1960), and actress Gwyneth Paltrow was born (1973).

29 — Nuclear physicist Enrico Fermi (1901), and singers Gene Autry (1907) and Jerry Lee Lewis (1935) were born, Willie Mays made his famous over-the-shoulder catch in the World Series (1954), and **Stacy Allison became the first American woman to summit Mt. Everest** (1988).



30 — Babe Ruth set the major league record for home runs in a season with his 60th (1927), singer Johnny Mathis was born (1935), the USS *Nautilus* was commissioned as the first nuclear submarine (1954), actor James Dean died (1955), and the first large-scale antiwar demonstration in the U.S. was held (1964).