

*The Consulting Team's***Leadership Tips****NOTE FROM
MARILYN MANNING,
CEO**

The economy is still uncertain, and we live with its associated constraints, posing a change challenge we didn't expect. Meeting and leading our organizations successfully through unforeseen, challenging change is the focus for this *Leadership Tips* issue.

First, consider the following qualities from our online assessment, *Am I an Effective Change Agent?*

- Have a constructive mindset and see opportunity in change.
- Be personally motivated to take part in the change.
- Communicate openly on things impacting others.
- Redeploy resources to maintain service.
- Resolve conflicts.

Or take this free, scored test at www.theconsultingteam.com/OnlineAssessments.htm.

The feature article explores workplace change dynamics. On page 3, read how to explore new paths to success. Then read the current Talley Study highlights.

Feel free to forward *Leadership Tips* to your colleagues, or use it for team discussion.

Warm regards,

Marilyn Manning, CEO •
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*Meeting Change Challenges by***Traveling the Change Continuum**

"In an age of discontinuity, an age when the past does not logically predict the future, it is even more critical that you build a substantial bridge between what was and what needs to be."

Terry Pearce, from *Leading Out Loud*.

What is a leader to do? Last fall the world economies suffered an abrupt downturn, posing challenges to government, for-profit, and non-profit organizations. Neither planned nor welcomed, this major change in public and private lives has introduced difficulties for workers to accept and for managers to maintain their teams' focus and morale.

Such is the nature of change. As the *Change Curve* on the next page displays, change introduces a roller-coaster ride through denial, to emotional responses of resistance, anger, fear, and worry, before rebounding toward acceptance and exploration. When organizations find new solutions to new conditions, then employees can integrate the full effect of the change and commit to new ways of creating success. As a nation, Americans were jolted out of the denial stage that we were in a Recession with the November '08 bailout. The challenge now is for leaders to know how to quickly lead folks through the obstacles they face to renewed commitment of positive energy and new direction. Sound people skills and innovative trailblazing are key leadership elements to successfully navigate this passage.

Get ahead of the Curve. Smart leaders find ways to move ahead of the change curve, embracing the Acceptance/Exploration stage of leading change. When you have accepted the change, your communications to your team will reflect your confidence in the future.

Most of us have become skilled at communicating the bad news, as well as good, when it comes to change. What some of us are less skilled at is creating space to listen to team concerns. Sometimes just allowing your team time to vent will release negative energy and allow them to more quickly move through fear and anxiety to exploring new approaches.

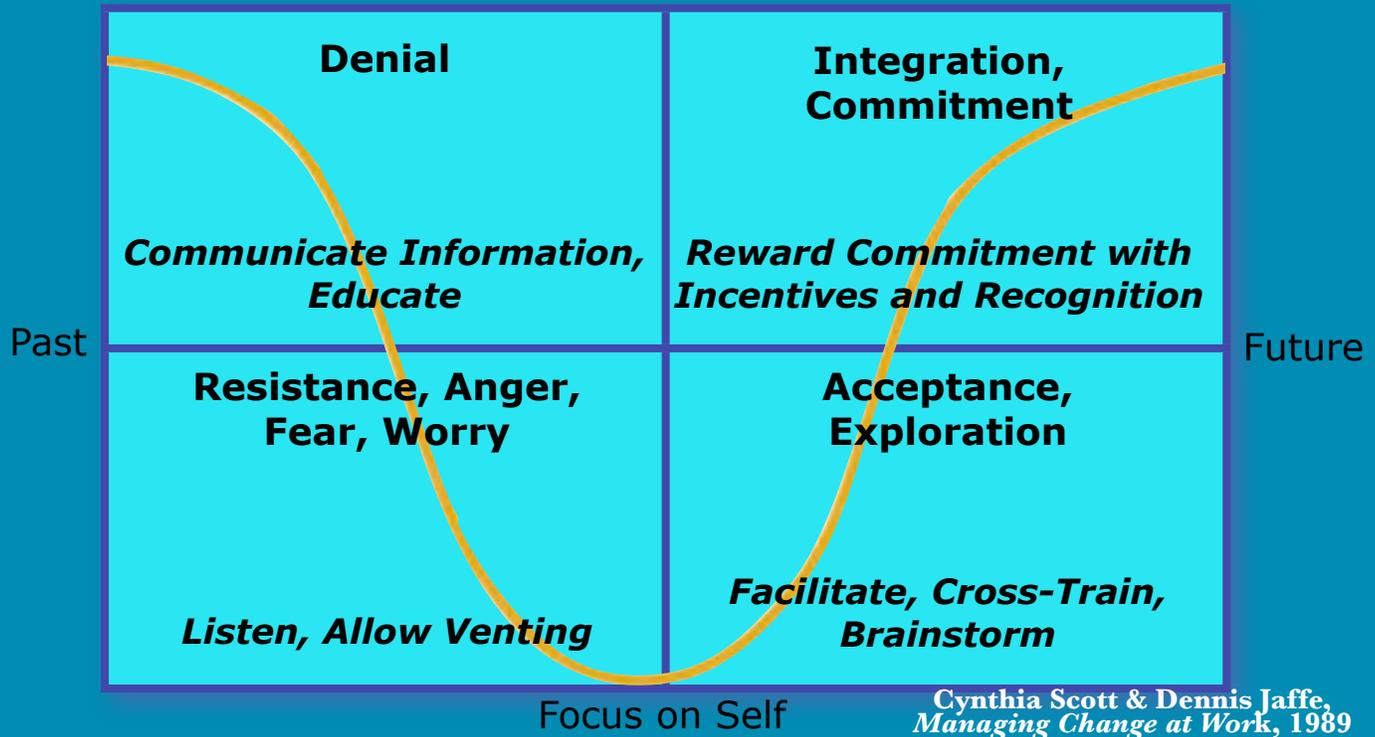
While working with a police department this spring, *The Consulting Team* coached its leadership team facing a change

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Change Curve: Leader's Role

Focus on Environment



challenge in new personnel. In less than a day, they explored and developed new ways to better integrate the officers from different generations while maintaining the force's mission and values.

Two-way Communication. By now you have lines of communication to let your employees know how the Recession has affected your organization. You have communicated about new budgets, staff sizing, and performance measures, which keep your teams informed about your organization's position and build trust in your continued leadership. Keep this up, and allowing team members to share their concerns.

This communication level is especially important during lay-offs. Empathy and understanding, both for those leaving as well as those who will remain to pick up the slack, builds future organization goodwill and commitment. We recently trained Human Resources trainers at a Silicon Valley telecommunications company in tools to better evaluate performance and manage difficult personnel interviews. They were able to help their managers to more effectively handle

personnel reductions and performance improvement.

Create an innovative environment. When rapid reactions are required, leaders typically dictate the responses top down. If work groups have the latitude to mold directives to their particular needs and circumstances they will adopt them more easily. Encouraging supervisors to lead brainstorming sessions can best help teams to adapt the new responses. Leaders can also ensure changes in roles and responsibilities include training in both task and people skills necessary to ensure employee success. Your suggestion systems and recognition programs will empower your employees to find ways to meet their new performance expectations.

Create a future that inspires commitment. New condition may call for a new vision. Your leadership will help build the new solutions that will be the bridge from yesterday to tomorrow. In communicating this continuity to your organization, you will provide it with the motivation and renewed commitment for future success.

Meeting the Change Challenge by

Exploring New Pathways to Success

Organizations understand their missions and the ways and ideas of how to accomplish them, whether or not they are documented. In normal times these directives can guide each organization on how it focuses its effort and spends its resources. Directives can set expectations by which to judge prosperity and success.

When Conditions Change. What happens when directives must radically change because where your organization is heading gets pushed distinctly sideways or, worse, backwards? How do you assess your current position and set a new course for your organization?

Last year, when the effects of the Recession began to take its toll in lost business, funding, revenue, and employment opportunities, we all faced the unknown. “When will we hit bottom;” “How bad will it get;” “How long will it last,” all became questions without reliable answers.

Now, the economy has become more stable and the effects of the meltdown have been assessed. It is an opportune time to analyze the conditions you are facing, to update priorities, and to chart the path to a successful future.



Renewal. There are several helpful ways to complete the renewal process. *The Consulting Team* is currently facilitating a City Council embarked on this process. While reviewing their annual goals, they found greater clarity by redefining their vision, agreeing on their values, and understanding current conditions. This also included getting a clear idea of what the organization is facing and the resources it possesses to surmount current conditions.

When assessing circumstances, because each area of the organization may have a different view, it is wise to use a team approach. Teams are helped by

articulating the threats and opportunities they are facing, as well as their organization’s strengths and limitations in meeting them.



With clarity comes an opening to explore new ways of doing things and new ideas to pursue. A check of the organization’s resources, helps to vet the newly conceived responses.

This process provides the background by which the team can review the vision of

the future it has held for itself and determine if it can be reached or needs revision.

Setting Priorities. With a renewed vision and list of team responses to the conditions the organization faces, its leaders can prioritize their responses into useful activities by determining their urgency, cost/benefit ratio, feasibility, and timeliness.

The outcomes of these steps:

- ▶ Clarified conditions
- ▶ Generated responses
- ▶ Prioritized activities

provides a firm basis of operations for the rest of the organization.

Communication. Communicating the outcomes of this planning effort presents opportunities to engage employees and stakeholders in the third phase of the change curve discussed in “Traveling the Change Continuum,” on page one. The City Council we have worked with is now engaged in this process. In reviewing their prioritized activities, their work teams and stakeholders can employ innovative thinking to meet the city’s future needs. Because they have faced the challenge of the times and determined new ways to succeed, this team has grown through its experience learnings and has increased its likelihood to succeed.

J.L. Talley and Associates Survey: Recession Change and Morale Findings

Based on excerpts from May Talley Report

In mid-April, *The Consulting Team* with other consultants sent out the third survey through Talley on how firms are experiencing the recession. It focused on the one constant for all surveyed organizations: **managing change**. The survey asked what change these organizations were introducing to deal with the recession and if the organizations were being managed in a way that **supported staff morale**.

Several questions were about the nature of organizational changes. One asked if changes were incremental (1) to systemic/disruptive (7). The data clearly showed incremental changes, suggesting people view this recession as normal and typical, requiring adjustment not fundamental change.

Another asked if changes were limited to a few activities (1) to impacting all organization activities (7). The score spread was broad. A question on the nature of change asked if senior leadership focused only on financial or technical aspects (1) or on cultural aspects (7). Most respondents felt there was a healthy mix of each.



The last question asked if changes were being negotiated, to maintain staff morale and engagement. Here the news was not so positive. The recession is putting strain on employees. Many have

seen co-workers downsized. Their own financial situations may be worse. So perhaps it is hard to maintain moral. Significantly, morale is often a sleeper variable. It often waxes and wanes with no more than occasional executive notice. But it reflects an often crippling erosion of staff engagement; it supports (or undermines) creativity and "going the extra mile". This result raises the question: will employees be ready to work hard to take advantage of the upturn.

The survey's open-ended question was, "What's the most creative thing your company is doing to respond to the recession?" The most common answer was "We're not doing anything all that creative..." with a list of traditional efforts of controlling costs, carefully managing capital, or reducing staff. The examples below, however, show how some companies have been creative in response to the recession:

- ▶ Instead of extra pay, employees bank equivalent time in a special account for future time-off, allowing this city to return money to its general fund
- ▶ Focus on culture shift to be innovative, understanding what this means in their own job and for the company
- ▶ Instituting an unofficial priority: "Focus on Fun;" employees are empowered to have fun, e.g. baking, giveaway, and paper airplane contests, a water park day, picture boards
- ▶ Added temporary on-site technical staffing to business model, using laid-off technical professionals combined with access to their customers looking for temporary help, creating a growing new revenue stream
- ▶ Team of experts reviewed the organization, resulting in changes totaling \$9-10 million in potential savings
- ▶ Increased leadership communication to share the story, eliminating need to make it up
- ▶ Pay cuts by shutting down the company (except customer facing activities), yielding "weeks" off and facilities savings
- ▶ Top objective for year: all focus on process improvements
- ▶ When a union went to a 4-day workweek, the field organization did as well. Staff works 4 extra hours at same pay for solidarity. The company is in it together, the hurt spread, and success will also be shared by all.
- ▶ Start weekly meetings with "Thanks!"

Want to Learn More About Challenging Change ?

Here is a sample of what we have to offer.....

Visit the following links for more information:

Our Free Assessments:

- ▶ [Am I an Effective Change Agent?](#)
- ▶ [Strategic Planning Checkup](#)

Our Consulting Services:

- ▶ Team Building
- ▶ Conflict Mediation
- ▶ Strategic Planning
- ▶ Facilitation of Meetings and Retreats

View Descriptions of Related Trainings:

- ▶ [The Challenges of Change](#)
- ▶ [Leading Positive Change](#)
- ▶ [Building Better Teams](#)
- ▶ [Appreciative Inquiry](#)

Read Related Articles:

- ▶ Under Team Articles, “Embracing Diversity to Build Effective Teams”
- ▶ Under Change, Stress and Strategic Planning, “Dealing with Stress in the Face of Change”

Thriving in a Challenging Economy

- ▶ The Consulting Team is providing low-cost, brown bag workshops! Call Marilyn for details: (650) 965-3663
- ▶ We can facilitate your meetings to expedite innovative goal alignment and team collaboration.

About Leadership Tips

Leadership Tips is a periodic newsletter to help deal with the difficult issues in today’s busy and hectic work environment. To see past Leadership Tips go to www.theconsultingteam.com and select Newsletters

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- ▶ If you know someone who would benefit from reading **Leadership Tips**, please forward this email to them.





**Marilyn
Manning, CEO**



Nan Andrews-
Amish



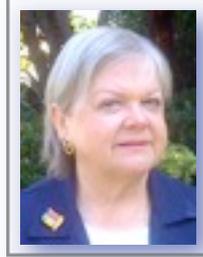
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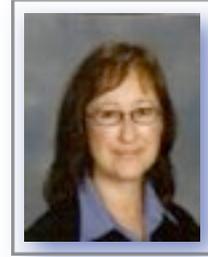
Ken
Braly



Pat
Haddock



Howard
Miller



Victoria Smith-
Raymond

Meet Our Core Team

Our Core Team of consultants each bring over 15 years of experience and individual expertise to add breadth and depth to our services. Over the coming months, we will introduce you to each of them. This month we feature:

Ken Braly

A unique professional with both in-depth technological expertise and communication skills, Ken Braly is known as a presenter who can bring life to technical and dry management subjects. He has been teaching people how to get the most from technology and how to make presentations more powerful for over 25 years. Ken is co-editor and publisher of SpeakerNet News, an award-winning weekly electronic newsletter with over 8500 readers in the professional speaking community. He has a passion for communication and speaking excellence and also works with speakers as a coach.

Ken continues to do a wide range of technology consulting, including Web development and Internet-based marketing. He has held project management roles with Apple Computer, Kaiser Permanente, and the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco. He was also a faculty member at Cal State Hayward. He has been an active member of the National Speakers Association since 1978, and is a founding member and past president of the Northern California NSA chapter, where he has been honored for extraordinary service to that organization.