

[Stay Connected](#)

/ Thursday, August 26, 2010



**Catherine Ford** Don't miss **MY CALL** by award-winning journalist Catherine Ford  
Every Sunday / [Read More >>](#)



Ads by B2BAds

- [Home](#)
- [A&E](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Health](#)
- [HR](#)
- [Politics](#)
- [Science/Tech](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [Environment](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Special Reports](#)
- [In the News](#)
- [Viewpoint](#)
- [About Troy Media](#)
- [Editorial Calendar](#)
- [Commentary submissions](#)
- [Family Ties](#)
- [Advertise](#)
- [Classified Ads](#)
- [GET OUR NEWSLETTERS](#)

# Why organizations fear change

August 23, 2010

By [Bob Weinstein](#)

Editor-in-Chief  
Troy Media



Bob Weinstein  
NEW YORK, Aug. 23, 2010/ Troy Media/— After decades of probing the elusive concept of change,

experts agree about one thing: Organizations must change or else they'll perish. And that change involves the entire organization. Yet, the biggest stumbling block is implementing it. This is where the change issue gets sticky, because the pundits have yet to come up with template-type solutions for making it happen.

Researchers at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania found that only about 20 per cent to 50 per cent of major corporate re-engineering projects at Fortune 1000 companies have been successful. "Mergers and acquisitions fail between 40 and 80 per cent of the time," they say.

### ***New spin on timeless concept***

A white paper by Arlington, VA-based management consulting company ESI International put a new spin on the topic of change, especially the stumbling blocks to successful implementation. A few of the results and conclusions of the study are valuable for both companies and career-builders – especially during slow economies and rising unemployment. While most people and organizations acknowledge the importance of change, they still don't understand the change process or why it's so difficult to internalize.

ESI researchers explained that organizations understand that change involves the following three elements:

**1. Process.** Organizational business processes can be defined by policies, procedures and rules that explain in great detail how work is performed and how goals are reached. Processes are constantly tweaked, redesigned and realigned as new ways are discovered to create products or services and better meet customers' needs. The ongoing need to perfect business processes spurs the adoption of new technology.

**2. Technology.** Logically, new and better technology leads to organizational efficiencies for successfully implementing change. It's a way to assimilate, analyze and process information and data quickly and accurately. Essential to any change process is a plan for executing change.

**3. People.** While some organizations have perfected the processes and technologies for implementing change, they've often failed to understand the people dynamic in making change happen. It's as basic as the fact that while people can understand the processes and technologies that drive change, in order to successfully implement it, they must accept and buy into the need for change. As the ESI researchers put it, "An organization cannot begin to introduce change unless its people understand and support the reasons driving the change."

### ***Change management defined***

The ESI study draws some interesting conclusions. Change management is a cyclic process consisting of three phrases: 1. Identifying the change; 2. Engaging the people; and 3. Implementing the change.

But the snafu preventing change, according to the ESI study, lies in the critical first phase: identifying it. Say ESI researchers, "Organizations often fail to identify and communicate the need for change in a way that is understood and embraced by people working at all levels of an organization." That is not a startling revelation. The eye-opener is that managers fail to consider how a change may be received "on an intellectual, emotional and, most significantly, on physiological/neurological levels by the people it will impact the most."

### ***Change's impact on mind and body***

Change triggers fear and stress, creating a complex physiological/neurological reaction, according to the ESI study. Here's what happens:

The pre-frontal cortex region of the brain receives the transmission through one or more of the physical senses.

The pre-frontal cortex compares the new condition with the current condition by accessing another region of the brain, the basal ganglia, which stores the data we receive and contains the wiring for the habits we have.

If a difference between the new condition and the existing condition is detected, an error signal is produced and sent throughout the brain.

The error signal is received by another part of the brain that tells us to be wary of danger.

The brain sounds a warning alarm, which triggers the emotion of fear.

The new condition is resisted by the pre-frontal cortex, which causes the person to back off and be wary.

### ***Tips for coping with change***

Knowing that change triggers this complex response, ESI advises organizations to take the following two steps:

1. **Get people's attention.** Rather than not deal with or avoid change, get people to address it by discussing it and asking questions. The goal is to understand and internalize its urgency.
2. **Align disturbances.** The ESI pundits say that a neurological disturbance "is a conflict between a person's current mental model (the way they did or thought about things before the change concept was introduced) and what needs to be learned (the mental map) to operate in a changed state." To align the disturbance, organizations have to create a common ground between their current model (the old way of doing things) and the model that's needed to operate in the new or changed model.



*Image courtesy [Hljod.Huskona](#) | flickr*

*Channels: The **Calgary Beacon**, Aug. 24, 2010*

[+](#) Share / Save [↕](#)



You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#). You can leave a response or trackback to this entry

You must be logged in to post a comment [Login](#)

#### **Family Ties**

Navigating the learning disabilities maze  
[www.troymedia.com](http://www.troymedia.com)

#### **Special Report**

The food we eat could be killing us  
[www.troymedia.com](http://www.troymedia.com)

#### **Special Report**

The UN on Trial  
[www.troymedia.com](http://www.troymedia.com)

#### **Last Mile Broadband solutions**

Solve your communications challenges...ask us how!  
[eeZee Communications Inc.](http://eeZee Communications Inc.)

Ads by B2BAds

### **Recently Commented**

### **Recent Entries**

[Putin's new arctic great game](#)

[The road to success is littered with failures](#)

[Oilsands facts don't stand a chance against oil coated ducks](#)

[Back to the past: The John DeLorean story \(Part 4\)](#)

[Alberta's ERCB's bark far worse than its bite](#)

[Innovation key to climbing global value chain](#)

[Alberta transforming its school system](#)

[In-person interviews a necessary part of immigration policy](#)

[David Mitchell is an example for all business leaders](#)  
[The British Labour leadership race – watching paint dry](#)

Ads by **Google**

**[Change Project Management](#)**

Free ebook by  
world famous  
business expert  
Dale Carnegie.  
Downloadable!  
[DaleCarnegie.com](http://DaleCarnegie.com)

[A&E](#)

[Business](#)

[Education](#)

[Health](#)

[HR](#)

[Politics](#)

[Science/Tech](#)

[Travel](#)

[Environment](#)

[Video](#)

[Special Reports](#)

[In the News](#)

[Viewpoint](#)

[About Troy Media](#)

[Editorial Calendar](#)

[Commentary submissions](#)

[Family Ties](#)

[Advertise](#)

[Classified Ads](#)

[GET OUR NEWSLETTERS](#)

[RSS](#)

[Log in](#) | 