

# Exploring New Pathways

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"The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on." - *Walter Lippmann* **How do you ensure that your team is convinced?**

## Empower your team

Deep organizational transformation occurs only when people are contributing. Individuals must feel empowered to take the lead and execute the strategy necessary to implement a new vision. Unless efficient organizational structures and systems are in place, individuals will feel powerless when faced with change situations, thus leading to resistance and a halted transition.

As a leader, what do you view as the biggest obstacles within your organization/ team? How do you remove potential obstacles that might get in the way of executing a change strategy? How do you ensure that individuals within the organization feel empowered?

According to John Kotter, there are several barriers to the empowerment of individuals:

**Formal structures get in the way of action** - The existing/ new organizational structure must facilitate the change initiative. For example, if a change initiative is designed to increase the productivity of the organization and to focus on low-cost production, it will be challenging to achieve this goal if corporate headquarters incurs very high staff expenses and implements costly initiatives. If organizational structures are not in line with the new vision, this will block the necessary empowerment that could stimulate individuals to bring about the transformation.

**Managers discourage the implementation of the new vision** - "Command and control" managerial styles tend to discourage individuals from attempting to implement a new vision. These types of managers resist the change (not necessarily believing in the new vision) and feel challenged to find a way to implement the vision. There tends to be a reluctance to confront these types of managers. However, the recommended approach is to have an honest discussion with them, declaring your intention behind the change and subsequently determining the best course of action: replacement of the individual, solutions to unblock the individual, or removal to another area.

**Personnel and information systems are not supporting actions** - In order to persuade others about the need for change, individuals must feel that there is "something in it for them". They will feel more empowered and more inclined to follow a change initiative if internal systems such as performance appraisals, compensation, promotions, succession planning are aligned with the new vision. The alignment will help generate the necessary

incentive to implement action.

**Individuals might not have the appropriate skills to take action** - When organizations undergo transition, individuals typically receive access to training programs. The type of training offered is around technical skills, with individuals expected to change their existing (historical) habits in a short period of time. However, we overlook the new behaviors and attitudes that will be necessary to learn the required skills and achieve a successful transition. Addressing ways to alter behaviors and attitudes can help ensure that the transformation is deep and permanent.

My invitation is:

- Determine if the organizational structures in place are aligned with the new vision.
- Identify what type of training would create the biggest impact for individuals to effect the change.
- Investigate if information and personnel systems are aligned with the new vision.
- Confront "control and command" managers who seem unwilling to change.

**Note: Concepts presented in this newsletter were inspired by John Kotter's book, *Leading Change*.**

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*The concept behind this newsletter is an invitation for you to explore new ways of thinking, new perspectives, and new behaviors, so as to increase your personal effectiveness. The themes we have selected are commonly addressed topics in coaching. We have chosen them carefully and are eager to share them with you, in the hopes you will find them both thought-provoking and valuable.*

*Warmly,*

*Céline Brillet*

## **Top 8 reasons to partner up with a coach**

1. You want to make yourself a priority.
2. You feel stuck.
3. You want to build on your strengths.
4. You want to reach your goals more effortlessly.
5. You need a neutral sounding board to bounce ideas off.
6. You are facing a stretch challenge.
7. You have an important decision to make.
8. You are ready to move to the next level.

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