



My Printer Just Broke: A Lesson on Change

By Darcy Bien

It all started when a message popped up on my computer screen. Some serious warning about my printer's ink pads. Over the next three months, I kept getting these pop-ups, crossing my fingers, and hitting "ignore." And, like magic, the printer kept working. Somewhere in the recesses of my mind, I knew it was time for a replacement, but an online search was overwhelming with so many different models and options. I tried to recruit my husband for consultation, but his input yielded nothing more than a three-word cheer: Go for it!

As you know, I do "strategic planning" for a living and know, firsthand, how hard it is to change. **Statistics show proactive change happens less than 10% of the time.** We are creatures of habit and our brains are trained to follow the existing canals to make our lives easier. So, why do we need to change? Let me continue with my story....

Then, one morning, as I was preparing for a kick-off meeting with a new client, it happened. The magic disappeared, the printer broke, and I was in full throttle panic. I needed copies – quickly. After spending two hours trying to navigate FedEx Office online print services (which isn't as easy as it sounds), I hightailed it to Staples and grabbed a basic printer in stock, only to have my husband later tell me it had lousy reviews. Did I mention, the wasted money and time making copies....



My pain level was HIGH – with wasted energy, money and resources. It was time to face the truth: I got comfortable ignoring the pop-up warnings for three months and chose not to acknowledge my printer's impending death. Even as a strategic planner, I knew I needed to change, and I was resisting it. For a while, "hoping it would keep working" worked, but as we know, hope is not a strategy ☹️. Most of the time, until the pain to remain the same is greater than the pain to change – we simply don't like to change.

Strategic planning proactively manages change to AVOID the pain of firefighting! Companies who embrace change and have a plan are 12% more profitable (Achieve it). Furthermore, 70% of companies with a plan outperform their competition. Why? Based on my experience, it is because “pain” is avoided, therefore fewer resources are wasted. By proactively managing change, we make better decisions and there are more resources “invested” to determine how to make better choices and proactive manage the future. I have found, the more conversations about “why” we need to change, the higher probability of making the change; in fact, 50% more likely. This helps people *understand* versus *ignore* impending changes. Here are some tips to help you manage change in your organization:



A positive attitude is essential. Positive things come to positive people. Your new work environment may not be what you envisioned, but let's face it, your previous environment likely wasn't either. Instead of a “glass half empty” attitude, shift your focus to how you can best leverage your skills to increase your performance in your current role. Some of us are hardwired to accept change quickly and others are slower to adopt, so acknowledge and respect your individual pace.



Make sure you understand the “why.” Do you fully comprehend what's driving your company's changes, or are you more focused on what's changing? If your uneasiness is based on a lack of information, reach out to leadership and ask them to explain the purpose of the changes. Strategic change should be aligned with the organization's values, purpose and vision. If it's not, ask why. Then, get involved.



Talk, write, and create a plan. No one wants you sitting at your desk bottled up with fear and anxiety. Talk about your discomfort with co-workers, family, or a counselor. Write down what fears you have about upcoming changes or ones that recently occurred, then devise a plan for managing these fears. This is empowering action, putting you in charge to help calm your worrying mind.

Even though change happens around us each day, it's natural for our brains to reject it, especially at work. We need to create new channels in our brain to support the new information. Leading companies are made up of learners who share fresh perspectives and, not only accept change, but embrace it. The more we allow ourselves to be comfortable with uncertainty, the more smoothly we will navigate the road of change.

Post “My Printer Broke”: ...Yes, I have a new printer and you know the best part...? It works better than my old one! At the end of the day, change is good, most of the time.

