

William Bridges' Transition Model

Change is not new to any of us. Business conditions change and yesterday's assumptions and practices are no longer effective. With innovation comes change. Many organizations approach change by focusing on the desired outcome the change will produce, and use change management plans with a heavy focus on communications and training. But why then, do change management efforts consistently fail?

In our experience, many leaders fail to account for the individual psychological transition that occurs as part of the experience of change. According to William Bridges, "transition is the inner psychological process that people go through as they internalize and come to terms with the situation that change brings about... The starting point for dealing with transition is not the outcome, but the endings that people have in leaving the old situation behind... Change will only be successful if leaders address the transition that people experience during change. Supporting people through the transition, rather than pushing forward is essential if the change is to work as planned. This is key to capitalizing on opportunities for innovation and creating organizational resilience." Relying on a classic business-school change management approach is not enough.

Using Bridges' model as a foundation, we guide leaders on how best to manage change. It is the role of leadership to help as many as possible climb up the change curve.

On the next slide, we describe the 3 stages of Bridges' Model, identify what people experience at each stage, and provide suggestions for how leaders can respond - to help guide people through the change process.

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What are the stages of transition?

Source: wmBridges.com

1. Endings

This first phase of transition begins when people identify what they are losing and learn how to manage these losses.

2. Neutral Zone / Explorations

The second step of transition comes after letting go: the neutral zone. People go through an in-between time when the old is gone but the new isn't fully operational. It is when the critical psychological realignment and re-patterning take place. People are seeking to understand how they will fit in new beginnings, their new roles, and what it will take to be successful. Many will feel in flux. Some will feel confusion and distress while other may be exhilarated.

3. New Beginnings

Beginnings involve new understandings, values and attitudes. Beginnings are marked by a release of energy in a new direction – they are an expression of a fresh identity. Well-managed transitions allow people to establish new roles with an understanding of their purpose, the part they play, and how to contribute and participate most effectively. As a result, they feel reoriented and renewed.

At Berlineaton....

We help leaders smooth out the productivity curve by recognizing the human side of change and integrating people-focused strategies into change management plans.

Stay tuned for an upcoming infographic about how to communicate during times of change.

Stage	What people may experience ...	How leaders can respond ...
1	Grief Shock Anxiety Relief Denial Chaos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empathy Validation Vision Clarity about the future Listen
2	Instability / Worry Highs/Lows Uncertainty Curiosity Exhilaration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information Communication What is known / not known Next steps Training
3	Trepidation Excitement Optimism Purpose Hope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role Clarity Coaching Support Recognition Celebration Vision