

Chapter 8. Managing Transition to a More Responsive Organization: A Blueprint for Implementing Organization Change

Introduction

In the mid eighties I received a call from an internal consultant in an electric power utility who had read my paper, "Organization Culture and Quality of Service." He told me the utility was about to engage in a major effort to become less bureaucratic, closer to their customers, and more service oriented. He was interested in knowing what I could do for them and asked for a proposal right away. I normally have a bias against writing proposals, partly because they almost invariably require that one commit to a plan of action in advance of doing an adequate diagnosis. In my experience, they also tend to separate the client and the consultant, substituting a contract for the development of trust and joint planning. In this case, however, the project sounded like just the sort of thing I wanted to do, so I not only wrote the proposal, but put a lot of work into it. This paper was the result of my efforts.

I didn't know much about electric utilities, so I enlisted the aid of my friend, Flo Hoylman, who was for many years an internal consultant with Pacific Gas & Electric Company. She and her colleagues had been conducting some very innovative work on reorganizing the delivery of service and empowering the service providers, and she generously made available to me much of their learning and experience. I borrowed liberally from what had worked for the Pacific Gas & Electric people, and after three days of very intensive work, I came up with the piece which follows. I wish I could say that I got the job, and we implemented the proposal as written, with great success. All

I can claim is that I got the job. The vicissitudes of the actual client engagement are described in the companion volume, *A Consultant's Journey*.

What I still like about this piece is the way I was able to frame the work to be done within key dimensions that have to be worked with in any large systems change process. I especially like it as a proposal, because it walks the line between giving vague generalities, and irresponsibly committing oneself to concrete actions in advance of adequate diagnosis. I would reprint it here for its value as a model proposal alone.

In my subsequent work I have carried forward the idea of a Design Team and a Steering Group (not, of course, my own invention). If I were redoing the proposal, I would emphasize even more strongly the importance of client involvement, and I would propose that a multilevel Design Team carry out a thorough diagnosis of the service issues prior to any further action. In this situation, as in many, the clients had already decided on an organizational solution to their customer service problems before inviting proposals from consultants. The clients' solution was to reorganize the customer service function, and they wanted help in implementing it. Had I a choice, I would much prefer to coach an internal team to carry out a diagnosis of the service delivery systems prior to making any decisions about reorganization. As part of the diagnosis, I would endeavor to conduct some large group event (e.g., Future Search (Weisbord, 1993)) which would involve all the stakeholders of the customer service function in assessing current functioning, working out an agreed strategic approach, and becoming part of the solutions. As time passes, I emphasize more and more

strongly the importance of clients assuming as much responsibility doing as much of the actual work as possible. I place myself in the role of coach, expert advisor, and intuitive counsellor. I am no longer interested in "running" change projects, instead preferring "running with" my clients.

Managing Transition to a More Responsive Organization: A Blueprint for Implementing Organization Change

This paper presents a point of view and an approach to managing the transition to an organization dedicated to a higher degree of service and customer orientation. It was originally prepared for an organization which had made the decision to merge "customer service" and "operations" and was prepared to undertake a major systems change effort. The approach I proposed to that client may be of interest to others who are engaged in similar efforts.

Balancing Polarities: An Approach to Transition Management

The excellent organization is balanced between opposites: loose vs. tight controls; the thrust for change vs. the conservation of what we have; participation vs. direction from the top. That balance is not a passive average, but rather a dynamic tension between opposites. Each of the opposite poles is alive and in action in the thriving organization. It is when the tension is resolved that the organization becomes either lax and flabby, or rigid and constrained.

In approaching organization change, there are polarities to be managed, and we are most effective when we keep the opposites alive, strong and in a dynamic rather

than static equilibrium. Vitality does not come from "getting it right," but from being constantly aware of the imbalances and continually adjusting them.

Some polarities are particularly important and require special attention when an organization is undergoing major change.

Leadership from the Transition Team vs. Participation: articulating a vision from the center and keeping the effort on track, while remaining open and responsive to inputs on policy and practice from organization members at all levels.

Learning vs. Performing: keeping productivity and quality high, while embracing the risk and failure which lead to acquiring new competencies for the organization.

Planning vs. Experimenting: designing changes and charting the path ahead to reduce risk, while involving the organization in the action which tests concepts and expands experience.

Internal vs. External Focus: having confidence in the expertise and acquired wisdom of the organization in its business, while remaining open to needs and wants of customers which may challenge our experience and upset our priorities.

Embracing the Future vs. Treasuring the Past: improving the organization and reaching toward a vision of excellence, while celebrating the achievements of

the organization-as-it-is, and preserving its competencies and accumulated experience.

Doing it Quickly vs. Doing it Right: keeping up the momentum and energy of the vision, while following a strategy of working in pace with the readiness of the organization, and testing new concepts thoroughly before they are applied "across the board."

In any organization, especially one which is changing rapidly, there exists a tendency to move towards one pole or the other, and the art of managing change is that of finding the right balance for each stage of the process.

The most effective leaders are continuously "in touch" with their organizations, sensing and diagnosing the state of balance. During periods of change, when the complexity of the organization increases exponentially, and the demands on managers for decision and action become especially heavy, the sensing and diagnosing process needs to become more self conscious. The consultant supplements the manager by providing an extra set of eyes and ears. The consultant brings a point of view which is attuned to the health and maintenance of the organization as a living system, while the manager may be more oriented to the organization as a producer of results.

I have outlined below some aspects of the change which may require particular attention to organization balance during the transition. Each is described briefly below, together with approaches to rebalancing.

NOTE: "Transition Team," in the following paragraphs, refers to the leaders responsible for the transition, plus their staff.

Leadership from the Transition Team vs. Participation at all Levels

It is easy for the vision to become the sole property of the Transition Team, creating a "them against us" mentality. Other polarities which may well occur are: top management plus rank and file, vs. middle management and supervision; and field managers vs. central staff. Such polarities are natural and can be productive, but they need to be managed from the start by applying the "principle of over-inclusion" to early events and activities.

For example, the Transition Team members need to get out and about early in the process, before they do their planning and before their vision of the process coalesces, listening actively to the views, advice and concerns of others about service. Such informal contacts should be supplemented by more formal organization diagnosis, a process of "organization mapping" in which the structures, procedures and practices whereby service is currently delivered to the customer are carefully studied, along with the attitudes, values and priorities which support current practice. Such an organization map is essential to planning the change, and the process of building it permits the involvement and sampling of opinion of many people.

People learn and change best when they come to their own conclusions. Opportunities for managers to meet with panels of customers about service can be valuable both for anchoring the service plan in the real needs and wants of the customers, and also for convincing the Company's people of the urgency of the

change. Similarly, visits to other companies in the industry to discover how they are improving service can be assigned to different teams, rather than confining the work to members of the Transition Team. The point is to include as many people as feasible in learning about service, and then to provide forums for them to talk service with others. Consultants can play a role in the design and in the facilitation of such "consciousness raising" events and processes.

Learning vs. Performing

While change goes on, the organization needs to continue to produce and deliver product and service. "Business as usual" is as important as the change. The usual way of business is to focus on and reward for results, to minimize risk and uncertainty and, in most organizations, to punish failure.

Maximizing learning, however, requires that experimentation and risk taking be encouraged, and that failure be embraced for the learning that it brings. For example, most of us tend to downplay or even to cover up our failures. When we are learning, however, we need to follow the motto that "if a thing is worth doing, it's worth doing badly at first." Furthermore, we need publicly to discuss and diagnose our failures so that we and others may learn from them.

In order to foster the relatively sloppy, experimental processes of learning, and still maintain a focus on productivity and results, it is useful to create a "parallel learning organization." All who are concerned with the change participate in the parallel organization, and they have concurrent roles in the "business-as-usual" system as well. The parallel organization consists of all the structures needed to plan,

prepare for and carry out the change: study groups; project teams; organization, systems and work flow planning activities; steering and advisory committees; test sites; and so on.

The advantage of the self conscious demarcation is that it lends itself to the creation of a "dual standard," an arrangement whereby people play by the "transition rules" when they are in the parallel organization, and by the "operating rules" when they are back at their normal jobs.

The "transition rules" favor risk, experimentation, open discussion of failure, and putting understanding before action. The "operating rules" favor decisiveness, avoidance of risk and failure, and reliability of results. Conflict and confusion of priorities are reduced by clarifying the need for both ways of operating in an organization in transition, and making the differences explicit.

Planning vs. Experimenting

The task of maintaining this balance differs between "technical" and "bureaucratic" organizations. Groups which tend towards the bureaucratic side tend to plan forever and be reluctant to act. Those towards the technical side prefer to jump in without much debate and work things out as they go along (this is also true of market oriented people).

In most organizations, the tendency is toward action, and people tend to become impatient with detailed organizational planning, once the goal has been clearly identified. My stance is to endeavor to balance the action bias by invoking the same attention to detail in planning organization changes that managers use in

planning complex technical projects. The principles are the same (e.g., contingency planning based on Murphy's Law). It's a case of applying the same rationality to organization change which engineers apply to creating technical systems.

First and foremost, that means understanding the situation you are trying to change before you jump in. It means mapping the organization with respect to service, and it means updating the map as the change unfolds. It means sharing that map with the key players and making it real enough that it becomes a guide to thought and action. One way to do that, as mentioned above, is to involve organization members in the mapping process. Instead of doing the diagnostic work themselves, the consultants advise and train the organization members to carry out the work. Then the organization members own and believe the results.

Another way of maintaining the balance is to follow the adage of action research: "no research without action, and no action without research." Any action plan needs a way to retrieve and make sense of the results, and we need to plan how the results so obtained can become influential in the design of the next application.

Internal vs. External Focus

The balance here is between staying close to the customer and remaining responsive to the changing demands of the environment, on the one hand, and keeping the focus and thrust of one's own vision, on the other. The leadership of the Company feel they've "got the message" from customers, and they feel good about their decision to take serious action to improve service. If, however, a company has over the years tended to decide what is good for its customers, it can easily fall into a

paternal approach to service improvement. Having decided to make a change, the organization may come rather quickly to a decision as to what the customers need, and then proceed along those lines with relatively little continuing dialogue with those they are endeavoring to serve.

In such a situation, balancing means keeping open the dialogue with customers, and accentuating it, even after change is under way. This can be done by means of relatively formal customer panels. It can also be done by instituting the retrieval of information which employees and managers collect informally in their interactions with people in the community. It can take the form of managers speaking at local groups, such as Rotary and Chamber of Commerce, and reporting back on the reception they experienced.

The particular settings and processes aren't crucial. What is important is to institute company supported activities which emphasize service. Such activities should involve people at all levels interacting with the customers and reporting back and discussing what they found out. Provision needs to be made for the information gained to be fed back into the ongoing decision making processes of the transition, so that it continues to be in touch with changing attitudes and opinions in the communities served by the company.

Embracing the Future vs. Treasuring the Past

Some organizations remain encapsulated in dreams of past glory, while they become more and more out of touch with current reality. Others innovate feverishly, obsessed by change for change's sake, and discarding the accumulated experience and

wisdom of the past in favor of whatever fad or fancy catches their imagination or promises a quick fix. Maintaining balance means questioning current practice and experimenting with newer and better ways, while celebrating and cherishing the values and traditions which have led to past achievements. At times when there is a strong push for change in the organization, it is especially important not to focus exclusively on weaknesses, but to "grow from strength."

Put in a service context, the question becomes, "how can you expect people to give good service unless they feel good about themselves, and about the company they work for?" How can the skills, the experiences and the wisdom of the past be turned to mastering the challenges of the future?

It is easy for people involved in serious efforts to improve things to come to believe that changing means giving up parts of themselves which they have previously treasured. For example, people might come to feel that instead of doing their jobs quickly, effectively and at minimum cost, they are now going to be distracted from their work by the needs and demands of others, in the name of "service."

It becomes important that people not see the change as "giving up" anything, but rather as using their skills, abilities and experience in new ways. The Japanese, for example, did not change from being producers of junk to being the best in the world in quality manufacture by giving up anything. Instead, they used their ability to learn from others. Formerly that ability led to their producing inferior copies of others' products, but when the same ability was turned to learning from American engineers how to control quality, they quickly became winners.

In the same way, qualities of resourcefulness, technical inventiveness and dedication to doing it right can be turned to the question, "How do we give the customers what they most want and need?" Success becomes a matter of defining the task in terms which the Company's employees can see as using talents and resources they already have.

Managing this aspect of the change is partly a matter of the attitudes of the Transition Managers. In addition, it is possible to design and conduct activities and programs which make people feel good about themselves and focus their attention on the theme of service in a positive rather than a remedial way.

One such approach is to create a program based on the idea, "Catch Us Doing Something Right," from "The One Minute Manager."(Blanchard and Johnson, 1982). It would involve offering small rewards to customers and employees alike for "turning in" employees who have been "caught" giving particularly good service. Periodic celebrations would honor those employees. In addition, groups of employees and managers would study those examples in order to determine what sorts of behaviors are viewed by customers as good service.

They would then take the analysis one step further, asking, "How can we free ourselves and our fellow employees to do these things even more often than we do now? What kinds of systems, procedures, and more important, structures, would best release our natural inclinations to be of service?"

Such a study group becomes a more positive variation of the quality circle. Its orientation is described as "positive" because it is not problem oriented; instead, it is

directed towards freeing people to do the good jobs and give the level of service which it is assumed they naturally want to do, but which they may not be free to do under the current arrangements.

Doing It Quickly vs. Doing It Right

This last balance issue has to do with the need to produce results, balanced against the need of the organization and its people to learn from experience, to experiment, and to change their approach based on their failures and successes. The question of balance arises when managers have a good idea or have seen the results of a successful experiment, and they then decide to implement it across the organization. Often, the wider implementation spoils what was a promising beginning, turning what could have been a real change of purpose and values into just another bureaucratic exercise.

Such errors are made when managers regard the organization as more mechanically responsive than it is. Because the organization works well in its normal operating state, and because relatively small adjustments and improvements are well tolerated (what we call "first order learning") it is assumed that large changes involving attitudes, values and that elusive "culture" will also yield to direction. In fact, organizations are not machines, but living systems with a life of their own, a truth which it is easy to forget in large, somewhat impersonal systems. Consultants like myself often spend considerable time and energy trying to slow the change process, not because we don't like to see things change, but because of the need for people to learn, and to experiment with and internalize new ways of thinking, feeling and doing.

Usually, this effort to keep things moving at an "organic" rather than "mechanical" pace means proceeding by means of small steps, documenting and thoroughly analyzing new experiences, and planning ahead.

This is not to say that energy, determination and a sense of urgency on the part of higher management are not of value to the change. Indeed, no major organizational changes can take place without strong leadership. But the encouraging leadership of a shepherd or teacher seems better suited to the learning process than that of the general, since it allows people the time and the space to find their own way towards the overall goal.

The Role of the External Consultant

The following are roles and services which consultant (internal as well as external) can provide to help an organization make the transition to a service orientation.

Consult with Higher Management on the Strategy for Change

- Help design the structures and the special roles required, to the end that policy making, communication and decision making about the change take place in timely fashion.
- Think through questions of participation: who should be consulted, and at what stages in the process; how to ensure that those with useful resources are involved, and those whose commitment is required for success are on board.

Help Design and Implement Individual and Organizational Learning Processes.

"Learning," here refers to all the changes in knowledge, attitudes and understanding required to create and implement the change. To us, the concept of learning is at the heart of a successful transition. It is a much broader concept than "training," including:

- Creating a common vision and statement of purposes and goals.
- Diagnosing customer needs and wants.
- Mapping in detail the current service delivery system.
- Planning new work flow patterns and new patterns of cooperation between functional groupings.
- Developing the attitudes and habits of thought characteristic of a "service culture."
- Designing, implementing and researching organizational experiments, e.g., test sites and service delivery systems.

Consult to Change Managers on their Leadership Roles and Styles

- Participative management, as opposed to. isolating and/or authoritarian styles.
- Management by walking about (MBWA).
- Inviting feedback and handling it nondefensively.

Work with Groups Involved in the Transition

- Team building: role negotiation, visioning, goal setting.

- Interfacing: establishing coordination and communication, negotiating authority and responsibility, managing conflict.

Research and Document the Transition

- Retrieving and conceptualizing what is learned; preparing reports and presentations to increase awareness and understanding of service delivery processes, and what such processes require of individuals and the organization in the way of resources, learning and change.
- Helping integrate new knowledge into the developing transition process: modifying strategy, structures and processes in accordance with experience.

Assist in Thinking through Systems Changes Implied by the Change in

Organizational Focus

- Career paths.
- Reward systems.
- Management development and training.

Stay "Tuned In" on an Ongoing Basis

- Help transition managers diagnose the dynamic balance of the organization on the polarities described above.
- Help sense the state of health of the organization.

Structures and Activities for Change

In planning a major change, a transition organization parallel to the normal organization must be designed, staffed and managed. A skeleton description of such an organization, along with a sequence of transition activities, is given below.

Note: Many of the ideas in this section derive from Flo Hoylman of the Pacific Gas & Electric Company and from Linda Ackerman, who generously made their experience and that of their colleagues available to me.

Steering Group

Managers representing all the line and staff functions in the Company are chosen to "advise and consent" to the activities of the Transition Team and the Design Team. Its function is to oversee the transition. It addresses policy regarding the relationship between the transition activities and the ongoing productive activities of the company, and it approves overall strategy for the transition.

As I conceive of the Steering Group, it reviews activities of the Transition and Design Teams but does not carry out any project work itself. The members are active in using their contacts and their influence to assist and smooth the transition process.

The Steering Group will oversee policy and implementation issues in such areas as:

- Development of a statement of corporate purpose and values which embodies the service concept and which can be embraced by all line and staff functions.

- Selection and recruitment of key Transition Team members, and getting them assigned to the Transition Team as a matter of high priority.
- Formulating the philosophy of the change, particularly with regard to time and timing (e.g., whether to focus on assessing needs and planning in advance, or to step into the change and work out the difficulties as they arise).
- Assessing resources needed by the Transition Team, and helping to free up those resources from the functions which own them.
- Establishment of criteria for selection of test sites.
- Planning and managing structural changes needed to support the service concept, particularly those changes which move the locus of decision making and control closer to the customer.
- Educating the functions as to the changes in work flow, priorities, job descriptions and rewards which are needed for the change to be more than just cosmetic.
- Advising the Transition Team as to the politics of the change, and helping to ease the conflicts and dislocations of the change by using their influence.
- Recognizing service oriented achievements, and publicizing them throughout the company. Helping to create a "service consciousness" by constantly talking about service.

Transition Team

The Transition Team is the key planning and action group, led by the Transition Manager, a person respected not only in his or her own function, but in those others with which he or she must deal. The Transition Manager will likely need the full time help of a couple of first rate upper middle managers (one highly experienced in field operations, and one with planning and organization design expertise) plus a couple of high level clerical/secretarial people. Internal and external consultants complete the team.

Design Team

The Design Team is composed of respected and experienced managers representing the functions involved in the change. Where the Steering Group is concerned with policy and oversees the action, the Design Team actively works together with the Transition Team to develop the concepts, structures and procedures needed to implement the change. Specifically, it is active in:

- Creating a statement of purpose and values, a mission statement which embodies the essence of the service concept.
- Developing the conceptual design of the field service organization: the structures, the linkages to the rest of the organization, the relationships to customers, the work flow concepts, the staffing patterns, the rewards.

Test Sites

These are field operations which are selected for early implementation of the service concept. There may be two or three, selected to represent different operating

environments. The Test Sites are regarded as operating experiments, selected for their commitment, as well as for their "face validity" (meaning that they would be seen by others as representative of the field organization as a whole).

Project Teams

Project Teams assist the Transition Team in implementing the transition. They have overlapping membership with the Design Team, but add new faces, partly to bring specialized expertise to bear, and partly to spread experience and commitment to the change throughout the organization. One Project Team will assist in implementing the Test Sites, and one will be active in implementing the redesign of the field organization.

A Transition Scenario

Phase 1: Orientation and Diagnosis (4-6 months)

The Transition team studies the organization and its environment, working with customer panels, interviewing people at all levels, both in the field and in the central organization. A "map" of the organization is created, showing how the current organization delivers service, and what facilitates or blocks optimum service to the customer.

Organization mapping also includes an assessment of the field and central organizations' readiness for change, with identification of nodes of support and indifference/resistance.

Visits are made to other companies in the industry in order to retrieve their experience in similar transitions.

The Steering Group is formed, and they participate in the identification and recruitment of the Design Team.

Large group meetings are held to publicize the service concept, and to recognize (celebrate) service achievements of the organization-as-it-is. A process is inaugurated for involving employees and customers in identifying examples of good service, e.g., "Catch Us Doing Something Right." Employee study groups are formed to help in identifying helps and barriers to service in the current organization.

The Design Team is identified and briefed as to its responsibilities.

Phase 2: Service Concept Design (3-4 months)

The Design Team is educated on the information gathered during Phase 1. Using inputs from the meetings of management and employees conducted in Phase 1, the Design Team drafts a statement of purpose embodying the service concept. The draft statement is discussed with managers and employees in the field, so that when it is presented to the Steering Group for approval, the statement is broadly representative of the field organization.

Phase 3: Selection and Preparation of Test Sites (3-4 months)

The Transition Team visits field to identify candidates for test sites. Interest and commitment are assessed on the part of key people in each potential site. The Design Team makes recommendations to the Steering Group; test sites are selected.

Phase 4: Test Site Planning (6-8 months)

The Test Project Team is selected, to link with the functions, help with planning the test, and facilitate needed changes in systems, procedures, work flow, regulations during the test.

The Transition Team works with Test Sites, assisted by members of the Test Project Team, to build commitment, and understanding of the service concept. Together they plan implementation, personnel changes, physical changes needed, work flow, and organization restructuring.

This is a time at which participation at all levels of the Test Sites is encouraged, and heavy emphasis is laid on contingency planning: thinking through what can go wrong and planning how to cope.

Phase 5: Implementation of Test Sites (9-12 months)

This is a time of tinkering with management systems, work simplification, linkages and information flow. It is also a time of continuous documentation and evaluation of progress by the Transition Team, together with the Test Project Team. This phase is complete when the Test Sites are out of the startup phase, and enough has been learned to be confident of implementing further sites effectively.

During this phase, continuous feedback from the Test Sites informs and influences the ongoing design of the new Field Organization (Phase 5a).

Phase 5a: Designing the Field Organization (5-6 months)

This phase is concurrent with Phase 5. It involves the restructuring of the field organization in accordance with the service concept, so that at the conclusion of the

Test Site implementation and evaluation phase, the remainder of the organization is ready to move towards implementation. The Transition Team, assisted by the Field Reorganization Project Team, works through the design process, under the eye of the Steering Group.

Continuous discussion and liaison with both the field and the functional organization is necessary during this phase, so that the planning process gains commitment and the planners do not become isolated from the rest of the organization.

Phase 6: Continuation and Consolidation

During the continuation phase, additional sites are converted to the new structures, systems and procedures, using the experience of the Test Sites. Phase 6 lasts until the entire field organization is operating according to the new concepts.

A major task will be the reworking of job descriptions, job evaluations and the compensation system. In order to fully implement the service concepts, it is necessary to embody them in the personnel systems. In most organizations this takes much longer and is more difficult than expected. The process is facilitated by having made sure during previous phases that key Personnel people have been intimately involved in the work of the Design Team, the Test Project Team, and the Field Reorganization Project Team.

A Transition Checklist:

Here is a summary of guidelines, or things to pay attention to in managing the transition process, put in the form of a checklist. This list owes a great deal to the contributions of Flo Hoylman and her colleagues.

- 1) The bringing together of different functions in the field in order to simplify the customer's relationships with the Company will produce a need for more generalists in management, and for cross training of present staff. In planning, give thought to designing a cross-functional development program in each unit affected by the change.
- 2) It is very important to get the design concept as clear as possible, and to continue to clarify and communicate the concept as the change develops. If people are clear about the concepts, they will know what to do. If not, they will have to use trial and error, and will look "stupid" in the mistakes they make.
- 3) Review policy and practice on the delegation of authority: the more responsive organization is the one where authority is exercised at lower levels.
- 4) Plan and negotiate changes in line/staff relationships - staff will probably move more into an advising, consulting and monitoring role, as the line becomes more accountable and has more authority for their entire operation. Such changes follow on the concept of a service culture, because it is hard to be responsive if you don't have authority and accountability.

- 5) It is important to involve the personnel function early on in planning and advising about job changes. Personnel is often overlooked by line managers eager to get on with the work, and then things get difficult later, when changes in job levels and reward structures become necessary.
- 6) There is a need to conceptualize and actively model the "customer advocacy" role and values. The active representing of the customer by line from the bottom up is the only way that real changes in service will take place. The new priorities should impact the selection and promotion process. In particular, when selecting key field unit people, insist on demonstrated customer/applicant advocacy.

A customer advocacy attitude is also important in support services and administrative functions, and its development needs to be planned for among these persons who don't normally deal directly with customers.

- 7) Make a communication plan for each stage of the transition: what to communicate, when and how. Give consideration to how to use the grapevine for communication! Remember that too much communication is better than too little, because people usually don't "hear" a message until it begins to impact them.
- 8) Use two way communication: give time for questions and discussion, and, where feasible, employee input. But don't ask for employee input unless you intend to use it, and do get back to employees with a response to input you asked for!

- 9) In designing each concrete change, prepare an impact analysis: a list of who the change will affect, and how. This will turn up a list of obstacles and barriers to the change which can be planned for in advance. The impact analysis serves as contingency planning for the change.
- 10) Before implementing new ways of working, each field unit should document (map) step by step processes for new business, before changing the work flow. This a) assures that no critical steps are lost; b) points the way to opportunities for streamlining; and c) identifies where improved communications between functional specialties or work units need improvement.
- 11) The "mapping" process should document what customer contacts are made: who makes them and about what. Plan how to maintain customer contact during the transition.

In addition to the task benefits of the mapping process, it enhances work unit morale and commitment to implementation by involving the employees who know the current system, and by recognizing and respecting their input.
- 12) When undergoing a transition, the managers involved actually have two full time jobs. Time management becomes critical, and the speed of the change will affect personal stress, as well as the effectiveness of the "business-as-usual" part. Giving more time for the transition is beneficial in reducing stress and keeping the unit's performance up. There is little point

in advertising a change towards greater service, and then reducing effectiveness by changing too rapidly.

- 13) The transition implies the building of new working teams. New teams need to work self consciously on their own startup (they can use help from consultants in this work). They should plan how people will work together: what each member needs from the others and needs to give to the others to get their jobs done in new or changed roles.

Team startup planning includes: how to manage the integration of the transition and the daily business; building an implementation plan which everyone understands and commits to; putting an early warning system in place and monitoring it; and learning more about leadership styles. Some useful activities are:

- Team startup meeting for planning, facilitated by a consultant.
- Role clarification: writing down each person's tasks, responsibilities and authority, and agreeing it; renegotiating roles as experience is gained.

I append one last guideline, perhaps the most important of all. Expect the unexpected! Expect the change to take longer than you think it will, probably by a factor of two or three. You can plan for all the mechanical things that have to be done, but an organization is an organism, not a machine. It will grow and change at its own rate, just as a plant or tree does. You can water and fertilize the organism, but if the

desired change is in the direction of empowerment and willing acceptance of responsibility, it cannot be forced.

Expect that performance and morale will become worse before they become better. The change will require upsetting systems and structures that people know and are able to make work, and it will take time to learn the new. We have no idea how much learning has been involved in making the current system work, because it took place over a long period of time, slowly. Much that has been learned has to be unlearned, and unlearning is the hardest learning of all.

Expect that people will resist changes they said they wanted, because change is upsetting, and because people in a bureaucratic organization have learned to be afraid of failure. People say that want freedom, but most shrink from the freedom to make mistakes and be criticized for them.

Expect you will get little credit for what you have brought into being. When people really learn new ways of working and make them successful, they feel they have done it themselves. And they will have!