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***Change the Way You Lead Change***  
Leadership Strategies that REALLY Work  
By David M. Herold and Donald B. Fedor  
(Stanford University Press, June 6, 2008)

“In a world replete with easy answers and facile slogans, this book recognizes that changing organizations is a complex, difficult business, and offers a practical model and some very useful examples and applications that will help the reader to beat the odds.”

—Steve Kerr, Senior Advisor, Goldman Sachs and former Head of Training and Development, Goldman Sachs and General Electric

Popular wisdom suggests that about 80 percent of all change initiatives end in failure. More alarming still for top managers, a survey of reported in *Business Week* in 2005, found that 31 percent of CEOs fired by their boards were removed because they mismanaged change (more so than for any other reason). Why is this happening – and why do we need yet another book purporting to have “the answer?”

In a new book, *Change The Way You Lead Change* (available from Stanford University Press, June 6, 2008), David Herold and Donald Fedor argue that most of the literature on change avoids dealing with complexities of real life organizational changes. The authors dispense with both the “ten easy steps” approaches, which emphasize how executives can make change go more smoothly, and “blame the victim” approaches, that would have you believe the problem lies with the targets of change – they just don’t get it. (The best example of the latter is the wildly successful *Who Moved My Cheese*.)

Instead, Herold and Fedor spent the last ten years asking executives to think of an unsuccessful change initiative and to identify the key factors that were responsible for the failure. In pursuing this question, they examined more than 300 organizational changes and over 8,000 individuals who lived through them. The authors then reality-tested their ideas by bouncing them off hundreds of managers who were living change on a daily basis.

The book finds that, while almost all advice about organizational change focuses on a few steps applied to a single change, few people actually lived in a “one change at a time” environment. Companies, by contrast, live on a “roller coaster of change,” with overlapping

changes being driven by different events, led by different executives, and originating from different parts of the organization. Change is never a stepwise or easily prescribed process: it is messy and complicated, and its outcomes are easily swayed by a host of factors.

As a result, Herold and Fedor argue that business leaders need to radically change the way they think of change. They should implement “holistic change” models that define and justify proposed changes, taking account of the abilities of the people who will lead them and carry them out, and of the internal and external context in which changes occur. There is no alternative to carefully strategizing a desired change and asking “what,” “with whom” and “under what conditions” before even beginning to answer the question of “how.” Most change books put the cart before the horse by tackling the “how” question as if the rest did not matter.

According to the authors, such a diagnosis typically yields one of three alternatives: a) modification of the nature, magnitude, or timing of the change idea; b) temporarily shelving the change idea and getting buy-in for the change idea within the company; or c) moving ahead with the change idea, but with a better sense of the challenges that will need to be addressed by the change process.

The book references many companies (including HP, Xerox, Ford, and Home Depot) that realized the need to change and were not timid about rolling out many changes, but bungled the efforts. It also cites the all too rare instances in which savvy leaders, such as those at Merck and P&G, were able to navigate successfully through change.

*Change The Way You Lead Change* drives home the point that what looks good on an excel spreadsheet does not necessarily translate into effective change. As businesses are forced to adjust to the beginning recession, this book will be an invaluable resource for anyone involved in change initiatives – from executives to consultants and management students.

**Stanford Business Books**

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