

### Surfing the Change Wave

Can you handle how fast the world is changing around you? With social media and other outlets, our customers and potential customers can control the image we have in the community. We can't control so much of the environment in which we operate. Some companies are accepting this and riding the waves of change around them. They find ways to get energy from changes they can't control.

"In a world that we don't control, tolerance is obviously an asset," says Ryan Holiday, author of *The Obstacle Is the Way*. "But the ability to find energy and power from what we don't control is an immense competitive advantage."

Riding a wave of change can only be accomplished by letting go of control over our futures and accepting other people's definition of who we are as a company. It does not mean letting go of who we are as individuals or of our morals and character.

Part of riding the change wave is to identify when the change is happening. This can happen when competitors introduce a new product or service, a major change happens in the local economy, or when things seem to have stabilized. A "stable" economy actually is in a subtle slow down. Give a "stable" economy a decade and the loss of business will be painfully obvious. Stacy Karacostas states that when she complains about something in her business three times, she knows that she needs to make more substantive

changes.

Another part of riding a change wave is to start planning how to respond to the change. Often, this means listening to people who have started playing with the new style, have explored the new rave, or even have participated in illegal activities. It is surprising how many activities have moved from the streets into accepted society. (Rap music, hip hop dance, and graffiti are just some of those.)

When deciding to change, there are a number of organizations and consultants who will help identify which change to make, how to prepare your company for that change, and how to manage such change.

But few such organizations talk about the most important changes that have to happen: the changes to ourselves. In order to surf the change wave, we, ourselves, need to have strong character. Often, we are the ones most standing in way of changes. We need to be in a place that the changes that need to happen strengthen who we are instead of threatening us. (How to get to that point is beyond the scope of such an article as this.)

The flip side is also true. There are organizations that are in constant turmoil, major changes all the time, and wind up with a lack of progress. Making changes needs to be done in accordance with our basic principles to provide a stable environment and purpose to everyone.

The strongest surfers work hard so that they maintain balance through rough waters and insane breakers. We can do the same through rough economic turbulence and radical changes to our companies.

### Riding The Waves Of Change

### The Science of Not Knowing

Human beings have three ways of not knowing. We can know that we don't know something. We can not know something and not know that we don't know it. We can "know" something but be totally wrong about it. This last one is the most costly and hardest to deal with.

There are a number of costs of knowing but being wrong in that knowing. We build institutions on that wrong knowledge and invest heavily in them. People who grow up learning that wrong knowledge fight unlearning it and, in the past, have fought wars over such teachings. And there is a significant biological cost to unlearning any knowledge even if it is wrong.

Just looking at how individuals unlearn something, we can see the cost to the individual. In our brains, we have several levels of learning including learning at the subconscious and "muscle memory" level, learning at the reaction level, and learning at the rational level. Each level of learning builds neural pathways, often building actual structures in the brain, and chemical pathways between neurons.

Unlearning requires us to break the chemical bonds between some facts and our neurons. We have an enzyme that helps us to forget. But when a bit of history builds multiple levels of learning (such as when the incident is emotionally charged), it builds more levels that take multiple ways to forget. It takes multiple different brain processes to forget such deep learning.

In short, unlearning some untruths is very difficult and people resist doing so.

When we look at a corporate structure, the people have learned ways to operate. It takes often significant effort to help them unlearn when they have learned something wrong.

### Risky World

The home assistants such as Amazon's Alexa are being enhanced to be able to make phone calls and order products on your behalf. Alexa and Google's Home are also prime targets for hackers. While nobody has reported a hack of Alexa that allowed the hackers to make purchases using your credit card, we only need to wait.

A View from the Prairie is published by  
Prairie Trail Software, Inc.,

**Making Information  
from Streams of Data**

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