

seen those Texas Instruments pocket calculators that our MBA friends carry. Well, it wouldn't hurt to know what one of those devices does."

Roth identifies the key to successful benchmarking as a mixture of focus and precision. He says, "Whether cost or service quality, the person or organization providing benchmarking services must ultimately tailor the information to its intended audience(s) so that the information is useful and of value. That not only means having the ability to develop an action plan from the information, but also a plan that is aligned with corporate/customer goals and objectives. Without such an outcome, both the corporation and the customer will not have confidence in your ability to deliver the facilities and related services they need at the cost and quality levels they desire."

Change Management

Change is the only constant in today's business world. Whether it is change in one's customer base, technological advances, or the economy, organizations that do not embrace change will not survive. As corporate mission statements and cultures change, changes in the work environment must occur as well in order to support the business goals and objectives of the changed organization. Interior designers are often called upon to develop a methodology for helping clients manage transitions related to change in the work environment. These changes are often needed to reinforce the major organizational changes, such as changes in leadership, purpose, and structure. Appropriate internal resources within the client organization are needed to work hand in hand with the change management consultant to manage the transition successfully. Change management consultation services are individualized to the specific needs of each client and employee user group. The most successful change management efforts foster ownership of the upcoming change among employees by involving them in the process, which also provides valuable input to the interior design process.

Melodee Wagen, a change management consultant, defines change management as "listening, responding appropriately, and communicating. It is the process of helping people manage through the human reactions to effectively and productively function under new circumstances. Change management is the process of informing, pulling, pushing, listening, and helping people through both the change and then the transition to the new reality. Change management is patience."

Diane Schroeder, an interior designer who has led many corporations through the change process, emphasizes that change requires a clear plan and a motivation for staff to follow the plan. She says, “In order for change to occur and perpetuate, there must be an intended result and an envisioned path through the transition. People cannot successfully shift from one set of behavioral protocols to another without a step-by-step transition plan. A new environment cannot force change any more than introducing new relationships or new tools, putting them in a room together and walking away, expecting them to ‘figure it out.’ Human behavior typically relaxes into routine and familiar surroundings. When an outside element imposes change, it is natural to resist. The key to successful change is to invite the ‘people’ to become engaged in the change; to create the value of the change to them personally, and to become involved in the physical surroundings that reinforce the ultimate desire. In order to transition to a new way of thinking and behaving, we must borrow elements from the present, put those elements into a new context, and create models to demonstrate the desirable future.”

This work involves a change management consultant, often an interior designer trained in change management processes, who typically consults separately with four groups: a steering committee made up of management decision makers, a facilitation team that oversees communication, a focus group composed of representatives of the organization at large, and an implementation team. The change management consultant provides material and guidance to the four groups, and manages the process from the initial discussions through design input and transition management. He or she develops tools to help employees understand and adapt to the changes in their workplace and often works with their corporate communications department to prepare appropriate internal communications materials.

Melodee Wagen has identified three critical activities in leading the change management process. The first critical activity for designers who practice change management is to help senior management understand why they should include change management thinking and behavior from the very beginning of every major undertaking. She says, “It is important to approach the change from the point of view of the individual whose life will be affected by what is happening, or rather effectively happening *to* them. All employees need information, as specific and detailed as possible, but they also need the understanding that change is disruptive, frightening, sometimes personally