

affecting people's lives, and that business *isn't* 'as usual.' The human response of stress, resistance, and 'mourning the old' does not differ if the change is viewed as positive or negative."

The second critical activity is to assure that the company either fulfills its promises or addresses these promises. Wagen says, "They cannot leave people wondering. Humans will make up their own version of events, speculation will run rampant, and productivity will suffer. It is important that the company understand that although change is a time that offers opportunity for creativity, it is distracting, and is not a good time to increase performance goals unless it is done very carefully."

The third critical activity is to communicate. Wagen says that in benchmarking, the design professional must "communicate, communicate, and communicate again. Repeat the story; remind everyone again and again why we are doing this, why it is important, and what the goals are for the change. Communicate in different media, such as town hall meetings, letters, on the web, through e-mail, and through special project newsletters."

The training that is needed by an interior designer interested in expanding his or her role to include change management is a widely varied path. Wagen found it helpful to pursue postgraduate work, which resulted in a Certificate in Management Studies. Her professional background includes 14 years of work in administration and strategic planning and analysis at Harvard University. She has also served as an on-site service provider at a major high-technology provider, doing strategic planning, master planning, alternative officing studies and implementation, and occupancy planning.

On the other hand, Diane Schroeder has evolved through three decades of interior architecture, always with a focus on communication and human behavior. With her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Nebraska, during the first years of her career, Schroeder was assigned to work with teams that developed facilities in Middle Eastern cultures including Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Vast differences in cultures, behaviors, and protocols awakened the realization that the dramas of life and the environments in which they take place are connected and interactive. Asking questions and inviting response in pursuit of a vision toward the way people feel and interact with their environment is the continuity of evolution through generations, business strategies, economic impact, technological influences, and variations in priorities.

Traits and characteristics that are helpful to an interior designer considering this specialty service include: patience, forward-thinking ability, understanding of human and organizational dynamics, ability to persuade as well as collaborate, ability to anticipate and put oneself in another's shoes. Wagen's best advice is to be able to "Tell the truth. Tell why something is happening. If it must be addressed but is still confidential—say so. Be very careful to say what you really believe. Don't promise what you might not be able to deliver." Perhaps the most important trait of a change management consultant is the capacity to see the common elements that can make up a path that staff can actually follow. Schroeder advises that "common denominators will cause bonding and balance. Simplicity evolves out of the interacting complexities. Instead of independent, isolated work environments, many companies are looking for the collective mentality of collaborative teaming to leverage the total knowledge of the workforce." The effect that this change can have on an organization is powerful. Interior designers who are skilled in change management processes provide vital consulting services.

A CASE STUDY: BLUE CROSS AND BLUE SHIELD ASSOCIATION

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association (BCBSA), located in Illinois, is a good example of a company that is sincerely interested in supporting and managing change. Diane Schroeder worked with them to implement real change within their work environment to reflect changed organizational philosophies. The BCBSA adopted "change philosophies" to encourage interactive work and team work. The compelling philosophy, "Collectively, we can gain nearly 100 percent knowledge," drove the stated goals:

1. Cultural transformation and the pursuit of excellence, focused on the customer, can be achieved through value added teamwork and shared vision.
2. A teamwork environment is really critical to achieve invention.
3. Teamwork, collaboration, and personal performance go hand in hand in creating a strategic framework.