

PERSPECTIVE

Don't let the change facing your organization go to waste

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Editor's note: to launch 2009, Canadian HR Reporter asked six experts, who are all members of the Strategic Capability Network, an association that provides a forum for leading-edge thinking and practice on people and organization management, what the year might hold in store. Here's what Edmond Mellina, commentator for SCNetwork on Organization Effectiveness, had to say.



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The ripple effect of the economic crisis will be felt throughout 2009 and beyond. It will bring both threats and opportunities to organizations, and its impact will be profound. Being preoccupied with continual, complex and uncertain change is the central issue that will keep senior executives awake at night.

In its *Global CEO Study 2008*, IBM found eight out of 10 chief executive officers anticipate substantial or very substantial change over the next three years, yet they rate their ability to manage change 22-per-cent lower than their expected need for it – a “change gap” that has nearly tripled since 2006.

IBM conducted the study before the first waves of the economic tsunami arrived on shore. By and large, the magnitude and depth of this crisis caught business leaders by surprise. Therefore, CEOs are undoubtedly even more concerned today with closing the change gap than they were at the time of the study.

“You don't ever want to let a crisis go to waste. It's an opportunity to do important things,” said Rahm Emanuel, the incoming White House chief of staff under U.S. president-elect Barack Obama. This should be a motto in all organizations. The fact the economic crisis is forcing change across industries represents both a challenge and an opportunity.

To tackle the challenge, **organizations should help the teams responsible for executing change by equipping them with proven change management tools and methodologies, and by supporting these teams with effective support and coaching.** This is about integrating learning and execution to effectively support the implementation of change; to mitigate risk; to make today's challenge easier to handle; and at the same time, to narrow the change gap.

Teams learn the most about change management when they have to execute complex change in an uncertain environment. So, this year presents organizations with a great opportunity to further develop their ability to manage constant change.

Strategy is a coin with two sides: defence and offence. When organizations make a concerted effort to support teams through integrated learning as change is executed, they play defence by responding more effectively to waves of change. They play offence in two major ways: First, they capture market opportunities by implementing the necessary change faster and better than the competition; second, they build a strategic weapon for the future by narrowing the change gap.

Don't let the change facing your organization go to waste. It is an opportunity to do important things on both sides of the strategic coin.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Edmond Mellina is president of ORCHANGO – a provider of learning solutions for organizations going through change. Its programs are based on a unique and proprietary system which features a very practical toolkit tested in the real-world, across industries and around the globe.

Edmond is internationally recognized as an expert in the field of change and transition management. He is the creator of the ORCHANGO Change Management System™ and the ORCHANGO Learn-and-Execute® System.

Edmond's articles have appeared in leading business publications around the globe; the media regularly interview him as an expert source.

As a speaker, Edmond addresses audiences on change management, leadership development, multicultural teamwork and the art of influence.

Edmond holds a Master of Engineering from the prestigious “Grandes Écoles” of France, and is a graduate of the Ivey Executive Program. He is fluent in both English and French.

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