

Sidebar: The 10 Challenges of Change

In "The Dance of Change: The Challenges to Sustaining Momentum in Learning Organizations," Peter Senge and his colleagues identify 10 challenges of change. Grouped into three categories -- challenges of initiating change, challenges of sustaining momentum, and challenges of systemwide redesign and rethinking -- these 10 items amount to what the authors call "the conditions of the environment that regulate growth."

Challenges of Initiating Change

1. **"We don't have time for this stuff!"** People who are involved in a pilot group to initiate a change effort need enough control over their schedules to give their work the time that it needs.
2. **"We have no help!"** Members of a pilot group need enough support, coaching, and resources to be able to learn and to do their work effectively.
3. **"This stuff isn't relevant."** There need to be people who can make the case for change -- who can connect the development of new skills to the real work of the business.
4. **"They're not walking the talk!"** A critical test for any change effort: the correlation between espoused values and actual behavior.

Challenges of Sustaining Momentum

1. **"This stuff is . . ."** Personal fear and anxiety -- concerns about vulnerability and inadequacy -- lead members of a pilot group to question a change effort.
2. **"This stuff isn't working!"** Change efforts run into measurement problems: Early results don't meet expectations, or traditional metrics don't calibrate to a pilot group's efforts.
3. **"They're acting like a cult!"** A pilot group falls prey to arrogance, dividing the company into "believers" and "nonbelievers."

Challenges of Systemwide Redesign and Rethinking

1. **"They . . . never let us do this stuff."** The pilot group wants more autonomy; "the powers that be" don't want to lose control.
2. **"We keep reinventing the wheel."** Instead of building on previous successes, each group finds that it has to start from scratch.
3. **"Where are we going?"** The larger strategy and purpose of a change effort may be obscured by day-to-day activity. Big question: Can the organization achieve a new definition of success?