

## Developing Change Agility for the Future

Written by: Dr. Nanette Miner, Leadership Development and Workplace-Learning Strategy Consultant, The Training Doctor

The ability to adapt and thrive in an environment that is always in flux is essential for the success and longevity of your organization. Which means you and your employees must embrace change. In fact, leading change would be the optimal approach. In reality, change is usually met with apprehension and resistance. Because of this, only 20 – 30% of change efforts are successful according to recent research by McKinsey and a poll of Chief Human Resource Officers by IBM.

Few people embrace change because they associate it with discomfort or loss... even danger – what if I get fired for trying this? By shifting the mindset of your people to change is a steppingstone to something better you can prime them for the agility that change requires.

Here are three ways that you can reframe the fear of change in your employees:

1. Focus on skill building
2. Promote and support experimentation
3. Designate change leaders or champions

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### Focus on Skill Building

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Skill building and continuous learning are a form of change. Remember when you or your teenager were preparing to get a driver's license? That change requires a lot of education, a lot of practice, and a lot of new responsibility. And yet teenagers everywhere embrace this change in their lives. This kind of excitement and dedication to learning new skills – because



something better is on the other side - is what we need to replicate in our businesses.

I recently spoke with a small business owner who challenged her employees in 2022 to pursue a passion project related to the business. She gave them time to work on their passion projects and a small budget. At the end of the year each of the employees gave a presentation about what they had been working on and their progress, and she chose two of the projects to formally adopt as services offered by her company.

For more information on building a learning culture, see the September 2023 article I co-authored with Brent Darnell, [here](#).

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### Promote and Support Experimentation

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Encourage your employees to ask questions, challenge assumptions, push back on the status quo, and try new

initiatives that are outside of the traditional way of doing things. Without questions we can't see possibilities and without experimentation we can't evolve and grow.

You have undoubtedly heard about Google's 20% rule in which everyone is given 20% of their work week to experiment with ideas that might benefit the organization. This is a policy that promotes experimentation. In reality, most organizations thwart experimentation because it takes time away from pressing day-to-day responsibilities.

Slack, the \$26 billion company, was originally started as an internal communication tool within a company that was creating an online game. When the game failed to find success, the founders wondered what they could do with the communication tool they created for themselves. This is a mindset that exemplifies that loss is not failure, it's just a step in the process.

Unfortunately, most organizations punish individual initiative or creativity when it doesn't pan out as originally planned. We celebrate entrepreneurs who bring to market things like Carvana and Robinhood, but we don't often hear the back story of the failures they experienced before they found success.

Experimentation creates expansive thinkers; when they hit a roadblock, instead of going back to the old way or giving up, expansive thinkers think, Well what's possible now? What haven't we tried yet?

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## Designate Change Leaders or Champions

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Change leadership is about more than just one person; it's about creating a network of individuals throughout your organization who lead and support change. The responsibility for growth and experimentation is a collective effort. All leaders and managers in your organization should see themselves as "change agents" actively participating in the process of experimenting and promoting change.

A phrase to use during regular check-ins with employees should be, What are you working on now? and How can I help? This encourages employees to think expansively about their work responsibilities and know that it is expected they are always "working on" something.

This isn't a nice-to-have, it is vital to the ongoing success of your business. The "this is how we've always done it" mindset will not serve us in the future.

I bet it takes two hands for you to count all the changes that have occurred in your business since 2020. There is no reason to believe that the pace will change. So, embracing change readiness and championing change in your business will lower stress and open possibilities for the future. Here's to a prosperous new year! 🦋



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## About the Author

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Dr. Nanette Miner is a leadership development and workplace-learning strategy consultant. Through her firm, [The Training Doctor](#), she has revolutionized the way that individuals are prepared for leadership roles in their organizations. Rather than a chosen few, her process is aimed at ensuring everyone in the company has the skills and business acumen of a leader. This approach ensures both immediate and long-term return-on-investment (ROI) for an organization.

She has written articles for Chief Learning Office magazine, Forbes, and MBA World and is a frequent guest on workplace training and career podcasts and talk radio such as Inc. Radio and America's Workforce Radio.

Nanette regularly speaks at industry conferences and corporate learning events on how to integrate leadership capabilities throughout an organization. An author of eight books, her most recent is Future-Proofing Your Organization.

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