



The Leadership Landscape

March/April, 2008

A bi-monthly periodical published by the faculty of the Federal Executive Institute to help you continue your growth as a public sector leader.

"Time changes everything except something within us which is always surprised by change."
Thomas Hardy

Upcoming Programs and Courses at FEI:



[Leading Public Sector Transformation, Online Session Begins July 14th, 2008, Resident Learning, August 25-28, 2008, Charlottesville, VA](#)

[Creating Breakthroughs: Innovating in Government, July 7-8, 2008, Charlottesville, VA](#)

[Polarity Leadership Program, August 4-6, 2008, Charlottesville, VA](#)

[Leading through Constructive Conflict, August 25-29, 2008, Charlottesville, VA](#)

Request a [Program Guide of all Courses](#) offered for FY 2008

Welcome from the Dean of Faculty:

Although we think about change and often talk of its importance, Thomas Hardy reminds us that we are also creatures of habit. Moreover, we often forget this crucial fact of life: everything is subject to change. The articles in this edition of the Leadership Landscape ask you to reflect on what might need to change in your everyday leadership capacities, how we might help ourselves and others "let go" and move forward, and, finally, how to see the difference between those changes that are a part of development trajectory and those that completely alter our paradigms. These are difficult questions without easy answers. Best wishes to you in the coming spring!

~Dr. Peter Ronayne, Dean of Faculty

Transforming Organizations: Do you know what the difference is between change and transformation? Dr. Beverly Fletcher examines this question and offers some suggestions for keeping these two organizational watch words distinct. [Read more...](#)

Values-Based Leadership: Stephen Blair discusses the inevitable signs that accompany big changes. He urges public sector leaders to embrace those signs in order to let go and look to the future. [Read more...](#)

Values-Based Leadership: Gail Funke offers some practical steps for reflecting on your leadership for 15 minutes each week. [Read More...](#)

Special Events: In honor of FEI's 40th anniversary, we offer three remarks delivered at our 10th, 20th, and 25th anniversary celebration. [Read more...](#)

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Wellness and Balance Tip of the Month:

Bully-who!

When I think of bullies, I mostly think about middle school. A recent study by [Zogby International](#) and the [New Workplace Institute](#), however, suggests that many people think of their own workplace when they think about bullies. Their survey estimates that nearly 50% of all people have endured or witnessed bullying in their work environment. Perhaps, these results are inflated by misperception of standard conflict.

To clarify, [Pamela Lutgen-Sandvik and her colleagues](#) write that although bullying may take many forms it is distinguished by its persistence and its focus on the individual rather than the work one does.

Perhaps you know a bully in your workplace or perhaps you might want to prepare others to deal with those difficult personalities? Researchers at Arizona State write that one of the best ways to “[bust the office bully](#)” is to tell a compelling story that focuses on promoting change.

Although this experience may be foreign to you, it might not be to those in your organization. In order to promote healthy and appropriately stressed environments, you may consider discussing what constitutes bullying and how your organization may deal with those situations.

~ John Stroup, FEI Research Fellow

Transforming Organizations

Organization Transformation: Misused and Misunderstood – Part I

Beverly R. Fletcher, FEI Senior Faculty

Organization transformation is an important concept that captures the massive changes currently being experienced by public, private and not-for-profit organizations. However, the phrase “*organization transformation*” is fast becoming one of the most over-used, abused, and little understood business concepts. Many leaders and managers seem to feel obligated to apply the term to every change effort they undertake to demonstrate that they are operating on the “cutting edge” of new ideas. As a result, the term is reaching cliché status which is relegating it to the world of “business speak.” Too often this phrase is used to obfuscate, confuse, evade the issues, and plain avoid communicating.

On the other hand, organization transformation is a useful concept that describes a distinctive set of organizational circumstances that require unique leadership and change agent skills and abilities. The unfortunate popular misuse of the term requires that the discussion of this concept start with clear definitions. Therefore, this two-part article has two purposes: First, to clarify what is and is not organization transformation; and secondly to convey seven themes that are present in organizations that are undergoing transformational changes.

A useful way to conceptualize the difference between *change* and *transformation* is to examine two basic types of change that may occur within organizations. First, a subunit of an organization may implement things without substantially affecting the nature of the organization as a whole. This type of

change would include relatively minor and often periodically occurring improvements and adjustments that do not affect the organization's core nature or require a shift in perception. The other type of change is multi-dimensional, multi-level, discontinuous, radical change involving a *paradigmatic shift* that transforms the entire organization.

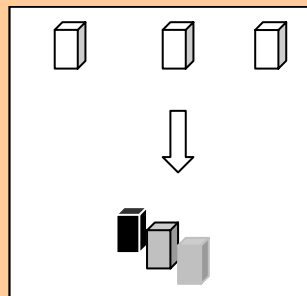
Paradigm Shift

So, before we can clearly define transformation, we are faced with another buzz-phrase (“paradigm shift”) that is overused, misunderstood, and must be defined. A *paradigm* is a pattern or model; a way of viewing the world; a conceptual framework or guide to making sense of things. In [The New Business of Paradigms](#), Joel Barker, a futurist, provides perhaps the most useful definition for the word. “A paradigm is a system of rules and regulations that does two things: First, some of the rules set limits or establish boundaries—just like a pattern sets the edges. Then, the rest of the rules offer you guidance on how to be successful by solving problems that exist inside those boundaries—in a sense, they offer you a model for problem solving. So a *paradigm* is a problem-solving system. And a *paradigm shift* is when you change from one set of rules to another.”

In further defining organization transformation, it is also useful to look at three different levels of organizational change: minor, major, and transformative.

Minor Change

Minor change is *first level*, which is *content change*, which is incremental or piecemeal. A useful analogy is the idea of a frame, which can be pictured as Joel Barker's “boundaries” for problem solving. The *frame* is a metaphor for the organization's context—that is its mission, vision, purpose, and values. A *minor change* then occurs when the contents within the “frame” are reorganized or changed.

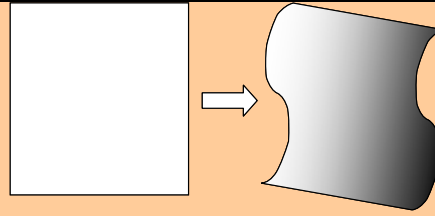


First Level - Minor Change:
Content change

Minor change is similar to rearranging the furniture in a room. An organizational example of minor change is process re-engineering in which a work flow process is studied and changed to achieve optimal efficiencies. Process re-engineering does not change the essential nature or context of the organization.

Major Change

Major change, or *second level change*, can be thought of as affecting the organizational context itself and is sometimes referred to as “*frame bending change*.” It is also called “transitional” change being somewhere between first order and second order change.

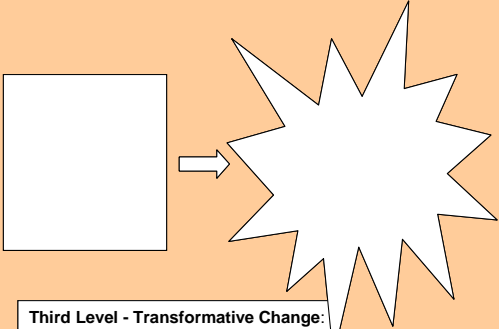


Second Level - Major Change:
Frame bending change; Context alteration

Organizational examples are adding a new product line, a new department, or changing reporting relationships at the top of the organization. These changes have the potential of transforming an organization; however, they do not automatically do so.

Transformative Change

Organization transformation, on the other hand, is *third level*, contextual, fundamental, paradigmatic change—also referred to as “**frame breaking change.**” It is often characterized by discontinuous chaotic events that cause severe disruption and “pain” in the organization. This is the basic definition for organization transformation.



Third Level - Transformative Change:
Frame breaking change; Contextual, paradigmatic, quantum, discontinuous, fundamental, total change (OT)

Organization transformation is, therefore, a fundamental third level change in the very context (or frame) of the organization: its vision, mission, strategies, processes, products, services, and relationships with environments and stakeholders (both internal and external). Organization transformation involves a paradigm shift that requires new ways of thinking, perceiving, and behaving. It can be thought of in terms of the difference between a typewriter and a computer, a fax transmission and e-mail, a horse and buggy and an airplane, and involves quantum change.

Organization Development (OD) vs. Organization Transformation (OT)

With an understanding of the severe nature of an organization transformation, it becomes apparent that it is not desirable in every situation. OT is not something that we want in our organizations just for the sake of claiming that we are “doing transformation” here. Organization development (OD) involving minor and/or major changes may be more appropriate to the situation.

It is also imperative to note that OD and OT do not represent polarities; and one is not necessarily “better” than the other. Each is useful within appropriate contexts. Indeed, a comprehensive OT effort will necessarily include many OD techniques, strategies, and interventions. The main difference seems to

be in the focal point of each. OD seeks to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of an organization, while OT seeks to change the very nature of the organization itself.

To learn more about organization transformation and transformational leadership, please look for FEI's new course offering [Leading Public Sector Transformation](#), August 25-29, 2008.

In the next issue we will continue the discussion by exploring the following seven themes that occur in an organization transformation.

- Coming to terms with chaos
- Providing open space
- Practicing radical authenticity
- Realizing connectedness
- Releasing blame
- Taking responsibility, and
- Accepting

Some of the ideas here were discussed more fully in Beverly Fletcher's book [Organization Transformation Theorists and Practitioners: Profiles and Themes](#).

To inquire about this program, please contact **Bonnie Boston 434/980-6277** or **Cynthia Morgan 434/980-6275**.

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[Values-Based Leadership](#)

Transformational Change and Letting Go

Stephen Blair, FEI Senior Faculty

As we began creating FEI's new program *Leading Public Sector Transformation*, I was reminded of a story about personally dealing with significant organizational change. While I worked in the first congressionally-mandated, performance-based federal agency, I was given the honor of leading the Customer Service Task Force. This Task Force was charged with listening to employees, students, parents, schools and our financial partners and taking their concerns seriously with the goal of recommending changes to our practices. The result of this effort was a series of recommendations on how our federal office could provide better service to customers and manage money more effectively.

After the release of the Task Force recommendations, an old friend and colleague of mine and I were having coffee and talking about the upcoming changes. I was very excited about the findings of the Customer Service Task Force and the recommendations for transformational change that came from our stakeholders. While I was enthused about the adventures ahead, my friend was very quiet. When I pushed him on his silence, tears came to his eyes and he said "I have been with these people for over 15

years, we are being pulled apart, we cannot even refer to ourselves by our name any more, and no one seems to care.” His obvious hurt brought up old buried personal memories and feelings that I had experienced during personal losses and changes—even positive changes. I had forgotten that even positive changes are a loss, and in order to proceed, even in joy, letting go of “what was” and grieving is an essential part of moving on.

Given the inherent difficulty in big change, we might ask “what do the experts have to advise?” In [*Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*](#), William Bridges presents that:

“Before you can begin something new, you have to end what used to be. Before you become a different kind of person, you must let go of the Old identity. Before you can learn a new way of doing things, you have to unlearn the old way. So beginnings depend upon endings. The problem is people don’t like endings. Yet change and endings go hand in hand: Change causes transition, and transition starts with an ending.”

Bridges suggests that you should expect and accept the signs of grieving. Certainly we know these signs well. They are:

Anger. Everything from grumbling to rage, often misdirected or undirected.

Bargaining: Unrealistic attempts to get out of the situation or to make it go away.

Anxiety: Silent or expressed; a realistic fear of an unknown and probably difficult future, or simply catastrophic fantasies.

Sadness: Everything from silence to tears—the heart of the grieving process.

Disorientation: Confusion and forgetfulness even among organized people; feelings of being lost and insecure.

Depression: Feelings of being down, flat, dead; feelings of hopelessness and being tired all the time.

He goes on to say that not everyone feels all of these feelings intensely, and that people don’t go through them in any particular order. But in any group faced with big changes you can expect to encounter all of them, and people need to recognize that they can accept the situation and move forward if they can work through these emotions. If you suppress the feelings and push to “get over them,” you’ll may handicap yourself and your team.

In their book [*Vitality*](#), Carl, Mary, and John Lofy point out the critical need to remember “4 Principles of Change.”

1. Significant events trigger reactions.
2. Those reactions do not go away.
3. Ignore them and they go “underground” and continue to influence the organization.
4. Dealing openly with reactions can create opportunities for growth and revitalization.

By reflecting on the challenge of navigating big changes or transformations, we can build on Bridges’ work to better understand the responses to the recommended changes:

1. Define what’s over and what isn’t. In my previous organization, our work dramatically helped millions of people secure an education and skills that have enabled them to live with dignity, raise their families, understand the world about them, and contribute to the overall good of the

world's peoples. That would continue and only increase. What are over are the things that were repeatedly identified as inappropriate and dysfunctional.

2. Mark the endings. Take time to reflect on successes, celebrate them, and say good-bye.
3. Treat the past with respect. Most likely, the changes you're going through are not because of wrong-doing, but because the world has changed.
4. Take a piece of the old way with you. Big change needs identification of the good things we want to keep and bring them into our new organization.
5. Show how endings ensure continuity of what really matters. The launching of a new or transformed organization will demonstrate what we want to let go of, and what we want to keep. In the public sector, most importantly, it will celebrate the continuation of an outstanding commitment to service to the public.

The intensity and magnitude of the changes were dramatic in the agency in which I worked. In the tragedy *Philip van Artevelde*, Henry Taylor wrote that, "He that lacks time to mourn, lacks time to mend." To embrace change, especially transformational change, take the time to celebrate your successes with you colleagues, together determine what you want to keep and what to let go of, say good-bye to old relationships, allow time to grieve, and join in celebrating a new opportunity to serve the people of this nation.

In order to more fully work with these themes, FEI's *Leading Public Sector Transformation* is an e-based and residential learning experience scheduled to begin with the online session mid-July and the residence program in Charlottesville, Virginia August 25-29, 2009.

To learn more or register for this program, please contact **Bonnie Boston 434/980-6277** or **Cynthia Morgan 434/980-6275**

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Leadership for a Democratic Society

Reflective Leadership: The Fifteen Minute Approach

Gail Funke, FEI Senior Faculty

For those of you who have attended the FEI *Leadership for a Democratic Society* program, you will recall that the very first week is largely devoted to introspection and reflection. This process is prompted by self-assessments and small group activities. This essay offers a leadership rationale for regular reflection and offers some actions you can take to be more reflective in the more limited timespace of your workplace.

One of the very early activities involves the "Executive Lifeline", in which 72 federal executives form a line in the central meeting room according to length of service or year entered. The span typically ranges from the 70s to the present, often with very new hires (< 1 year) rounding out the line.

This activity is processed by asking executives to ponder and discuss two questions: (1) Why did you join the government? and (2) Why do you stay?

People enter federal services for all kinds of reasons –“needed the job”—“Limited choices where I was” – wanted to try government work” – but almost to a person, they **stay** because –“I love federal service” – “Here, I can make a difference” – “I would never have these opportunities in any other job” – “I am doing important work”.

It is precisely these types of reflections that contribute to leadership prowess. All too often, we are caught up in the day-to-day fires, pressures and demands of our work. Precious little time seems available for that ‘standing away’ –sometime just to take a longer view.

Executives who depart FEI report renewed energy, dedication and commitment to federal service – in part due to the benefit of distance from the everyday.

What can we do when a four-week FEI experience is not an option? One approach is to build some Structured Reflection into your worklife. Structured Reflection is a guided activity, yet not terribly restrictive. The use of structure allows us to be efficient—to make the most of our very limited time.

Where to start? We begin with the questions of the Executive Lifeline. Each structured reflection is a once-a-week, fifteen minute activity, done **at the office** – this is part of your job!

Week 1 – Monday (all Structured Reflections take place on Monday, so that they can be referred to as necessary throughout the week. Each session need be no longer than fifteen minutes.

Thank back to the time when you entered federal service. What were your motivations, hopes, dreams, and realities? Now come to the present. Imagine your best day(s) in federal service. Why do you stay/ What keeps you energized, dedicated, inspired?

As you reflect on these questions, especially the latter, notice how you are responding – what images, sounds or feelings come to mind?

Throughout the week, refer to these images or sensations as you go about the daily routine. Use the images as a reference point, as a stress reducer, or in any way you wish.

Week 2

Thank back over your career. What are some accomplishments you are especially proud of? Times when you were at your absolute best? When things just went the best way possible? To the extent possible, “re-live” one or two of those great moments.

Once again, notice your physical reactions.

Again, as you need reinforcement, or simply want to re-enjoy the moment, refer to the images, along with those from Week 1.

Week 3

What strengths do you bring to your work? Think about the things you do really well—take some time to tease them out.

Ibid.

As you progress through the week, try to be aware of situations that will benefit from your application of a strength.

Week 4

*How are you taking care of yourself? Are you paying enough attention to your 'whole person' spiritually, physically, balancing work and non-work? Pay attention to what you **are** doing, some attention to what else needs to be done, and what forces are helping or hindering you?*

Begin to keep track of when you are consciously taking good care of yourself. Note the internal conversations you may be having with yourself.

Be aware of how your work performance shows up when you are/are not taking the best care of you.

Week 5

Hopes and Dreams: Revisit Week 1, but with more specificity to your current work. What visions do you have for your organization? For your people? Why is this important?

As each week progresses, keep track of your visions, your ideas, your hopes.

Whenever you need a boost, go back to weeks 1 and 2.

These questions by no means exhaust the possibilities introduced by Structured Reflection. Each week, you can have your own question. These will no doubt occur to you over time. When you do this, remember to be physically aware of how you feel, and don't forget to loop back to the original questions. The point here is to be intentional about making room for this reflection. Good luck!

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Special Events

The Federal Executive Institute's 40th Anniversary

In preparation for FEI's 40th Anniversary, we thought that it might be a good idea to get a head start looking back at the importance of our programs. We offer three quotes delivered at our 10th, 20th, and 25th anniversaries from former Office of Personnel Management Directors. Please be on the lookout for more information about FEI's 40th Anniversary events and publications.

"The FEI was established to provide executive training which will help executives sharpen their managerial skills. As most of you are aware, the institute was established to meet the needs of top federal executives, as well as executives at equivalent levels from state and local governments. The role of the institute is unique in that most of its training within the federal government, as well as in other organizations, is directed, quite correctly, at the 'generals' of the civil service... Those who come here are the leaders who link the elected and appointed policy makers with the rest of the civil service system. This link is essential to an effective operation of the federal government."

Alan A. Campbell

Director, Office of Personnel Management

Summer, 1979 – FEI's 10th Anniversary

"Since 1968, the Federal Executive Institute has served as the premier executive development center for the federal career executive community. Its purpose throughout has been steadfast: to promote excellence in government through the nurture of

executive talent and to increase awareness of the possibilities and responsibilities of the career executive role. Today, more than ever, leadership in the public service demands individuals able to transcend their specialized fields and embrace a second, generalist career orientation. Achievement of these ends has been and remains FEI's primary responsibility."

Constance Horner

Director, Office of Personnel Management

October 14, 1988 – FEI's 20th Anniversary

"FEI is a unique institution. It is unique because of its interagency reach and its approach to management education. While our customers may attend similar sessions at universities and some may attend programs operated for particular segments of the government such as the foreign affairs community, there is no other institution in the US where participants come from all departments and agencies and where the emphasis balances individual awareness, management processes and techniques, and current federal issues."

Kirke Harper

Acting Assistant Director, Office of Personnel Management

Spring, 1994 – FEI's 25th Anniversary

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The Federal Executive Institute

1301 Emmet Street, Charlottesville, VA 22903

434-980-6200

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