The Behavior Change Handbook

Optimize behavior change for business impact
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Change initiatives are on the rise ... and so is their failure rate.

Most leaders believe that no greater than 50% of change initiatives are successful (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2011).

And how did they gauge that success?
There it is. If you want to achieve strategic change, your number one priority is behavior change.

“There is no return on investment until you get behavior change.” – Shirli Pollard Ed.D., Learning Performance Lead, Air Products

The most important measure in determining the success of a change initiative is “Behavior change in the organization.”
Why does behavior change fail?

Behavior change fails because organizations typically fall into one of these five traps:

1) Focus on learning as an event, not a process

2) Use “The Field of Dreams” approach—focus efforts solely on building an online place in which learners can share knowledge. Unlike “The Field of Dreams,” if you build it, they may not come

3) Focus on e-learning, which can be effective for knowledge acquisition, but not always for behavior change

4) Focus on the delivery and measurement part of a learning initiative to the exclusion of the communication and alignment pieces

5) Build tools without clarity about what the end state should look like, or means to measure it
Why current solutions fall short

Our data show that the distribution of investment of time and resources across the phases of a learning solution (Align/Equip/Sustain) does not align with where business impact is derived.

These data support Robert Brinkerhoff’s 40/20/40 rule: Aligning and Sustaining make a much greater impact on learning than does simply equipping learners with skills to make a change.
And you know what happens when we isolated the "highly effective" at sustaining behavior change from the ineffective? The results were even more striking ...

How Do You Invest Your Time and Resources Across Align/Equip/Sustain Phases?
One key lesson jumps off the page:

The most effective sustainers of behavior change invest their time and resources where the impact is.
The Solution

We recommend investing time and resources in the aligning and sustaining stages of learning by creating a learning system not a training event.
To Improve Your Focus on Aligning

- Do learners see the connection between business goals, individual performance, and learning opportunities?
- Are learners clear about the reasons for the learning initiative: the learning path and its destination?
- Are you appealing to learners’ rational and emotional sides in your communications?
- Can learners identify opportunities to apply learning to real situations?
- Do you leverage communication and measurement plans to provide feedback and support to learners over time?
- Does the learning initiative have strong, visible support from management?

To Improve Your Focus on Sustaining

- Have you made it clear to learners and their managers that the learning process continues on after the formal learning event is over?
- Have you put processes, tools, metrics, and supports in place to help learners get on the path to mastery—and stay on it?
- Can learners access examples, practice opportunities, and coaches that can help them in the mid- to long-term?
- Have you put rewards and recognitions in place to help reinforce new behaviors and motivate people to change?
- Have you put appropriate communication and measurement plans in place to provide ongoing feedback on successes, progress, and results?
Before the Learning: Align stakeholders and create a measurement strategy

If you wait until the learning is underway to sustain it, you are sunk. The two biggest reasons for lack of sustainment—management commitment and measurement—should be addressed in the alignment phase. Senior stakeholders must agree on which behaviors will drive execution of their strategy, and how those behaviors will be measured.

Lack of Management Commitment

This is the chief reason why behavior change is not sustained. This is particularly true for our “laggards” whose comments reveal further insight into this challenge:

- “Executive level politics and turf war”
- “Lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities”
- “Lack of prioritization, too many initiatives to effect change”
No Defined Measurement Strategy

Only 38% of organizations are able to demonstrate the impact of behavior change on their business results to even a moderate extent.

Getting agreement upfront on the right measurement strategy will ensure that the right behaviors are focused on. This should include a concrete plan of action for measuring behavior change, including key metrics, how they will be tracked and by whom, and how the results will be reported back to stakeholders.
Measurement Breakthrough at a Financial Services Organization

This client company’s Learning and Development team realized that to be credible with key stakeholders and organizational culture, they needed tangible evidence of how specific behaviors impacted customer and financial measures. Based on discussions in the Impact Workshop*, the team created a customized behavioral survey that quantified the demonstration of these behaviors—such as accessing senior-level customers and executing relationship-planning meetings—and captured a wide range of vivid success stories that showed how employees were adopting the new behaviors and achieving better results. These behavior metrics and stories provided the colour and nuance needed to support the tracking of larger metrics over time.

*Impact Workshop – A meeting in which Forum brought together all the key stakeholders involved in the initiative at the client organization to catalyse the measurement strategy and commitment.
During the Learning

You’ve jumped the first (and biggest) hurdle—senior management is bought in, clear on their role, and on how success will be measured. Now it’s time to choose the learning methodology and content that will equip people to support the change. Forum’s six Principles of Learning are good guideposts:

- Link Learning to Value for the Individual and the Organization
- Connect Action and Reflection in a Continuous Cycle
- Address Learners’ Attitudes and Beliefs in Addition to Their Behaviors
- Provide Learners with a Balance of Challenge and Support
- Create Opportunities for Participants to Teach as Well as Learn
- Design and Cultivate Learning Communities Along with Learning Media
After the Learning: Making the behavior change stick

Effective leaders know that this learning phase—sustain—has the most impact on behavior change. But who is accountable?

Our data detect a shift occurring: the vast majority believes that managers or learners, rather than the L&D organization, have the main accountability for sustaining learning and behavior change after the training.
Up to 70% of learning happens on the job, and people often struggle to “get it” on their own. Forum helps clients “Seize the Seventy” and provides a contained process for people to sustain learning on the job.

We have identified six real ways people learn on the job.
Know “It”
Review course skills, tools, and techniques to take you to the next level of performance and then make them your own by reflecting on their value to you and your work.

See “It”
Observe skills in action by seeking out examples, information, or models that demonstrate what success looks like.

Need “It”
Identify ways to assess your progress—identify strengths to build and gaps to address.

Do “It”
Find opportunities to practice and apply new skills or processes in safe environments.

Grow “It”
Reflect on your achievements and synthesize what you have learned and still need to learn.

Live “It”
Get support and coaching for ongoing improvement.
To illustrate how a company can achieve sustained results by taking a systematic approach to learning and behavior change we have put together the story of XYZ Bank.

This story is a fictional composite of several real Forum client companies.

The Situation

- Diversified regional financial services organization.
- 1,300+ banking centers, $100B+ in assets.
- Strategy to differentiate by providing superior customer service that encourages customers buying solutions across lines-of-business.
- Execution required all sales and service people and systems to adopt new sales process and behaviors.
- Sustainment of behavior was seen as key to generating the customer loyalty and growth that would produce long-term operating results.
The Solution

- Developed uniform sales and service model for each line of business.
- Supported model with 13 sales training programs for 6,000 participants across customer-facing organization.
- Strategy differentiated by providing superior customer service that encourages customers buying solutions across lines-of-business.
- Programs ranged from consultative selling workshops for banking and financial center reps, to customer service for call center reps, to coaching for managers.
To ensure sustained behavior change, Forum designed a three-part process:

1. **Impact Workshop**: A planning process that enabled key stakeholders to define the specific business outcomes expected from the strategic initiative (such as new business and customer acquisition, satisfaction, and retention); the workshop would track and report the training programs’ results as well as their influence on the expected outcomes.

2. **Metrics that Matter®**: A process for measuring the results of the training programs at five levels: reaction, learning, behavior, results, and return on investment. Metrics that Matter® is a web-based survey system developed by KnowledgeAdvisors, the industry leader in measuring training and using metrics to drive business results.

3. **Learning Reinforcement**: On-the-job application of new skills and behaviors are encouraged through a variety of reinforcement techniques and approaches, including post-training webinars, coaching, self-paced learning “quick-bites,” skill labs, quiz-based mobile apps, and more. Designed to cut through the clutter and address various learning needs, comprehensive reinforcement programs enable participants to internalize core concepts, practice key skills, and ultimately make learning stick.
The Business Impact

The strategic initiative has achieved significant results to date. All XYZ lines of business reported substantially improved operational performance in its first year:

- A **12% increase** in the customer engagement index score of the Business Banking Group
- An extraordinary **329% increase** in sales of complex products in the bank’s Customer Contact Center
- The **highest average monthly revenue** trend in 5 years in XYZ’s Mortgage/Consumer line
While some program participants expressed initial scepticism, they then went on to learn and apply advanced customer-focused skills:

- A personal banker who had been on board at XYZ for less than a year applauded the training for helping him to hit 176 percent of his quarterly goal in less than a month.

- The bank’s Learning and Development executive used the measurement process to demonstrate business results to senior management, which then increased its investment, enabling additional XYZ employees to benefit from the program.
Further Resources:

Go to http://www.forum.com/intelligence/, you can download the following resources:

- White Paper: Change the Behavior, Change the Business
- Webinar Replay: The Art & Science of Behavior Change
- Video: How do you make learning stick?

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