



Turn Whine into the Bottom-Line

by Patti Hathaway, Business Advisor & Author

Your organization's greatest enemy is NOT in the Marketplace. Investing in the latest technologies, new faces, and ineffective management strategies cannot turn around the numbing bottom-line crises found in many of today's organizations. Just because you're not hearing employee whining doesn't mean resistance to change isn't affecting your organization.

Failing to get a real grip on what can and cannot be controlled keeps your employees unproductive. In order to relieve the crisis stress and paralysis, your managers need to develop a passion for whining and an ability to handle this whining and resistance effectively. Many managers ignore whining hoping the resistance or the people whining will go away. A different approach is for managers to begin to understand that the agency will only succeed if they can uncover and break through the resistance and whining as it occurs.

Consider the magnitude of change in our work world today: mergers and acquisitions continue at an unabated pace, technology and the impact of electronic commerce and the Internet is completely restructuring several industries. Most organizations are pushing to do more with less, an average employee receives an astounding average of 190 messages per day, and in a recent study of the changing workforce, 71% of workers feel used up at the end of the day.

The impact of such significant and profound change can result in employee whining because people are experiencing several types of loss and pain. Employees may grapple with one or several of these concerns:

1. Evaluating Skills and Conditioning: Perhaps an employee used to be a "franchise player", now they wonder if they have the skills to succeed in the new world of technology and the new ways of doing business? It's hard for people to admit they don't know how to do something or that they lack the skills to succeed on the team. They may be asking themselves, "*Has the game passed me by?*"

2. Position: There is an uncertain feeling about the position they will play or whether or not they have any job security. Many employees tend to protect their turf and territory and not contribute to team play. Some staff are concerned about a change in their perceived status when their position title is changed (although their job has not). A critical question for your staff to consider is, "*Am I more concerned with my own statistics or the team/agency's success?*"

3. Game Plan: When a new coach comes to a team, the players often question what the direction is and where they are going. This is equally true in the workplace today. Many new bosses or

leaders don't ask for the employees' input because they were hired to turn the organization around. How do the long-term employees fit on this new team? Employees may begin questioning their own abilities and wonder, *"Does the new boss recognize my skills and talents? Will I get the opportunity to show him/her?"*

4. Team Unity: Oftentimes, new employees can be overlooked because they lack a proven track record. Long-tenured employees worry because their skills may be diminishing and they are not recognized as the star they once were. Staff worry when positions are combined and they are made into "generalists" versus "specialists". They also may be questioning why their work hours need to change while other staff wonder why other departments worked the same hours all these years. All people want to feel significant and like they have value on the team. They may be asking themselves, *"How can I contribute value to my team and how do I fit in?"*

5. Making the Playoffs: Will the organization be successful? Even if the team succeeds with all these changes, will I be cut from the team and put on waivers? You don't feel like you are in control and you don't know where you stand on the team or within your organization.

Perhaps you have asked yourself these questions as you've experienced change. They are gut-wrenching questions that can be painful to consider. It is important for employees to really FEEL the pain that change is causing them before they can begin the healing process. I believe that if you can feel the employees' pain, you can heal the organizational pain of change. On the other hand, if you ignore the pain or an injury and don't take the time to understand what caused it, you won't know what and how to begin the healing process. Remember the old adage, "No pain, no gain!" That is true of organizations in change as well -- there will be employee pain before there is organizational gain.

*Excerpted from the book **Untying the 'Nots' of Change Before You're Fit to be Tied**. Patti Hathaway, CSP, **The CHANGE AGENT**, is one of fewer than 7% women worldwide to have earned the Certified Speaking Professional designation from the National Speakers Association for her proven presentation skills. She is a Business Advisor and the author of 6 books that have been translated into 5 languages and have sold over 100,000 copies. Patti solves your people challenges by providing highly customized solutions to meet your needs. Contact Patti at 1-800-339-0973 or at her web site: www.thechangeagent.com for information on her speaking and consulting services or to receive her free e-mail newsletter/blog.*