



## Trust in Transition Overview

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPLP

My new book, *Trust in Transition: Navigating Organizational Change*, will be launched on August 18, 2014 by ASTD Press. The book is about how organizations must do a better job of preserving and enhancing trust when they go through changes such as reorganizations, mergers, acquisitions, or other restructurings. Your purchase of the book includes access to a set of videos that enhance several of the key points.

There are numerous books on managing change, and many books and articles on M&As. My book is unique in that it focuses on the actions and behaviors needed to maintain the vital **trust** between people and organizational layers during the process of change.

A link between trust and organizational performance has been demonstrated in numerous studies. The correlation is strong, and the leverage offered by high trust is impressive. Most studies show a two to five times productivity benefit in high trust groups over low trust groups. Can you name any other single factor that can offer a 200% improvement in productivity?

When organizations contemplate changes, the manner in which the effort is planned, organized, announced, managed, and led has everything to do with the impact on trust. Unfortunately, in the vast majority of cases, the changes end up having a profound negative impact on the culture just when trust is needed the most. This condition ends up undermining the change effort and leads to a documented dismal track record of almost 80% of transitions not living up to expectations.

Thankfully, failure can be avoided by taking steps right from the start of a change process to act differently and prevent problems from occurring. The old adage of "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" holds true for this situation. If some changes in mindset can be accomplished from the earliest plans for a change, the ability to retain or even grow trust during change is possible.

My book is about how to break the cycle of change failure by focusing as much effort on the cultural integration as on the mechanical parts of the change process. Unfortunately many leaders have had professional training in the MBA schools that emphasizes only the mechanical aspects of the change process such as negotiation, due diligence, financial valuation, or legal implications. These subjects are critical in transitions, but they should not squeeze out the considerations of how to get people to work well together during and after the transition.

The focus on the financial and legal implications of a change are forced on center stage, and what ends up back in the wings is the fragile culture of trust between people in the organization. That is a problem, because the end result is a change effort that works well on paper but often fails to meet expectations in the real world.

The book contains dozens of areas where leaders unwittingly make errors in judgment which undermine the changes all along the way. By following a parallel path that works just as hard on the culture as the deal, leaders can greatly improve the odds of success.

I will provide a series of articles over the next few months that look at different aspects of the change process to suggest pragmatic antidotes to common problems. Investing more leadership attention to the culture early in the change process will have a profound positive impact on the success rate. I hope you find the tips I offer in the book and in future articles to be helpful at preserving trust in your organization. Nothing could be more vital for your ultimate success.

Bob Whipple, MBA, CPLP, is a consultant, trainer, speaker, and author in the areas of leadership and trust. He is the author of: *Trust in Transition: Navigating Organizational Change*, *The Trust Factor: Advanced Leadership for Professionals*, *Understanding E-Body Language: Building Trust Online*, and *Leading with Trust is Like Sailing Downwind*. Bob has many years as a senior executive with a Fortune 500 Company and with non-profit organizations. For more information, or to bring Bob in to speak at your next event, **contact him at** [www.Leadergrow.com](http://www.Leadergrow.com), [bwhipple@leadergrow.com](mailto:bwhipple@leadergrow.com) or 585.392.7763

