

Digital Change Management Tips

Description

People don't resist change, they resist being changed

People don't remember things just because you told them it was important to remember. The more they passively listen to you, the less likely they will remember. Worse, they are less likely to do anything creative with what you tell them.

To understand how to create an active learning environment, you need to know how the brain remembers and learns.

First, there is short-term memory found in the cortical, logical brain that acts like a small container. It is limited in capacity, meaning people can only remember a certain number of items told to them at any given moment. This container is also full of brain chatter around current projects, family matters and personal issues.

If you want someone to remember something for more than a few hours, or even minutes, then these bits of information must be transferred to one of the two other major memory centers, primal memory and long-term memory. This transference is called "learning."

Two ways of learning

For people to remember anything, an emotion must be attached to the incoming stimuli. Otherwise, the brain doesn't deem the data worthy of being remembered. However, different emotions cause data to "land" in different memory centres, which also affects how we use this information later when it is recalled.

If people are scared into learning, such as by getting ultimatums, by being forced to compete with colleagues or family members, by threatening their security or predictability about work or life, by demeaning their value, or by pushing them into situations that feel unfair or hopeless, then they learn what they need to survive in the moment. However, if they are overcome by hopelessness, rebellion, or resignation, they may learn nothing at all.

Even if they do remember what they are told, when they face similar situations in the future, they have only learned to act in one way. When people learn by fear, they transfer the information to the memory center in the primal brain, found in the brain stem. This memory is primed to react when a threat appears. So anytime they face a similar situation, they react in the same way. They behave the way they learned in order to survive this situation. There is no analysis. There is no considering possibilities. It is very hard to rewire and change this behaviour. This is one of the reasons why it is so hard to

change behaviour even when we know it doesn't serve our best interests.

However, if you want people to be able to act thoughtfully, creatively or strategically, then you should refrain from threats and instead, use emotions that trigger neurotransmitters instead. When people experience laughter, compassion, gratitude, pride, dignity, joy, love, social connection, achievement, contribution, insight and personal breakthroughs, the memories are not only stored in long-term memory which is associative instead of reactive (meaning that when information is recalled it is pliable and changeable by new information), they create more synaptic connections and richer neural networks, which gives the brain greater flexibility to access many pathways at once, leading to more creative thought processes.

Tips for Leading in a Learning Environment

Tip 1: Teach with inspiring and humorous stories, relevant cartoons, identifiable and pleasurable metaphors, and compelling examples. Information delivered with pleasurable and heartfelt emotions are quickly transferred into long-term memory. The facts may be lost, but the stories and the message will live on.

Tip 2: Seek to serve and develop people. People don't forget those who have helped them. Their brains love to remember things and events that leave them feeling cared about.

Tip 3: Use discovery. Engage people in dialogue. Whenever possible, coach instead of teach. People don't resist change; they resist being changed. If they sense that someone is trying to force them to learn something, they naturally resist. If the brain senses judgment along with the lesson (the teacher or leader must think I'm stupid, inadequate, or slow), then they will act defensively or shut down. Instead, be curious and ask questions as if you are learning too. This helps people learn for themselves. The pleasure that goes along with discovery triggers a wave of brain activity.

Tip 4: Encourage trials and experiments. Praise effort as well as results. If people don't put what they learn into action right away, then the information falls into the back of the brain's filing cabinet where it is often lost. People learn by practice and they need praise to go the distance. Adults need approval and acknowledgment as much as children do.

If you want people to be more innovative and resourceful, make sure that you create a pleasurable, participative and safe environment for learning. The happier the brain, the smarter the person.â•

About the Author

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1. Toolkit

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