

# Understanding Change Through a Simulation

By [Marty Lasker](#)

I have sat through many lectures, seminars, classes, and presentations on change. They are often different from one another and frequently present different theories on the need for change, the "x" steps to successful change, and how to overcome the obstacles to change. No matter how dynamic the instructor was, or how easy it was to follow the logic of the presentation, by the time I arrived back at my desk, 60% of what I was exposed to was lost. I have a similar experience when I read a book or an article about change and in this case I lose 80% by the next day.

The most effective way to understand change is to experience it. We all have preferred learning styles. Some people prefer to read text material as distinguished from people who prefer to watch a video. Some prefer to listen to a tape or lecture, while others need small groups to ask questions. There are those who have a need to interact through discussion and some like to immerse themselves into the heart of the activity. This last style is called kinesthetic learning and while not all people like to learn this way, it is generally acknowledged to be the most effective.

Here is the challenge; how can you immerse people in a change process that is relevant to the business environment? ProfitAbility® Business Simulations, a UK based firm has created just the right vehicle. It's a simulation that puts participants into teams with each running a division of a large company. Each division starts out in the same place. They are failing to satisfy their customers, losing money, experiencing unclear communication between departments, and engaging in redundant and often meaningless tasks. Participants are each assigned to one of four departments in their division and are oriented to the "way we have always done it." Since it's an existing business, there is product that needs to be produced to meet current demand, administrative tasks to be completed, orders for the next business cycle to be obtained, and a constant need to for new product and services to be designed. Of course there is never enough time to accomplish everything . . . so the pressure increases.

If any of this sounds the least bit familiar, then the designers have it right. Through the learning experience, participants must make the changes to their business practices to reach profitability and improve customer satisfaction ratings in each of their three product lines and all within three business cycles.

There is usually a need for change but it is often difficult to move out of our comfort zones and thus we resist. There is nothing like a high pressure, exhilarating, and fun experience to move us off our cushions. Create enough discomfort with options for relief, and watch the changes flow.

Marty Lasker is an experienced corporate trainer specializing in the use of simulations to drive learning within organizations. His client list is extensive and includes many Fortune 500 companies as well as schools and not for profit organizations. Included among the subject areas he addresses are finance, change, leadership, diversity, and team building. He can be reached directly at [hlcici@aol.com](mailto:hlcici@aol.com) or through his company's web site at <http://www.hlcinc.com>

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