Walk the Talk

Radio for Agile Minds

Shelley	**It's that time of the month when we "Walk the Talk" and welcome Nick Anderson to the studio to help us check out if we do actually "Walk our own Talk"** Nick is Senior Partner for Professional Development Services – The PDS Group and affiliated with ROCG – Business Transition Specialists and long time contributor to WGVU Over the last 20 years Nick has coached many leaders in household names like Turner Construction, Qwest Telecommunications and Royal Bank of Canada to impact bottom-line results through aligning people for change Each month Nick chooses a topic related to the business world in West Michigan focusing on the transitions this economy is going through Welcome….What have you chosen for us this month?
Nick	Well, I want to build on last month's theme. Regular listeners will remember I was talking about how many change projects were planned in response to the economy yet almost half of the respondents indicate that a significant number of change projects failed to meet their stated goals." According to the research, more than a third of the respondents (38 percent) undertake a small number of change initiatives per

	year (1-5 projects). Yet the top reason reported for failed change efforts is having too many "top" priority projects and the inability to coordinate them across the organization. So I was looking on the web and for some reason I found myself thinking of our experience in PDS Group about what we have learnt and what drives us to prevent change initiatives from failing. And so my theme this month is what you can do to increase the odds that the change you're planning will achieve its desired results.
Shelley	I feel a checklist coming on…….knowing you, LOL
NICK	Exact. Listeners here's our beliefs on managing change based on 90 years of change management consulting and research. (and sometime it feels like 90yrs…lol) Over those years we have often been brought in after an initiative has failed or has stalled. For example, a major bank who had spent half a million dollars on sales training and we were brought to find out why people weren't using what they had learnt. Another, spent….well they didn't really know….but a good ball park was $2m on "Relationship Management" with one of the big consulting firms. It wasn't delivering on its objectives; internally those involved were exhausted doing their full and I mean full time jobs and being on committees etc. One more, which just happened to be another large bank but illustrates a common problem. They brought a division of an international bank of specialists and then found they were underperforming 'cos they couldn't talk or present to their lay customers in a language they could readily understand and more importantly differentiate from their competition. So, that brings me to our first belief.

	Build on existing language. If there's no common language, you are confused and competitively blind. But, you need to start where you are! Let me explain, we leave in a society of disposal, and the seduction of the new being automatically better. It's understandable that we generalize technological advances to cover everything including how people are managed and led.
SHELLEY	Does that mean we should manage people the same way they were managed, say. 100 years ago?
NICK	If you mean like the Ford Plants of that generation, no. Workers then were not as educated, unionization had yet to take control and people did not have access to the amount of information that they have today and there are others. But, you do make a valid point. Managers and leaders are often base a lot of what they do on past success (and failure). But the pace of technological and competitive change and overwork creates a rush to the expedient. For example, One sales training program using what can seem to be a foreign language as a competitive band aid.
Shelley	I am not clear on "foreign language"?
NICK	It's my shorthand for all those companies who want to protect their intellectual property. Plagiarism is a form of compliment until it hurts your bottom line – right? (LOL) For example, one company I know came up with the idea of training sales people to plan sales on the basis of the political process inside their larger customers. Consequently, several "copycats" followed who, in order not to be sued, developed different terms for what is essentially the same concept. The problems comes when one form of this type of sales training follows another, people say *"here we go again" "been*

	there bought the tea shirt""don't worry – it too shall pass" This also true of the "quality or Lean movement" and another is CRMs
Shelley	OK. I get it similar terms for the same thing lead people to become jaded…What's next in PDS's beliefs about successful change?
Nick	**Change is hard, real change is real hard.** Companies routinely initiate change but never seem to "really" change. This is shorthand for managers and leaders not setting up for the long haul or being too ambitious in the competitive window available. Their default is to take things head-on rather than consider strategies like *"50% of something can be more profitable than going for 100% of a market and lose money"* The need to not only read Sun Tzu but internalize it! *"It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin. Hence it is a subject of inquiry which can on no account be neglected"*
Shelley	What's next on your list of common mistakes?
Nick	**Change is not about making time, it's about releasing time.** Executives must "create" time for change by reducing the distractions to getting work done. It's like….In prison, you spend the majority of your time in an 8' X 10' cell. At work, you spend most of your time in a 6' X 8' cubicle. The difference being? - In prison, you get three meals a day. At work, you get 30 minutes for a meal you buy or bring in yourself (LOL) It's like when we are aligning people for a change – We are as much concerned that people stop or discard theirs and others expectations

Shelley	What's good example of overloading
Nick	Having to go to a weekly meetings 'cos you might be needed
	You go cos you can charge the client for your time! REAL
	Building on change is hard and releasing time.
	There has to be a **coaching cascade establish and reinforce change.** Managers must coach and be coached.
	This is a crucial component but will come to naught if you .don't know how to
	Create a compelling environment. Support, compensation, and other directional systems must be integrated.
	This includes making the consequences clear for non-compliance. You have to create a culture of accountability. And as a leader you have to make and follow through when people use tactic like:
	• "The Dead hand of inertia" • "The Entitlement Game" • "Conspiracy theorist" • And of course the "rumor mill"
Shelley	Listening to these mistakes….brings to mind how difficult change is and how business leaders often try to sugar coat change
Nick	It's understandable yet subverts what they are trying to do….until it's too late and they have to cut people.
	Next Do "different" things! Don't just do "things" differently. Think "out-of-the-box" and do different things

	rather than trying to get a little better at what you're currently doing. I am reminded of the servant adjusting his master's armor while he sits on his armored horse while the opposing army is charging towards them. Meanwhile there's another servant comes up to him and says "There's a salesman at the door" "Can't you see I have a battle to fight!" The servant tells the salesman he can't be seen, so he packs up his 50 caliber machine gun and walks away....LOL
Shelley	What other short cuts get business leaders into trouble?
Nick	**"Everyone needs to walk the same talk."** Receiving inconsistent voices from various sources causes people to "do what they've always done". For example: **Measure the "how's" not just the "what's" of success.** Move management's focus away from what was achieved to how you can win - measure leading indicators, not just lagging indicators. Especially, in sales with long sales cycles **No one sales process is the "right" one.** The "right" sales process is the one to which people are committed. **Sales and marketing people learn when they realize their collective ignorance risks losing a specific deal.** It's not what you know, but what you don't know that creates competitive vulnerability.
Shelley	What about the leaders themselves...how do they make change less likely?
Nick	The often fail to think through all the linkages,

	for example **Paint the train - revenue and competency grow together.** Too often such training is disconnected from "real jobs." Revenue and competency growth are dynamic concurrent processes not static sequential ones. **Speed, intensity and momentum are critical.** Move with "speed" to swim above cultural inertia. Move with "intensity" by focusing on a few new things. Build "momentum" by promoting early successes.
Shelley	We talked last month that people in the survey thought there were too many change initiatives...how does this play a part in failed change?
Nick	**White Noise can't be ignored.** The background "hum" of distracting cultural legacies- "white noise"- drags change and must be overcome FIRST.
Shelley	Tip of the month
Nick	Go to pdsgrp.net/beliefs where you will see a summary of what I have covered today. Then, stand back and look at your own organization – and ask "What traps are we falling into?"
Shelley	Contact details
Nick	Blog – pdsgroup.wordpress.com – WTT – A blog for agile minds