

Rider, Elephant, Path: The Psychology of Workplace Change

Management Essentials



Best Care EAP Can Help!

For free, confidential support for you and your dependent family members, contact us today.

402-354-8000 | 800-801-4182

www.BestCareEAP.org

Member ID: bcCODEe – Password: CODE

Introduction

70% of workplace change efforts fall flat because they fail to address people's natural resistance to change. This program will help you make your next change effort a success by showing you how:

- Our intellects, emotions, and circumstances prompt us to resist change
- Real-world strategies for leveraging thoughts, feelings, and context to move change efforts forward

What Do All Change Initiatives Have in Common?

For anything to change, someone has to start acting differently.

Why Do People Behave The Way They Do?

It's a great question. And there are many competing answers. The model we find most useful is offered by Jonathan Haidt (2006) in his book *The Happiness Hypothesis*.

The Rider, the Elephant, and the Path

- According to Haidt, our intellect is the Rider, our emotions the Elephant, and our circumstances the Path on which we find ourselves.
- All successful efforts rely on the Rider to provide planning and direction and the Elephant to provide the energy. They also succeed when the Path is cleared of obstacles (i.e., outdated policies or processes) to the Rider and Elephant.

Direct the Rider

Rider Strengths

- Foresight
- Analysis
- Self-control

Rider Weaknesses

- Analysis paralysis
- Focus on problems rather than opportunities
- Bias towards self-generated solutions
- Lack of stamina

Strategy for Leveraging Strengths and Managing Weaknesses

To leverage the Rider's strengths, direct him: show him exactly where to go and what to do.

Tactics for Directing the Rider

- Follow the "bright spots"
- Script the critical moves
- Point to the destination

Motivate the Elephant

Elephant Strengths

- Emotional strength
- Stamina
- Hatred of failure

Elephant Weaknesses

- Hunger for instant gratification
- Preference for conserving energy (i.e., "laziness")
- Easily "spooked"

Strategy for Leveraging Strengths and Managing Weaknesses

Motivate the Elephant. The simplest way to do that is to engage people's emotions.

Tactics for Motivating the Elephant

- Find the feeling
- Shrink the change

- Grow your people

Shape the Path

Path Strengths

- Circumstances powerfully shape behavior
- Simplest, most direct to change behavior

Path Weaknesses

- Underutilized because of “Fundamental Attribution Error”
- Too much change too soon and the both Rider and Elephant will rebel

Strategy for Leveraging Strengths and Managing Weaknesses

The Rider lacks the stamina to blaze new trails. The Elephant prefers to conserve its energy by sticking to the tried and true. Consequently, if you alter the Path the Elephant may trumpet with annoyance for a while, but it will follow the new pathway and the Rider will be dragged along on the journey.

Tactics for Shaping the Path

- Tweak the environment
- Build habits
- “Rally the herd”

Case Study: Can You Get People to File Their Expense Reports on Time?

The Situation

Barbara, the controller of a consulting firm, is fuming again about expense reports. Why do people always turn them in late? The monthly due date was yesterday and she’s still missing 38% of the reports. That puts pressure on her team – especially on Maria, the “expense czar” – because they’re expected to close the company’s books on time and the expense reports are a necessary input to the close.

Frustrated, Barbara starts composing a reminder e-mail, full of underlined words and exclamation points. (The “nag” e-mail has become a monthly tradition.) Why does she have to “shout” before people do what they’re supposed to?

Best Care Webinar Evaluation

Program Title: _____ Date: _____
Your Employer: _____ Facilitator: _____

Thank you for participating in today's webinar. Please share your impressions below and then fax to Best Care EAP at (402) 354-8046 or scan and email to EAP@BestCareEAP.org.

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The material covered in this program will benefit me personally and/or professionally.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The facilitator was knowledgeable and effective and used clear examples.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I plan to apply what I learned.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Best Care EAP's services and benefits were reviewed.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I would recommend this training to coworkers/colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5

6. What was particularly helpful about the training?

7. What would you recommend changing about the training?

8. If you would like to receive email updates about ongoing Best Care training opportunities, please give us your work email address:
