

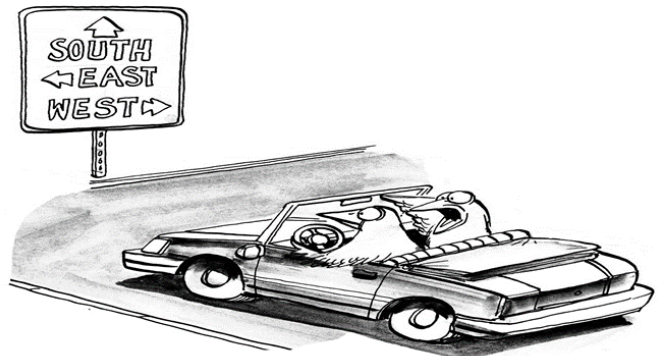
# INTERSECTIONS

## INSIGHTS

Fifteenth Edition

Our brains get 34 GB of information daily;  
one of the reasons change is difficult

A [study](#) conducted by researchers at the University of California-San Diego, estimated that people are inundated with approximately 34 GB (Gigabytes) of data daily. We are exposed to over 100,000 words a day and even though we don't really read the words, they are reaching our eyes and ears. For you math whizzes that is 23 words per second during 12 waking hours. Ouch... no wonder we find it hard to focus, make changes and discern valid, factual and relevant information. As a reaction to receiving this deluge of information some neuroscientists believe that our brains may now be developing differently. They believe our brains are creating new neural connections (mind maps) to react more quickly thereby reducing our ability for deeper thought and reflection.



“If you're really open to change  
you won't go south this year.”

This data supports and underscores an enormous challenge in any organizational change program; you must grab the attention of the people that need to change and make them aware of and desirous of creating modifications.

In both our work and personal environment our tendency is to keep doing what we have done before, partly because it feels safe and partly because we may not be aware of options. I like to say that the difference between a rut and a grave is the dimensions, but many would vigorously disagree with me.

## Our brains get 34 GB of information daily; one of the reasons change is difficult

Creating an awareness program in organizational change is about connection and relationship. Building these elements is a function of listening, hearing, structuring and working with effected staff to co-create change. It is important to keep the lines of communication open because when and if the connection is broken, doubt enters into the decision-making process, then suspicion, distrust and resistance.

Awareness in any change program is facilitated by good communication; however, you must get people to listen and believe that the change, whether simple or complex, is important and move them similarly towards desiring the change.

It is essential to also understand the role that the ego plays when you are asking people to change. In the context of change management, I think about ego as the mechanism that can derail a program because the ego wants today to be just like yesterday where it can recreate the pleasurable experiences and avoid any pain that the ego cannot forget. As change managers, we convince a person that today is going to be different and that it may contain limitless possibilities and untapped potential; however, it is wise to also let people know that change may make them uncomfortable and anxious. Be careful to make the awareness program authentic or it will be seen as just propaganda and ignored.

A common phrase is that “most people buy with their emotions and justify with reason”, which is why advertising, whatever the media, that tells a story and touches us emotionally is usually more effective and memorable. This is also true for organizations. When you tell the change story, focus on both the tangible benefits as well as the emotional and ideological elements. The use of symbols, contests, artwork, co-creation circles, and incentives is a start. These elements, if used correctly, increase awareness and the change is likely to be seen as more desirable.

If birds of a feather flock together and you want to turn the flock around to head east and not south this winter, you will need to make them aware that east is a desirable option that should be experienced.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carmen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail that extends downwards and to the right.

Interested in learning more?

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