



## Ten Minutes of Your Time. Lasting Business Impact.

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"Changing culture is not a matter of teaching people a bunch of new techniques, or replacing their behavior patterns with new ones. It is a matter of exchanging values and providing role models. This is done by changing attitudes."

- Philip B. Crosby

### What's On My Mind This Week

## Management's Role

*By Kevin Weiss  
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During the workday I lead an organization, but I'm always overseeing the development of my daughters. Functionally, there are clear differences – princesses and pricing, cartoons and customers, time-outs and *Take Ten Minutes*. But viewed as development projects, the necessary leadership actions and best practices are surprisingly similar.

Leaders strive to help people reach new goals. And since growth requires change, selecting the right values to guide the change process and being a positive role model are essential tasks of management.

So I listened with interest as a colleague recounted a meeting at a local preschool. What began as two parents discussing teaching philosophies became a reminder that management plays the most important role in developing people and organizations.

### Competent and Confident

At the beginning of each school year, parents and teachers meet to discuss the school's philosophy and teaching objectives. This routine session got interesting, however, when the instructor described a typical day.

First, there were problems – lots of them. When students arrived for lunch, there were too few or too many chairs. Instructors promised each child four crackers, but sometimes gave three or five. Students left for recess without putting on their coats. Chaos, confusion, and emotion were common.



Regular debriefs uncover issues, reinforce key messages, create a forum to discuss problems, and allow role models to praise successes: What happened at school today? How did you respond? What happened next? Have you seen that before? What else could you do? You're doing so well!

Extending learning outside the classroom repeats key ideas and reinforces the benefits of change. Getting ready to leave but your child just sits there? Don't tell them to get their coat, have them solve the problem: What are we doing today? Why is everyone wearing their coat? What should you do?

The hardest task for many parents, however, was to continuously demonstrate the desired values. Too often, the attitudes and behaviors the school was trying to instill were counter to the ones being reinforced at home. Not only must parents ensure all family members approached problems in a competent, confident manner, but some parents must change *their own* attitudes and behavior to ensure their children's success.

Out of cash for the subway? Don't get angry. Explain the situation and calmly walk to the nearest ATM. Fail to run the dishwasher last night? Don't despair, wash a few pieces by hand or get out the plastic knives and forks.

Because modeling behavior is such a critical element of the change process, development of people is *never* a passive activity. At each moment, leaders actively support change or actively work against it.

### **Extending the Lesson**

These dynamics are true in all organizations. In today's business environment, our organizations frequently initiate large-scale changes. And just as often, management undermines these efforts.

When we ask employees to become good project managers, produce things right the first time, or listen to the customer, for example, we require them to learn new skills but also to change their attitudes and behavior. New attitudes often demand new skills to support them, but learning skills without adopting the attitudes and behavior to utilize them is largely wasted effort.

So by treating organizational change as a skills issue rather than an attitudinal or behavioral one, we set our organizations up for failure. We send people to project-management training but never review their project plans, teach quality management but insist on strict production quotas, and create customer-listening programs but fail to listen in meetings with employees.

While no rational person expects teachers to fully create our competent, confident citizens, people in management roles often expect outside coaches, instructors, and experts to create our confident, competent organizations. The organization's leadership, not outside experts, has the largest influence on employee attitudes and behavior, so it is management that ultimately determines the success or failure of every change effort.

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That may be the most important lesson ever taught in preschool.

**Take Ten Minutes**

Consider the organizations you lead and answer the following questions:

- How does your organization need to change to become more successful?
- Where are people learning the attitudes and behaviors to be successful in this new environment?
- How are you actively supporting – or undermining – the adoption of these attitudes and behaviors?
- How can you be a better role model within your organization?

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**About Take Ten Minutes**

*Take Ten Minutes* is a publication of [Philip Crosby Associates](http://www.philipcrosby.com) and [The Capability Group](http://www.the-capability-group.com).

The premise behind *Take Ten Minutes* is simple: take ten minutes out of every week to refocus and recommit to business improvement. *Take Ten Minutes* features quotes and interviews to inspire you. We also pull articles from today's headlines as examples of the power of the preventive culture (or the deep problems caused by not having one).

As the name suggests, *Take Ten Minutes* is relentless with the editing razor and keeps each

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