



TriMetrix®HD Frequent Change

Frequent Change

Moving easily from task to task or being asked to leave several tasks unfinished and easily move on to the new task with little or no notice.

Why is this behavior important?

In every job and every facet of your life, you experience change. We all know people who say they love change or hate change, but the fact is, we all have to learn how to manage change whether we love it or hate it! The key point here is managing Frequent Change, not stopping it. Managing Frequent Change is all about adapting how you react to change and improving your effectiveness in situations that involve shifting priorities.

In order to manage Frequent Change, you need not only to be mentally flexible, but also organized and efficient. We've all seen video footage of traders on the New York Stock Exchange. While the scenes look chaotic, do you think the men and women running around the exchange are really disorganized and inefficient? Of course they aren't. Those individuals work in a stressful, constantly changing environment, but they are organized enough and flexible enough to continually refocus their priorities and communicate them when they need to.

The description above also illustrates the importance of speed of action combined with accuracy and effectiveness in managing Frequent Change. What would happen if a stock trader bid on the wrong group of stocks? What if she sold shares she wasn't authorized to sell? What if she couldn't follow the pace of the exchange and kept missing opportunities to buy low or sell high?

Creativity is another ingredient essential to managing Frequent Change. As we all know, sometimes you get a new, urgent assignment before you have finished the last urgent assignment. Sometimes you think a new assignment means a shift in priority, but it really means you have another top priority. Successful change managers handle change with creativity. Combining related tasks, applying lessons learned, delegating responsibly, and buying more time by thinking of better ways to manage tasks or approach problems are all ways to use creativity to manage change.

Above all, you must be able to prioritize and reprioritize activities without getting frustrated. This doesn't mean dropping the ball on activities that get bumped to a lower priority either. Just because someone isn't beating down your door for results doesn't mean the project shouldn't get completed. Being good at managing Frequent Change requires that you maintain your personal focus on tasks that cross your desk even if no one is asking you for it at that particular moment.

In short, getting better at managing Frequent Change requires mental flexibility, creativity, efficiency, organization and prioritization.

What behavioral characteristics are associated with Frequent Change?

Someone who has characteristics associated with Frequent Change:

- Is able to respond to re-prioritization needs.
- Uses creativity in approaching problems and solutions.
- Works quickly within prescribed time frames.
- Has mental flexibility.
- Can assess new situations and apply lessons learned to new situations.

How do you develop your own abilities in Frequent Change?

- Prepare for change. Don't just react to it when you must face up to it.
- Seek ways to make improvements and initiate productive changes of your own.
- Find good in change. Even if characteristics of change make you uncomfortable, focus on the improvements change will bring.
- Be creative about how you respond to changes that are thrust upon you.
- Develop justifications for changes you want to initiate.
- Organize papers and files you have on your desk so you will be able to file and find relevant papers more quickly.
- Have a clearly designated prioritization scheme in effect. Post your priority tasks, assign them to categories and develop appropriate time frames.
- Don't panic about change. Slow down for a few minutes and re-group if a sudden change takes you by surprise.
- If you are required to juggle multiple tasks or respond quickly to regular changes in priority, don't drop any balls. Finish the task you are working on if at all possible. At least get to a clean breaking point so you can return to the task later.
- Practice mental flexibility. Do puzzles or brainteasers. Consider possibilities and potentials.
- Be more creative about problem solving. Be sure you apply what you have learned to new situations that arise.
- Don't get too upset if you are asked to shift priorities before you think you've finished a project. There may be reasons you aren't privy to, that explain why the shift in priorities is necessary.
- Don't be too much of a perfectionist. Be sure you do the best job you can but don't waste too much time checking and re-checking work when your time would be better spent beginning a new task.
- Learn to drive changes. Don't allow yourself to get stuck in the status quo.
- Improve your working speed and efficiency. Make sure you have the best tools and the appropriate skills and knowledge to be the best at your job.
- Look for patterns to past changes. What do they have in common? Who typically drives the change? How can you anticipate it in the future?

Frequent Change

Activities

Activity 1: Interview

Talk with someone you know who is a good change manager. See what you can learn from this individual by interviewing him or her about how he or she approaches change, manages juggling tasks and prioritizes new assignments. Come away from the conversation with at least three good, solid recommendations for yourself as you work to improve your response to frequent change.

Activity 2: Brain Teasers

Research has shown that people who maintain their mental flexibility are not only more productive and happier, but also may live longer and avoid certain types of age-related mental deterioration.

Buy a book of crossword puzzles, a book of brain teasers and a book about a subject you know nothing about. Assign yourself a section from these books to complete every day to increase your mental flexibility.

Activity 3: Recent Reactions to Change

Describe a recent change that took you by surprise. _____

Why did this event surprise you so much? _____

Could you have anticipated it? How? _____

Would anticipating the change have changed how you managed it? _____

Do you think this situation or a similar one will arise again? _____

How will you manage the change the next time it comes up? _____

Activity 4: Upcoming Change

Think carefully about the following list of items and gather information about each item you list.

- Projects that are on your to-do list for the next week
- Projects that are on your to-do list for the next month
- Projects that are on your to-do list for the next six months
- Organizational priorities
- Management changes you anticipate
- Staffing levels that you think may change
- Events in your personal life in the coming weeks and months

Now that you have gathered all of your projects and ideas together, see what upcoming changes you can anticipate in each area. It doesn't really matter if you end up being right about the change because this is an exercise in helping you try to anticipate potential changes. The point here is to use your imagination to think of potential setbacks that might affect your progress in each of the areas you listed above.

