



Dear Friend,

Change Point

I can laugh about this now...but I wasn't laughing when it happened!

Picture this. I'm at a client's site. I sit. And, then I feel it...pop, pop, pop. Not only did the strained button on my pants finally give way, but my fragile zipper did as well. (Okay, this probably qualifies as a TMI/"too much information" moment; however, you had to get the picture.) Thankfully, *this* wardrobe malfunction remained private. And, after a sophisticated (though hurried) dash to the ladies room, I was able to jury-rig things, with the aid of a trusty paperclip to replace my button and a long shirt/jacket combo to cover the busted zipper, until I could get back home. As I said, I can laugh ... now.

Someone once said that folks won't change until the pain of the challenge becomes greater than the pain of the choice. For me, that day, with precariously held-together pants, marked a change point. That's what it took for me to commit myself (with the help of family and close friends) to shedding some of my excess poundage, and I am so glad I've started that journey.

Here's the deal. We all face challenges. They may come for you as an individual, for you as a professional, for you as a leader, or for the unit or organization you lead. The question is this: After you've concluded that you probably should do something, how long will you let your challenge ride?

This month's **EA Insights** is dedicated to helping you determine if you've reached your change point. So, join me as, together, we count the cost.

All the best,

June

June Melvin Mickens
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Having Trouble Initiating Change? Count the Cost.

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If you're like many of us, you usually know when it's time to make a change.

- The team isn't meeting goals.
- The business isn't functioning the way you planned.
- The ride to work is getting harder, and harder, to make each day.



As I said, you KNOW it's time. But, for some reason, you just can't seem to MAKE that change happen.

In our work with **Executive Advantage** clients, we often find that, when folks are having trouble figuring out what needs to change or actually initiating change (even when they know something needs to happen), a good habit is to **count the cost**. That is, stop and take stock of what the cost is (or soon will be) if things continue as they are. Focus your attention on five areas:

Customers - Is the way you're doing business generally, or the way you're handling a particular function, costing you customers? Think about it without bias for a moment. Do people buy your product or use your service once but rarely, if ever, return? Do they talk about your company in glowing terms, or are former customers full of stories about why others shouldn't look your way? If you find yourself having difficulty actually moving forward with needed change, think about the impact of non-action on your ability to attract and keep customers.

Growth - Think of growth in two ways. The first is organizational. You may have plans to grow the size of your organization, to expand your

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"Quotes"

"To change, that is the most difficult thing to accomplish."
~Isabelle Adjani

"Change is difficult but often essential to survival."
~Les Brown

"The key to change... is to let go of fear."
~Rosanne Cash

"Change begets change. Nothing propagates so fast."
~Charles Dickens

"Change means that what was before wasn't perfect. People want things to be better."
~Esther Dyson

"The reality is, some people don't want you to change or go anywhere different."
~Kenneth ("Babyface") Edmonds

"I think the way to change...is to handle issues individually when it's essential to do so."
~Stephen Harper

"I think ... sometimes in life things happen and you try to change them and if you learn from mistakes, it's always a good thing."
~Martina Hingis

"No one likes change but babies in diapers."

product or service line, or to increase your impact. However, if you're finding that you continually hit a brick wall as you seek to advance your growth goals, there's probably an issue related to processes, or attitudes, or skills, or practices that could use some adjusting.

But, arrested growth isn't only a problem for organizations; it also can show up for individuals. If you find that new and interesting assignments, or promotions, or mentorship opportunities never seem to have your name on them, your personal growth is being stunted. And, while there may be organizational reasons why this happens, after repeated incidents, you'd be wise to consider your part in being passed over yet again.

So, whether organizationally or individually, what's your inability to grow as you need to, or as you want to, costing you? Is the pain great enough yet to do something about it?

Management - If you're a supervisor, team leader, manager, or executive, think about this one. How much of your time (your very *valuable* time) is taken up by certain persistent personnel problems within your unit or company? How much effort do you put into consoling your team or planning workarounds for a process that's outdated or just plain broken? How much energy is devoted to cleaning up blunders by people who aren't properly trained for their technical jobs or for their supervisory or leadership roles? In other words, what is your present challenge costing you from a management perspective, and have you reached the point yet when enough is enough?

Finances - For some of you, this may be where the rubber meets the road. Is this current situation turning into a money pit? You see dollar after dollar just going down the tubes with little-to-no return (or certainly not the return you expected)? Or, is the situation one that is keeping you from making money? That is, are you failing to meet your revenue and/or profit (or margin) numbers because something's just not working? Be honest. How much are you willing to lose before you make a change?

Joy - In the words of B.B. King, "*The thrill is gone!*" If that tune's turning into your anthem, how did you let it get this way, and how long are you willing to stay where you are? Count an ongoing, or an increasing, lack of joy as a sign that something's wrong and that it's time to take action. Life's too short to walk around miserable. Moreover, misery rarely stays contained; it has a nasty way of trickling over into, and tarnishing, other areas of your life. So, fess up. What effect is your lack of joy having?

You see, there's always a cost - customers, growth, finances, management ability, and/or joy. You name it; there's a price to be paid when problems are left unaddressed. My question for you is at what point is that cost more than you're willing to bear? It's only when you're tired of losing that you're likely to do what's necessary to turn things around.

So, count YOUR cost.

But, here's my invitation to you. When you've done so, and you're ready to make your change, call us here at **Executive Advantage**. We're poised to help you pinpoint the real challenge, to identify potential solutions, and to walk with you as you move beyond your change point!

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~Barbara Johnson

"If we want to change what people think of us, then we have got to change."

~Francis Maude

"If we don't change, we don't grow. If we don't grow, we are not really living."

~Gail Sheehy

"We, too, must change as circumstances evolve."

~Baldwin Spencer

"We all have to face pain, and pain makes us grow."

~James Taylor

"If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading."

~Lao Tzu

"Pain is the root of knowledge."

~Simone Veil

"A lot of people say they want to get out of pain, and I'm sure that's true, but they aren't willing to make [it] a high priority. They aren't willing to look inside to see the source of their pain in order to deal with it."

~Lindsay Wagner

"Willingness is essential in any initiation or in making a dream come true. 'I can't often means 'I won't.' You can change 'I won't' to 'I will' with willpower."

~Marcia Wieder

What Should We Cover?



Do you have questions or topics that you'd like to have us cover in an upcoming issue of EA Insights?

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About Executive Advantage

At **Executive Advantage**, we are committed to providing results-based business and management consulting, leadership development, and coaching support. We partner with business leaders to build healthy, well-functioning organizations, where goals are met and people thrive. We also partner with individuals to create professional (and personal) lives with clearer direction, improved results, and greater balance.

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