

NEW

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Director

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Implementing Change

A conversation with John McKinley and Adalsteinn Brown

Assistant Deputy Ministers John McKinley, Health System Information Management and Investment, and Adalsteinn Brown, Health System Strategy spoke candidly at a recent FYI Series session about the approaches they took to help their staff understand transition and about the new stewardship culture that needs to take root in their divisions.

The Challenge of Change: Different Strokes for Different Divisions session was part of the on-going Stewardship in Action FYI Series, which aims to increase awareness and build greater understanding among ministry staff about stewardship.

An audio version of Brown and McKinley's presentation is available in the [Understanding Stewardship: FYI Series](#) archive under Learning and Development on INFOweb.

Below are excerpts of the answers to audience questions provided by the ADMs at the session.

Q: Describe the challenges of managing change in your division?

McKinley: At the beginning, it's about re-orientation, personal change and trying to get to a new mindset. It's developing a collective focus and working to shift the entire culture of the division.

In the middle, it's pretty tough. As you build confidence you start to get some excitement and people become engaged. People need to understand when they talk to their colleagues where they are in the transition process. It boils down to individuals supporting each other as they go through the transition process together.

I invited people to have breakfast with me — about eight people at a time over several months. I really wanted to listen to them and hear how they were feeling. Since then, we have built on listening to each other and sharing views, and have started quarterly retreats for all staff and created a quarterly newsletter. Once again, we communicate and listen, communicate and listen.

Brown: In 2008, after we had done a lot of our design and position matching, we received pretty good commentary about what people's work felt like to them. We still have five to 10 per cent of people asking questions about where things are and some who provided quite pointed and strong critiques at times. It is good input.

You have to do a lot of things to bring about change. We're working on our alignment and our culture. We hold forums, workshops and breakfast conversations across all levels in the division. We continue to look at leadership, at the division, branch and unit levels. We are working with individuals on changing values, practices and behaviours.

Q: What is the desired end state of this change management?

McKinley: The end state would see much more evidence-based decision making — making sure we have cross-health sector analytics. My [dream] would be to see the entire piece as opposed to just silos of data.

Brown: Our product is policy, legislation, regulation, research pieces, and planning documents. But our end state is where people define success in their job based on improvements in the health outcomes, efficiency, and confidence in our health care system.

Q: How will you know when the desired change is taking hold?

McKinley: When I start to see the evidence coming through. We've already seen a certain degree of that change coming to the Ministry Management Committee (MMC) table, in comparison to five years ago. We can actually measure the change through the amount of evidence that is built into strategy and how complete and thorough the analytics were behind it.

Brown: When people bring a policy forward, it will include the outcome they want to see in the system — whether it will be health or confidence or satisfaction or cost. When they say what we are going to work on now is changing something specific in the system and they see that direct connection.

Q: What would you do differently if you had to start over again?

Brown: Make John (McKinley's division) go first! It is important to make sure there are sufficient resources within Health System Information Management and Investment (HSIMI). It's kind of the gas that goes in the fuel tank of what we're doing. I would have encouraged the transition of HSIMI earlier.

McKinley: If we could have done it faster that would have been the thing that I would have wanted to change the most. It's taken a long time.

Q: What is your most important change management advice?

McKinley: Communicate, communicate, communicate. In change management, it's all about how you communicate and manage by communicating — especially face to face — and engaging people in the discussion and work of change.

Brown: The focus on culture is key. It needs to begin as early as possible in the change process.

Q: When you say culture what are you talking about? Can you narrow it down for us?

McKinley: We need to build a culture from the grassroots. How do we feel about our work? I see more cohesiveness in our values and the ability to be flexible. This is the culture I see in the future. It is built right into how people feel about the way they work.

Brown: It's a culture that values evidence very strongly and is constantly focused on improvement. We make a big jump when one

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ADM John McKinley
Health System Information
Management and Investment



ADM Adalsteinn Brown
Health System Strategy

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of my team members says: “My job right now is focused on a project to improve the safety in hospitals so more people leave alive.”

Q: How would you describe your change management leadership style?

■ McKinley: I have tried to make it as participatory as possible. Making sure everybody gets involved with it as much as possible so they can see and live the change.
■ Brown: I don’t think I have a style. We have gone through so many different changes and I am learning as an ADM to match the style to the problem at hand. You’ve got to kind of recalibrate your style all the time. ■

NEW Directions

NEW Directions, published for employees of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care by the Communications and Information Branch, can be read on-line at INFOweb at <http://intra.moh.gov.on.ca>.

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Do you have questions about the organizational change?

- Ask your manager
- E-mail your questions or comments to the feedback account at anewdirection.moh@ontario.ca

Maureen Murray, *writer*

Missed a past FYI Series session?

Listen to the archived audio presentation! At your convenience, you can listen to an audio webcast of all past FYI sessions. Follow along with the presenter’s PowerPoint slides and hear the answers to questions from the audience. Go to Learning and Development on INFOweb and click on

[Understanding Stewardship: FYI Series](#).

Focus on the Tools for Teams Toolkit

Part 2 Tools for Team Building

The comprehensive Tools for Teams toolkit, launched on INFOweb this fall, is helping teams work together and achieve their goals more effectively.

With more and more work being carried out cross-functionally, there’s been a growing interest in supports that will help teams work at an optimal level, explained Lorraine Deska, acting manager of organizational development and change strategies.

“We’ve had a lot of positive feedback from formal and informal teams across divisions on how the tools were useful in helping them meet their objectives,” Deska said.

Ann Schrager acting team lead, ER implementation team, Implementation Branch, Health System Accountability and Performance explained that she uses various tools in the toolkit to build interest and momentum in the project she leads.

“When leading a cross-functional team, although people don’t report to you directly they are accountable for their contribution to the team. The tools help me to build an understanding with and engage members who have competing work commitments in other areas,” Schrager said.

“Reducing wait times in emergency departments is a government priority with set deliverables,” she said. “I have used a blended approach and chosen different elements from many of the tools to improve team dynamics in order to complete work on time and achieve the project’s goals.”

The toolkit is located in the [Working in Teams — Team Tips and Tools](#) section under Learning and Development on INFOweb.

The 22 tools in the kit are organized into three focus areas:

1. Improving Team Processes (featured in [NEW Directions, Oct. 3, 2008](#))
2. Team Building
3. Communications

Team Building

The Team Building tools will help teams gain the benefits of powerful teamwork by:

- Building capability
- Building relationships
- Building listening skills
- Improving the quality of conversations
- Building trust.

Here are two examples of the Team Building tools that enhance team dynamics:

Speed Problem Solving

This tool is for teams that need to improve problem solving skills, team dynamics and team moral.

It is useful where members discuss problems and obstacles at length but fail to identify solutions, or in situations where one or two members monopolize team discussions. This tool is modelled on speed dating. Its success lies in the concept that the most effective approach to problem solving is to vary the participants and to set limits on how long each one engages in the discussion. The short time frame forces participants to speak clearly and succinctly about the problems and prompts them to move quickly from problem to solution. Team members learn how to quickly get to the heart of the matter and how to start discussions that generate solutions.

What’s in a Name

This tool is a good ice breaker for a new team as a way to get to know each other.

It is useful where members are dealing with change and need to do some bonding. It is also helpful for an existing team that needs to better understand that people

respond to change in different ways. Participants are given cards with statements to which they respond. A sample card could read, “My greatest lesson learned about change is (was)” Used as a team building tool, members learn that a person’s response to change depends on the stage of the change process in which they find themselves and that environment, upbringing, life experiences, and ways of thinking all contribute to how we deal with change and diversity. Participants discuss what insights they have gained from hearing everyone else’s response

Improve your team building competencies! Learn more about Speed Problem Solving, What’s in a Name and the other tools in the [Team Building](#) section. Look for a feature on the toolkit’s Communications tools in an upcoming issue of *NEW Directions*.

Gain the benefits of powerful teamwork from the Tools for Teams toolkit!

The toolkit helps all teams and team leaders to:

- Develop a strong team
- Work together successfully
- Ensure member’s strengths contribute to team results.

The tools in the kit are organized into three focus areas:

1. Improving Team Processes
2. Communications
3. Team Building

Help your team, whether it be new or existing, get results! Read more about all the resources available in the [Working in Teams — Team Tips and Tools](#) section under Learning and Development on INFOweb.