

The Change Imperative

Strategic brainstorming, change management and printing awards at CUPMAC's 47th annual conference



Sean Kehler presents an Impression Award to Shelley Demers (left) and Heather Hersemeyer of Nipissing University as part of the inaugural CUPMAC Awards held in Halifax.

CUPMAC stands for College and University Print Management Association of Canada. Its approximately 80 members, who are all managers or other key personnel of in-plant printing operations in Canadian institutions of higher learning, do not necessarily follow the same protocols that spell success in the business world. Rather, they operate in ways uniquely geared to effectively serve the specific needs of their own academic institutions and customers. At the same time, their day-to-day routines accomplish many of the same goals that have always been among printing's loftiest – education, freedom of thought and speech, free access to information and the progress of the arts, sciences, and technology.

Another remarkable aspect about CUPMAC members is that they are regularly required to devise sophisticated practical solutions to meet the unique challenges of their work. Invariably, when I speak with members, I am fascinated to learn about the latest solutions they have uncovered for printing dilemmas I've never even heard of before. For this reason, I was excited to facilitate a 90-minute interactive brainstorming session on the latest challenges, successes and growth strategies for academic in-plants at CUPMAC's 47th Annual Conference, held in early June in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The conference's relatively small size of about 40 participants enabled shop talk that was satisfyingly intense and detailed, and gave all of us an opportunity to get to know each other over the information-packed three-and-a-half-day event.

Change or die

The conference theme, The Change Imperative, emphasized CUPMAC's focus on supporting its members at a time when print and education environments are both changing rapidly. To survive this volatility, academic in-plants must quickly keep forging new paths to ensure their products and services stay relevant, while also ensuring their printing platforms remain efficient in the face of tightening budget constraints.

Among the conference's eye-openers on managing change was a workshop called *Change or Die* by Scott Comber, Assistant Professor at the Rowe School of Business at Halifax's Dalhousie University. Comber is also a leadership coach, who works with organizations to help them manage change and improve the effectiveness of their leaders, conflict resolution, ethical decision-making, and the overall quality of work life.

Comber's thesis for his *Change or Die* sessions derives from studies in the health-care field involving patients with heart disease who undergo bypass surgery and afterwards need to change to a

healthier lifestyle for their own survival. Yet statistics show that 90 percent of these patients choose not to change. Comber believes the reason is that, although they can understand rationally and intellectually why change is necessary, they fail to grasp the need for change on an emotional level and, therefore, fail to do so.

"In business, change management usually refers to new sites, new bosses, new organizational charts, new technology, new policies, or other practical measures," explains Comber. "Most management approaches to change focus only on these externals and their results."

But most managers neglect what he calls transition: The internal psychological experience of the people involved in change as they come to terms with the new situation. "Unless transition occurs, change will not be successful," says Comber, pointing to research showing that a full 75 percent of corporate change initiatives fail.

"Since research also confirms that the largest catalyst for behavioural change is emotion, you must understand that change is emotionally driven and that managing people's internal experience is the most critical part of change leadership," says Comber. "Accordingly, you must integrate emotion into the way you communicate with others about change to make your communications effective in engaging people and changing their behaviours."

He suggests that connecting with people on a human level right at the beginning of the change process is the most-important single thing you should do – even before addressing the subject of how the change will proceed. "All you have to lead people through the change is your relationship with them," he advises. He also recommends that leaders' initial communications about change should identify the brutal facts – meaning what needs to be different – or else the change will not proceed successfully, either.

Aiding transition

Since change – especially endings – can often give rise to people's negative emotions like fear, denial, frustration and anger, Comber advises leaders to acknowledge (but do not necessarily judge) any endings that must occur, including any associated conflict and emotions.

Support people in dealing with their feelings about the change and recognize that some people will take longer to adjust. Only after these preliminaries is it advisable to move on to discussions identifying best practices and creating an action plan for external changes.

At this stage, one of the best ways to aid someone's transition is to empower them to become part of the decision-making process through engaging them in dialogue, answering their questions, and listening to their feedback. "Help them decide on their own parts," advises Comber. "In most situations you can include others in this way and avoid the common mistake of not holding other people capable and assuming they won't be able to handle it."

Once an action plan for change is determined, Comber advises it is best to move quickly and energetically to implement it, because research shows that fast, large movement actually helps people adjust better than small, gradual changes.

Another effective leadership technique is to tell a story about the road to change and new beginnings in a way that gives people meaning, purpose and validation. An excellent way for leaders to achieve all these ends is by communicating progress in a way that speaks to people's emotions by instilling hope or even joy – emotions that are far more powerful motivators than logic, facts or fear.

CUPMAC'S INAUGURAL AWARD WINNERS

Impression Awards

Collaborative Service:
Print Plus & FASS, Nipissing University

Distinctive Service:
Media Production Services, McMaster University

Green Service:
Print Services, Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Accelerated Service:
Printing Services, University of Victoria

CUPMAC Hall of Fame:
Printing Services, York University

Production Awards

Digital Black & White Print:
Printing Services, University of Regina

Digital Colour Print:
Printing Services, Memorial University

Graphic Design:
Document Solutions, Simon Fraser University

Offset Colour Print:
Graphic Services, Carleton University

Communicating appreciation

Comber says another important part of communicating about change is appreciation: "Focus on what you want more of, give energy to it, and it will grow. In other words find it, track it and fan it."

"Conversely, do not focus on problems, because if you focus on the negative, it will actually grow. Instead think in terms of the changes you want to see. As a small example, if employee lateness is a problem, track people who arrive on time and appreciate them. Rather than focusing on the problem, get people galvanized on a positive future marked by early arrivals."

Your expression of appreciation should be timely, convey thanks and include an all-important impact statement explaining the positive results of what you are appreciating. "It's the impact message that actually changes behaviours by helping people understand how their contribution counts," Comber explains. "During change people must do things they nor-

boom, to judge by the number of cranes and construction sites in evidence in June. The CUPMAC conference took full advantage of local tourism by offering attendees optional nearby sightseeing on Nova Scotia's South Shore, including visits to the famously scenic fishing villages of Peggy's Cove and Lunenburg (the latter being one of only two North American UNESCO Heritage Sites). The fact that modern Halifax has become a gastronomic wonderland was reflected both in excellent meals at the conference hotel and several supplier-sponsored dinner outings to fine local restaurants.

The awards dinner at the conference was memorable for its impressive venue: The Garrison Room in the North Magazine of the Halifax Citadel, a British fort established in 1749 and Canada's most visited National Historic Site, according to *Fodors.com*. The occasion marked the first ever presentation of the annual CUPMAC Awards, a new source of lifeblood for members, who depend for their existence on the acknowledgement of their value by the bureaucracy and teaching departments of the institutions they serve.

This clientele, consisting of administrators and academics, may have no concept of the expertise and benefits provided by their school's printing in-plant and may in fact find it easier to farm the whole operation out to an external facility-management supplier if they seriously fail to understand its importance. Hence the requirement on all CUPMAC members to keep their institutions constantly aware of the unique and valuable services their in-plant provides.

The newly created awards program gives members a way to generate just this kind of vital internal recognition and marketing, explains Sean Kehler, Supervisor, Print & Logistics Services, Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Surrey, British Columbia. He laughs when recounting that his appointment to the Awards Committee of one, charged with implementing the program, came while he was taking a break from the room where CUPMAC's 2013 annual meeting was being held in conjunction with the association's 2013 conference in Whistler, British Columbia. (He was present, however, when he was elected the association's new President at CUPMAC's 2014 annual meeting in Halifax.)

In organizing the awards, Kehler elected to incorporate a number of distinctive features; for instance, wall plaques are awarded as prizes instead of trophies to save space on desks and shelves. The plaques are made in the city hosting both the annual conference and awards presentation ceremony to further involve the locale in the awards. All samples entered in CUPMAC's five categories of Production Awards are displayed at the annual conference and judged by all members in attendance. A further five categories, called Impression Awards, are judged by CUPMAC's executive team to recognize special achievements.

The Impression Awards include: Collaborative Service, working with another unit to achieve a goal; Green Service,

changes in operations impacting recyclable, renewable and sustainable environmental resources or communicating the in-plant's green efforts to customers; Accelerated Service, an extreme production deadline; Distinctive Service, continuing daily production while achieving innovative goals for growth through such drastic measures as new equipment installs, plant moves or reorganization; and Hall of Fame induction, exemplifying the highest standards of service to an institution along with contributions to CUPMAC and the in-plant community as a whole.

Although printing in-plants in institutions of higher learning vary greatly in size and complexity, Kehler explains the Impression Awards make it possible for even CUPMAC's smallest members with

only one or two staff to gain recognition: "Impression Awards are for something you accomplished in the trenches without ever necessarily producing a showy printed piece. Everyone can enter a good story or two about how they overcame a difficult challenge to achieve a special accomplishment."

During judging, CUPMAC's members and executive assess entries following detailed criteria set out on a judging sheet compiled by Kehler, then cast their votes accordingly. Another friendly, collaborative touch is that, after receiving an award, each winner then turns around and acts as the presenter for the next one. ☺

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Assistant Professor Scott Comber of Dalhousie University presented a workshop titled *Change or Die*.

mally don't have to do, so it's important to appreciate their extra efforts." It is not necessary to acknowledge each person individually, however. You can also do it through collective events like awards presentations or ice cream days.

Comber adds that effective change leaders also need to cultivate their own skills at communicating with others about the ambiguity and volatility of information and situations. Likely, as plans progress, they will need to find constructive ways to address such unforeseen developments as delays and unanticipated consequences.

Adding local colour and national awards

Halifax is one of Canada's most-historic cities when it comes to printing. The country's first newspaper, the *Halifax Gazette*, was first published there in 1752. The city also became home to Margaret Draper, a Loyalist from Boston, Massachusetts, considered Canada's first female printer, who arrived in Halifax at the start of the American Revolution with her business partner John Howe, dragging a wooden printing press along with them.

With a population today of 413,710, six universities and three colleges, Halifax seems to be experiencing a building

**another time.
another print.**

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