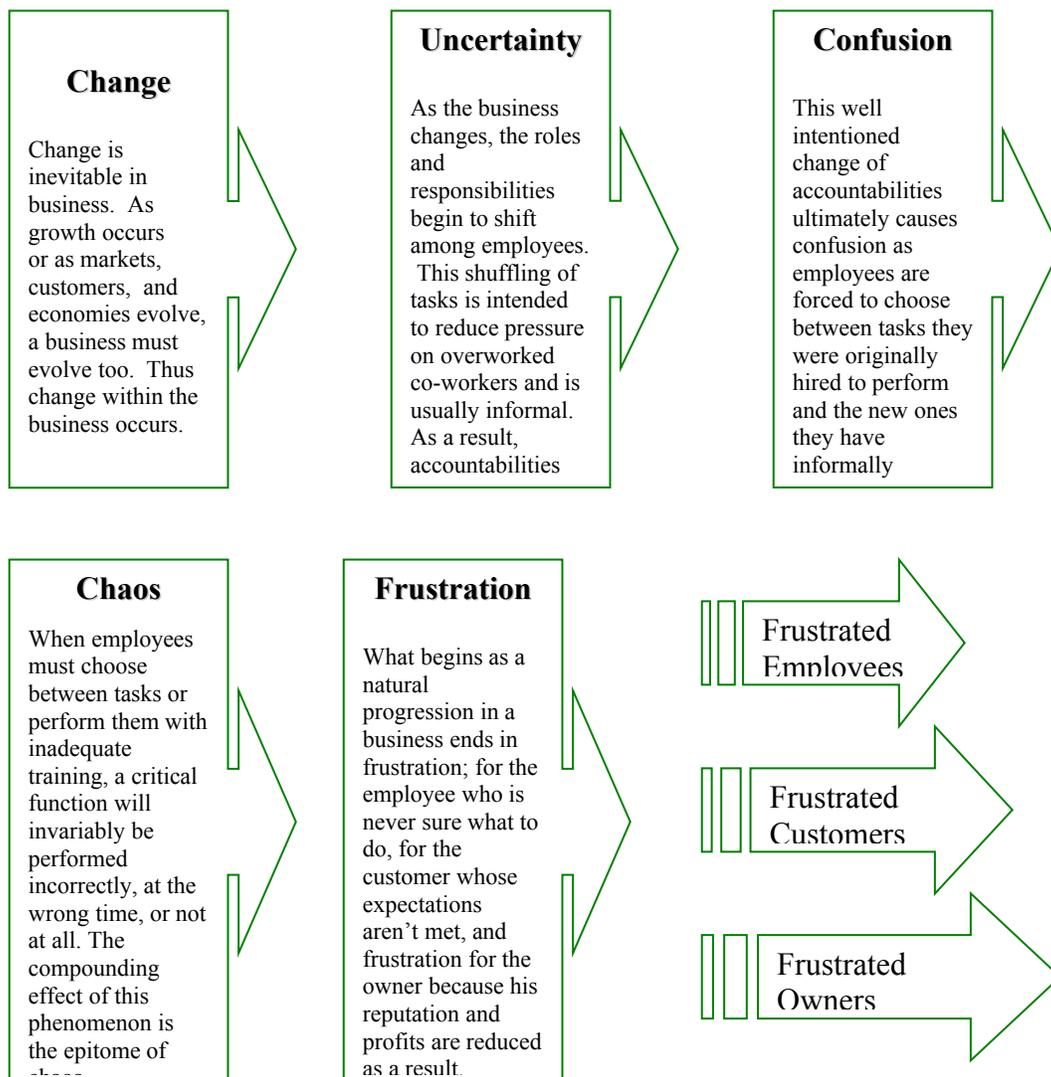




Loose Change by Aaron Crowley

This is an election year and the word change is everywhere. The *call* for change, the *lack* of loose change, *due* to the change in gas prices, and *climate* change are referred to endlessly. Even the economy is in a state of change, and it is safe to say that business as we once knew it is changing too.

While change in a business is nothing new and very often for the better, the subtle changes that occur when no one is looking can be as destructive as five dollar a gallon gas on a politicians election chances. How does a business owner manage the unintended consequences of unanticipated change?



The answer to that question lies first in understanding how subtle shifts in roles and responsibilities due to evolving circumstances. This shift can wreak havoc on an organizations ability to perform critical task necessary to keeping the customer happy and put money in the bank.

The chart above shows how this happens.

Once the task that is being performed incorrectly, at the wrong time, or not at all due to changes within a company is identified, the following actions can be taken to ensure it is executed properly:

Assign the Position: Once the task in question is identified as the root cause of the chaos and frustration, the manager or owner must assign or designate a specific position or person with in the company the formal responsibility of performing it.

Define the Result: After the accountability for performing the task has been established, the specific result the task is intended to achieve must be defined in unmistakable terms. The result must be accompanied by measurable standards so there is no confusion or debate over whether the task was performed properly or on time.

Design the Operation: The final step in this process is to design the operation for the person performing the task. A map is as necessary to arriving at a destination as a recipe is to a world class dish. And even the most conscientious and diligent worker will need a step by step process to ensure the desired result is achieved.

To the extent that this simple process is applied to frustrations resulting from change in your business, is the extent that your employees will be fulfilled in knowing they did their job right, your customers will be happy because their expectations were fulfilled, and you will have a profitable company capable of capitalizing on change. And to quote my grandpa, "With change comes opportunity!"