

Communicating Change

Performance Improvement & Change Management

Each staff member interprets management announcements about change in light of their own experience. This determines how they respond to change – support, watch, undermine or avoid. Responding to the differing motivations of individuals towards change is a very significant determinant of success or failure.

Dr Donald Tosti is a highly valued member of our Persona Global alliance, a Past President of the International Society for Performance Improvement, international author and change consultant. The information that follows draws heavily on his work and that of C.S. Lineberry.

The Energy Investment Model allows us to examine and address an individual's "inherent" motivation towards change activity, through two dimensions –

1. **Attitude** regarding the activity
2. Willingness to expend **energy** on the activity

In an organisational setting, these dimensions depend strongly on an individual's previous experience in the performance environment. For example, a person's current approach to the job is affected by his or her past experience with work – how the person has been treated on the job by management, co-workers and company policies. These two dimensions create a matrix for identifying potential motivational 'communities' within an organisation, as illustrated below:

- **Walking dead** (low energy – negative attitude) Often act as if they are powerless to influence events and may conduct themselves as 'victims'.
- **Spectators** (low energy – positive attitude) Speak positively of their jobs and organisation – avoid change unless they are sure it is absolutely 'safe'.
- **Cynics** (high energy – negative attitude) Often spend a good deal of time complaining about their jobs, management, policies, or other aspects of the organisation.
- **Players** (high energy – positive attitude) Demonstrate a positive attitude towards their jobs and organisation, and invest considerable energy in making things better.

Research by Dr Tosti across more than 2000 managers in various international organisations, as part of his consulting work, has produced consistent results on the distribution of employees:

- Spectators 38%,
- Players 14%
- Walking dead 9%
- Cynics 39%.

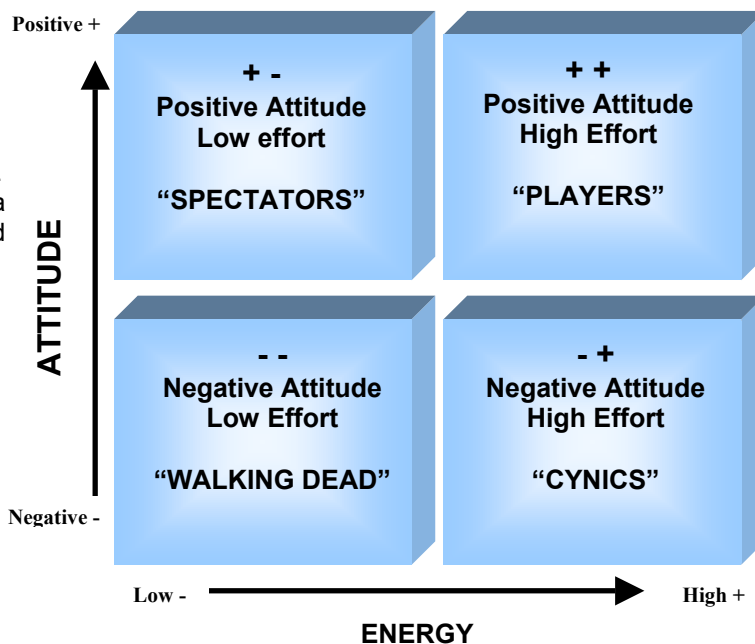
When managers announce change, they can often be misled into thinking there is good support by employees, because the spectators and players combined make up just over half of the total.

A key concern for all leaders and managers must be why the percentage of players is so low and why there are so many individuals in the other 3 categories. When newly hired, very few people exhibit the behaviours of spectators, cynics or walking dead and they want to contribute constructively. Perhaps the way they are led and managed subsequently has something to do with their shift from the player's corner.

There are strategies that can be employed to communicate the change message effectively to get more spectators and cynics "on board" with change.

If you would like more information about the Energy Investment Model or Change Management generally please contact John john@dawson-mcdonald.com.au or call (03) 9602 4858.

ENERGY INVESTMENT MODEL



C.S. Lineberry 1987



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