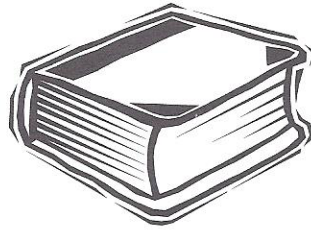


— Book Review —



Developing the Foundation for Change

by **Mary V. Gelinas, Ed.D. and Roger G. James, Ed.D.**

International Society for Performance Improvement, 1995

84 pps., \$24.95

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Reviewed by Ken Blanchard

The belief that is central to the consulting of Mary Gelinas and Roger James, organizational consultants who specialize in collaborative approaches to large-scale, is that of comprehensive organizational design. If it is true that organizational behavior is driven by a series of agreements, then Gelinas and James believe that change is created through

collaboratively reconsidering, reframing, and rebuilding those agreements with the leaders and stakeholders.

"Organizations are created and maintained on a series of agreements. Some agreements are explicit, consciously developed, and documented in the organization's mission, vision, philosophy, values and aspirations. Others are summarized in plans — strategic, business, operations — or captured in policies and procedures. Many agreements are implicit and not so consciously developed. They become suddenly subtly interwoven into an organization's culture or accepted mode of operating. They affect decisions about whom to hire and fire, performance appraisal ratings, whom to promote and demote, how to allocate resources, and what behavior is expected."

— Excerpted from "Developing the Foundation for Change"

This book is the first in a series of three that takes a comprehensive look at change. Book one, *Developing the Foundation For Change*, provides a basic understanding of all the agreements that need to be built among an organization's leadership team and the conditions that need to be present in the organization prior to embarking on a

change initiative. Book two, *Designing Change*, (Fall 1997) is concerned with building agreements among members of the organization on how to change the

organization. Book three, *Implementing Change Successfully* (1999) will deal with how to actually make it happen.

Practical Theory

I believe in Gelinas and James' approach — not only in theory — but in practice. Our organization, Blanchard Training & Development, Inc., (a 165-member training and consulting company) hired Gelinas and James to guide us through a comprehensive organization redesign. Under their direction, we took six people off their jobs for a full year and placed them on a Design Team to work with a Steering Committee of our top managers to lead us through the first two phases: Building the foundation for change, and design-ing the change. We now are in the midst of the implementation phase led by a Transition Team comprised of members of the original Design Team and Steering Committee. We are finding this process extremely helpful and have been very pleased with the involvement and commitment of people throughout our organization.

What attracted me to Gelinas and James was their aversion to "quick-fix change". I think leaders like myself have been frustrated by partial solutions that do not achieve the needed results. We are starting to realize that an effective change is a journey that needs ongoing attention and more comprehensive, systemic approaches. Leaders are also beginning to see the critical importance of their own role in

leading change. We now are realizing that their role is to simultaneously manage the current business and lead efforts to improve it.

The Focus of this Book

Despite this increased understanding, there still

is little appreciation of the conditions and agreements that need to be in place prior to initiating successful change efforts. And, although there is much agreement about the importance of the role of the leader in creating change, little has been written about what a leader specifically needs to do to position a change initiative for success. Enter Gelinas and James and their book *Developing The Foundation for Change*.

I believe that *Developing the Foundation For Change* is the first book to provide theory, behavior, and tools to work with an organization's leaders to set the stage for effective performance improvement initiatives. Consult-

ants, trainers, performance technologists and change agents can use this theory to educate their clients about what is needed to develop a firm foundation for change. The procedures can help them work more effectively with clients to build the understanding, agreements and conditions that are requisite if performance improvement initiatives are to be successful.

Audience


This book is written for anyone who is interested

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in helping organizations set the stage for successful performance improvement initiatives. It can be used by external or internal trainers, consultants, and human resource generalists — by anyone who wants to be able to respond more effectively to a client's request for help.

Final Thoughts

As you can tell, I have nothing but good things to say about Mary Gelinias, Roger James and their book *Developing the Foundation for Change*. Given the fact that change is a way of life today, I think it is a must-read for anyone working within organizations to make them more viable and effective. The book is practical and inspiring. It translates theory into clear and understandable "how-to's." It will give you everything you need to "roll up your sleeves" and make successful change happen.

And it is based on the belief that collaborative processes are key to organizations surviving and thriving. *Developing the Foundation for Change* makes you feel optimistic that people can create the kind of organizations they truly desire and leaders can do just that — lead others in a motivating and effective way. 



How to Order "Developing the Foundation for Change"

Why do so many performance improvement initiatives flounder at implementation or fail to achieve the desired results? Part of the answer lies in the agreement made or not made at the start of the initiative by the organization's leaders. Another part of the answer is in underestimating or underutilizing the pivotal role of managers in creating change.

The authors present a systematic and proven approach that demonstrates how to work with the leadership team of an organization to build a strong foundation for change. The step-by-step approach is applicable to any size of organization or change initiative, citing examples from their own experience consulting with leaders at every organizational level. Gelinias and James show the complete process in

action

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Ken Blanchard is the co-author of the all-time best-selling book, *The One Minute Manager*, and co-founder with his wife, Marjorie, of Blanchard Training and Development, Inc. His recent books, *Mission Possible: Becoming a World Class Organization While There's Still Time*, *Empowerment Takes More Than a Minute*, *Everyone's a Coach* and *Raving Fans* have consistently appeared on the Business Week best-seller list, along with the perennial best-seller, *The One Minute Manager*.