



## Keeping Pace with Change

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A well-known Chinese Proverb counsels — “A wise man adapts himself to circumstances, as water shapes itself to the vessel that contains it.” The ability to do just that is critical to success in today’s business environment. **Keeping pace with change, which is more rapid than ever, is vitally important to your company.** Here are two approaches you can take to make sure your business is in good shape.

### Lifelong learning

[According to Zvika Krieger](#), technology advisor for Facebook, **“The shift to lifelong learning is absolutely essential.** As the pace of technological changes quickens, we need to be sure that employees are keeping up with the right skills to thrive.”

Lifelong learning requires effort but enables us to make informed response to change. Today’s leaders need to have a talent for broadening people’s current mindset. **They need to listen in order to lead and have a passion for learning new ways to approach new challenges.** Being able to adjust thinking and tactics to fit new business paradigms is essential.

Making lifelong learning a core value is a tall order. A good place to start is by reading — there is a world of information online and in print. Maintain a list of books and online resources to explore and share titles you’ve enjoyed with your team. Consider starting a book club in your organization. Remain curious!



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### The opportunity in change

When it comes to looking at the opportunity in change, I'm reminded of some great companies that were on the verge of extinction and recovered. The list includes: Apple, Best Buy, Marvel, GM, AIG, IBM, Starbucks, Jack in the Box, Chrysler, and Lego.

Of these corporate turnarounds, there may be none more famous than Apple. In her article in Business Insider, Alyson Shontell describes what she calls the "The Greatest Comeback Story of All Time" ([The Greatest Comeback Story Of All Time: How Apple Went From Near Bankruptcy to Billions in 13 Years, Alyson Shontell, Oct. 26, 2010](#)) In 1997, Apple was hemorrhaging \$1 billion a year. The media was predicting its death. At the '97 Macworld Expo, Steve Jobs humbly explained to the audience: **"If we want to move forward and see Apple healthy and prospering again, we have to let go of a few things here. We have to let go of this notion that for Apple to win, Microsoft has to lose."** Bill Gates and Steve Jobs joined forces. They announced a five-year contract that would release an updated

Mac version of Microsoft Office and Microsoft's \$150 million investment in Apple. In the end, both Jobs and Gates won!

Author Barbara Kingsolver, says, **"The changes we dread most may contain our salvation."** In 1997 Steve Jobs wasn't afraid to make difficult decisions to get the company back on track. He demonstrated to the world that you can adapt to change by finding opportunity within it.

### Keeping pace

The best leaders are continually developing a culture that enables people to find opportunity in change. They are active listeners, attentive to hearing ideas with an open mind, and able to respond without judgment or finality. They project understanding and respect. They are also lifelong learners who recognize the need for continually keeping pace with a fast moving world.

**Remember — a wise business man adapts to his circumstances.**

## 5 KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Keeping pace with change is vitally important to your company.
2. The shift to lifelong learning is absolutely essential.
3. You need to listen in order to lead.
4. The changes we dread most may contain our salvation.
5. A wise business man adapts to his circumstances.