

# progressing business

**Mario Pennisi Retires**

**AOQ-QLD™ Appoints New CEO**

**The Challenge of Change**

**Griffith University  
Innovation Challenge**

# The Challenge of Change

## PART ONE

Narelle Stratford

Psychologist and Master Practitioner NLP, Timeline and Hypnosis

*Change in any area of our life is the scariest thing of all for anyone, unless we are well-prepared for it.*



*Have you ever had the experience of doing something a certain way, time after time again? Maybe it was at work, or on the sports field. Perhaps it was a certain way you swung your golf club, or squash racquet?*

Maybe you were taught a particular hand grip, an exact way to stand, how to sight the ball, how to turn your wrist for a particular shot, how to move your elbow back or forward etcetera?

And over time, that action became part of you... Until one day, someone came along and in their wisdom said, "You'll get a better result if you do this..." What? Come again? What do you mean I'll get a better result if I do ... what?" It's as though the brain scrambles and we cannot take those words on board and get our body to follow through. In essence, we are in shock.

It's as though the brain and the body cannot compute the outcome of a different behaviour, because the old behaviour is so firmly entrenched in our mind and body.

This is the challenge of change. To move past that shock and accept that there may be a different way of doing things. Or of saying things, of experiencing things.

Learning has different stages, from one through to four, when we reach a level of automatic accomplishment. When you are learning and going from being an absolute novice to an expert, you know and understand you'll make changes along the way. I like to think of these stages of learning as being equivalent to the stages of change.

### **STAGE 1. UNCONSCIOUS INCOMPETENCE**

Take for example, learning how to manage a team. You've just been appointed as the manager or supervisor of your department and you have a team of six people who will report to you. You've never managed a team before, but it can't be that hard, can it?

Your six people have different roles, are different ages, there is a mix of male and female, different cultures, different ways of approaching tasks, different learning styles, different levels of experience, and of course, there are different

personalities. But all you have to do is communicate what you want and you'll be right, won't you?

Ha ha ha! Experienced managers reading this will now be laughing their head off because they know that you have just entered the most incredibly difficult challenge of your life. This challenge is up there with marriage and in-laws.

### ENTER STAGE 1: UNCONSCIOUS INCOMPETENCE

You think you know how to deal with or manage people, and yet, you don't know what it is you don't know. Because you are unaware of all the hidden traps that occur in communication from your new perspective as "the manager", you don't yet know just how incompetent you can and probably will be.

This could be a scary thought for some new managers, as they worry about how to speak to a team member and not be seen as the ogre or the witch.

*Or, don't care.*

*Or, think it's easy to get new staff...*

*Or, forget to calculate the cost of high staff turnover.*

*Or, don't have time to monitor, support or train people or can't see the point of it.*

*Or, why isn't everyone like me, there's no need to get all emotional?*

Change in any area of our life is the scariest thing of all for anyone, unless we are well-prepared for it. Read that sentence again, because it's one of the most important statements you will read or see or hear. For many people, change is very scary. You can no longer run on automatic.

Even when you are mentally prepared for it, you're not really prepared for the emotion of it. Remember how the brain and body kind of went into shock when a change was required? Change may take some getting used to because it occurs on at least two levels inside of us.

There's your Conscious mind and there's your Subconscious mind. Or think of it as the intellect (which says what's the problem?) and the emotions (who cries, screams, gets fearful or excited, goes quiet or silently withdraws).

If you have ever asked someone who is good at something to break it down into small and easy to digest steps so that you can copy them, you might see their eyes glaze over as they try and work out how to do that. Ask an experienced dancer who isn't a teacher how they just did something and they will have a hard time explaining it because the body has

taken over all the little steps and now does things automatically.

This is because they have long passed the first stage of unconscious incompetence and have become habituated to the level they are now operating at.

To get through Stage 1 Unconscious Incompetence, give yourself reassurance that you are learning and mistakes are okay because you can learn from them. After all, you would never have learnt to walk without making many mistakes. Ask forgiveness of yourself and forgive others when you/they don't know what to do or how to do it and it is not coming easily.

Laugh about it, because laughter releases endorphins, the happy hormones and this aids learning, and reduces stress. The less stress there is, the easier it is to think clearly, the easier it is to speak, to be smooth in action, and the easier it is to succeed and so on.

I bought a baby laptop many years ago, took it home, unzipped the bag, opened the lid, and spent the next hour trying to find the "on" button. I was embarrassed, frustrated, annoyed, ticked off with the manual because the diagram did not include the PSH (push here stupid) on/off button. I think

I finally rang the store and had to ask.

I did not know what I didn't know until it rudely presented itself. There are many situations where this will occur, from human relationships to technology. And humans are by far the hardest to figure out. And funnily enough, I have never seen someone hand me a manual on how to run humans effectively and productively. (Perhaps I should qualify that, you can learn a lot about the individual if they do a DiSC Behavioural Profile, which will go a long way towards this.)

In the meantime, help yourself with deep breathing, laughter (at yourself and with others), patience, and kindness. Especially, you can help others who are new to something, with the very same attitude. Hopefully, the situation is not going to cause the end of the world if a mistake is made, so let it go. You will eventually move out of this stage of not knowing what you don't know and on to the next one.

In the next article, you can read about the next stage and what goes on in your mind, at the point of Conscious Incompetence.

More information request *Change1*  
to [progbus@pbinstitute.net](mailto:progbus@pbinstitute.net)

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**KEYNOTE ADDRESS** Joseph A DeFeo, President, Juran Institute

<b>THEME</b>	Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow – 300 Years of Quality
<b>HOSTED BY</b>	Progressing Business Institute, AOQ-QLD™ and UQ Business School Downtown
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<b>MORE INFORMATION</b>	<a href="http://www.aoq.org.au/PBCon2009.htm">www.aoq.org.au/PBCon2009.htm</a> Telephone: +61 7 3816 2255 Email: <a href="mailto:info@aoq.org.au">info@aoq.org.au</a>

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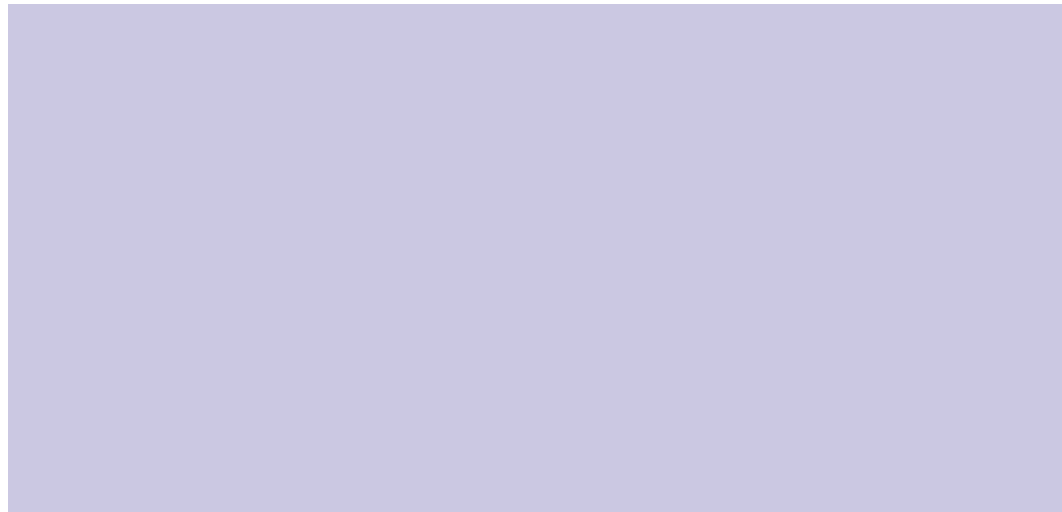
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