MODULE 4: **CHANGE MANAGEMENT AND CREATIVE THINKING**

STUDENT'S MANUAL

Objetives:

- Know what it means to **change**, and become aware of **how changes affect us**.
- Interiorize the **comfort zone** concept and the relevancy of leaving it to develop our learning and improve as professionals.
- Learn what **resilience** is, how to develop it, and its link to flexibility and adaptation to change.
- Promote **continuous improvement and innovation** for our constant adaptation to the environment and the achievement of our objectives.
- Understand what creativity is and how our thinking works.
- Learn how to proceed for problem solving.

Contenidos:

- Introduction
- The change
- Comfort zone
- Flexibility, adaptability and resilence.
- Promote and potentiate the change
- Creativity: vertical and lateral thinking
- Solving problems

- **INTRODUCTION**

The world is constantly changing, and organizations are facing new challenges every day that need different solutions. In this sense, professionals, in many cases not covered by an organizational structure, must be flexible, proactive and creative enough to adapt in the most optimal way; And they must be able to propose changes that allow them to maintain their level of competitiveness, both for themselves and from the point of view of business objectives.

Being competent in change management and creativity **means being able to find and apply agile and effective responses to changing situations, environments, people, responsibilities and tasks:**

- Showing us flexible
- Integrating change in a positive and constructive way.
- Using both brain hemispheres for problem solving; In other words, making use of both analytical (from logic and reasoning), and creative (from curiosity and imagination) skills, seeking in their application the appropriate combination and symbiosis of both.

Change is a process through which one passes from one state to another, generating changes or alterations of a quantitative and/or qualitative character of reality in an individual, group, team, department, company, ...

In the workplace, it has become essential to train and develop flexibility, adaptability and resilience

skills, as they allow us to achieve a **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT** that provides us with the achievement of individual, team and organizational results.

Likewise, being able to promote change, to propose new ideas, to innovate, is increasingly important, and in many cases, **the point of differentiation in our professional profile.**

Although change usually costs us, because we tend to the "status quo", change is also supposed to grow, to learn. Do you dare embracing the change?

- **THE CHANGE**

"In the universe, there is a law that does not change,
And it is the law that all things change and that nothing remains"
(Buddha)

In a changing environment like the present one, we have different alternatives to act. To start observing ourselves is the essential starting point for working this skill. Then think:

- How you face changes in your life, however small they are.
- If you act with flexibility in face of them and if you consider that you have the capacity to adapt.
- If you experience these changes as part of your everyday life or if you visualize them as adversities, living then with uncertainty, fear and insecurity.

By becoming aware of how we act facing small changes, we may be able to predict how we will act facing the larger ones. Likewise, if we begin to enhance our ability to manage small changes, we will be training to adequately address the most relevant and significant changes that may occur to us.

However, despite knowing what has been said before, the processes of change often fail because of our lack of adaptation to them. There are several factors that can influence a person to find it more difficult to change or adapt to changes. Some of these factors are the personality itself, our need for security and control before what happens to us, the habits acquired ...

Basically, we can say that there are **3 styles or reactions** when facing the changes:

- **DENIAL:** The person is not willing to make any changes within his established plan; Even if it means losses or an opportunity cost, denies the change and is not willing to accept it.
- **ACCEPTANCE:** The person adapts to the changes that arise, although he does not live it as an opportunity, nor sees the possible benefits of those changes. It simply changes to be able to "save" the situation. Accept and put into action.
- **POSITIVE:** The person adapts to the changes and even sees benefits in them, allowing him to even promote and initiate them.

2.1. ¿How to work change management?

- **Observe yourself without overjudging:** how you face change, whether you act flexibly,

whether if you feel it as part of your daily life or you live it as adversity

- **Identify the emotions** that changes cause you, so you can act on them conveniently, if they facilitate or prevent you from moving forward.
- Begin to **look for other possibilities of action** when external changes appear.
- Begin to **consciously introduce and little by little changes in your life**, leaving, for example, some things unplanned, changing a habit ... this will help you learn to adapt to what appears, to become more flexible.
- **Enrich the environment** with your contributions and different ways of doing things. For others, your way of organization, for example, can be an opportunity for them to do things differently and be more efficient.

2.2. Managing Change in Telework

When we telework, due to our dependence on technology and our isolated and autonomous work on most occasions, **being able to manage change quickly and efficiently has become an essential competence both to be efficient and to be competitive in time**; specifically:

- It will allow you **to be more competent facing adversities** that can be presented daily (especially in relation to technology), and to act faster.
- Help you to **learn more** and improve continuously.
- It will facilitate, both the team and the organization of which you are a part**, the proactivity necessary for change**, thus increasing the probability of success.
- It will facilitate the **good environment and integration** in the work teams, because it will increase their confidence in facing the problems and adversities.

- **COMFORT ZONE**

The **comfort zone** refers to the area where we feel safe, where we think that we control and that nothing escapes us; that is, where we have everything conquered and where we have everything learned.

It may seem that in the comfort zone everything is good. But it is not so, in that zone can happen things that I like more or that I like less; And even things I do not like (shouting, traffic-jams, arguments ...). However, the comfort zone is what I know which makes me feel confident about how I should act, how I must behave.

Each person has their own comfort zone. When we walk outside the existing limits of our knowledge, skills, habits and attitudes, we begin to feel slightly anxious. When we make a purpose, or try to change an unhealthy habit, we have to move outside our COMFORT ZONE. Our mental regulator will do everything he can to get back to where we were. And before we realize, we will have forgotten our good intentions and we will have returned to the old routine. That is why we find it difficult to change and leave this area of comfort. Any change in our habits is
awkward. The discomfort tells us that we have gone beyond what we were accustomed to. However, we are entering our LEARNING AREA, where we develop. And if we do not change, there will come a time when we become obsolete.

The **learning zone** is where development takes place (improvement), and involves effort, humility and willingness to learn.

- **People with poor performance** tight up in the comfort zone, repeat models indefinitely and stop challenging themselves.
- **People with high performance** are talented and persistent "risk takers", they rather frequent the learning area, "expand" their comfort zone.

3.1. How to work in the area of comfort and learning??

- Sign a **SMART objective** (remember, Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic and defined in Time).
- **Consider your attitude:** you must be willing to change (no one changes if they do not feel the need to do it). Your proactivity will be essential!
- Identify **how far your comfort zone is.** What things do you avoid doing? What should you start to change?
- Begin to **do small things differently**. When you are achieving small successes, you increase your sense of self-efficacy and your motivation grows.
- Learn something or do **new things** (for example, enrol in digital programming courses, start using new productivity tools ...).
- Try to **reach the maximum** in those things that you propose. Do not decay! Always give the best of yourself.
- **Visit your comfort zone** from time to time to find the resources you already have. Sometimes we forget, that we were already able to do certain things, even in another area. Look for what you already have!
- **Train** to find those other resources that you need and do not have. The attitude towards learning and continuous improvement is of vital importance.
- Set to **"action" mode**. Without action, you will not be able to leave your comfort zone. Be aware of the restlessness that causes you to be in the learning zone and how many benefits you are reported to act in another way, to incorporate new habits into your daily life.

3.2. What involves getting out of your comfort zone and learning in teleworking?

Working in your comfort zone and learning will help you in telework, because:

- It allows you to **set goals and go for them**, making your work more productive by being very focused.
- Helps you see **change as an opportunity for growth and learning.**
- It facilitates **the acquisition of new skills**, necessary to have a better and better performance in the development of your work in a remote and autonomous way.
- Improve your **self-esteem**, and gain control over your life.
- It allows to keep the job and/or to promote, thanks to having become **more competent** to expand our comfort zone through the acquired learning.
- Helps **to make the most of the tools** that facilitate teleworking.

- **FLEXIBILITY, ADAPTABILITY AND RESILIENCE**

Resilience is the capacity of the human being to cope with the adversities of life, surpassing oneself, and even being transformed by them in a positive way. It is the attitude that transforms adversity into

learning and effective changes in our life.

Given the world in which we live, it is very necessary to become **resilient professionals**, people prepared to overcome the labor and professional difficulties that lurk, learn from possible mistakes and be willing to rebuild situations for their own benefit.

We must be willing to face what others would call "crisis" and difficulties, understanding them as opportunities to get ahead, which will help us to stand out in the very competitive business world. We must learn from error, and assume that error is not equal to failure, but to learning. Who does not, does not make mistakes, but neither does he learn. *Edison adjudged to the errors the cause of its successes. Without its 999 faults, it would not have been able to invent the electric lamp in the attempt number 1000.* Have you ever considered this?

Resilient people are:

- Flexibles.
- They adapt quickly to new circumstances.
- They expect to respond and trust to be able to do so.
- They consciously decide that, in some way, they will act in the best way to survive, adapt and make things go well.

When a resilient person faced changes and / or adversities he goes through 6 phases:

- *SHOCK*
- RESISTANCE
- CONCERN
- EXPLORATION IN SEARCH OF OPTIONS
- DISCOVERY
- ADJUSTEMENTS

In the case of vulnerable or non-resilient people, phase 4 would be CONTROL LOSS, and the 5th and final phase would be DEPRESSION. So, after the concern, it is better to take action, to really take care of the situation, becoming aware of all that we can influence, defining and assuming our responsibility on what we can do to generate change and a solution.

Given the differential value that currently brings resilient people, the question that often arises is: can resilience be develop? Can we learn to be resilient? You are right! Resilience should not be considered a personality trait, nor a fixed and invulnerable ability. Fortunately, resilience is a capacity that can be trained, it can be learned!

4.1. How to work on resilience?

- Be **aware of what you think and what you feel** when something goes wrong and when you talk about yourself.
- Stop considering yourself a victim and take the reins of your life. **You have to consider yourself protagonist**, responsible for facing what happens to you, putting control of the situation in yourself (what we call the locus of internal control).
- Try not to associate making mistakes with failure. **Every mistake involves learning**, so take the time to reflect and draw lessons learned for the next time.
- Remember that **what matters is your reaction to adversity and mistakes. You choose**. Life is not determined, but conditioned; And you have a lot to do with what you do with what happens to you.
- "Do not make a mountain of a grain of sand". In this sense, **learn to relativize**, and do not let yourself be infected by the exaggerations or the emotions of others that may incapacitate you.

- **Be flexible**, review your judgments and think about different ways of acting.
- **Look for support** if you need it. In this sense, you must work your humility and your vulnerability. Sometimes we need others to get ahead optimally and in less time. Do not hesitate to ask for help if you need it!
- Improve your **self-confidence**. Recognize and celebrate each step, every moment of improvement. Here to surround yourself with people who empower you and help you in your development will also be important.

4.2. What is the use of flexibility, adaptability and resilience in telework?

When teleworking, and above all before the VUCA world in which we move today (Volatile, Uncertainty, Complex and Ambiguous), being able to develop skills to be more flexible and more resilient becomes an essential condition for adapt appropriately to the changes that happen every day.
Working your flexibility, adaptability and resilience in telework will help you because:

- It will allow you to **analyse your mistakes quickly, learning from them** and coming out strengthened for the next few occasions.

- It will make it easier for you **to overcome adversity**, to face them more optimistically and to emerge victorious from them.
- You will learn to **seek for options**, not to block yourself and to make the necessary adjustments.
- It will make you **more competitive** in the market, because managing the changes quickly and effectively will make you a first-rate professional. Companies require and value positively those people who help the business overcome adverse situations, coming out strengthened from them.

- **PROMOTE AND POTENTIATE CHANGE**

Continuous improvement, which implies promoting and boosting constant change, is itself an attitude towards life and work, and one of the most important concepts of the business world of the twentieth century, and certainly the century in which we are. Its objective is to progressively increase the quality of processes, products and services, and is based on the **Deming Cycle (PDCA)** consisting of the following phases:

- PLAN.
- DO.
- CHECK.
- ACT.

This philosophy can be implemented in our personal and professional life, but we must take into account, first of all, and as we saw in module 1 with long-life learning, which involves a change of thought; A paradigm focused on

- There are no limits to improvement. Everything can always be improved, at some time or aspects.
- Simplicity.
- Continuous verification.
- Only what has been measured can be managed.
- Working as a team increases the possibilities and options to solve problems and improve situations

Also, to make a good change, we can follow 7 ideas, based on the 7 basic elements that Dale Carnegie proposes in his book "*Accept change for success",* which are:

- Provide a clear and accurate picture of the current situation that justifies the need for change. It is very important to have objective elements that describe this situation: **FACTS.**
- Introduce those involved a clear and reasonable idea of what the optimal situation should look like to discover the difference: **BENEFITS.**
- Develop a realistic **ACTION PLAN and CALENDAR** to ensure compliance. In this phase, it is necessary the commitment of all the involved ones and to take into account how we are going to handle the resistances and objections.
- Consider the **RESOURCES NEEDED** for the implementation of the plan, whether economic, material and/or personal.
- Plan a **COMMUNICATION STRATEGY** on the process to everyone involved. In most cases, the changes fail because they have not been communicated in a timely manner to those involved, neither in their purpose nor in what they contemplate in themselves.
- Determine the **SUCCESS EVALUATION SYSTEM** of the change plan. That is, define how we will measure the results, whether we have achieved the proposed objectives or not, whether we have achieved the benefits we were looking for or not.
- Always consider the **CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE INVOLVED**, to achieve the satisfaction of all of them with the results that have been marked as objective.

We can find different obstacles to boost and promote changes, such as: not setting clear goals, not considering the expectations of other people involved, being inflexible with tasks, unfairly distributing responsibilities, poorly communicating, avoiding people which oppose resistance, demonstrate that there is no belief in change and lack of consistency, among other factors. All of them will have to be well taken into account to guarantee the success in the implementation of any change process.

5.1. And broadly, how can we work to promote and empower change?

You can work on your continuous improvement, promoting and enhancing the necessary changes, for which it is important that you follow these three steps:

- **CONSCIOUSNESS:** Be aware of where you are and where you want to be, as well as the resources you have and those you need to achieve your goals.
- **RESPONSIBILITY:** Responsibility to assume this continuous improvement and that path towards the goal. Accept that things happen, mainly, because we make them happen (locus of internal control).
- **ACTION:** Action is what will determine success. Without action, we will not get anything! So… get to work!

- **CREATIVITY: VERTICAL AND LATERAL THINKING**

Each of us generally adopts two types of thinking: vertical thinking and lateral thinking. Edward de Bono coined the term of lateral thinking in his book *New Think: The Use of Lateral Thinking (1967)*, showing it as a new technique for finding solutions, following seemingly illogical methods and from a much more creative approach. His approach was to produce ideas that were outside the habitual thinking pattern of the person or persons who execute it.

VERTICAL	LATERAL
Logical Rational	Creative Intuitive

Sequential	Non-sequential
Analytical	Explorer
Selective	Artistic value
Functional value	It does not replace the vertical, but integrates it

Lateral thinking involves trying to think things differently, not keeping the first idea that appears to us mentally and questioning it. Only in this way will we obtain new solutions and options to the questions that we pose in the day to day both at professional and personal level. It is what is commonly known as "thinking outside the box"; That is, out of the ordinary, of what our reason, our logic and custom dictates. Thinking sideways or creatively implies believing that intuition is also a valid source of knowledge. And although it is a very valuable source for developing our creativity, we must not forget that lateral thinking does not replace the vertical, but integrates it. Both types of thinking are necessary for everything.

6.1. How to work on lateral thinking, develop our creativity??

- Reserve time for "**doing nothing**", thus recharging the energy of your brain to create. Letting your imagination fly requires not being busy, nor focused on anything specific.
- **Question what you do**: what and how do you do it? Would there be a better way to do it? How would someone else do it in your place?
- **Defy your beliefs**, do they have a foundation? What would another person have thought of this or that?
- Do not always stay with the first solution you can think of, **explore**! Find out how others have done it, ask for other ideas or possible alternatives, which may not be so apparent or logical for you.
- **Constantly learn** by training, reading, other people and experiences.
- **Have fun!** Because when you have fun, you tend to be more creative. This is evident in teams with confidence and good humour. Creativity is guaranteed!

6.2. What is the use of lateral thinking in teleworking?

Working on your lateral thinking and developing your creativity will help you in teleworking: because:

- Organizations need to **solve new problems every day**, problems that have never been faced previously, so that creativity becomes essential.
- All professions require **reinvention and constant learning**. If you keep doing the same thing as always, you will get the same thing as always.
- Your personal and professional growth depends on **you trying out and trying new** things on a regular basis. Differentiation is key to being competitive.
- Customers have **new needs** constantly, and being able to offer them **innovative solutions** is fundamental to having a sustainable business over time.

PROBLEM SOLVING

The *problem solving* is a methodology to face situations, through the identification of objectives, obstacles and available resources; It is possible to affirm that there are no problems, but opportunities to transform difficult situations in situations of less damage and greater benefits.

This methodology can be applied to personal, interpersonal or organizational problems; It does not refer to a person's ability to solve situations that should do with a specific subject in which he is an expert, but the **general**

ability to find solutions in any field, by using tactics and techniques with maximum efficiency (**solution** of the problem) and efficiency (**time and effort** employed).
The problem solver is the person who, regardless of resources and situations, **finds a way out of the problem.**

We can find different types of problems:

- **Operative:** refers to all activities that require the solution of a problem in real time.
- **Strategic:** it is linked to all activities that require a resolution of problems in a future logic. In order to solve such problems, it is necessary to evaluate the future consequences of the choices made

To get out of the problem it is necessary to look proactively: **see** something that we have not yet considered. This implies:

- **Open the mind** to possibilities that we have not yet explored, to be curious.
- **Expand** the limits of our knowledge and experience.
- **Overcoming existing paradigms** and those we create.

The *problem-solving* process can be broken down into 4 major phases

- Discover, recognize and define the problem to face. The objective is to obtain a **description as concrete as possible of the manifestation of the problem, as well as its causes**. It must answer to what? where? when? how? and who? among other issues.

- Propose possible solutions by activating change mechanisms. This phase brings into play the use of many mental capacities that **open the way to the development of creativity and our potential**; For this, it is necessary to **change the usual points of view**: vertical and lateral thinking. As we have said, in order to find effective solutions it is necessary to **harmonize and integrate the two forms of thinking.**

- Evaluate possible solutions. It is important to **submit each alternative to an exquisite evaluation,** considering all the key criteria to decide, to choose the most appropriate one.

- Implement the best solution. It is the least creative phase of the process, but it is also the most concrete, given that after finding the solutions and choosing the most effective one, it is necessary to put them into practice, which implies **defining the action plan** to implement it, according to expected results, **identify potential threats and weaknesses, and follow up on key indicators of success.**

7.1. How to work on problem solving?

- Be aware that **problems can always arise** and the need to solve them to move forward. It is part of the everyday.

- **Follow the steps** to solve problems, so you avoid stress and you can think better to get the solution.

- **Take some time** to get all the information about the subject and analyse it.

- **Be responsible** for the part that touches you.

- **Look at problems as challenges** to learn and demonstrate your talent.

7.2. What is the solution to problems in teleworking??

Working in problem solving will help you in teleworking because

- It favours the **proper functioning** of teams and organizations.
- Problems **arise in all types of companies**, so knowing how to solve them is an increasingly valued competition.
- Problems are **new ways of learning and growth**, so good management is vital.