

Team Presentation – Book Review

Who Moved My Cheese?

Spencer Johnson uses the story to describe the desired behavior patterns for dealing with change. The first concept is that change will occur regardless of what one does or doesn't do. He then points out the difference between activity and productivity. After recognizing that change will happen, one should learn to anticipate change. To aid in the anticipation, develop an awareness of when conditions are ripe for change, become participatory versus reactionary, take action, and initiate change rather than wait for it to happen. Learning to adapt quickly to change means letting go of old ideas and embracing new ones.

Highlights:

- Visualizing one's self at the end of a goal
- Accentuating the positive versus negative
- Discovering the journey to find new cheese can be enjoyable and looked upon as an adventure
- Asking the question, "What would you do if you weren't afraid?" This enables people to see past their fears and focus on their actions, even when in uncharted territory

The above text is referenced from Wikipedia.

General Review: This book has won rave reviews and is considered one of the bibles for change management. The book is about adapting changes and making life more beneficial to you. The names of the four characters Sniff, Scurry, Haw, and Hem are symbolic and signify their attitude and approach towards change. The book reinforces the importance of visualizing, anticipating, and accepting changes. The author differentiates the concept of transition from the process of change and expounds the significance of our reaction to changes.

Roopa's Review: The book makes for a good introspective read. The concepts are motivating and the story in the form of a parable and an allegory make it interesting. I particularly liked the distinction between transition and the process of change, and people's reactions/resistance to change. The book highlights the role of a leader who motivates people to change and their learning through the process.

The characters are symbolic in nature:

- Sniff - sniffs a situation and gets out of it
- Scurry - gets into action immediately
- Haw - see what I am doing wrong and do better – open to taking a new direction
- Hem - Is hemmed into a situation - wants to stay in a familiar territory

I do, however, agree with the general criticism of the book though. The theme tends to be redundant and the author states the obvious. I am not sure why the author chooses mice and cheese as symbols of change. The concepts are very complex, and the author tends to over-simplify them. A chapter on the actual process of changing and internal struggles in accepting or resisting changes would have made the book complete and insightful.

How the Book Applies to the PDM team: As Product Managers and Business Analysts, do we resist or fear bringing changes to our products? How can we tread fearlessly in to the unknown and discover the challenges of finding new features and functionalities in our products that can make our consumers happy? What are some of the changes we can anticipate, identify, and implement to make a difference to our products and customers.

Recommendation - Yes. The book is just 96 pages. Or you may watch the video at:

<http://in.youtube.com/watch?v=HRPNkIU7BW0>