



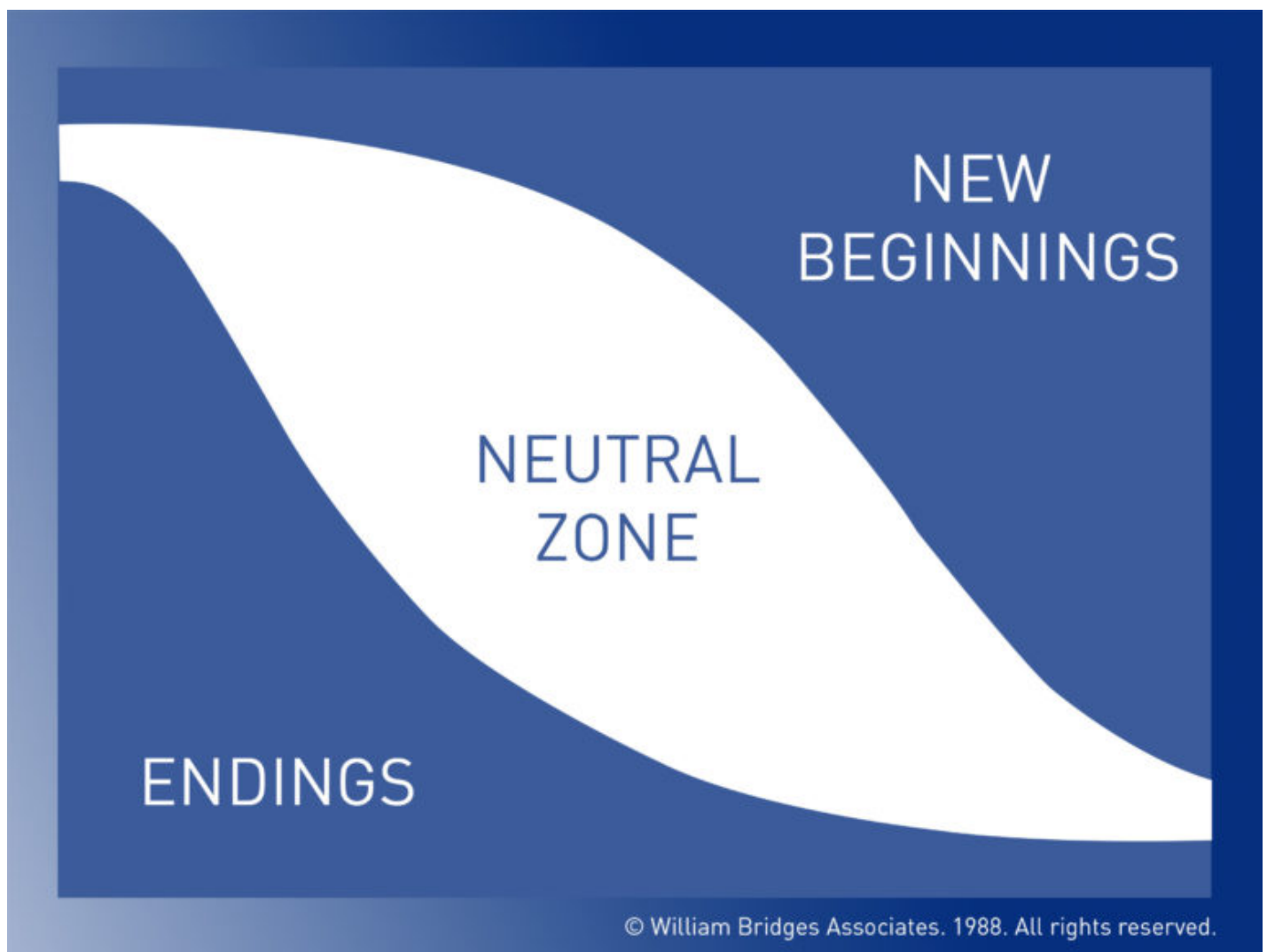
William Bridges Associates
TRANSITION MANAGEMENT LEADERS

(<https://wmbridges.com/>)

Bridges Transition Model

“Not in his goals but in his transitions man is great.” —Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Bridges Transition Model helps organizations and individuals understand and more effectively manage and work through the personal and human side of change. The model identifies the three stages an individual experiences during change: Ending What Currently Is, The Neutral Zone and The New Beginning. Developed by William Bridges, the **Bridges Transition Model** has been used by leaders and management consultants for more than thirty years.



What is the difference between change and transition?

Change is the external event or situation that takes place: a new business strategy, a turn of leadership, a merger or a new product. The organization focuses on the desired outcome that the change will produce, which is generally in response to external events. Change can happen very quickly.

Transition is the inner psychological process that people go through as they internalize and come to terms with the new situation that the change brings about. Empathetic leaders recognize that change can put people in crisis. The starting point for dealing with transition is not the outcome but the endings that people have in leaving the old situation behind.

Change will only be successful if leaders and organizations address the transition that people experience during change. Supporting people through transition, rather than pushing forward is essential if the change is to work as planned. This is key to capitalizing on opportunities for innovation and creating organizational resilience.

What are the stages of transition?

Endings

Transition starts with an ending. This is paradoxical but true. This first phase of transition begins when people identify what they are losing and learn how to manage these losses. They determine what is over and being left behind, and what they will keep. These may include relationships, processes, team members or locations.

Neutral Zone

The second step of transition comes after letting go: the neutral zone. People go through an in-between time when the old is gone but the new isn't fully operational. It is when the critical psychological realignments and repatternings take place. It is the very core of the transition process. This is the time between the old reality and sense of identity and the new one. People are creating new processes and learning what their new roles will be. They are in flux and may feel confusion and distress. The neutral zone is the seedbed for new beginnings.

New Beginnings

Beginnings involve new understandings, values and attitudes. Beginnings are marked by a release of energy in a new direction – they are an expression of a fresh identity. Well-managed transitions allow people to establish new roles with an understanding of their purpose, the part they play, and how to contribute and participate most effectively. As a result, they feel reoriented and renewed.

What is the transition management process?

Transition management in organizations addresses the inner psychological process that people experience during change. Successful transition management involves these steps:

1. Communicating with the organization about why the change is needed.
2. Collecting information from those affected by the change to understand its impact on them. Gaining their investment in the outcome.
3. Doing an audit of the organizations' **transition readiness** (<https://wmbridges.com/resources/transition-readiness-assessment/>).
4. Educating leaders about how the change will affect individuals in the organization to manage the transition effectively.
5. Monitoring the progress of individuals as they go through the three stages of transition.
6. Helping individuals understand how they can positively contribute to the change and the importance of their role in the organization.

// The essence of life takes place in the neutral zone phase of transition. It is in that interim spaciousness that all possibilities, creativity and innovative ideas can come to life and flourish. //

—SUSAN BRIDGES

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