



## **Managing The Weeds Of Change**

From Jones Loflin-The Speaker With TWO Last Names



*Creating the optimal environment for plants-or change-sets the stage for something else... weeds!*

*The real work is to have every manager begin working with their direct reports on what will specifically need to change in their daily work routine.*

When it comes to [change management](#), my approach is to teach people to work through change like a gardener who is growing things. The goal of the work is to end up with a harvest of something better as the change matures.

If you have spent any time growing vegetables, flowers, or even a lawn, you know that creating the optimal environment for plants also sets the stage for something else...weeds! And if these weeds aren't kept in check, they can severely limit or destroy the final results of your hard work.

In my work with organizations on change management, I see several "weeds" that leaders and managers in the organization fail to address. They include:

**Expecting new procedures and/or systems to have no effect on productivity.** People need time to adjust to anything new, especially if they have been engaging in a routine for an extended period of time. Try moving your icons on your smartphone or computer desktop and count how many times you try to go to the former spot to activate them. Leaders need to allow for temporary dips in productivity as people adapt, and communicate that before the change initiative begins.

**Informing everyone about the change at one time, and thinking that's enough.** It's fine to announce the change organization-wide to get everyone on the same page, but the real work is to have every manager begin working with their direct reports on what daily actions will need to change. The longer the gap between the announcement and this work, the more weeds of doubt, suspicion, and fear that grow.

**Giving no sense of urgency about making the change.** Few people change for the sake of change. They want a rock solid reason-positive or negative-about why this change should occur now. This sense of urgency should be determined and communicated as individually as possible-just saying it will grow company market share doesn't cut it.



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**Failing to acknowledge past failures with change initiatives.** One manufacturing company I worked with last year was preparing to move to a flex assembly line with their people. They had tried it in the past with little success. When I asked if they would be communicating how this effort was different than their previous one, they said, "No, we don't want to talk about that." I said to them, "Well, your people are talking about it, so you might want to be a little more transparent."

Like a garden, managing successful change requires consistent cultivation. As the change grows, it will "shade out" the weeds that attempted to grow earlier in the season, and you can focus more on enjoying the harvest that is to come.

*As the change grows, it will "shade out" the weeds that attempted to grow earlier in the season.*

*What are some weeds you see in current change initiatives in your organization?*

Jones Loflin is an internationally-recognized author and speaker. His messages focus on change, motivation, time management and work/life blend. He is the author of three books, including *Juggling Elephants* and *Getting the Blue Ribbon*. Jones' new book, *Getting to It*, is now available wherever books are sold. His humor, energy and audience engagement make an **impact** on every member of your group, not just an impression.

You can learn more at [www.jonesloflin.com](http://www.jonesloflin.com).