

Re-evaluating Customer Service Needs in an Ever-Changing Market

By Mel Bost



As a GSS employee who has worked for five major petroleum companies in the last ten years and been involved in at least three major mergers, I often think that my middle name is “transition.”

With the words “transition” and “change” firmly in your mind, I would like to personally share with you some concepts which have been significant to my adaptation in the merged environment of ConocoPhillips.

These concepts were introduced by William Bridges in his book *JobShift: How to Prosper in a Workplace without Jobs*. You may also be familiar with Bridges as the author of *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes*, a highly acclaimed book which discusses how people respond physically, emotionally and intellectually to the transitions and changes in their lives.

The ideas or concepts from *JobShift* are not intended to supplant anything you currently know about our ConocoPhillips Performance Management process or your own Employee Development. They are intended to give you a perspective from which to build a response to a continually changing organizational environment. The approach takes advantage of your unique skill set and competencies with which you can contribute your best to ConocoPhillips' success as a major company.

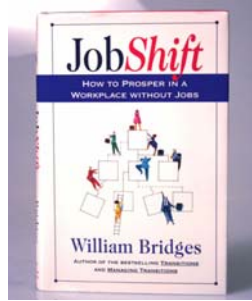
Bridges' main theme is that “change creates opportunity.” While change does tend to destroy old opportunities, the bigger implication for you personally is that change creates new “needs” within an organization. Many of these needs go unmet until someone recognizes them and takes action. Change relocates the opportunity by changing internal customer needs and the terms under which success is possible. What does this mean? An employee should consider the workplace as a “market” with supply and demand forces at work.

By looking at the “supply of” and “demand for” services and needs on a continual basis, you can determine what roles and skills are necessary at any point in time to fill the gap and act accordingly.

To serve each of the customers effectively in this type of market environment, you must learn to find the needs that are not being effectively or economically met by others either inside or outside the organizational boundary (because external contractors and vendors can and often

do meet these very same needs). This shift in thinking replaces the idea that job roles are restricted to only their formal definitions and allows an employee more ownership of their contributions to the Company.

Change also creates new interfaces. These interfaces may be a face-off between two organizations, between a business and its environment, between two patterns of experience and expectations, or between new technologies and users of old technologies.



Because interfaces juxtapose value systems, assumptions, needs and languages, they create “unmet” needs. They demand workers who are good at brokering, translating, interpreting, training, linking, facilitating, negotiating and servicing. These activities

bridge the gap in comprehension and familiarity that the interface creates. For example, your group may need assistance from the Global Internal Audit group to assess standards and processes in your work area or your project, but no one may be assigned to provide this linkage. The first step would be recognizing the need, second assessing what type of skill or competency is required to fill the gap, and finally effectively closing the gap.

So, what does this imply for your day-to-day activities within GSS? Continually scan the COP environment for these unmet needs that define the marketplace for your group. Be aware of what skill sets and competencies exist in your group for satisfying a variety of these needs. Act as a facilitator or provide the linkage whenever possible to close the supply and demand gap for services.

Remember: “Change Creates Opportunity.” The market will continually change but, by developing skills to recognize, adapt to and fill the need; you add value for yourself and the Corporation.

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Acronym Legend

GSS	Global Systems and Services
GIPA	Global Information Protection & Assurance
SD	ServiceDesk
CCSS	Credit Card Settlement System
ECS	Exchange Conferencing Server
GDP	Gross Domestic Product