

CHANGE

# NAME of the GAME

## MAKING CHANGE WORK FOR YOUR COMPANY

By **Brenda L. Holmes**

*“If you don’t like something, change it. If you can’t change it, change your attitude” – Maya Angelou*

Change comes in many forms in today’s workplace. Clear communication helps facilitate the evolution that is necessary to compete and succeed at the highest levels.

Six organizations on the 2020 Best Places to Work in Indiana list recently shared how they work to help employees survive and thrive in a world of change.



Tim Ash delivers his first Friday Morning Meeting message after Ash Brokerage moved to its new headquarters in 2016. The team puts “service into work and work into service” while painting a house for NeighborLinks and stuffing backpacks with supplies during Bring Your Child to Work Day.



### Fitting work into a full life

Creating an office culture that is receptive to non-traditional scheduling helps workers achieve a good work-life balance.

Ash Brokerage, an insurance brokerage agency headquartered in Fort Wayne, boasts “a culture of innovation and meaningful change.”

Embracing the concept has helped the business grow from approximately 50 people a few years ago to a workforce of more than 450 today in various locations.

“We recognize that the nature of work is really different now than it was even five years ago,” explains Ryan Fox, who works in talent acquisition and career development. “If you need to work 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. and then go pick up your kid from school or go coach their team, that’s fine. Then you can plug in later when you get home and do a little bit more work. Fit work into your life and life into your work, wherever you can.”

Moving into the company’s new headquarters four years ago was a major transition for employees. They moved from a single-floor facility right off a highway to a multi-level downtown building.

“The physical layout of the buildings definitely was a change for people to go through because we’re on three separate floors,” Fox offers. “Our CEO, Tim Ash, started what he called his Friday Morning Meeting. Every Friday, the whole company, for the first half hour of the day, is together. Together means in the same conference room, or virtually if you’re a remote employee or remote office.”

During these sessions, Ash shares new ideas and the direction he sees the business going. Department leaders are given time to offer praise. He also makes an added effort to keep the meetings relevant for the entire team.

### Understanding the ‘why’

Expanding an organization and acquiring new entities can cause a lot of stress on employees. Making sure transparency is a priority can help in a time of transition.

Rehab Medical is a mobility equipment provider that specializes in complex rehab technology – the configuration of mobility equipment that requires custom fitting, design, adjustment and programming to meet the unique needs of each patient.

The organization, headquartered in Indianapolis, employs 87 people in Indiana and has locations in 13 states. According to president Kevin Gearheart, the company is growing at an average rate of about 30% per year.

In the last 18 months, Rehab Medical made four acquisitions. Each came with one or more new physical locations.

“The key really is making sure that we immediately gather everyone within that organization and really help them understand who we are as a company,” Gearheart declares. “This is our approach. This is our vision. This is our mission and our core values. This is how we operate and how you fit within our long-term vision.”



Rehab Institute (top left) is an outlet for professional and personal growth for Rehab Medical employees; a group from netlogx volunteers at Second Helpings; and the KBSO Consulting team enjoys a spring outing at Topgolf.



He says constant communication and making sure people understand what is going on is a top priority.

“We’re really trying to make sure people understand the ‘why’ of what we are doing. I think that helps calm them down and figure out what is actually changing. That way people don’t feel so overwhelmed,” Gearheart concludes.

### Encouraging collaboration

Some companies take the “open door policy” to a new level.

KBSO Consulting is an 18-person engineering firm based in Carmel that designs commercial buildings. In a world of impending deadlines and ongoing projects, leadership encourages idea sharing and discussion.

“We actually have an open office,” emphasizes Jordyn Gladis, executive assistant and HR coordinator. “Even down to the managing partners, everyone is at a desk. It’s really a welcoming environment.”

Rachel Davies, operations manager at KBSO, says minimizing the use of offices and closed-door meetings creates a special inclusive energy for the staff.

“We only have two rooms with doors, and those are conference rooms,” she asserts. “There’s no denying the excitement and the energy here with the managing partners in the room. They have the ability to bounce ideas off each other and always make sure that we’re connecting and communicating – getting things done the right way.”

The team comes together each Monday for a meeting to update all on the current projects. This helps the team stay agile and make adjustments when necessary.

“We go over the schedule and any upcoming deadlines,” Davies

notes. “We can ask them to help step in and fill a void here and there. This is a time when we communicate with each other and express any concerns. Jordyn and I also talk about any administrative changes.”

### Listening to feedback

Investing in employee surveys can help identify issues created by a changing environment.

Community First Bank of Indiana (CFB) nearly doubled its workforce in two years, growing from 56 people in 2018 to 100 this spring. In 2003, CFB was the first new bank chartered in Howard County in 55 years.

The organization expanded into Hamilton County, opening two branches in Westfield and one in Noblesville, within the last two years. Carlonda “Londie” Davis joined as vice president in 2018, creating the company’s first human resources position.

“We take the Best Places to Work survey and really break that down to see what they (employees) are not happy about,” she says. “We talk about the accolades and all the good things very briefly. Then we really try to tackle all the things that aren’t great.”

Those areas with a 70% or below approval rate are studied and more surveys are sent out to get a better picture of the issues. This helps to pinpoint specific areas that need improvement.

One example of a concern came from the bank’s commercial lenders.

“They felt it was too loud (in the office) to get work completed,” Davis reports. “We’ve moved them physically to a different spot to make it a better working environment. We want to remain a high-performing independent bank. We also want to be a preferred

employer of choice. To do that, we have to make sure that we're investing in our people."

### Know yourself, know your team

Emarsys North America Inc. is a technology enterprise providing marketing software to businesses around the world. Since opening its Indianapolis location in 2015, the workforce has more than doubled from roughly 40 to over 100.

Leading the local office is Sean Brady, whose title is president of Americas. The company has more than 800 workers worldwide, operating out of 13 offices. Innovation and change are daily conversations with the team.

"To continue to grow, one of the things that we've had to do is also add more remote employees," Brady reveals. "Trying to make sure we remain extremely relatable, so people don't feel disconnected, is one of our main visions."

Emarsys uses a predictive index or behavioral assessment tool.

"Are you a person that is extremely flexible or are you a person that needs time to process change? We work with our employees on understanding their profiles and the profiles of others. It helps us to adapt when alterations happen in the business," he details.

"We post those up in our cubicles and in our offices. I have mine on my door. It's (the tool) designed to help you understand the way you navigate different things."

### Give them autonomy

Empowering staff members to make their own decisions on various aspects of their work life can be beneficial for the entire team.

Audrey Taylor is founder and CEO of netlogx, a 21-year-old consulting services firm. A native of the United Kingdom, she listens to her team of nearly 50 people to find out what they need in order to implement new procedures.

"This time last year, we started to engage in an exciting new project out in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I'm so grateful to the team members who started traveling with me out there so that we could get the project launched, get processes in place and start to be successful," she shares.

A balance was required for flying cross country on a weekly basis to expand the organization while keeping a presence at home.

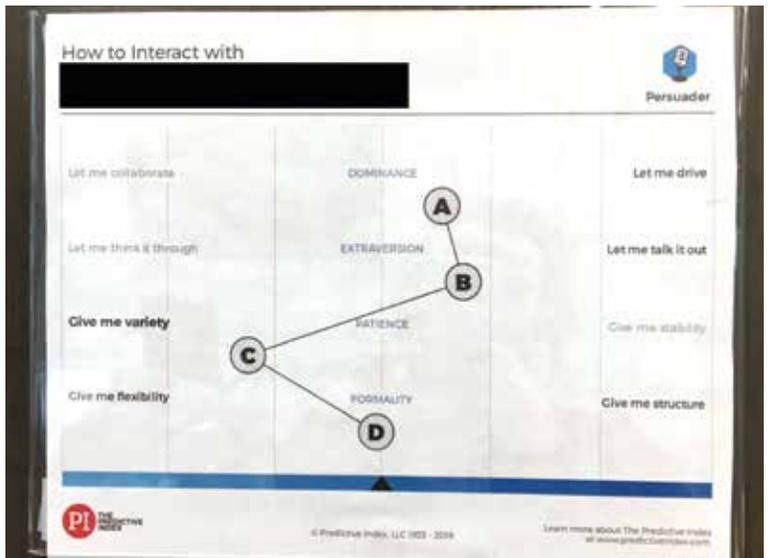
"We let people choose their own flights and time to get out there," Taylor reveals. "We also allowed people to, instead of them flying home every weekend, maybe having significant others fly out to them. They get a chance to see those other cities and get to spend some time out there."

She says travel is discussed at the top of the interview process for a prospective new employee.

"Before we hire anybody, they take a test," Taylor adds. "The one we use is called the Core Values Index. It's very tech savvy. We try very hard to leverage it to make a more effective company."

Ensuring new talent is open to traveling is imperative for netlogx. The tool, similar to the one used by Emarsys, also helps team members better interact with each other.

"Everybody can work really well when it's all going wonderfully," she continues. "But the minute deadlines are looming, people start to get stressed – it changes that dynamic. We have our profiles printed on name badges."



Nearly 100 Emarsys North America employees participate in its March Town Hall via Zoom; team members display their predictive index results in their offices and cubicles; volunteers partner with Keep Indianapolis Beautiful to replenish Indiana-native plants in a nearby community lot.

**RESOURCES:** Sean Brady, Emarsys, at [www.emarsys.com](http://www.emarsys.com) | Carlonda "Londie" Davis, Community First Bank of Indiana, at [www.cfbindiana.com](http://www.cfbindiana.com) | Ryan Fox, Ash Brokerage, at [www.ashbrokerage.com](http://www.ashbrokerage.com) | Kevin Gearheart, Rehab Medical, at [www.rehabmedical.com](http://www.rehabmedical.com) | Jordyn Gladis and Rachel Davies, KBSO Consulting, at [www.KBSOconsulting.com](http://www.KBSOconsulting.com) | Audrey Taylor, netlogx, at [www.netlogx.com](http://www.netlogx.com)