

# How Schneider National Made Change Easy for Employees

## A CLIENT STORY

### Schneider National



#### About Schneider National

Schneider National Inc., headquartered in Green Bay, Wisconsin, is a leading provider of transportation, logistics, and intermodal services. Schneider National serves more than 80 percent of the Fortune 500® companies, offering the broadest portfolio of services in the industry. Schneider's transportation solutions include One-Way, Intermodal, Dedicated, Bulk, and Transportation Management. With wholly owned subsidiaries Schneider Logistics, American Port Services, and American Overseas Air Freight, Schneider National is the only truckload carrier to offer customers end-to-end domestic and international logistics solutions. Privately held and operated, the company conducts business in more than 28 countries in North America, Europe, and Asia, and continues to grow its international service offerings. Schneider covers more than five million loaded miles per day.

#### Business Situation

In its more than 70 years in business, Schneider has expanded to more than 20,000 associates, including 15,000 drivers and independent contractors. Its continuous success became evident when, in 2005, it experienced its 33rd consecutive year of growth, reaching more than \$3 billion in sales.

Marketplace conditions and government regulations shift rapidly in this industry, and Schneider must constantly implement change to maintain its leadership position.

For example, plans are under way to transform the customer service operation into a customer solution center at corporate headquarters in Wisconsin and to relocate a facility to Mexico. Both moves are imperative—but unsettling for associates.

#### Action

Schneider senior leaders realize that emotions play a big role in any change initiative and that not everyone progresses easily through changes that impact jobs, teams, or departments. The company wanted an innovative way to acknowledge emotions, generate dialogue, and gain greater employee commitment.

Schneider began using a program called **Right Turns: Change in Action®**, which helps participants better understand and embrace the change process.

Schneider National leaders realized that they needed an innovative way to communicate corporate changes, shifting market conditions, and government regulations. They wanted to ensure that employees understood and embraced the change process and progressed easily through changes that may affect jobs, teams, or departments.

During a one-hour “discovery learning” (place discovery learning sidebar near this text) experience, small teams of learners work together to explore the issues that create the need for change and develop insights while strengthening their grasp of corporate strategy. Discussion topics include:

- How successful change efforts progress through the phases of planning, proceeding, and persisting
- How human factors and emotions affect change initiatives
- How actions and reactions of both the organization and its associates affect ultimate success
- Participating managers are guided through additional exercises (approximately 1½ hours) in which they explore ways to better lead and champion change.

## Discovery Learning Benefits:

- Training time is condensed.
- Programs are fun, fast paced, and energizing.
- Participants absorb course content through active participation.
- Sessions are highly customized.
- Retention is high.

# How Schneider National Made Change Easy for Employees

For example, managers are challenged to create a list of actions they can take to support the success of change. They also discuss specific leadership skills and personal attributes, such as demonstrating honesty and admitting mistakes that will help employees more easily accept and adjust to change.

A table-sized full-color illustration created through Paradigm Learning's Discovery Maps® program provides an engaging picture of Schneider's corporate strategy and organizational change. Activity cards and other exercises drive the learning experience. The map is designed to engage employee teams in the discovery of critical information.

According to Robb Gomez, president of Paradigm Learning, change is about people. "Whatever your major initiative, there's a pretty good chance that for it to work, people must change how they think, they must change how they act, and they must buy into the importance of the initiative. To produce powerful results, you need to plug the 'people variable' into the equation."

"Some associates [had previously used silence to mask how they] really felt—confused and unsure of how they'd be able to handle the change."

**ROB REICH**  
**Schneider Vice President**  
**of Enterprise Recruiting**

## Results

Schneider National associates have reacted enthusiastically to Right Turns because it:

- Deals directly with changes occurring in the organization
- Gets associates and managers talking about these changes and their reactions to them
- Builds reassurance by helping associates see where they fit in

Schneider Vice President of Enterprise Recruiting Rob Reich says he has observed major signs of progress. With previous changes, associates often became so overwhelmed with details

## What is "Discovery Learning"?

Discovery learning is based on the premise the people learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process. Over the years, "discovery learning" has been proven to appeal to all types of learners, as it accelerates knowledge and skill acquisition and ensures long-term retention. Discovery learning consists of three phases:

- **An experiential phase**, in which the learners encounter a new and concrete experience and deal with it in terms of observations, feelings, and reactions
- **A reflective phase**, in which the learners consider their own perceptions and reconcile the experience against the memory of their past experiences
- **A testing phase**, in which the learners try out the new awareness by engaging in new concrete experiences in hopes of producing new and more desirable results

**About Paradigm Learning**  
Paradigm Learning  
(www.paradigmlearning.com)  
is a privately held company  
based in Tampa, Florida.  
Since 1994, it has worked  
with more than half of the  
companies on the Fortune 500  
list, creating award-winning  
business games, simulations,  
and communication tools  
to address specific business  
needs. Its flagship program,  
**Zodiak®: The Game of  
Business Finance and  
Strategy**, has been played  
by more than one million  
people worldwide. Other  
products address such issues  
as leadership, teamwork,  
project management, and  
organizational change.



# How Schneider National Made Change Easy for Employees

they reacted with silence—which managers misinterpreted as acceptance. “In reality,” Reich says, “the silence masked how some associates really felt—confused and unsure of how they’d be able to handle the change.”

In fact, the Personal Action Planning component of the session helps the associates think through, plan, and monitor their next steps. It consists of a:

- Self-Reflection Guide, which helps employees identify emotions that may be occurring as a result of the changes and causing them to be less effective on the job
- Change Information Gathering Guide, which assists employees with identifying upcoming changes and the reasons behind them
- Personal Action Planning Guide, which provides employees with the opportunity to document how they are going to keep themselves progressing along the positive path of change

Schneider uses Right Turns with work teams rather than as part of an open-enrollment program. In this way, they get these teams talking about changes that affect them—exploring both their concerns about these changes and the opportunities presented by them.

As a result of this program, Schneider employees and managers could:

- Identify key phases and milestones that accompany organizational changes
- Articulate the urgency in organizations today and the ways in which change decisions can be made and acted upon
- Identify the types of changes occurring in Schneider and their departments and the urgency of those changes
- Identify several common emotional and behavioral responses to change and describe strategies for handling or managing those responses
- Give examples of ways to accelerate the implementation of change in Schneider and opportunities to remove barriers to success

“We see Right Turns as a cost-effective way to help support our change efforts,” Reich says. “We haven’t figured out yet how to put a price on helping people understand their emotions and embrace new ways of doing business. You either have a culture that believes it’s worth the money or you don’t, and Schneider believes it’s worth it.”

## What is Right Turns: Change in Action®?

**Right Turns: Change in Action** is a powerful classroom-based learning experience focused on change management that guides employees and managers to explore the realities of change and the actions and behaviors that lead to success.

Whether learners are dealing with organizational change or **leading organizational change**, this fast-paced discovery learning experience will build understanding, alignment, and commitment for any corporate strategy.