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Transitions

BY ANNELEAH JAXEN, CEO, TUALATIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Twenty-two years ago, I started West Coast Swing dance lessons with a dance partner. I worked so hard to learn that dance. I remember the first lessons were about transitions. In dance, believe it or not, what your partner follows is the transition, that subtle movement in your partner's body that sets you up to go in a certain direction before a step has even been taken. In fact, a transition makes it easier for your body to go in that direction than anywhere else. I have been contemplating all the transitions we humans go through in life.

had just been bought by their rival company. The logistics of reorganizing the company were very stressful. He said that the Japanese have a toast that they say at the opening of a new business "May your business prosper and never know a transition." Wow! That's how bad a transition can be!

Even the captains of technology and industry – the creators of Kamakazi pilots – are afraid of it! After hearing that quote, I remember thinking that I certainly wanted to stay away from any business that was in "transition." Ha! That's a laugh. Just to spite me, every company I have worked for since and even this Chamber has continually been in one transition after another.

Then it dawned on me that transitions are a natural, very necessary part of growth and development. They are not a rare catastrophic event that requires a hostile takeover. Just like in dance, they set your organization up to go in a better direction, and if handled with grace and discipline, they make it easier to move toward excellence than anywhere else.

Without a transition, the Tualatin Chamber would never have become what it is today, and I wouldn't be here having fun, working with the Board, the volunteers, and our members to find a new direction in this Post Covid era. Come join us. We are headed for excellence. My favorite quote by Michaelangelo says it best, "The great danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it."



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The definition of the word transition is: "A passage from one form, state, style, or place to another. Another definition of the word is: "A passage from one subject to another in discourse," the way I did just now when I went from discussing transitions in the dance world to the definition of the word transition. Every woman who has gone through childbirth remembers "transition" as that most difficult and painful time in labor just before the actual birth of the child. Then there is one of my favorite definitions of the word, and that is: "A brief adaptation to a certain proportion; to regulate or temper." This, I believe, is the best description of the positive movement that occurs in an organization when it is in transition.

The Tualatin Chamber of Commerce, just like many businesses since the "Covid 19" quarantine, has been in one transition after another. In the business world, when you say that your company is going through a "transition," it usually means a change that is full of pain and difficulties – kind of like childbirth.

There are all kinds of anecdotes about change in a company, but my favorite is something a marketing professional told me years ago. I was working for a company that

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