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Authors managed change

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Kate Nelson and **Stacy Aaron**, authors of a new change-management guide, can name former client companies one by one without missing a beat.

Borden Foods Corp., Whirlpool Corp. USA, the Dr Pepper division at Cadbury and Schweppes, Olsten Staffing Service, General Mills Inc., the Quaker Oats unit of PepsiCo, Detroit Medical Center and Nestle USA Inc.

At those companies, while employed in the 1990s at Deloitte, **Aaron** and Nelson advised executives and divisions on change and change management.

Projects would almost always take weeks to initiate and then complete. Sometimes it took months, quarters, even years to deal with organizational change.

Aaron, 39, of Madeira, and Nelson, 36, of Mount Lookout, were young mothers whose grueling travel schedules did not mesh very well with the demands of family, hearth and home. How could that schedule and a normal home life ever be a fit?

So the two resigned from their positions at Deloitte. Within months both concluded that their combined 26 years of expertise did not necessarily have to lie fallow.

Their experiences eventually led to a \$14.95 palm-sized book, "The Change Management Pocket Guide: Tools for Managing Change," and a mini-publishing and consulting company called ChangeGuides LLC.

The book is dramatically different in at least one aspect: At 3 1/2-by-5 1/2 inches, it's tiny, small enough to fit into a brief case or even a Franklin planner, where it can be used as a reference guide. "There are internal and consistent cycles of change," **Aaron** said. "Our goal is to make this book a portable tool kit for change."

The change management guide offers three closely linked phases of change implementation: planning, doing and sustaining. Within those phases, other elements must occur to move the process forward. For instance, under the "Doing" category are communications and transitioning work.

Sustaining change means structures within and outside the company or group that is undergoing change must be aligned, assessed and then made the most of.

"The sustain phase is the most often overlooked aspect of any change project," Nelson said. "If the organization fails to sustain new behaviors, business benefits will likely not be realized or they will be short-lived."

The book is available at amazon.com or on their company Web site at <http://www.changeguidesllc.com>.

But the authors mainly want to use the book to offer up their expertise as consultants to the hundreds of local companies with 20 to 100 employees that have to grapple with change issues every day.

Later, maybe, they can crack the market at a multi-national company that would buy books by the thousands rather than dozens.

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