



## Winners, Losers, and Change

I recently was speaking with someone whose organization was 'repatriating' HR and finance people to their headquarters functions, dismantling the little mom and pop shops that had grown up all over the organization. The reasoning, as always — economies of scale and that elusive Holy Grail, synergy. While I have some views on the wisdom of 'repatriation' (don't get me started!), I was more interested in another aspect.

To assuage the feelings of managers losing staff and avoid the impression headquarters HR and Finance were winning in this change, the chief executive had all the repatriated staff report to her. So, when you couldn't get a clerk hired, you're supposed to chew her ear off? Right.

To my mind, this thinking assumes we should pretend change doesn't entail winners and losers. It does. In big change, some people benefit and some lose. That's why any right-minded person hates it. You make the change in the most humane way possible and take care of the people in the process, but you don't try to pretend that you can make a change and have everything stay the same. You can't and you shouldn't even try.

*Frances*

Frances' latest article: *Make Room for Innovation* will appear in the June edition of *Canadian Business and Technology*.

**Did you know: *Strategy and Innovation Journal*** found that companies in developing countries, because they are too poor to afford R&D, have been able to compete successfully by innovating around process rather than product. A lesson for North American organizations?

**Frances Horibe**, best selling author of *Managing Knowledge Workers* and *Creating the Innovation Culture*, is an accomplished speaker and seminar leader. Contact her directly at her website.

[www.franceshoribe.com](http://www.franceshoribe.com)

Research Associate  
Marilyn A. Stanton  
Telephone: (613) 236-1006  
[mstanton@franceshoribe.com](mailto:mstanton@franceshoribe.com)