

Mastering The Power of Change

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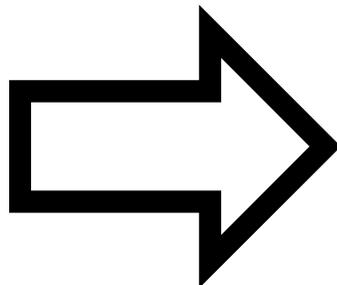
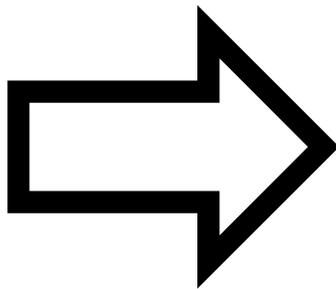
CHANGE

Everything in us was only enough to get us to where we are today. If we want to go any further or do anymore, we have to

Why are we so afraid of this word “change”?

List what makes people reluctant to change.

The arrow's outline represents the stated mission of your department, but what direction are you really going?



An Italian philosopher once said...

There's nothing more difficult to take at hand, more perilous to attempt, and more uncertain in its success than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things.

The foundational thoughts...

“Progress and change are indelibly intertwined there can be no progress without change”

You don't need to be sick to get better!

*If you always do
what you've always done,
you'll always get
what you've always got.*

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Vision drives Change

People will understand the rationale behind the vision, and will anticipate change, even if they do not necessarily support the change. The greater extent to which the vision is shared and fully supported, the easier it is to create an environment which seeks to move forward into the future.

Forming a Change Team

The purpose of a change team is to ensure that the change is introduced as quickly as is appropriate, as smoothly as is possible, and with maximum acceptance by the wider organization.

- There is greater depth of experience and knowledge to help into the change
- It provides a greater base of energy behind the change
- It forces the organizations to think through the impact of the change
- It provides broader base of relationships to handle issues with the change on a personal level
- It communicates a sense of importance and purpose about the need to change
- The primary purpose of the team is not to work out what the change should be, but rather to introduce the change to the organization. The best size for the team will most often be between 3 and 7 members (depending on size of the organization).

Reactions to Change

Reactions to change fall into a number of groups. This is not an attempt to pigeonhole people, since most of us will fall into each of these groupings for different changes. Rather it helps explain the process by which change is adopted.

1. “**Early Risers**” – these people like change, almost for change’s sake. They are the first people you see with the new craze – often before you realize that it is a craze. Very often this group is into technology. They are a relatively rare breed!
2. The “**Early Adapters**” – will follow the “Early Risers” once they are comfortable that the change is a good one, or at least that it is likely to be OK. Seeing the logic behind the change helps them accept it. They often accept that there is some element of risk involved.
3. The “**Crowd**” – the majority of the population will follow into a change once it is becoming the accepted norm. With no strong feelings one way or the other beforehand, they are swayed by the way the wind is blowing.
4. The “**Legitimizers**” -found within the crowd, and often amongst the slowest to be convinced naturally. They are people with two important characteristics. First, they will carefully evaluate new ideas, because they are independent thinkers who need to make up their minds for themselves. Secondly, they are known and respected by the crowd – once their minds are made up, it can help others to reach their decisions.
5. Finally, the “**Resisters**” – people who are against the change from the moment they hear about it. Their resistance may be passive – they will do absolutely nothing to help the change, and may grumble consistently, or it may be active resistance – where they will lobby against the change, trying to prevent it.

A change team should be biased towards those who are in favor of the change (Early Risers/Early Adapters) but also include one or two legitimizers, who will lend credibility to the team.

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The Strategy for Change

The first job for the change team is to understand what the change involves, and why it is happening. They then need to tackle three areas:

- I. The timetable for change – how quickly will the change be introduced?
Specifically, will there be a pilot/transition period for people to get used to the change. Both are appropriate, but the change team and the leadership need to be totally clear on the purpose of any trial or transition period. This decision will be influenced by the degree of resistance anticipated.
- II. To what degree will people be involved in the change process? For some changes, the change team should aim for complete transparency – the process of introducing the change is so well managed, that the organization barely notices. In this case the organization should still be told of the change and the reasons for it to avoid feeling manipulated.
- III. Is there any learning that can be taken from previous experiences within the organization, or from similar changes introduced elsewhere? Will we need to be careful of mapping the issues of one particular situation onto another, there are many more similarities between situations than we often give credit for!

Implementing the Change

It is vital at this stage to be clear on the purpose of the change team. They are responsible for introducing the change and not for the change itself (although this is unlikely to be perceived clearly by the wider organization!) Thus any issues and decisions involved in the process for introducing the change e.g. running of the transition period, the communication involved, or other issues that will arise alongside the change are their responsibility. Any desired amendments to what is introduced (the change itself) should be passed back to the individual or group who are responsible for the change itself. This is likely to occur during the planning process for implementing the change, and the introduction itself; almost however well the planning group has tried to anticipate the change.

Two tools that can help introduce the change are:

- A timetable for change – either published to the wider organization, or kept as a tracking document by the change team.
- A task list, with a member of the change team nominated as being responsible for ensuring that each task gets done, someone nominated to do the task itself, and a date by which the change needs to be completed.

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Handling Resistance

One of the largest pieces of work to be done in introducing change is to help those who will naturally want to resist the change come to terms with it. One of the distinctive features of a Trust based organization should be that it handles resistance with a loving approach to members and a clear separation of the people from the issue.

Brian Pearson, in an excellent Administrators "How to" guide on change, wrote this: "It is both an unachievable aim, and an inappropriate one to eliminate resistance completely. There will always be a residue, even if it remains well concealed. Its presence (in moderation) is a valuable ingredient which can be a productive agent in the overall process."

The change team needs to group its actions into two elements. There are some actions which can be handled with the whole organization or in large groups, by clearly communicating how the change will NOT see people's worst fears realized.

This will require the change team to talk with people to sensitively understand what their worst fears are!

The second group of actions is to identify those individuals who are likely to resist the change and to talk with them. Very often the process of empathetic listening and careful explanation can help to encourage those whose resistance is based on misunderstanding or on personal fears. Where there is room for flexibility within the change, it should be accommodated. Indeed, the whole process of handling resistance to the change can make a significant contribution to the change itself, by forcing a critical appraisal of the change, and by allowing an organization to Vigorously debate the issues associated with it.

Review

It is important to review the introduction of the major change after it has been implemented to check that the desired outcome has been reached, and that the organization is happy with it. The change teams are the ideal group to conduct the review, although the results of the review may need to be presented to the sponsoring group or to the leadership. Four areas are suggested for a review:

1. **Has it happened?** Take the vision statement for the change – has it been accomplished? Where are there gaps?
2. **How has the change been received?** How are people feeling?
3. **What are the problems?** How can these be resolved?
4. **What can be learned from the process of introducing the change?** What would you do differently next time?

SUMMARY

Using a structured approach for change will not guarantee success. Flexibility and common sense will be needed to determine the degree to which this approach needs to be followed. This approach is designed for major changes associated with an organization stepping out to reach its vision – smaller changes will not need to go through each stage in detail, although the principles outlined should be followed!