Leading Change

Introduction

'Change' – a much used, possibly overused word in business. And yet we all know that it is happening all the time – we are immersed in change. 'Change' is a huge topic. This short paper will only highlight key areas and suggest ideas for action and further reading and exploration.

It is valuable to see 'change' as a journey. This is a powerful metaphor. Often this journey will have more in common with the early explorers – they had only a very general sense of where they were going, and enormous motivation. They had to overcome the unexpected, occasional crises and be prepared to alter their plans.

Our ideas and suggestions for Leading Change are captured under four main headings:

* Change – What and Why?

  You do need to know what you are intending to achieve and why it is important.

* Engagement – The vital ingredient for change

  Quite simply, success will depend on the engagement of all affected by the change or with the fundamental purpose and process of change. You can't 'do' engagement – it is the consequence of good leadership.

* Delivering change – Doing it!

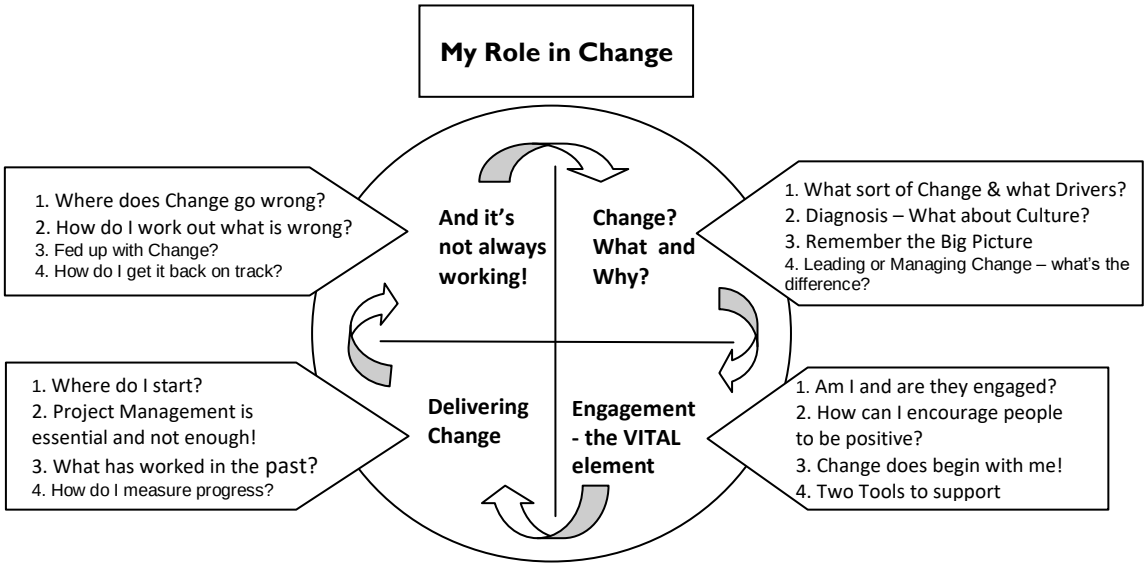
  Once you have worked out the what and why of your proposed change, and you have done things to get engagement – now you have to get on with delivering it – the How

* And it's not working

  Things often do not go as expected! What do you do then?

These four main headings have a logical order – going clockwise around the diagram. And change is rarely this smooth. So be aware that you will need to consider all of the components most of the time, even when focussing on one particular aspect. Sitting at the top of the model is "My role in change". This is a key focus - what might I be doing right now?

The first piece of practical advice is to avoid using the word 'change'. **Talk in actual outcome terms**. E.g. If you want to change 'how a team works together' talk about the behaviours that you want, the results you want people to focus on etc. It is much easier to be positive, clear and involving if you talk about the actual outcomes that you want to achieve.



© 2020 Alchemy of Coaching Ltd

Alchemy of Coaching

Change - the what and why

The business case and purpose - what is driving this change?

To answer this be really clear about the change in which you are involved or are planning – writing things down if necessary. E.g.

Is it a change to a process or system?
Is it a change in the way we work together?
Is it a re-structuring?
Is it something else?
Is it a significant or a small change?

Can you answer the question "what is the purpose of this change?" Some examples

1. To improve our responsiveness to customers
2. To simplify our manufacturing process
3. To reduce the number of suppliers
4. To respond to changes in the market place e.g. a new competitor

When planning change the clearer you are about the drivers for the change and hence the PURPOSE, the more successful you are likely to be. Once you are clear about the purpose you can then consider further questions,

1. How does the change envisaged relate to the business strategy?
2. How does it contribute to adding value for your customers?
3. How will you know when you have got there?
4. What measures will you agree and use from the start?

During a change programme or project you will need to keep revisiting the question of drivers as you seek more clarity and engagement around PURPOSE. It is not a one-off task.

Diagnosis – context and culture?

Whilst detailed diagnosis and analysis is not necessary for every change programme some information is essential. We suggest collecting information about three related issues:

1. The change needs to be considered within the broader organisational context. The following questions will help you.

- How well do we serve our customers? (And how do we know?)
- How well do our processes work? (And how do we know?)
- What system conditions impact improvement? (And how do we know?)

2. How does the proposed change impact other aspects of your organisation? The Performance Driver Framework (see references) can be used to help you identify how the change will impact on different parts of your organisation. The framework consists of:

• **Direction** - communicated as Purpose, Strategy and Plans

• **People** - in terms of Capability, Alignment and Commitment

• **Enablers** - by which we mean Business Processes, Structures and Systems

• **Leadership** - the roles of leading and managing that integrate all the elements

The key question is - "Which element or elements of the Performance Driver Framework does this change affect most?" You need to know this because any change will have a knock on effect to other parts of your organisation.

3. What sort of organisation are you and what is your experience with change? The aim here is to have some sense of how change happens in your organisation – in terms of the extent to which it is seen as planned and controlled, or as a more flexible, adaptive, responsive process.

© 2020 Alchemy of Coaching Ltd

If change is in the air - and even when is it not - it's worth asking yourself whether the normal environment, the culture, 'the way we do things around here' is likely to help you or whether it may get in the way.

Leading and managing change – what is the difference?

Leading is about creating and sustaining purpose, direction, and intent. Managing is about processes for planning, monitoring and controlling change. They can be summarised as

Leadership is doing the **RIGHT things**
Management is doing **things RIGHT**

Once the appropriate Leadership activities have been put in place - the processes and mechanisms for planning and monitoring change (management) have their place. The set of 'management' activities that we have found useful to complement Leadership activities includes Project Management, Communication and monitoring processes.

Engagement - the vital ingredient

It is important to engage everyone connected with the change in some way, so that they feel a part of it rather than having it imposed on them. You will benefit from putting a lot of effort into achieving this outcome.

Can I encourage people to be positive towards change?

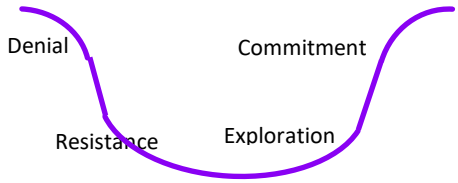
Yes, you can, by creating and encouraging everyone connected with the change to be engaged and involved in what is going on. Communication is vital and so is being fair to everyone.

Change begins with you!

You need to be prepared to change yourself if you expect others to change. Are you ready for this?

The change curve and "The hand over the chasm"

The change curve illustrates four common stages that people go through during change and offers actions to help overcome each one. People will be at different stages at the same time and the leaders will often be further round the curve. Be aware of this. It is a normal occurrence. The hand over the chasm illustrates the importance of the leader offering support and help in the form of a 'bridge' or by being able to climb down into the chasm and help people out.





Delivering change - doing it

Ensure adequate leadership, especially doing lots of communicating. Be sure to allow time, resources and space to deal with the unexpected. Make a plan and put in place appropriate project management steps.

Where to start

You have to begin somewhere. The steps in our model - on page 1 - work. So put time and energy into being clear about the drivers and the purpose and the desired outcomes before you prepare the project plan. Once you have the purpose then getting people engaged follows. Get these steps 'right' and other steps go much more smoothly.

© 2020 Alchemy of Coaching Ltd

Alchemy of Coaching

Project Management is essential and not enough

You will need an effective project management process for your change – however small it may be. Recognise that things never go as planned. Be prepared for things to **emerge**. Allow space so that you recognise emergent issues and have time and resources to deal with them.

What has worked/succeeded in the past?

Learn from your own past experience. You do not want to re-invent the wheel. Your organisation will have delivered change in the past, so what worked and what did not work?
Appreciative Inquiry is a method for looking at things with an upbeat rather than a problem solving approach. Rather than focussing on what is wrong, it focuses on what works.

And it's not working

It is important to realise that not everything will go smoothly. Be prepared to deal with things skilfully when they do go wrong.

Where does change go wrong?

Think back through your experience of change in this organisation. What has been a problem before? Look at the Performance Driver Framework to see which areas in your organisation might be unexpectedly impacted. Also look at your own leadership. Make a list of things going wrong in the past and identify ways to avoid them wherever possible.

How do you figure out what is wrong?

Listen to yourself, to others and create a positive climate for change. Getting feedback is the quickest way to finding things out. For this you need a trusting and supportive environment.

What is change fatigue?

'Too much change' - Initiativitis…. To overcome it first recognise it, especially in yourself. Before you can help others you need to get yourself in good shape.
What to do when you just want to get off the 'moving train'? Pause, reflect, take a break.
Again – take care of yourself first before you try to help others.
Encourage people to take responsibility.

How to get this change back on track

- Return to the purpose. Do you and others really understand it?
- Re-examine the context. Has the situation changed?
- Review the resources - are they adequate and appropriate?
- Revisit the timetable. Has something changed?
- Renew commitment – starting with your own.

References

We have condensed a lot into four pages. Additional information on Leading Change, The Performance Driver Framework and Appreciative Inquiry is available on our website.

Kotter, J. *Leading change.* Harvard Business School Press. 1996.

Kahane, A. *Solving problems.* Berrett-Koehler. 2007.

Binney, G. et al. *Living Leadership.* Prentice Hall. 2005.

Covey, SMR. *The speed of trust - the one thing that changes everything*. Simon & Schuster. 2006

For more information please contact Alchemy of Coaching www.alchemyofcoaching.com

Ray Charlton 01564 794665 ray@alchemyofcoaching.com
Paul Hedley 07775 675401 paul@alchemyofcoaching.com
Ian Saunders 07775 655448 ian@alchemyofcoaching.com

© 2020 Alchemy of Coaching Ltd

Alchemy of Coaching