

Managing Change

& Technology

December 2000

Vol. 1 No. 9

Greetings! - <i>Peter de Jager</i> -----	2
Who's your Fonzie? -----	3
From Obstacles to Steps -----	4
When I talk to Myself, I Listen	5
Phantom Change -----	6
Repetition, Repetition, Repetition	7
Burning Bridges -----	8
Embracing Resistance -----	9
Building Rapport -----	10
Almost a Visionary -----	11
Rewarding Failure -----	12
Us vs. Them -----	13
Making Stone Soup -----	14
The Masthead & Subscription Info	16





Greetings!

Well, this month we're going to jump into the deep end of the pool. We're going to talk about the nitty gritty, and sometimes cloudy, details of, "How do you get people to Change?" So far, MC&T has focused on the high level aspects, seldom dipping down into the dirt.

This issue will focus on the tactics of persuasion. Another word for 'persuasion' is 'propaganda'. A word loaded with negative connotations. To some readers, some of these tactics will be 'Machiavellian' in nature, to others, they merely represent how leaders get things done.

My take? These are tools. And like all arguments about the ethical use of tools, it depends what you use them for. Can they be abused? Of course! Am I recommending that you abuse them? Of course not! Each of the tools/tactics I'm about to describe are used for both 'good' and 'bad' purposes. Most of you use some of

them already, although you might not have names for them or even be conscious of their use.

I'm well aware some readers will consider some of these 'Politically Incorrect.' What I also know is that there will be an overlap between what you think is 'wrong' and what others think is 'right.' For myself? I make my living as a speaker, so I'm very sensitive to 'Politically Correct' issues. Sensitive to them... not handcuffed by them.

My purpose with this issue? I make the assumption that if you are trying to bring about a Change, then you believe it is the right thing to do. With that in mind, these are the tools or observations you can use to achieve your goal. I'll leave the questions of 'ethics', and how they relate to your specific situation, to you.

Enjoy... and use wisely
Peter de Jager

*Force has
no place
where there
is need of
skill*
Herodotus



Who's your Fonzie?

Making the assumption the TV show 'Happy Days' is not known to everyone, the reference to 'Fonzie' requires some explanation. 'Fonzie' was a central character in a TV show. He was the very 'essence' of the concept of 'cool'. All the kids, and even some adults, looked to him for guidance.

In the show Fonzie was portrayed as a rebel... But as a 'good' rebel if that makes any sense. He was 'cool,' but didn't smoke, had girlfriends, but no sex. The producers knew that if he participated in 'bad' habits or behaviour, it would be copied by viewers and since the viewers were mainly teenagers the producers, surprisingly, acted responsibly.

Another example of a powerful influencer is Oprah Winfrey. She need only mention a book on her show for it to become an automatic best seller. If further proof is required for her role as 'influencer', one need only examine the lawsuit placed on her by the cattle industry when she mentioned her dislike of hamburgers. The cattle

industry knew that her ability to change North American eating habits was substantial.

With this as the cultural background, who in your target audience is your 'Fonzie' or 'Oprah'? Who are the key players who will determine, to a large extent, whether or not your Change is accepted?

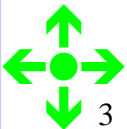


One way to find out is to just observe who people pay attention to in the organization. These individuals will not always be a part of the management structure. They might simply be people to whom people turn when they have a concern.

Another more formal way to seek out the influencers is to take the radical step and ask people 'Who do you listen to?' Or 'Who do you turn to for advice?'

Once you've identified who these people are, it should be obvious that if they were for the change being proposed, then implementing the change will be easier than if they opposed it.

*He listens
well who
takes notes
Dante*



From Obstacles to Steps

Here's a test. It's easy. You'll pass. Think back over the past handful of change projects you've been involved in. Did you ever encounter a person who started out being 100% totally against the change? Who then, for whatever reason, became the biggest supporter of that change? You did? Good! Join the crowd, it's a common enough phenomenon.

Now here's the final exam. What did you learn from the above? I don't know about yourself, but I fail this more often than I like to admit. It is incredibly easy to fall into the trap of seeing those that resist as the enemy to the change process. Especially if the person is an influencer who is convincing others not to accept the change.

The lesson we're being presented with, courtesy of serendipity, is that your biggest obstacle can, once they see the light, become your biggest supporter. With that in mind it really is illogical and even counterproductive to consider and treat resisters as the enemy. I think we're better advised to misquote Roy Rogers and believe that

'enemies are just friends you don't like as yet.'

The first step in creating this change of perspective inside our own heads is to accept that the resistor's viewpoint, no matter how mule headed, stubborn, conservative, obsolete etc. etc. is a perfectly legitimate viewpoint from their perspective. And since we're the one trying to get them to 'buy-in', the responsibility for the sale lies with us.

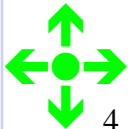


In other words we're the one with the problem, not the resistor, they're just trying to protect what they already have... And that's allowed.

If we fail in this attempt to reframe the situation we will inevitably, either by accident or design, end up displaying disrespect to the resistor and then we've lost. Once a resistor believes we have lost respect for them, then it becomes a matter of pride NOT to change and no argument, no incentive, no bribe, will suffice to move them from that position once they dig in their heels.

Habit is habit, and not to be flung out the window by any man, but coaxed downstairs a step at a time.

Mark Twain



When I talk to myself, I Listen

There aren't too many persuasion tactics I would classify as belonging to the field of Magic, but this one comes close.

The first variant I came across was demonstrated by Gerald Weinberg. If it has a failing it is that it is too simple and can't possibly be as effective as I claim. Have you ever sat with someone who was trying to solve a management type problem and wasn't getting anywhere? They've come to a brick wall and are repeating endlessly, "I don't know what to do (or do next)!" If so, try the following.

Try saying "I know you don't know... But if you did know... What would you do?"

Sorry, that's all there is to it, I wish there were more to it, like waving your hands in a particular pattern, or burning a dead chicken with lemon grass under a full moon, something like that... But that's all there is. The typical result is a gushing of alternatives, other things to try, other solutions to implement. All of a sudden, the person who didn't have any new ideas, is full of them.



What does this have to do with getting someone to change? Well, this simple technique resonates strongly with a technique known as self persuasion. If you have someone who is reluctant to change then without making reference to their personal reluctance, do the following.

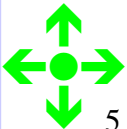
Ask them to think of ways or arguments they would use to convince others to change.

Once they do this, they are 10 times more likely to adopt the change themselves. ('Age of Propaganda' by Anthony Pratkanis & Elliot Aronson - Freeman Press) The act of selecting 'persuasive' strategies for others, causes them to select

the very arguments they find most convincing.

There is a natural built-in resistance to this technique. Some people, myself in certain circumstances, will not contemplate how to convince others until they're convinced they should change. There is a strong ethical sense of "If I don't think I should change, then it's not right to try and convince others."

The best defense strategy is the courage to attack yourself
Al Ries



Phantom Change

It's a familiar enough tactic. Young Huckleberry Finn was a master at it... "Sorry but you can't paint this fence... You're not capable of doing it right."

But there is more going on here than just 'reverse psychology.' First a desire to perform a task is created and then it is strengthened by being made inaccessible. The longer the change is 'forbidden' the greater the determination to achieve it.

Assume you have an accounting department who have been using an old system, even a manual system, for a number of years. The system is no longer sufficient to handle the day to day business.

There are several strategies you could use to implement a new accounting system. The first and most common method is to send some of the computer people out to look at some alternatives and then come back with some solutions to have people 'buy-into.'

Next is to include some of the accounting people

in the exploration of alternatives.

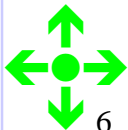
Finally, send accounting people, by themselves, to conferences where new systems are being used by other companies, subscribe to magazines that discuss and review new systems, hire in accountants who have used better systems and wait for the accounting department to start presenting new ideas for their department.

Then have them build a business case for the change. Have them fight a bit of an uphill battle to receive the budget and permission to go ahead. This all builds the commitment necessary to accommodate the trials and tribulations that any department has when a new system is implemented.

At no point in the above process was anyone trying to get the accounting dept. to 'buy-into' their solution. From the start the accounting department was designing their vision of where they wanted to get to... This makes the inevitable chaos more acceptable. It makes change 'easier.'



Everything that deceives may be said to enchant
Plato



Repetition, Repetition, Repetition

Communicate until you hate the sound of your own voice. If you're trying to bring about a change in a large organization, then write about it, talk about it, refer to it in every corporate memo, newsletter and missive.

Repeat yourself until people cringe at the very sight of your name in their inbox. Become a pest, an annoyance, an inescapable background noise. And then keep doing it, do it until there is an underground movement to have you publicly lynched the next time you open your mouth.

And then just when you think you're guilty of cruel and unusual punishment against your fellow man, someone will come up to you and complain that no-one told them about the upcoming change. Welcome to the reality of communicating change in a corporation.

The task is never done, and no matter how much communicating you do, it won't be enough... Because half the time they will misunderstand what you meant to say and the other half of the

time, they'll be listening to rumours.

All joking aside. The task of communicating is never complete especially on large projects where more than 100 people are affected.



The need for communication, was driven home in the survey we recently performed for MC&T. A surprisingly high percentage of the responses to the question 'What is the most important thing management can do to make Change happen more smoothly?' Was... 'Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!'

It was the repetition of the word 'Communicate' which drove home for me the frustration of the respondents, over the existing lack of management communication.

The march of the human mind is slow.

Edmund Burke



Burning Bridges

When people are trapped by a fire on the 10th floor of an apartment building, they will often jump from the building rather than endure the heat and smoke. That's an unfortunate reality.

People also decide to pile into little boats and sail across shark invested waters to escape from regimes they find oppressive or unbearable.

The lesson here is that when people decide the Status Quo is no longer acceptable to them, then, they not only decide to leave but will undergo tremendous hardship in order to get somewhere else.

There is one important point to keep in mind. In order for the 'burning bridge' phenomenon to take place, the pain of remaining with the Status Quo must be real, severe and pressing. Much of the change in corporate life is illusionary, ill-advised and trivial.

Neverending re-organizations come to mind, springing up annually like perennials in a garden

too rich in horse manure. There are GOOD reasons to re-organize a company, but some companies see a re-organization as a solution to the problems caused by the *last* re-organization, which never got out of the Chaos phase.

Trivial change aside, 'burning bridge' is a viable strategy in a situation where it is obvious, if you have the right information at your disposal... that the change is vital to the continued existence of the organization.



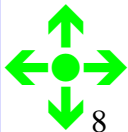
Once again the answer to the problem is communication. Is it possible to communicate why the Status Quo is no longer an acceptable behaviour? If it is,

then people are smart enough to understand that Change is necessary.

If not... Then why is the Change necessary? If the reasons cannot be explained, then is it really necessary? Or is it change for the sake of change?

That which is necessary is never a risk

Paul de Gondi



Embracing Resistance

If you were to encapsulate resistance to change into four little words they would be ‘Why Should I Change?’

What is important here is not the brevity of the sentence, but that the four short words form a question. This simple expression of resistance is not a ‘challenge’, nor is it ‘insubordination’, it is merely an expression of a desire for information and understanding.

It’s practically the offering of a contract... “Give me a reason to change and I will respond by changing, if I agree with your rationale for change.”

In my seminars I often go around the room asking why people are attending the session. I do this for several reasons, the first is that if I know why people are in the room then my task is very simple. Give them what they’re asking for.

The next reason is even more selfish. If I’m real observant, if I actually listen to the issues raised, then I’ll learn more about the change process.

One reason often expressed is that the person wants to “find out how to get people involved in the Change Process”. That’s an admirable goal, providing they understand what exactly ‘involved’ means in the context of change.

I ask this seeker of knowledge another question. “When you currently attempt to implement

Change, do people resist?” And the answer I invariably get is “Yes! That’s the problem! They’re not involved, they’re resisting!”

This is where we have a difference of opinion, perhaps even of philosophy.

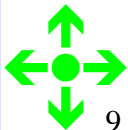
If they are resisting, then they are involved. Perhaps even more involved than the person trying to make the change happen.

If you’re interested in Time Management I recommend Harold Taylor’s excellent free newsletter ‘Taylor’s Time Tips’
E-mail him at timetips@taylorontime.com
with subject=Subscribe



One of the best ways to persuade others is with your ears - by listening to them.

Dean Rusk



Building Rapport

It's all very well to point out that communication is the key to Change. It's nice to have a survey confirm that you must communicate, communicate, communicate. But it's all pointless if the target audience won't listen.

Every salesperson knows that before you can make the pitch, you have to get their attention. Every salesperson knows the best way to get the attention of the customer is to build some form of rapport. That's why salespeople start out with small talk. Once you agree on the humidity, then and only then, is it time to start talking about a new air conditioner.

How to build rapport? Without knowing the parties involved that's nearly an impossible question, and there is certainly no answer which will guarantee success in all cases.

We all know people with whom rapport is something that's never going to happen. There

are some guidelines that'll help in most situations, and if we restrict 'rapport' to the kind that applies to managing change then we can succeed more often than we fail.

1) Resisters aren't the enemy. I know this is repetition, I know this because I'm becoming very conscious of how many times I repeat it and it's beginning to annoy me every time I communicate it. If you enter into a change situation thinking of the target audience as the obstacle to be overcome, then rapport will never happen.

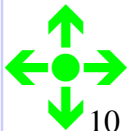
2) Don't have all the answers. You've got a greater chance of gaining co-operation if you're

asking for help than when trying to force unwanted advice down someone's throat. Nobody knows the Status Quo better than those who live inside it on a daily basis. Asking them how things might be different is more fruitful than telling someone how it's going to be.

Grandma's wisdom, "You can catch more flies with honey than vinegar" is still true.



Honour opens many doors and trust favourably influences the outcome of all your dealings
James Cook



Almost a Visionary

Warning. Warning.

Whoop. Whoop.

Incoming contrary advice!

Take Cover!

Any management guru is going to tell you that one of the roads to success is to be a visionary. That might be true in many cases, but when it comes to the Management of Change, it's often the road to ruin.

One moment you're minding your own business and then bam! you have a 'vision'. Then next thing you know, you're looking for ways to get people to 'buy-into' it.

Getting people to buy-into something already 100% complete is like expecting someone to buy a car without the ability to make any changes in the colour, the upholstery or whether you want that anti-rust. It's possible, but it's a more difficult sell.

Now you're going to have visions, there's no

getting around that fact. If you're good at your job, you'll see threats to the Status Quo, and come up with solutions to those threats.

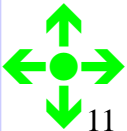


The trick is to keep them to yourself. Use them as something to steer by as you get people to understand the threat, and then come up with their own vision of how they might solve it.

But, don't, whatever you do, present them with a solution all wrapped up in a shiny ribbon, they won't appreciate it.

This doesn't mean you should have solutions in mind. Or even that you shouldn't be exploring the optimal solution, just don't hold these out to the target audience as the answer to their problems.

*The true leader is always led
Carl Jung*



Rewarding 'Failure'

If you've been a manager for any length of time then you've (hopefully) learned one of the seven holy secrets of management¹...

That of recognizing when people do something good, rewarding them in some way so *they* know *you* know *they* are of value to the organization.

That secret alone, practised on a regular basis, even if you have to sneak around trying to catch them doing something good, is worth half your paycheque. Being congratulated for doing a good job is a sure way to boost someone's morale.

During the Change process however, especially in the Chaos phase where people are by definition learning new skills, there are not too many opportunities for telling people they're doing good. When you're learning something new, you're making mistakes, lots of them.

If on top of all these mistakes, you add that people are upset over their loss of old competencies and fearful they may never

learn the new ones, then you have the makings of rampant low morale. What better time to raise their spirits? If only you could find a legitimate reason to do so?

There is a legitimate reason to praise people, but it's hidden behind something we're more likely to chastise them for. It's hidden behind their failures as they attempt to learn new skills.



Behind each failure is an effort to succeed. This 'effort to succeed' is reason enough to praise people and will do wonders to provide positive feedback during a period when success itself is rare.

¹The other Six Holy Secrets of Management were lost during the sinking of the Titanic. This one was found floating in a wine bottle in Boston Harbour in 1973... it is suspected that one of the other secrets was a sense of humour.

*Who never
climbed
high, never
fell low*
Thomas
Fuller



Us vs. Them

One of the goals of management is the ability to create good, strong 'team spirit.' The final objective? A group of people acting together to achieve a common goal! Rah! Rah! What happens though, when that 'common goal' is 'resistance' to change?

While it takes a bit of magic, a lot of effort, a bit of luck, to deliberately create and nurture a team, accidentally creating them happens frequently enough to suggest that the dynamics of team building are still a bit of a mystery.

What is a team? 'A group of people aware they share a common goal.'

How is change usually announced in a typical organization? Staff are herded into a room, management stands on the podium bathed in light and announce that we are headed in a new direction, that it will be difficult, that sacrifices must be made etc. etc. The physical set-up of the room splits the organization into 'us' those of us in the cheap seats and 'them' those bathed in the spotlight. It doesn't take too much insight to determine which group you fall into. We've created two teams. Each with an opposing goal.

If this were the only instance were we split groups into 'Us' vs. 'Them' then this argument wouldn't hold much water, but it's not, it's only one example.

When working with an organization on Change I'm often instructed to hold different change workshops. One for management and another for staff, as if the problem of 'Change' is radically different from one group to the other. My preference is always to have both the 'Us' & 'Them' teams in the same room. It doesn't take much to demonstrate that 'Change' is an objective they have in common.

Persuade me as you may, but I won't be persuaded
Aristophanes

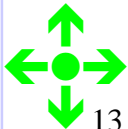


Peter de Jager

Speaker/Consultant on
Change & Technology

Services: Keynotes
Change Workshops
Consulting

Contact: pdejager@technobility.com
1-(905) 792-8706



Making Stone Soup

I'll admit it. I'm nothing but a kid at heart. I'm continually astounded by the world around us and tend not to take things for granted. I received a fax yesterday and watched with sincere amazement as an image magically appeared out of a little black box, sent to me by a wizard many hundreds of leagues away. (ok, it wasn't a real wizard. Remember this is a kid writing this article!)

To me, the world is a fairy tale. Did you know that planes can fly? I mean those BIG planes, the ones that weigh hundreds of tonnes. They speed down the runway and make a magical leap into the sky. And more to the point. They stay up there! Must be wizards again.

For someone who believes he's living in a fairy tale, I also read fairy tales. They were around long before user manuals and quite frankly contain more information than most manuals.

Have you read the fairy tale about stone soup? If



you have, then the information it contains just might make you a better manager of technology.

Making stone soup is an old tradition. First you need a stone. Not just any old stone. A smooth stone, river washed until it's about the size of a large goose egg. Make sure

you don't get one that's covered in green algae, otherwise your soup will taste foul.

Place the stone in a soup pan and fill with water until the stone is covered by about 2 inches of water, and bring to a slow boil. Taste it. You'll notice it tastes like hot water.

Now bring out the flavour of the stone. This is not a simple task. A stone is hard and unyielding. It's not going to present you with flavour unless you find the secret of extracting its natural juices.

First you must dice up some carrots, about 3 or 4 large carrots should be enough. Then 2 potatoes, washed, sliced into 1 inch cubes. (Leave the skins on, being close to the earth already, they

The shortest distance between two points is under construction.
Noelio Alito



have a natural affinity to the stone and will entice it to give up a hearty flavour.) Now slice up a beef steak (not that stuff from England or you'll make yourself mad at the results) into similarly sized cubes. Finally sprinkle the brew with salt and pepper to taste. Let simmer for about an hour and voila! A hearty stone soup!



Warning! If you try to make stone soup without using the above instructions for extracting the flavour then all you'll have is a lot of boiling water.

Now stones and sand are mostly silicon, and most technology managers know computers are also mostly just silicon. So we have the beginnings of a metaphor. (work with me on this, I'm working under a deadline here!)

What brought all of this to a boil for me (so to speak.) Was a recent conference I was fortunate enough to facilitate for Hewlett Packard. HP has achieved something significant, and was using this meeting to demonstrate the accomplishment. They've placed some 82,000 PC users onto a 'Common Operating Environment.' Those working in a corporate environment know how difficult it is to implement any sort of

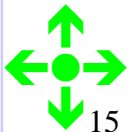
standards into the end user computing community. Getting 1,000 users to use the same word processor is an achievement. Getting 82,000 users to follow any type of standard is nothing short of a miracle.

Here's the catch. I know a market full of End User Computing managers who'll want to buy HP's 'technology' (read 'stone' for those having difficulty with the metaphor). They'll ask how much this PC COE costs. They'll want to buy this stone from HP and they'll expect the same remarkable results. They'll want to make HP's stone soup, but won't want to follow the instructions.

They'll spend the money, buy the stone, put it into their environment and turn up the heat. They'll expect soup... All they'll get is hot water.

What they need to do to get the benefit from the stone is add the extra ingredients. eg. Management, Change Process Control, Training, Marketing, and of course... Patience.

The first prerequisite of intelligent tinkering is to save all the pieces
Aldo Leopold



Managing Change & Technology

Subscribers:

As of December 2000: ~6,500

Publisher:

de Jager & Company Limited
22 Marchbank Crescent
Brampton, Ont
L6S 3B1
(905)792-8706

Editor:

Peter de Jager
pdejager@technobility.com

Archives:

www.technobility.com

Copyright

© 2000, de Jager & Company Limited

Reprint Permissions:

Permission to copy MC&T in its entirety is given freely.

Specifically: If you pass MC&T to any individual or organization you must do so by sending them the entire MC&T file. You may not extract individual articles from the newsletter without obtaining written permission.

To obtain details on how to acquire permission to reprint individual articles please contact the publisher at either:

ManageChange@Technobility.com
or 905-792-8706

Subscription Information:

To subscribe:

Send an e-mail to:

ManageChange@Technobility.com

with MC&T in the Subject line and 'Subscribe' in the body of the message.

To Unsubscribe:

Send an e-mail to:

ManageChange@Technobility.com

with MC&T in the Subject line and 'Unsubscribe' in the body of the message.

