

# Managing Change

& Technology

January 2001  
Vol. 2 No. 1

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# Greetings!

**W**elcome to the New Year, decade, century and finally, it took long enough!... the millennium.

The big news this issue is that this is the last issue... that I'll be sending out directly.

Future issues, unless something arises in the testing, will be distributed by the Yahoo Groups service. As I've mentioned in earlier notes, the admin of some 4,500 direct subscribers is a bit onerous, so I'm happy to have found a solution to the problem.

Is the solution perfect? Nope. There's a cost... Each time you receive MC&T from Yahoo they'll add a small banner ad to the text portion of the e-mail, not to MC&T itself. This is the part of the mailing where I place incidental information. The solution for you if it offends you? Delete the text and save the attachment.

Well... with that out of the way, we head into a new year.

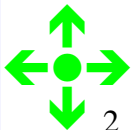
**A**s always, your contributions to MC&T are welcome. We all encounter strange change in our organizations. Even anecdotes and casual observations of what you see around you is something we can learn from. We just have to look closely and pay attention.

This month the articles span the entire landscape of change: Past to Future, Certainty and Doubt... as always, your comments are eagerly awaited.

MC&T is ultimately only as useful as what we put into it. I hope you feel comfortable enough to contribute. If it makes it easier for you, I'm happy to post things anonymously.

Happy New year  
Enjoy!  
Peter de Jager

*We only think when confronted with a problem*  
John Dewey



# Some Survey Results

We had some 500 respondents to the survey we did several months ago. Here are some results.

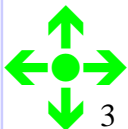
- ‘Frequency’ Respondents who experienced this ‘change’ in the last year.
- ‘In top 3’ Respondents who then ranked it in their top 3 most disruptive changes.
- ‘Severity’ A likelihood that if this event takes place in any organization, then it will be very disruptive.

<u>Frequency</u>	<u>In top 3</u>	<u>‘Severity’</u>	
19%	10%	55	Relocated
24%	18%	72	Merged with another company
26%	10%	37	Grown by more than 25% but less than 50%
4%	2%	43	Grown by more than 50% but less than 75%
2%	1%	59	Grown by more than 75% but less than 100%
4%	1%	44	More than doubled in size
8%	5%	62	Bought out by another company
<b>26%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>Been down sized</b>
67%	38%	56	Suffered staff turnover of more than 0% but less than 25%
14%	11%	78	Suffered staff turnover of more than 25% but less than 50%
<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>Suffered staff turnover of more than 50% but less than 75%</b>
0%	0%	na	Suffered staff turnover of more than 75% but less than 100%
20%	13%	62	Implemented a large ‘outsourcing’
49%	19%	40	Embarked on a large e-commerce initiative
24%	14%	60	Canceled any large project before completion
31%	14%	44	Implemented a new ‘quality’ initiative (6-sigma, CMM, ISO, PI etc )
<b>68%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>Reorganized the management structure</b>
41%	21%	53	Have you personally changed jobs within the last year?
48%	24%	49	Has your manager changed in the last year?
<b>12%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>Large IT project</b>
<b>9%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>Other</b>



*Statistics are for losers*

*Scotty Bowman*





# Look both Ways

*By: Georgia Ferrell*

To me, life is change. Whether technology were present or not, to be alive is to change. Some changes are minute and some are huge, but to me the most important element is my awareness of the changes that are happening to me, and the control I have over them.

**O**ver the years I have seen many technological changes, from a tiny, two channel a day, black and white TV; to mind boggling choices on 100s of channels, all day in living color; to watching tiny cameras take pictures of my interior regions; to seeing my heart beat on a computer screen; from painful slow drilling of teeth, to an almost instant painless fix, to name just a few.

When I was 45, I moved onto a 100 acre wood, and had to learn all over again where to put my priorities. I had land, but no house. After one year, no job. I had no telephone, no electricity, no running water, but I had my wits. I have discovered that resourcefulness is way up at the

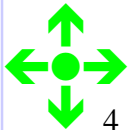
top of necessary qualities. I figured out how to build a cabin using recycled parts. because the trailer of last year's winter was a bit too cold - in 30 degree Celsius.

The next 15 years saw many changes, ending with the loss of my parents and thus a new house— designed and built by myself with help from my friends— with all the modern conveniences i.e. I have leapt into the technological world of the 21st century. I have a computer - which I just love - and toilets that flush, telephones that answer when I am not here, lights, TV, and all the other bells and whistles.

**W**hat have I learned about change and the impact of technology? Well, for one thing, washing machines and dishwashers, etc. really do make life easier and give me more time to do the stuff of creative living; I can now go to “those faraway places” in a day or less; cumbersome switchboards have been replaced by tiny cell phones and the wonder of speaking to my friends halfway around the world as if they were beside me; so, yes, technology is very good to us.

*Dreams are the touchstones of our characters.*

*Thoreau*



# Look both Ways...

**O**n the other hand, I have seen friends lose jobs to automatic tellers and factory robotics; “mom and pop” stores have vanished; people uprooted to make room for “modernization”; exploration became exploitation; air and water is so polluted, we reap asthma, sickness, and death.

But what hurts the most from what I have seen, is that those who could alter this scene, choose not to. Short term wealth is now more important than long term life—and a Macdonalds hamburger is more valuable than an acre of rain forest.

**S**o, those of us who can, do what we can to influence those we know to care more — about life, about each other, about our connectedness to everything living and to our planet; about maintaining the ability to change and especially to put our priorities in order, so that life can continue to change in life enhancing ways, with people running technology for the bonuses it offers us, instead of being “fast forward and out of control”.

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## Peter de Jager

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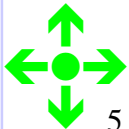
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*You can tell  
the ideals of  
a nation by  
its adver-  
tisements.*

*Norman  
Douglas*

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## TRUTH PICK # 025

*If you think  
the problem  
is bad now,  
just wait  
until we've  
solved it!*

*Arthur  
Kasspe*

**L**ightly touch, even a single thread of web, and we disturb the spider. We exist in a world highly intertwined. The interconnections aren't simple. They're mostly invisible... until touched.

When we rush towards solutions, we do more than lightly touch a few threads. Most things are the way they are for a reason... even problems. We seldom ask... What are the reasons? Instead we rush to the glory of the battle. Fix the problem! Throw enough resources at a problem, and we overcome most of them. And create others.

Elegant and powerful word processors are a solution to the time taken on manual typewriters. They're also a wonderful way to produce memos suitable for framing.

E-mail... It's faster to send an e-mail than writing a letter or a memo... and because it's faster, there are more of them to read... and write. Is the solution worse than the problem? Is MC&T part of the problem?

By making people more productive, have we made it possible to do things that were never, and never will be, worth doing? Just because we can now do them faster?

Touch the web, wake the spider

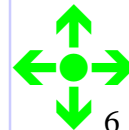
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# Reaction Management & Other Taboos

By Glen Ford

**I**t seems silly to rush around building an airplane, rush up to a cliff and then push it over to see if it will fly. But it is even sillier to give no thought to how to land.

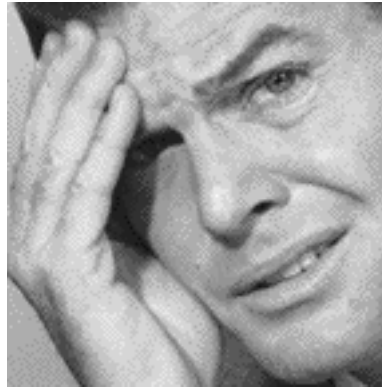
Yet, that is what we do constantly in the technology field. We build airplanes, throw away the landing gear and then push the whole mess over a cliff.

I remember, in a previous life, being forbidden to deal with the manual procedures to support the computer systems we designed. We'd busily talk to the users, then go off and design our wonderful new systems to make their lives easier.

**B**ut, if the new system meant they needed to change their manual processes, then that was *their* problem. The poor user of the new system was left to their own devices to cope with the changes. Our success rate was variable, to say the least.

Sometime later, I went into accounting to

document the systems for a major re-engineering effort. I couldn't understand half of what they were doing! My poor ex-Accounting Manager mind was being run around in circles! As a Systems Analyst I was reduced to rapid blinking and mumbling distractedly!



Confusion reigned until I realized that they were routinely balancing half transactions. New systems made old procedures obsolete, but they had tried to go on with the data that was left.

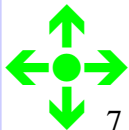
Situations like this seem silly, and they are silly. But they are also common. The question is why?

I'm a great believer in why. Unless you answer the why, you can't properly answer the "what", the "how" or the "who?".

**T**he first answer is simple. Techies are, generally speaking, incompetent at reaction management and managers are aware of it, if only because they're aware of their own weaknesses. So, the quick solution is to

*It doesn't pay well to fight for what we believe in.*

*Lillian Hellman*



# Reaction Management & Other Taboos

keep the Techies right out of the problem universe. TABOO! Certain death! Automatic firing!

Leave it to the implementation support people who may not be any better at it, but at least they aren't Techies. They also make great crash dummies!

But why are Techies incompetent when dealing with reactions? There are three basic reasons why Techies can't do reaction management:

⇒ They aren't people oriented.

⇒ They also resist change.

⇒ They don't have change skills.

As we continue to ask "why?", the answers converge.

The answer to "why?" is a lack of skills in people management and in reaction management and surprise, surprise - these are trainable skills.

So what do we have?

⇒An increasing need for reaction management,

⇒A low level of management trust,

⇒Inherent (people) skills level are low,

⇒The need for formal training is high,

⇒Availability of training is low.

I do hope there is a crash team available! Now, where is my parachute? You did remember the parachute didn't you?

I'll sew the parachute next month.

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*I invent  
nothing,  
I rediscover.  
Auguste  
Rodin*



# The Woodstock Nation: 2nd Round

*By Warren Evans*

We're all sick to death of hearing about and reading about the 'baby boomers'.

We would also be wise to take all the management and investment advice dispensed by the pop demographers, with a large grain of salt. Not only because they've been so consistently wrong about the impact 'the boomers' will have (housing, cars, recreation, 'boomernomic' funds, etc), but, because their foundation assumptions are fundamentally flawed, in two areas.

First, while the 20 years of the boom may be a demographers statistical generation, the pace of change was accelerating sufficiently at that time that we actually had 3 completely separate generations emerge in terms of outlook, attitudes, and subsequent behaviour patterns. Common sense tells us that if you were born in 1947, you had a growing up experience that was very different than that of someone born in 1966.

Secondly, predicting behaviour based on age assumes a repeat of the priorities and decisions of the last generation, when they hit a certain age. If the combination of economics, corporate restructuring, technology, globalization, and psycho-graphics cause different decisions, the

ability of demographics as a predictive tool gets severely diminished. (we're selling the house and buying a bigger one, not smaller; we're driving sports cars, not the land yachts our parents did; we're skiing, not bird watching; we're in equities, not T-bills).

There is a group in the centre of this bunch with a cluster of some identifiable psycho-graphic traits in common. This is a group we could call the 'children of the sixties'.

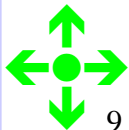
These are the folks who came of age, whose values were shaped, and perceptions of the possible, defined during that experience we refer to as 'the sixties'.

For purposes of this definition, I define the sixties as a period of time that ran from a grassy knoll in Dallas to a rooftop in Saigon, with Woodstock and Tranquility Base, somewhere in the middle of it all. This is actually not a decade at all . . . it's more like a headspace. As such, this is also a self-selecting group based on a sense of shared experience, so there are no exact statistics on who belongs. But there's a lot of them!

(and pollsters tell us this is the first group to have their identifiable 'values cluster' move up generations, as well as down).

*Freedom is  
nothing else  
but a  
chance to  
be better*

*Albert  
Camus*



# The Woodstock Nation: 2nd Round

*By Warren Evans*

They are just now starting to get their hands on all the levers of control in our society. They are driving not only the national social agenda, but also some fundamental, and largely invisible, sea changes in how and why we work, and what is expected of our organizations.

Those who have their radar screens tuned in will be able to recruit, retain, design, market, and attract investment or funding more successfully than those who don't 'get it'.

Here's a couple of things we know about these folks, and what they mean:

They are change masters. This group is good at fundamental and radical change. Consider the changes that have taken place in the role of women in society and environmental awareness, since this group came of age a couple of decades ago, as just two examples.

They are control freaks. This group will seize ownership of issues that concern them, and have never been very good at deferring to traditional authority on anything.

Two trends we're watching emerge:

## **PowerHouse Philanthropy:**

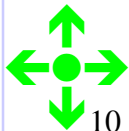
Over the next few years we'll see an explosion in causes and issues, and radical new approaches to volunteerism and philanthropy. From school boards to food banks and art galleries, this group will change the landscape.

A while back I did a strategic retreat for several dozen CEOs of children's service agencies in Canada. This subject led to a discussion of a recent fund raising initiative to build shelters for the homeless. A group of business people had decided 'to do something' about this. They made a 3 year plan, and kicked it off with a week long event in every major city. Using their network of contacts they had TV ads featuring local sports, political, and media celebrities running in each city. They put the whole thing together in a few months, and blew past their fundraising targets.

Many of the CEOs were mighty displeased with all of this. It appears the folks behind it had not gone through any of the traditional agencies and committees in place, to address these issues. They felt that 'their' cause had been high-jacked by outsiders.

*Man prefers to believe what he prefers to be true.*

*Francis Bacon*



# The Woodstock Nation: 2nd Round

## **Business as an Institutional Pillar:**

To many people, business is the last of the traditional institutional pillars of our society still functioning effectively. As such, it will find an increasing number of issues form the ‘social agenda’ thrust onto its plate. This goes far beyond supporting the annual United Way campaign.

We are quickly moving into an age where the personality of the organization is the brand.

Smart companies are initiating mentoring programs for local schools, designing recyclable products and undertaking a wide variety of substantive initiatives under the umbrella ‘community citizenship’, for themselves and their employees.

A good example of the contrast is Exxon and BP. In the eyes of many, Exxon’s actions have clearly positioned it as an outfit that believes that any suggestion of environmental considerations, is an unjustified interference with the proper pursuit of business. It is adopting Charlie Wilson’s infamous 1953 mantra, that ‘what’s good for General Motors is good for America’. (In Oct 2000, after the US Supreme Court upheld the damages verdict from the 1989 Exxon Valdez fiasco, it announced it still has several other

avenues of appeals it intends to pursue before it pays anything.) Any organization adhering to a 1953 basis of operating as it enters the new millennium is setting itself up for decades of grief to come . . . and sooner rather than later.

BP is setting itself up as leader in trying to find innovative ways to balance the need for energy, with the imperative to restore the environment. They are backing this up with a serious PR campaign and with real action around the world. (Ford Motor is another leading the way, with their Chairman publicly calling for an end to car pollution.)

There are other factors driving this group, and other macro-trends they are driving, but a good place to start understanding them is that they want options and control. If they don’t find either, they will create both.

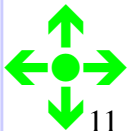
Organizations not gearing themselves up to operate in light of this reality, will find themselves on the wrong side of this reality . . . and soon.

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*I like the dreams of the future better, than the history of the past.*

*Thomas Jefferson*





# Change in Context

By Peter de Jager

*Since this is the 10th issue of MC&T I'm going to make the assumption that you're familiar with both myself and my thoughts on Change. I'm even going to go a bit further and assume a much more casual*

*style in this article. I think the subject matter calls for a more relaxed approach.*

I was thinking about a change issue the other day and stumbled on a way of thinking about change that was 'new' to me. I place the word 'new' in quotes because it can't really be a new view on change, but it is certainly an aspect I've never focused on in more than 20 years (good grief!) of change work.

We talk about, and wrestle with, the issue of 'managing change', in particular the 'implementation' of change. That's what MC&T is devoted to. Why? Because 'Managing Change' is not something we're very good at.

A recent survey of some 3,100+ IT folks by CIO Magazine and Athabasca Univ. ([www.athabascau.ca/com](http://www.athabascau.ca/com)) posed this statement "My organization manages the introduction of

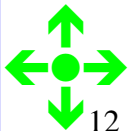
change brought about by IT very well" and only 27% could agree at level 4-5 on a five point scale.

This finding is supported by our own survey of MC&T subscribers. Look on Page 3 of this month's MC&T. The event most likely to cause great disruption in an organization is an IT project/implementation! Why? Why are we so incredibly bad at this? Is it important? How much money is lost in failed implementations? Sobeys is a Canadian Food Chain, they just gave up trying to move to SAP... Estimated cost of the failure? \$50,000,000!

Sobeys claims the reason is SAP is technically incapable of handling Sobeys business. We all know that SAP is capable of handling extremely large installations. I'd guess that the reason is a combination of a lot of things. Regardless of the reasons... a large change failed and the net cost is huge.

Why is 'implementing change' so difficult. When we define change, we commonly describe it as moving from something old to something new. Change is when things are different. Change is when we have to leave the past behind and move to something else etc. etc.

*The important thing is not to stop questioning*  
Albert Einstein



# Change in Context



Something's missing here. I'm certainly guilty of it. I've used all those definitions in the past in one form or another. All of them seem to miss a crucial element of what 'change' is all about.

Why am I so sure of this? Because... when you've properly defined something, then if it's a problem, the definition itself usually suggests a solution. None of these 'definitions' immediately suggest a solution.

**A**nother way to gain understanding of something is to stop asking 'What is it?' and start asking 'Why is it?' So... Why is change? Forget that it sounds weird. Why is change? Or better yet. Why are you implementing change? Huh? this is the SAME question that the 'resistors' to change are asking... and slowly begin to become clear.

The question "Why are you implementing change?" results in a much more useful definition/description of our little problem. The answer to this question, in the context of implementing change in organizations, is ALWAYS... "This

change is a solution to this problem." i.e. Change is a solution to a problem.

Until you understand the problem, changing the status quo will never make any sense.

If you don't believe the problem exists, then the change should never take place.

Change, isolated from the context of the problem which generated it, is nonsensical.

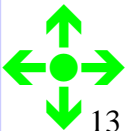
**N**ow I know for a certainty, that some readers are going "Duh!"... and others are going "So What?" To those going "Duh!" my hat's off to you, you got there first. Congratulations. To those going "So What?" read on...

If we now replace the phrase "Implementing Change" with "Implementing a Solution to this Problem" then we've practically designed and planned the entire "Change" Strategy. The need to explain what the problem is that we're attempting to solve, is inherent in the description of what we're doing.

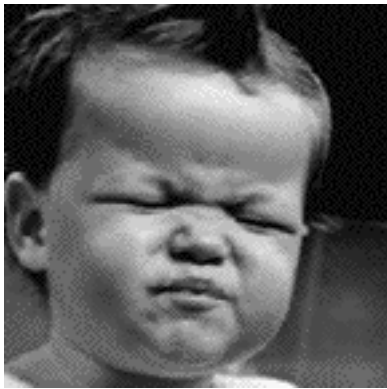
By restoring the context of the "Problem" which

*The certainties of one age are the problems of the next.*

*R.H.  
Tawney*



# Change in Context



generated the change solution, we automatically answer the number one resistance question we encounter all the time; “Why should I change?” The answer is ‘obvious’ ... “We’re imple-

menting a solution to this problem.” If they don’t know about the problem? We’ll describe it to them. If they don’t understand why this solution is the right one? Then we can explain it within the context of the problem.

**W**hat’s interesting to me, is that this invalidates none of my thoughts on ‘Change’ management. Here are the steps I use in my implementation process.

## **Understand the Change** ✓

If we restate that as “Understand the solution” it becomes almost too trivial to mention.

## **Establish Rapport** ✓

A basic human need is to get to know and be trusted by those you intend to work for. Here the focus is on trust. Is the change you’re trying to implement in their best interests?

## **Understand Status Quo** ✓

Which is another way of saying get to know the problem you’re trying to solve. i.e. the state you’re trying to change.

## **Create Desire to Change** ✓

If they understand that the current state is undesirable, i.e. a problem, then they’ll know something needs to be done.

## **Desire becomes Action** ✓

Here’s where they begin to work towards the solution.

## **Reinforce New Behaviours** ✓

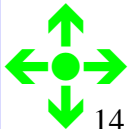
This is something that relates to how people acquire new skills. It is a part of something we might want to label as “change management skills” as it is separate from any particular problem and common to all change processes. (The tendency to revert to old behaviours, might qualify as a ‘Change Pattern’.)

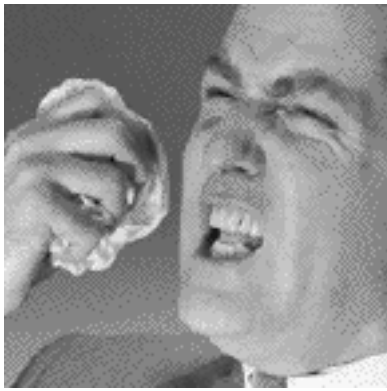
## **Create Closure** ✓

Any achievement, especially one that solves a known and annoying problem, deserves to be celebrated.

*Doubt is not a pleasant mental state, but certainty is a ridiculous one.*

*Voltaire*





# Change in Context

All of these points are still valid under this 'problem solving' view of what "Change Management" is all about. For me though, they now seem to make even more sense.

Folks, I don't know if looking at "Change Management" from this perspective does much for you. I do know that since I focused on this perspective, tumblers have been falling into place with gentle clicks inside my head. Things that I knew were right, now are even more appropriate.

**F**or me it boils down to this. When I think of the phrase "Change Management", it exists outside the context of why we're doing it in the first place. A feeling that is obviously shared by the target audience when they ask "Why should I change?"

On the other hand, when I think of the issue as "Implementing a solution to a problem", then the context is right up front, and it's obvious what we're trying to do and what we have to do... we have to explain why the solution is the right one

for the problem. If they don't know what the problem is and why we have to fix it, then that's also something we have to take care of.

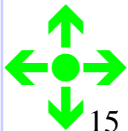
Even more to the point? We don't implement 'change', we implement 'solutions to problems.'

(c) 2001, Peter de Jager is a speaker & consultant on the issues relating to Change & Technology. Contact him at [pdejager@technobility.com](mailto:pdejager@technobility.com)

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*The future is hidden even from the men who made it.*  
Anatole France



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