

Managing Change

& Technology

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Greetings!

Hi Folks,

Here's the long awaited issue of MC&T, I hope you enjoy it.

*Look with
favor on a
bold
beginning.
Virgil*

In future issues, I'm going to draw on you, the reader, for more information. I hope that you'll be willing to contribute to MC&T in the form of input to a number of surveys I'm going to create in the coming months.

There are several ways you can contribute to MC&T... each one is as important as the other.

Articles. You've seen what I choose to publish, I'd like more of the same from you. While I am happy to provide most of the view points, I think it healthy for any publication to present a variety of views. That will only happen if you hit the keys a few times... or pick up that antique thingie called a pen.

Surveys. Filling out the surveys I present to you each month from now on will be a great help. I'll be creating a survey page on www.technobility.com and asking you to visit there at least once a month IF the survey applies to you. This data will be collected and it will be the foundation of the next issue.

Questions. Do you have questions you'd like to see asked of our membership? If so, email them to me and I'll post them along with the other topics.

Feedback. I can't stress this enough. Without your input I cannot possibly know if MC&T is serving your needs. I recognize that MC&T will never be all things to all people, but with respect to the management of change, we should be able to at least hit the target every month.

Enjoy!
Write!
Think!
Change!

Peter de Jager



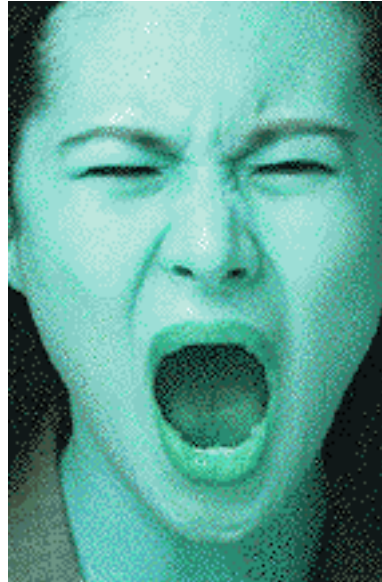
Tomorrow's Layoff?

By: Peter de Jager

Bill, lost his job recently. It seems his company was downsized. His well developed skills were no longer required. It's tempting to claim his company was at fault. But the fault was his and his alone. Let me explain why.

Things are changing incredibly fast. Yesterday's idea, is an emerging technology today, mainstream news tomorrow and history by next week. And... everyone contributes to the speed of change.

There's a myth about management. Since we're responsible for so much change, we must be good at coping with it. I've observed the exact opposite. Managers have great difficulty accepting change. They tend to get complacent in their 'secure' status quo. They believe the skills they've acquired, will serve them well into the future, in spite of all signs to the contrary.

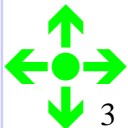


Take a close look at business magazines. Each issue offers something new, something different. Each advertisement promises to increase productivity, to increase efficiency, to inflict change upon our unsuspecting organization. Used properly, magazines are a guidepost to the future. Ignore them and they'll get you downsized.

Bill acquired his management skills in the trenches. He worked his way up through the ranks. He acquired a set of skills, and over the years, deepened them. He began to believe his tool kit of management techniques was complete. They'd served him well in the past, and would suffice in the future.

Bill's error was not in his judgment of whether or not a particular skill was long lasting. Bill's error had little if anything to do with 'management skills.' His error lay in

No human thing is of serious importance.
Plato



Tomorrow's Layoff?

his world view. He believed his world would stay the same. Somehow he'd be protected from change. Somehow he alone would be immune.

Shielded in immunity, he gives no thought to a 'different' tomorrow. He leans on his illusion of status quo, even while destroying the status quo of others. He's not alone in this. He's joined by politicians, unions, successful companies, staff, by anyone and everyone who's comfortable with past achievements.

How do you prepare for the future? Step one is trivial... Acknowledge uncertainty. That alone, will keep you from being complacent. That alone, will have you thinking about alternatives. That alone, will remind you that you're not alone. Everybody is faced with the same uncertainty. Welcome to the future!

Next - you're not your business card. No matter what your title, no matter what your function, you're more than a 'box' on an org chart. You're a collection of skills with the ability to learn new ones.

These steps do little to change the future. Accepting uncertainty and solid self assessment is a good strategy, but without a plan of action, they'll add up to nothing.

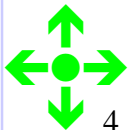
Assume you're fired tomorrow, what would you do? Sounds drastic, but it happens every day to thousands of people from 'every walk of life.' So why not to you? What better time to contemplate it, than today when you still have a job and time to plan?

Is this type of thinking 'negative'? Or is it actually a positive outlook on life, where you prepare yourself for the worst... and with prudent preparation transform the 'worst that can happen' into an opportunity?

Bill lost his job because he couldn't see beyond his status quo. Don't make that same mistake. Contemplate this thought. Ask the question... "What's my place in the uncertainty I'm helping create?" Then do something about it.

Regrets are as personal as fingerprints.

Margaret Banning



Change Emotions

In Change workshops I ask people to list the “emotions” they experience during Change... I’ve collected them for a few years and thought I would share them with you.

It makes for an interesting snapshot of the human condition. Who would have thought all of this happens in corporate cubicles? You’ll notice they’re not all really ‘emotions’... who I am to argue with clients?

There is no right or wrong. There is only opinion.

A.J. Carothers

Apathy, Afraid, Anger, Awe, Agitated, **Anticipation, Amused, Appreciated,** Anxious, Brooding, Betrayed, Burnt Out, **Curiosity, Cautious, Challenged,** Dread, Deceit, Depressed, **Excitement, Eagerness,** Envy, Empathy, **Enthusiastic, Energized, Encouraged,** Fearful, **Fun, Gratefulness,** Grief, Grim, Hate, Hostility, Hurt, **Impatient, Inquisitiveness,** Indifference, **Inspired, Joking,** Jeers, **Laughter,** Lousy, Morbid, **Motivated,** Private, **Playful, Peaceful,** Quiet, Queasy, Revulsion, **Revelry,** Rage, Resentful, Resigned, Sick, **Silly,** Stoic, Sober, **Serene,** Suspicious, Terrified, **Thrilled,** Tired, **Thankful,** Ugly, Useless, Uneasy, Vigilant, Vindicated, Weary, Yellow Bellied, **Zeal & Zest.**

Who said Change was easy???



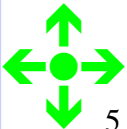
Peter de Jager

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TRUTH PICK # 026

*Life is like
playing a
violin solo in
public,
and learning
the instrument
as one goes
on.*
Samuel Butler

No matter what we're doing, if we're doing it for the first time, then it's a given... We're doing it badly. Bluntly? We're incompetent.

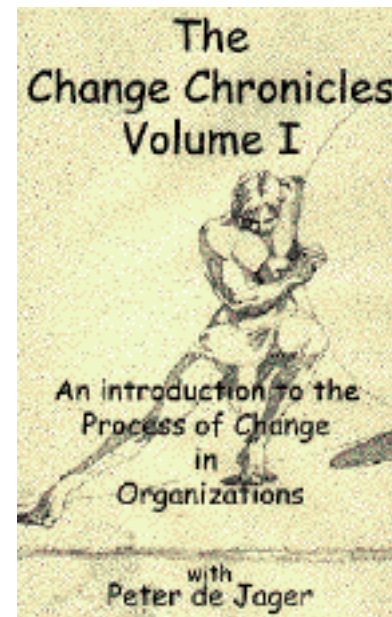
We're making mistakes, lots of them, again and again and again. How does that feel? If we're like most, it's at least frustrating, embarrassing and annoying. We don't like being incompetent. Welcome to the club. We're just like everyone else.

But our reaction to our incompetence is a bit peculiar. Why does doing something wrong the first time, frustrate us? Do we really expect to paint like Picasso, jump like Jordan, or sing like Sinatra, the first time we try?

Nevertheless, we feel the way we feel, and it takes a bit of doing to overcome our reaction to the failures in learning.

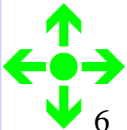
If we know how we feel when faced with something new... do we extend that knowledge to cover others? If I'm uncomfortable with incompetence, are others? If so, can I choose to ease their discomfort with the goal of making their transition easier?

Not going in the water until we can swim, is not an option.



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Reaction Management & Other Taboos

Part II. By Glen Ford

Several months ago (Editor: Sorry about that!) we left our hero, in an aircraft with no undercarriage, being pushed off a cliff and staring at a pile of nylon. Okay, work with me here, it's been a while since I used that metaphor and I'm not used to writing serials.

Last installment, we were left, after several “whys?” with a situation that looked like this:

- ◆ A high (and increasing) need for reaction management,
- ◆ A low level of management trust,
- ◆ Inherent (people) skills level is low,
- ◆ Need for formal training is high,
- ◆ Availability of training is low.

And I was promising to sew you a parachute. Maybe I should jump off that cliff! It might be easier.



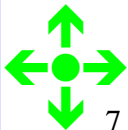
If your company is typical, the inability to deal with the increasing speed and depth of change is a problem that could literally tear your company apart. Not to mention rip you out of your job. And it will continue to get worse as technology and the economy evolve.

So how do we solve the problem? There are three basic alternatives. We can turn our people into “change artists”; we can hire outside “change artists”; or we can ignore the situation and hope it goes away. Our criteria for choice is simple, “Does it give the organization

the ability to react positively to change?”

So what happens if we ignore the situation? At the start of last year, we were all being told that to survive we had to be “dot.com-ers”. Bricks and mortars had crashed (airplane metaphor alert), and clicks were flying high. By the end of the year, it was the clicks that were in a tailspin. Killed by Hype? The inevitable result of still more management by

Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example.
Mark Twain



Reaction Management & Other Taboos

fad? Perhaps, but economic murder by the inability to react appropriately to change is the more likely charge. In the First World War, pilots would often jump from burning aircraft. They didn't wear parachutes but their craft were made of wood and canvas. Which choice did you make? Oops, too late!

Hitting the ground as a ball of flames or as a bad Superman impression isn't a real choice. We need to address the problem or we will be seen as the fire not the poor pilot.

That only leaves us with two choices, our own people or outsiders.

When do you use outside skills? If you are the group being changed then outside skills are not only the obvious solution but also the best. Outsiders, whether new hires or consultants, are able to bring new skills and a non-political, balanced view. At least in perception if not always in reality.



But what happens if you are the change agents? In that case, outsiders aren't going to cut it in the long run. You are the outsiders. You are the change consultants to everyone else. You need those skills and you don't have them. You could hire them – but since they have to train themselves – not too likely!

You could hire consultants – but there aren't that many of them available. Certainly not enough to cover your clients' needs.

If you are change agents for your organization, you need to develop reaction management skills as part of your basic skills

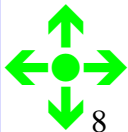
delivery. Relying on others just isn't going to work.

IT is by definition a “change agent”. It brings the change into the organization and propagates it by installing new software. Which is part of why IT people are amongst the most change resistant.

They've never been trained in their role of

Practice and thought might gradually forge many an art.

Virgil



Reaction Management & Other Taboos

change agents and yet are required to bring change to the organization. Is it any surprise that they burn out and go crashing down into a “my way or the highway” attitude?

So what’s the solution? IT has to train its own change agents. Those in our organizations who are charged with dealing with clients must be capable of helping people react to change.

We can use consultants in the short term. But their purpose must be clear. Not to help our clients change, but to help us. To train, to mentor, to show by doing. But we, as IT people, must make the primary change – into trained, capable change agents.

Of course, theoretical training and even mentoring isn’t the whole solution. In the words of a world famous teacher (just ask your kids), “Take chances, make mistakes, get messy.” Without application the

knowledge won’t be internalized. IT people won’t change.

And the first group to change – has to be IT management and its peers.

It is IT management (and their peers) who need to promote the change in their organization. It is you who need to seek out or develop the appropriate training. It is you who need to identify the appropriate mentoring system. It is you who need to hire the consultants to change your organization. And most important of all – you who need to empower your staff to screw up royally – because they will.

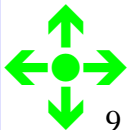
So, can you sew?

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Nothing is easy to the unwilling.

Thomas Fuller



Implementing ‘X’

By Peter de Jager

Over the years, and recently in the MC&T discussion list, I’ve been exploring the notion of “Change Patterns.” In a very real sense, every time we refer to a “Change Model”, we’re referring to a larger pattern which someone has ‘encoded’ into a concise form for the purpose of communication.

The Virginia Satir Change Process Model is an example of this process, as is the Kublar-Ross Grief Cycle.

The purpose of identifying a “pattern”, is so that we can apply what we learn in one situation to other, similar, situations.

In this article I’ll touch on a common pattern known as “Implementing ‘X’” where X is anything -- Security, Privacy, Standards, or more generally, that “thing” known as a “Policy.”



First... some basic assumptions about the ‘pattern’ under discussion.

a) Everyone affected by the ‘Policy’ agrees that the department/person attempting the implementation has the right, for the most part, to be concerned about this issue.

b) The scope of the policy extends beyond the boundaries of the department/person implementing the policy. In other words, the people affected are not just those who have to report to that department head. eg. Decisions made in the IT department can affect the operation of the HR department.

The pattern facing us is the following:

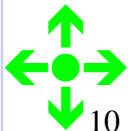
How does the IT department implement Security standards across the organization?

How does the HR department implement Diversity standards across the organization?

How does the PR department implement Document standards across the organization?

The first step in finding something is knowing where to look.

Robert Half



Implementing 'X'

These are not trivial questions. Careers have come to grief on these rocky shores on more than one occasion. Each situation is obviously very different on one level and glaringly similar on another. Chances are, even as you read this, someone is trying to execute this pattern in your organization.

In the last month four different clients have asked me about four, seemingly different scenarios.

In each case they have related how management has seen a problem, determined what needed doing and then did it. In every case they have implemented a central committee with the mandate to implement a policy relating to one of either the Security, Diversity or Privacy issues.

In each case the problem they've run up against



is this. The meetings are being held... but nothing is happening. No change is being generated. The question I've been asked in each case is "Why?"

The level of frustration attached to that question is obviously high. These managers are not, by any stretch of the imagination, incompetent. They've seen a problem, formulated a solution and acted upon it.

What are they doing wrong?

Much more importantly... why are four different managers, doing the same thing and having exactly the same undesirable result?

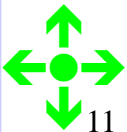
I think the answer lies in patterns.

Each of these managers has chosen the same type of solution to the same type of problem. Naturally, if that solution fails, it'll often fail in the same manner.

The key to policy implementation lies in ownership... ignore it and you run the risk of failure.

For every Human problem, there is a neat, plain, solution -- and it is always wrong.

H.L. Mencken



Implementing ‘X’

First “solution”: The “Corporate Memo” approach.

This involves the least amount of effort and is least likely to succeed.

The reasoning behind this strategy? Since the policy is supported by upper management (Mandated Top Down Change), all we have to do is tell the staff what to do, point them to the new policy, (Yellow binder, East wall of the library, third row, fourth from the right), and voila! Presto Chango! The change is complete.

Surprisingly, sometimes this works. It works exceedingly well in military organizations where “orders” must be obeyed.

It also works well in organizations where disobedience is met with dismissal. I wish this was still not true... but it is. From a recent conversation with a client, relaying management’s philosophy to staff.. “If the attitude towards this change doesn’t change? Someone’s going to get fired.”

It doesn’t work so well in organizations where entrepreneurial thinking is tolerated or even praised.



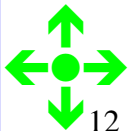
This still involves a lot of work on the part of the change agent. Drafting the policy independent of the user community is a time consuming task. It is however, free from interruption. No dissenting opinions need be taken into account. All political issues are easily ignored.

Trouble is though, the people affected by it will have no sense of ownership.

This is something being imposed upon them and the level of resistance is nearly always, extremely high.

Which is not to say that there are not times when this approach is the appropriate one. Sometimes what is required is “action” and not “debate” and “consensus”, but these situations are rare.

If you can't explain what you're doing in simple English, you are probably doing something wrong.
Alfred Kahn



Implementing ‘X’

Next Solution: The “Father knows best” approach.

This builds on the corporate memo by adding meetings to inform the user community why the changes are necessary.

They delve deep into the problems the company is facing and how these solutions address these problems. Corporate training schedules are announced and there is no doubt management is very sincere in their efforts to solve problems and make the company a better place.

This is a very effective strategy. The new processes are not exactly being “forced” down people’s throats.

The reasoning behind each change is laid out in a logical manner. Quite often this strategy is successful. It’s commonly known as getting the organization to “buy-into” the change.

In both “Father knows best” and “Corporate

memo”, a lot of effort has gone into the creation of that “Yellow binder.” It takes time to craft a comprehensive policy for any of the issues mentioned. In both cases, management is not avoiding the heavy lifting involved in their attempt to manage change.

Where they differ is in how much effort they allocate to managing the “people impact” of the change.

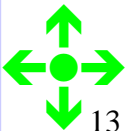
When this strategy fails, it fails for the same reason as the “Corporate Memo”, a lack of ownership. The solution being proposed is not their solution, and people being people, they’re always able to think of better ways to solve

the problem. Since it is not “their” solution, the user community has no stake in the success, or the failure, of the implementation project.

This is the solution deployed by each of the four managers mentioned earlier.



*One man's
'simple' is
another
man's
'huh?'*
David Stone



Implementing ‘X’

Another solution: The “What’s your problem?” approach.

This technique is very different. There is no attempt to create that “Yellow binder”... Some criticize it as almost an abdication of management responsibility.

The whole focus is to draw the attention of the various parties to the current situation. If problems really exist in the area of security, diversity or documentation standards, then it should be possible to point them out to people who are at least as intelligent as ourselves.

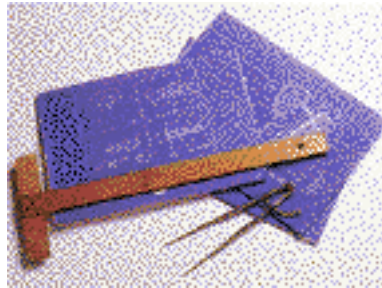
If not? Leave well enough alone and focus on something else.

If the problems exist, then it is fair to ask the interested parties to predict what will happen if we continue to move forward doing things the same way we’ve always done them. And then ask the really tough question... “is that what we want to happen?”

If the problems are real, then the response is... “Nope.”

The next question is the golden key... “Okay, what are you going to do to avoid these problems?”

Strangely enough, this is all people need in order for them to introduce Change into a business process. Our job as managers is to a) help them become aware of problems and b) help them implement their solutions.



If you are trying to introduce “security” measures into an organization, then you need to first prove a problem exists. Has the organization lost information in the past? Have similar organizations lost data in the past?

Could an outsider break into your files? Have they done so? Can you demonstrate how easy it is?

Once people “see” the problem, they’re smart enough to recognize a solution is required. They will either have the necessary expertise themselves, or have no trouble asking for help.

Nothing is so simple it cannot be misunderstood.

Freeman Teague



Implementing ‘X’

Once they understand the reason a solution is necessary, they’ll go to great lengths to implement that solution. And once they do, they will have a deep, well deserved sense of ownership in their solution.

People do not buy into your solutions, as readily as they buy into their own problems.

Obviously, this technique of asking people what their problem is, has a serious flaw, or at least a major shortcoming. What if the change you’re trying to bring about is not something others perceive as a problem, or as something they

believe is not in their best interest to fix?

If they don’t see it as a problem... then is it? If you’re certain it is, then you’d better find a different solution... this one won’t work.

If it is a problem regardless of what they think, again, choose a different solution.

In both situations, you’ll still be taking advantage of your knowledge of patterns.

Good Luck,
Peter de Jager

*It is not at all simple to understand the simple.
Eric Hoffer*

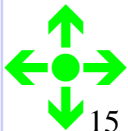
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Quill and Quire, March 2001



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