

Managing Change & Technology

**The Light Version... Vol 3, #3
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*To Embrace the Future,
Let go of the Past
PdJ*

THE ESSENCE OF CHANGE

A minimalist view of the Change Process

Based on a persistent question by a reporter

About 20 minutes into an interview on the process of change, the reporter threw up her hands and said, “This is all too complicated for my readers. In the simplest of terms, why do people either resist or willingly accept Change?”

I’ve always refrained from making simplistic statements regarding the Change Process because there are nuances to every situation that deserve attention. However, the interview wasn’t going to go anywhere unless I catered to the reporter’s belief that her readers needed tiny bite sized morsels. Besides, she could be right. Maybe simple statements *are* what’s required. With this in mind I offered the following:

The majority of people will willingly accept a Change for one of two --not necessarily mutually exclusive-- reasons.

They are either:

- a) attracted towards the proposed Change because they believe they will benefit, or*
- b) they are afraid to stay where they are.*

That seemed to satisfy the reporter and to the best of my knowledge, she used the quote somewhere or other.

It’s not a bad summation of the Change Process, but there are still some built in nuances that need explaining. In the rest of this little discourse, I’ll attempt to parse the ‘sentence’ and see if it holds up as a ‘simplistic’ Change Model under close scrutiny.

Majority of People

Not everyone willingly changes for the two stated reasons. There are other motivators besides Love (attracted towards) and Fear (afraid to stay where they are). The two in particular which spring to mind, (although there are several others), are ‘Curiosity’ and ‘Power’

Curiosity

Some people just like things that are new. They need no additional motivation. If it’s new, then they’re interested. They’re the early adopters of society. They are the people who make prototypes financially possible. They’re the explorers, the discoverers, the adventurers. In an organization they introduce unintended chaos and welcome excitement to the work environment. Some studies suggest this

group make up less than 15% of society. This writer is definitely part of that group of tricksters.

Power

This is an observation of the writer based upon years of watching organizations undergo various types of Change. It might be classified as cynical, even as politically 'incorrect' as it chooses to highlight a less than desirable human attribute, never-the-less I believe the observation has merit.

There are those who introduce Change merely because they can and this gives them a sense of control over the fate of others. "Change for the sake of Change" seems to be their motto.

Willingly Accept

Here it becomes important to understand exactly what we mean by 'willingly accept.' It does NOT mean that the instant they are introduced to a Change they choose to leave the Status Quo behind and march blindly into the future.

It does mean that once people have had a chance to examine the Change before them, compare it to what they already have in their Status Quo, they come to a rational, considered opinion that the Change is ultimately good for them. Once they decide this, then there is no holding them back from Changing.

The biggest failure in management today is that they reject the right of people to ask the question: 'Why should we Change?' The very asking of this reasonable question is seen as 'resistance to Change'... This points not to a failure in those asking the question, but to a failure in those attempting to initiate the Change.

If there was a single solitary thing an organization could do to make themselves more 'receptive to Change' it would be to create an environment where the question 'Why should I Change' is seen as a positive rather than a negative.

Not necessarily mutually exclusive

It is entirely possible to have both a desire to move towards something and away from something else. When this situation occurs the momentum for Change is overwhelming. Anyone who can harness both these compelling forces is capable of implementing any Change.

Attracted towards

The more definitive the Vision of the future, the more believable it is, the more benefits it offers... then the more the 'Target Audience' is drawn towards that objective. If on the other hand the Vision isn't clear, if the goals are not defined for everyone to understand, then expecting people to move forward is a fool's errand. It isn't going to happen. Why should it?

Afraid to stay where they are

If where you are is becoming intolerable, then moving away is foremost in your mind. Where to? It doesn't matter. The primary goal is to get away from where you are. The danger of this situation is that if we're not careful, then we move from the fire into the fireplace. (Sometimes a cliché is exactly what's called for! <grin>)

Fear of the existing Status Quo is a compelling reason to willingly move, but to where? Here the problem is that the desire to Change exists without a conscious goal. In a sense it becomes a form of 'Change for the sake of Change'... Our objective when faced with this situation is to create an objective that will not only get us out of the existing Status Quo, but will create a New Status Quo that is actually a good place to end up.

Summary?

The simplistic model is 'good enough', especially if the listener is starting from ground zero where any increase in understanding is beneficial. Of course there's an even more simplistic way to state all of the above... once we understand everything involved. Try this on for size!

People move towards what they desire, and away from what they fear.

Happy Changes
Peter de Jager
Speaker & Consultant on all issues relating to Change

I do not object to people looking at their watches when I am speaking. But I strongly object, when they start shaking them to make certain they are still going.

Lord Birkett 1883-1962

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UPDATE ON THIS NEWSLETTER

Not exactly lite, not exactly monthly... a compromise

Hi Folks

Welcome to a compromise between the simplest of text newsletters and the full fledged MC&T I used to produce. This I think/hope, is a useful compromise.

Full Paid MC&T?

I've put this idea on permanent hold. There really isn't enough interest by the readers for me to make the commitment to produce the Journal faithfully each month. So? I've gone to a simpler version of the same thing.

MC&T Lite?

What you're reading is what I plan to produce on a guilt free, almost monthly schedule.

Subscribing to this Journal?

E-mail pdejager@technobility.com with 'Subscribe MC&T' in the subject heading.

Unsubscribing to this Journal?

E-mail pdejager@technobility.com with 'Unsubscribe MC&T' in the subject heading.

Other changes to your 'subscription'?

E-mail pdejager@technobility.com with 'MC&T Changes' in the subject heading, and your instructions in the body of the message.

Commenting on this Journal?

All comments are always welcome! Send them to me at Pdejager@technobility.com

MY SERVICES & PRODUCTS

Greetings, I'm primarily a speaker/consultant on issues relating to Change and the Future. You can contact me via e-mail at pdejager@technobility.com or call me at 1-905-792-8706

Managing the Impact of Change...

Basically everything I talk about in this journal are topics I consult and speak about. Let's discuss how I might be of service to you. If I can't help you, I know someone who can.

Commerce ends with an E!...

Our focus is first on our 'commerce' and then on the Internet

The Rule of 100 in your business...

Why rapid change in ANY direction forces you to re-examine your business, your industry and even society.

Technology in Context...

What instant access to information means to any industry.

The Erosion of Boundaries...

What does the ever increasing flood of technology mean to life in general?

The Fading Hope of Privacy increases need for Ethics...

An examination of the loss of privacy in the 21st century.

The drive to simplicity in the face of complexity...

Why Cities in Italy are reversing the clock on Technology.

The Vapour Point of Product

What happens when it costs less to build it yourself than to buy it from a store? An examination of the near future of Rapid Manufacturing.

And Truth Picks... to be published in January, 2002!

See www.technobility.com for more information on Truth Picks' ... it's something different.

That's it... see you next year!
Peter de Jager