



Successfully Delivering Significant Change

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Think about times when you have decided to change something about yourself. What caused you think a change was necessary? Perhaps everyone else is doing it. Perhaps you looked in the mirror and noticed a difference. Perhaps there is a special date coming up like a birthday, anniversary, or a new year? It is easy to jump into making a change without asking, "Is this right for me?"

REASONS FOR CHANGE

Many times change is the result of external influences. There is a need to change, perhaps from competition or a threat. Many of us make changes because we have to. It isn't our idea; it is something that is forced and we know we need to do it, *or else!* Change through coercion is seldom a positive experience. Often change is thrust upon us and it is a reason why many resist,.

Change that comes from within an individual requires a certain level of sophistication and maturity. The greater number and breadth of successful past change experiences help individuals accept and realize the need for change. Internally motivated change is based from self-actualization. A leader has the ability to look at a situation and see what would be the best direction and then implements the change. These types of leaders don't do it for immediate reward or praise. They do it for the greater good which improves the experience for everyone involved. The same process is necessary for organizations. A culture of successful change needs to be developed so that individuals within the change can understand their role and the purpose of the change.

Change is constant and on-going. Changing requires work and the results if not designed well are uncertain. Motivating yourself as a leader and members of the organization to make changes gets easier to do when you have experienced positive change. The problem is that most of us haven't experienced many positive changes in our past. Often people comment that the change looks a lot like rearranging deck chairs. All the workers break a sweat going through the change and when all was said and done, the end result didn't make a significant change.

Making things different, is not the same as making things change. Change needs to result in improvement.



DESIGNING QUALITY CHANGE

The reason most change fails is that it isn't properly designed. Often the *changer* decides something needs to be different than it is now. This may be as a result of internal or external influences. The design begins by looking at the desired result. The needs to enlist the insights of others so that the intended change has used a variety of perspectives and the talents of others to plan the change. Without a design plan, the *changees* have to react to the possibility of change without having the same vision of the changer. Communicating the dream or vision of the change destination is critical if you want everyone to be successful on the journey.

Thinking you can state the change alone and expecting it will happen, is the mistake many changers make. Often changers have been considering the change for some time so it has become engrained in their thinking. Not so for their employees. Many people are not able to envision the same vision and need a variety of details in order to process the change. Also, changers can see how the change works from their vantage and don't always know the perspectives of others. Change often looks different from various places and positions within the organization. Developing a well-designed plan inspires confidence by displaying the blueprint for change which will answer many of the questions participants have.

There are several key steps in designing intentional change. Developing the framework and analyzing the components needed for change integration is the first step in a well-designed plan. The first step in creating this plan is *identifying the situational factors* behind the change. Planning for design needs to understand the:

- Current situation needing change
- Expectations of supervisors and others
- Characteristics of the work
- Characteristics of the employees and/or customers
- Characteristics of the organization, managers and leaders

As you identify the change's situational factors one or two of them are probably the largest or most critical that you will need to deal with immediately as you begin to discuss the change with others. Skipping this step in the planning for change, is a huge reason why change implementation fails.

SHARING THE DREAM

Identifying the situational factors helps accomplishing the second step to design your change, *creating the Big Dream*. What is this change going to do once implemented? Your Big Dream goes beyond a short-term goal. How will it impact your organization's employees and customers? How will it build a robust work environment to retain and motivate employees? How will it develop a customer loyalty? This Big Dream will be the premise for creating your change outcomes and needs to align with your organization's mission, vision and values.

DEVELOPING THE PLAN

Many managers and leaders are more familiar with developing the technical domains of the change plan. Outcomes for each of these need to be written as a way to communicate the change. These will vary somewhat depending on whether the change is employee-based or customer-based. There are many moving components and steps in the change process that need to be considered. Let's examine these technical elements:

- *Foundational Knowledge* – What is the knowledge that employees or customers need for the change to occur? These would include key concepts, terms, types of relationship and facts that will be new and require training to build a common foundation upon which the change will be built.
- *Application* – How will employees or customers apply the change? These would include the activities and tasks that you need these groups to be able to perform based on the foundational knowledge. This step is identifying what you want them to do better or differently than in the past.
- *Integration* – How will your organization integrate the new information and process with the old? These considerations describe the types of synthesis and analysis employees or customers will do as they link to or develop relationships with specific information and actions with other information and actions.

The outcomes developed for each of these more technical domains are critical to model the way the change will work.

The following human domains are essential in making change significant and lasting. However, many leaders fail to adequately develop the thinking necessary to plan for these.

- *Human Dimension* – Employees or customers will better understand themselves and be able to interact positively and productively with others. The outcomes for this domain describe the kinds of activities employees or customers will be able to perform when they apply the information to themselves and to their interactions with others.
- *Value* – Employees will more deeply value this process or issues related to the work environment. Customers will appreciate the value of the product or service. The outcomes describe the kinds of activities employees or customers will be able to perform when they connect the information to themselves and their professional/personal lives in a meaningful way.
- *Learning How to Learn* – Employees or customers will develop the ability to learn better (more efficiently and effectively), during this change and in life in general. The outcomes describe the kinds of activities employees will be able to perform and continue to learn more about similar topics or products in the future.

These domains are critical in successfully implementing change. People want to know, “*What’s in for me?*” In order to obtain a buy-in for the change and bring others on to the team you are creating, careful consideration is needed to plan for and communicate with those being affected by the change.



Moreover, these domains provide an opportunity to gather multiple perspectives. Listening to employees and customers is often the most ignored opportunity for growth. Developing the outcomes for these domains helps to communicate expectations and can promote positive change experiences for employees and customers.

MEASURING CHANGE

Once outcomes are developed for each of the change domains you will need to align assessments to measure the quality of the change. Measuring the technical domains is something many leaders have experience in doing. It is fairly easy to assess the level of learning of foundational knowledge. Project management will help to assess the level of quality of application and integration for processes. Employee performance will demonstrate these domains and surveys can do the same with how customers are reacting to these outcomes. For both, are the desired results being met.

The challenge lies in assessing the human domains. These are often less observable as they aren't as evident through employee or customer performance. These require written or verbal documentation through surveys or interviews to measure the success of the change implementation.

It is important to identify the assessments for the change domain outcomes once they have been written to ensure they align. You need to be certain each assessment will measure the outcome to which they are assigned.

DEVELOPING CHANGE LEARNING

Once you have planned for the change domain outcomes and assessments, you are ready to develop the training activities and process that will bridge the outcomes to the assessment. What action will you design to make the change work? You need to do this for each of the domain outcomes so you don't assume the integration is taking place.

Often, the learning to make change depends on the complexity of the learning process. You have more time with employees than you do customers. Employees will change with learning that reinforces what they know and how they can apply the change into their practice. You have the opportunity to discuss what they do now and what they *will* do going forward. You can see how they are performing and support their learning immediately. You don't have the same opportunity with customers. They will go elsewhere or not participate if the change is too complex. Customer training needs to be direct and done quickly. It has to be easy for them and they need to see the advantage of the change immediately.

Starbucks recently redesigned their loyalty program. Instead of any free beverage for every 125 points, they bumped some beverages to 150 points and made it possible to use points for lesser priced beverages and some bakery items for 50 points. Overall the change may be an advantage, but by installing it without communication, customers didn't know what was happening didn't have an option



to redeem their points before the change if they wanted. The points carried over, however some customers were upset that more of the points would be used to get what they could have gotten for fewer points the previous week.

TIMELINE

As you can see with all the elements involved in designing the change plan, coordination is key. It is a bit like creating a multi-course meal. You cannot afford to have the entrée ready while you are waiting for the potatoes to cook or your dinner rolls sitting in the oven too long. If you aren't a cook, you may

better relate to a building construction. The windows don't show up on the site as you are pouring the foundation. The roof isn't delivered before the framing is completed.

Developing a timeline for implementation for each step with start and end dates is key. Employees or customers can't apply or integrate until they have the foundational knowledge in place first. Nor can they value the change until the *new and improved* has been communicated with them or understand how it will impact their own work and their work with their colleagues.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, I would ask you to consider the following:

- Most change doesn't get fully implemented.
- Most of us have had more negative change experiences than positive experiences.
- Most change comes from feeling a need to make things different and making things better.
- Most leaders haven't been trained on how to make significant change.
- Most change doesn't start with, or are aligned with a Big Dream

Planning for change by identifying the situational factors so you know the reasons and recognizing the most critical challenges is the start. Developing the Big Dream so that it is clear for you and your organization is critical. Creating outcomes for each of the change domains to communicate expectations and aligning the assessments are needed to measure the quality of change implementation. Establishing the tasks and process for learning for change accompanied by a detailed time for integration is an essential part of the plan to successfully deliver significant change.