

[youtube:http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_kZl15houUc]Over 230,000 views of this video - recorded some time ago but the message is just as important today. Because human nature has not changed - even though the pace of life has increased, together with the scale and complexity of opportunities and risks globally.

“All my experience suggests that individuals will eagerly embrace change when given a chance to have their share of voice in inventing the future of their company...to create a unique and exciting future in which they can share.” □ Gary Hamel, Chairman of Strategos

Every year billions of dollars are wasted trying to make people change the way they work. Resistance to change is a number one killer of healthy corporations. Boards may spend days, weeks or months approving a battle plan, and executive teams work hard to flesh out the details, often running up huge consultancy bills in the process.

But all too often the result is disappointing: little or nothing seems to happen, even though the underlying threats are growing more serious.

So why is Change Management, which is such a huge money-spinner for management consultants, such a huge source of angst for business leaders?

The reason is simple: most people just don't want to change, for very good reasons.

Because they don't see the point, or even if they do, they are all too often convinced that the end result will not be worth the effort, for them, for those around them, even perhaps far beyond that.

“It is only the wisest and the stupidest that cannot change” Confucius

However, if approached in a better way, change management can be rapid, easy, relatively painless, and totally effective. The secret of change management is to win people over and make them enthusiastic drivers of business transformation. Radical change happens instantly without a change management programme when everyone sees the crisis, knows what to do, and believes there is hope for the future.

Instant Change Management

“Change starts when someone sees the next step.” □ William Drayton, President of the Bank of the United States 1840-41

Here is a fact: if a major fire breaks out in a building, and there has to be a full-scale evacuation, and much of the building is destroyed, you do NOT need a change management programme.

It requires very little management effort to:

- Get large numbers of people to suspend everything they are working on
- Get them all to leave the building rapidly
- Get them working hard on a major programme to restore full operational efficiency in a temporary building up the road

The problem is clear and demands urgent response. Failure to act fast, with total complete efficiency could mean some get trapped in the building and burn to death. Failure to recover fast could mean major losses and some people losing their jobs.

Using our “building a better world” model: it’s obviously a far better world for all without exception to get out as fast as possible, and it’s a better world for all to rebuild rapidly and to operate very flexibly in the meantime.

So then, if you are trying to change an organisation, here are some fundamental questions, which many senior managers fail to answer properly before embarking on major restructuring or other disruptions:

- Why is this change so necessary?
- Who will benefit from all the effort?
- Have you fully accounted for hidden costs such as lost morale and added staff turnover?
- Do you really believe it is of the utmost importance yourself – or is it something you feel has been imposed by others, whether shareholders, analysts, out-of-touch board, short-sighted boss or whatever?
- Are you certain the change is going to end with you in the right place?

Change management can only succeed if people have vision of where they are going.

Past decades are littered with the debris of failed corporations that had the wrong products, wrong services or were unable to compete because of archaic structures, out-of-date systems and bad decisions.

But making things happen differently inside a big organization is a huge challenge. In fact, it takes so long that large companies have to start adapting many years before they expect the future to arrive.

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