Generative Change Management

Creating Positive Organisations and Flourishing People

Penny Shapland-Chew

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'One must step back. One must climb onto the banks and look at the river until you understand the course, recognise its potential and see what must be done.'

Bert Hellinger

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY –
1 PARAGRAPH

Penny Shapland-Chew is a coach, consultant and facilitator who works with change – in individuals, teams and organisations. She is a Fellow of the Institute of Leadership and Management, with wide-ranging experience over twenty years in the arts and creative industries. She has also been part of founding and growing several new organisations and has worked in the public sector. She has been involved in numerous change programmes and has developed expertise in the *people and organisation* aspects of leadership and management. Over the last six years, she has been exploring personal and professional development in depth and aims to share her understanding of how to create successful and positive workplaces where people can flourish.

Overview

This eBook explains how to undertake a *strategic review* and it suggests ways of avoiding the pitfalls of change *management* where business change is seen as a one-off effort to move an organisation from where it is to some fixed future state. It also considers the need for continuous change and how really listening can ensure you are alert to the adjustments and innovation that's needed. It is intended for leaders and mangers in small to medium sized organisations and offers coaching questions which support good leadership and management.

It is about how to make sure that your organisation is the most successful it can be by listening to and working with the people and the systems upon whom it depends for its existence. It is about building a healthy organisation which can deliver high levels of performance over time. It is about how to manage change in a way which gets the best out of people because they feel valued and motivated and are gaining satisfaction from their work.

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With wide-ranging experience of leadership and management in UK arts and the third sector, Penny has developed her understanding of system dynamics in organisations and the individuals who work in them. She is a systemic coach and facilitator, mentor, and consultant, developing courageous leaders, managers and their teams wanting to find greater satisfaction in their lives and greater achievement.

1   INTRODUCTION

Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), according to the European Commission, are businesses or companies: that have fewer than 250 employees; and either (a) annual turnover not exceeding €50 million (approximately £40 million) or (b) an annual balance-sheet total not exceeding €43 million (approximately £34 million). They may be much smaller.

An enterprise of this size may not have a 'people and organisation' role in the executive. The function may be covered by an operations director, who is likely to be a 'finance person'. When it comes to change, this person will be well equipped to analyse financial trends and create forecasts for all possible scenarios but the company may value some additional expertise. This eBook provides some insights into what is involved including some of the latest thinking on the development of organisations.

There are many big beasts, numerous frameworks and theories and a huge industry in the management of change. When I started writing this eBook, my aim was to make organisational change simple. But it isn't simple and it has many aspects.

I have drawn on the wisdom of experienced and acknowledged experts such as John Kotter and McKinsey Consulting, whom I characterise as left brain thinkers as well as upon experts who take a 'right brain' approach, such as John Whittington and Jan Jacob Stam, both of whom have been my teachers.

How can you avoid the need to employ one change consultant after the next because the change you have put in place almost inevitably has unintended consequences? I believe you need both approaches.

There are also new ways of leading and managing organisations and new ways of thinking about leadership and management. I hope I can offer you some new ways of thinking about leading and managing change which will mean that your organisation changes in a dynamic, effective and sustainable way.

2 WHY CHANGE?

Here are some of the challenges organisations have raised with me:

- We are not generating sufficient profit or surplus
- There is conflict amongst the staff
- There is high staff turnover
- As the person who started this business, I am frustrated
- The business is growing so quickly and we are struggling to manage
- Staff are complaining about their colleagues
- We need a new performance management system
- We are merging with another organisation and the staff are resisting the change.

John Kotter, change guru, summarises the imperative for change:

'The two fundamental reasons behind most transformations are still the need…

- *To increase revenues/profits or decrease costs*
- *To become more effective or more efficient*

Or both'.[i]

McKinsey and Company, global management consultants, recognise the importance of organisational health, which they define as 'how well your company is aligned, able to execute, and invested in renewing itself over time'[ii]. They explain that measuring organisational health is the best way to predict your future performance: you can learn from the past and innovate for the future. Financial results tell where you've been, but your health score tells you where you're headed.

Moreover, McKinsey's research shows that inadequate resources, poor planning, bad ideas, unpredictable external events are responsible for less than one third of the change programmes which fail: more than two thirds are caused by things like slow decision making, poor morale, weak performance ethics, a lack of talent or confusion over roles and responsibilities: 'organisational health' factors, described below.

3 THE PACE OF CHANGE AND IMPLICATIONS

"The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence – it is to act with yesterday's logic."

Peter Drucker

'VUCA', short for 'volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous' is a jargon word currently used to describe the pace of change in the world and in the workplace.

If the idea of rapid change is new to you, think of the impact of online shopping on high street retailers, of the internet on the newspaper industry or on public libraries, of digital formats on publishing, music and film industries, think of the changes in demographics, especially the aging population in the Western world and the impact of globalisation.

In the VUCA environment, you need a strategy which keeps your products and services relevant and you need an organisation fit to deliver your strategy.

In the face of rapid change, it is wise to plan for the future (see *SWOT and PEST* below). It is also wise to build an organisation which, as well as being respectful and understanding of the past, is open, flexible and able to adapt rapidly to meet what the future presents – some of which is more unpredictable than ever before.

In the following sections, I will touch upon how to engage the whole organisation in recognising the need to change and how to analyse what needs to change before embarking upon a change process.

Understanding systemic issues such as the 'founding purpose' (what the organisation was originally created to achieve) and leading principles (the main activities of the organisation which enable it to realise its founding purpose) and the history of the organisation can have a helpful effect. Holding the organisation as a system within wider society and the global context is essential.

4 WHAT TO CHANGE?

'Culture eats strategy for breakfast.' [iii]

Culture is about what people do and how they behave as a result of what they think, feel and believe. Change initiatives may fail because their leaders believe that reviewing and restructuring the staffing will change the culture of the company. Leaders may ignore the organisational culture because they do not understand its importance or perhaps, because it seems to work for them personally. However, even if a restructure creates temporary success, culture will reassert itself and create inertia at best.

Structures are tangible and culture is nebulous so it can seem easier to focus on structure and avoid looking at culture. This means that the change to 'the way we do things around here' cannot happen. Because the culture doesn't change and the dynamics of the system haven't been addressed, a cycle of restructures is inevitable.

What you need to consider alongside these questions is what kind of business you are and what kind of business you want to be. Everyone in the business, including all your stakeholders need to engage with this question wholeheartedly. The emergence of your business culture will affect all your decisions, your systems and processes: from your business plan to office layout, from recruitment to visual identity, from communications to HR policies.

By its nature, in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment, it isn't possible to plan for the future, knowing only what we know from our past. We need to plan for the unknown: 'the emerging future'. If we understand this, then we can create the conditions which allow enough agility in the face of changes in society and in the world.

5   CREATING AN ORGANISATION WHICH IS MORE THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

It is important to acknowledge that as a leader or as a leadership team, we are interdependent. The leaders cannot achieve what they want to achieve without their staff, the staff cannot achieve what they want to achieve without their leaders.

Peter Senge, in The Fifth Discipline [iv] describes a method for creating an organisation where 'collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning together, making the whole organisation more effective than the sum of its parts.'

Senge says that: *'Mastering the disciplines will:*

- *Reignite the spark of learning, driven by people focused on what truly matters to them.*
- *Bridge teamwork into macro-creativity.*
- *Free you from confining assumptions and mind-sets.*
- *Teach you to see the forest and the trees.*
- *End the struggle between work and family time.'*

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6 WHEN TO CHANGE: TWO DIFFERENT CURVES

6.1 REINVENTION

In his book The *Second Curve*, Charles Handy reminds us not to be complacent. New thinking is important whilst things are still going well, for individuals, organisations and society. We should not wait for things to start to decline. 'The nasty and often fatal snag is that the *Second Curve* has to start before the first curve peaks'. He speaks of first curve success blinding us to external forces like a new technology or a new market, allowing others to seize the initiative.

> **How can you create the conditions for your organisation to create the next iteration of its products or services?**

6.2   STAGES IN AN ORGANISATION'S GROWTH

Larry Greiner also used a curve to describe organisations' growth. Understanding that organisations go through different stages in their evolution is still a useful concept when organisations are growing quickly. The Greiner curve was created in 1972. It gives a framework which explains why problems (even 'crises') happen as organisations grow and can be used to anticipate problems before they do, so that you can plan for them. It is also important to note that each phase may last for a different length of time, but the longer a phase lasts, the harder it will be to implement a transition to the next. Originally Greiner identified five stages of growth and he added a sixth in 1998. Here is a summary of the phases:

Phase 1: Growth through creativity

In phase 1, the founders are energetically creating products and opening up markets. With few staff, informal communication works well. People work long hours, inspired by the founding purpose and, if they receive pay for all the hours worked, this may be through profit share or stock options. As the company grows, it needs more staff and systems and processes to manage communication and other functions. In Greiner's model, this phase ends when professional management is needed. Sometimes someone new comes into the organisation. Sometimes the founders take on the role.

Phase 2: Growth through direction

In phase 2, growth continues with someone managing more clearly defined functions including: communications; finance (including budgeting); marketing and production. In some companies, incentive schemes are introduced for employees. This phase ends as more staff are needed to manage the volume of work and new structures are needed so that work can be delegated.

Phase 4: Growth through delegation

Many organisations struggle in phase three, as the founder who solved the problems at the end of the *creativity phase* finds it hard to let go and the newer middle managers struggle with their roles as leaders, whilst also reacting quickly to opportunities for new products and services. The senior leadership is focused on big issues and monitoring performance of the organisation. This phase ends when the 'departments' need to collaborate more and more sophisticated strategic leadership is required.

Phase 5: Growth through coordination and monitoring

In phase four, growth continues with new systems and processes in place to manage the different departments and functions. Increasing bureaucracy can suffocate innovation and this is when close attention to culture is needed, along with a new organisational structure.

Phase 6: Growth through collaboration

In phase five, formal controls are replaced by staff working more flexibly in a matrix structure and only ends when growing further means working in partnership with other organisations.

Greiner's sixth phase, added to the model in 1998, suggests that growth may continue through merger, outsourcing, networks and other solutions involving other companies.

Greiner asked 'where has our organization been? Where is it now? And what do the answers to these questions mean for where it is going?' The dimension of *time* is important and is often overlooked, as leaders and managers focus upon the current environment and towards the future 'as if more precise market projections will provide the organisation with a new identity'.

7   SYSTEM DYNAMICS

From a system health perspective also it is important to remember that 'in the future the past is always present'[vi]. An understanding of system dynamics in organisations can help avoid repeating the same mistakes and it can move an organisation on when it seems stuck.

'System leadership' is a widely used term and it is useful to clarify what is meant. One organisation I was working with recently used it to mean *partnership working or collaboration.* The system dynamics approach to organisational (system) health discussed here is different. Klaus P Horn and Regine Brick[vii] describe it like this: 'It is not only those belonging to the organisation who participate in the success or failure; others also play a role – for example, the customers, the shareholders, the users, the competitors and perhaps foreign affiliates. Like a network, they create a powerful whole which is more than the sum of its parts.'

The dynamic state of an organisation at any point in time is the result of the actions of all the people, past and present, who have been part of or interacted with the organisation. It is not possible to remember consciously all of these actions and dynamics but their effects, both positive and negative, will be visible. When deciphered by someone skilled in using the emotional intelligence of the right brain together with the principles of systems, seemingly intractable problems can be resolved.

In a healthy organisation everyone has a right to belong and knows they have an equally safe and respected place, their skills and contributions are acknowledged, seen and included. The contributions of those who have left are remembered in a way that allows those who remain to flourish. There is a balance of give and take that limits stress and burnout. People want to stay and bring the best of themselves to work. This system dynamics approach to organisational development began in Europe and is growing quickly. [Click here find a practitioner to explore this further](#).

7.1   CONTINUOUS CHANGE AND PERIODIC STRATEGIC REVIEW

In most organisations there will be a need both for continuous change and periodic strategic review, when you will focus on data from a number of different sources and consider your strategy in the light of what you find out. See below *data which indicate you need to change.*

In most organisations, you will also be looking for continuous improvements to systems and processes. Some new organisations are building in the expectation of continuous change.

Brainlabs, a London-based technology company founded in 2012 look to their staff for continuous improvement: 'You are the Culture: The 'Brainlabs culture' is only ever the result of the people who work here. We all bring something different to the table – particularly the free lunch table. That's why this handbook will look different in a year and probably be recycled for toilet paper in 3. What this means is that you have a role to play in defining our future. If you think we are doing something wrong, or could be doing something better, then don't moan about it…speak up and make a change.'

7.2   CONTINUOUS CHANGE: AGILE

Agile development methodology formally builds in opportunities to assess all aspects of a project throughout its development. It does this 'through regular cadences of work, known as sprints or iterations, at the end of which teams must present a potentially shippable product increment'. Agile methodology is described as "iterative" and "incremental." Development teams only have one chance to get each aspect of a project right. Every aspect of development from specification to design is revisited throughout the lifecycle. 'When a team stops and re-evaluates the direction of a project every two weeks, there's always time to steer it in another direction'. Learn more here.

What to change

How does your organisation know that you need to change – either day to day or at a moment in time?

7.3   DATA WHICH INDICATE YOU NEED TO CHANGE

Your intuition will tell you that change is needed. Consider also the data you already have and data you can gather. There are a number of frameworks and tools for generating this information and surveying beneficiaries of your products and services is key.

7.3.1   LISTENING TO CUSTOMERS AND SERVICE USERS

7.3.1.1   Continuous improvement

Some organisations keep a chair at the table in meetings to remind themselves to include their customers'/clients'/patients' perspectives as they make decisions and develop products and services.

Others bank comments from customers and service users gathered from all the places their staff have contact with them, including over the phone and at reception desks. Remember to include interactions with finance staff, dealing with invoicing and payments as well as others who take enquiries and other calls by phone and email.

7.3.1.2   Periodic strategic review

Ask yourself:

What do our future customers and users want from us?
How can we prepare for this?
How is our company doing compared with companies doing similar things?

At the same time, keep in mind that the people who have the capability of dreaming completely new ideas hold the seeds of delightful new products and services. Steve Jobs put it succinctly: 'Your customers can tell you the things that are broken and how they want to be made happy. Listen to them. Make them happy. But don't rely on them to create the future road map for your product or service. That's your job.'[viii]

7.3.1.3   Using social media

Scan social media platforms to get insights into what people are talking about in your field or market, which can be used to make continuous improvements and to monitor trends which will inform your periodic strategy review.

What are people saying on social media about your products and services?
Whose voice is influential in your field?
What are they saying?
What are your competitors and possible partners talking about?
How does your organisation need to change to be sure to be visible in virtual space?

7.3.2   LISTENING TO STAFF

7.3.2.1   Continuous improvement

Being alert to what staff throughout the organisation think, feel and know is useful for planning and for understanding what and how you need to change. It is also motivating for people to feel that you value their ideas.

Employees' perceptions are usually accurate. Consider the most practical way of ensuring staff know you are keen to hear their ideas and how they should communicate them to you. This could include ideas for how to make systems and processes more efficient as well as for new products and services and how to improve staff wellbeing. Be clear also about how you will use the ideas they bring to you so that you can manage expectations.

7.3.2.2 Strategic review

Periodically you may want to design a *discovery process*, to gather ideas and views through a one-off series of interviews with a leader within the organisation, or perhaps more fruitfully, by someone with no conflict of interest, who is outside the organisation.

Staff surveys

Template staff surveys are available on the internet and you can use them to get a sense of what is working well and what could be improved. Key to the success of staff surveys is feeding back to staff any findings from the survey and any actions to be taken in the light of those findings.

You can find a range of template staff surveys on the internet here or you can tailor make your own.

Intranet

In addition to the system you design for listening directly to staff, consider the communication and collaboration platforms like *Yammer* and *Chatter*, which are becoming more and more prevalent.

How you can best use them to gather ideas and understand the mood of your colleagues?

Considering the pace of change needed, how can you listen to staff and gather their ideas and perceptions continuously.

| What would work in your organisation? |
| How can you create the capacity needed to listen to staff regularly? |
| How can you build a culture where people feel their views are valued and heard? |
| How can you hear what staff are telling you when you are under so much pressure yourself? |

Exit interviews

Exit interviews, carried out confidentially as staff leave the organisation are a source of wisdom for the organisation. If exit interviews are carried out in the spirit of openness and learning, they can be invaluable. Staff leave organisations for a whole range of reasons. As they leave, there is an opportunity to gather useful insights into what they have enjoyed about working with you and what could be different. Each exit interview can stand alone but it may be useful to do an annual summary to look for themes.

More tools for gathering data for periodic strategic reviews

- SWOT and PEST
  PEST and SWOT, originally created in the 1960s, are still useful frameworks for planning strategy.

  PEST (political, economic, social, and technological) assesses a market, including competitors, from the point of view of your business.

  SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) assesses your business or new business idea. Strengths and weaknesses often relate to your organisation's structure and culture: opportunities and threats are generally to do with external factors.

  Free templates for SWOT analysis are available on line. Two examples:

    https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_05.htm
    and
    http://www.businessballs.com/swotanalysisfreetemplate.htm

- **McKinsey's Organisational Health Index**

  McKinsey make their recently created Organisational Health Index[ix] available free for small and medium sized companies. They offer 'a robust toolkit that does for organizational health what accountancy does for financial healt – that is, establishes a reliable, consistent method of measuring the dimensions that drive business results.' 'Many factors help determine the health of a company and performance is only one of them.'[x]

  In researching organisational health, Scott and Kelleher found that all companies had ways of managing their performance and few, if any, had considered the health of the organisation beyond employee surveys. The evidence showed that improving performance and health at the same time and with equal rigour is the best way for an organisation to 'achieve high performance today and sustain it tomorrow.'

The Organisational Health Index provides useful data to examine your organisation from the perspectives of:

Direction	• Shared vision • clear strategy • employees engaged and active
Leadership	• Authoritative • Consultative • supportive • challenging
Culture and climate	• Open and trusting • internally competitive • clear behavioural and performance standards innovative and entrepreneurial spirit
Accountability	• Clear roles • performance management • individual ownership
Coordination and control	• Performance management systems • effective financial management • standards • risk management

Capabilities	• Recruiting and developing 'talent' • training resources • use of external expertise to fill capability gaps
Motivation	• Meaningful values • inspiring leaders • career opportunities • rewards including recognition
External orientation	• Customer focus • competitive insight • business partnerships • strong relationships with government and community agencies
Innovation and learning	• Leaders drive innovation • all staff develop new ideas and improvement initiaves • knowledge shared across the organisation • new ideas and best practice brought in from outside

This is an evolving tool which will give you plenty of data about what to focus on.

8   HOW TO CHANGE

8.1   HOW TO LEAD AND MANAGE: SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES VERSUS SOFT SKILLS

> *Instinctively we know that management is out of date. We know its rituals and routines look slightly ridiculous in the dawning of the 21st Century. That's why the antics in a Dilbert cartoon or an episode of The Office are at once familiar and cringe-making[xi].*
>
> **Gary Hamel**

8.1.1   WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ABOUT LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT?

Many of us believe in the rights and wrongs of particular kinds of leadership and management, which may come from the way our parents brought us up or perhaps from an organisation where we worked earlier in our career.

> **What is driving you to lead and manage in the way you do?**

Perhaps you believe in systems and processes. You believe that you can use structures, processes, and systems to drive the performance you want. You believe in managing and controlling people's behaviour by specifying their actions and using incentives linked to key performance indicators to motivate them to perform in the way you/the organisation wants them to.

Or perhaps you believe in managing through good interpersonal relationships. Often characterised as *the soft approach*, you believe that good performance is the result of good relationships.

Of course, both systems and processes and good relationships are important and their interdependence is clear. A performance management system is not an end in itself. It will only deliver sustainable results if those managing it are highly skilled in relating with their staff.

'In their book, *Leading from the Emerging Future*, Otto Scharmer and Katrin Kaufer describe three "openings" needed to transform systems: opening the mind (to challenge our assumptions), opening the heart (to be vulnerable and to truly hear one another), and opening the will (to let go of pre-set goals and agendas and see what is really needed and possible). These three openings match the blind spots of most change efforts, which are often based on rigid assumptions and agendas and fail to see that transforming systems is ultimately about transforming relationships among people who shape those systems. Many otherwise well-intentioned change efforts fail because their leaders are unable or unwilling to embrace this simple truth.'[xii]

8.1.2 DIFFERENT WAYS OF LEADING AND MANAGING ORGANISATIONS

You may not know that there is a range of valid ways of running organisations, some better suited to particular types of organisation, or stages in their growth.

> **What are your beliefs and assumptions about how best
> to lead and manage your organisation?**

In *Reinventing Organisations*[xiii], Frederic Laloux gives us language to describe different ways organisations run. He uses the concept of the evolution of organisations and characterises five stages of evolution using five colours: from red (the earliest stage of development) to amber, orange, green, teal (the latest stage of development). See table below.

Earlier stage of development of organisations
Red organisations are controlled from the top. They operate by command and control. Typically their focus is short term
Amber organisations also operate through command and control. They rely on systems and rigorous processes and a clear hierarchy
Orange organisations, like amber organisations use command and control to manage objectives – but they allow freedom for people to achieve their goals by their own route. Their goal is to beat the competition and maximise profit and growth
Green organisations are structured in the classic pyramid hierarchy and believe that getting the culture right and empowering people will lead to extraordinary results
Teal organisations are the newest form. They are structured in self-managing teams with distributed power and responsibility. Their social mission and a living purpose are their raison d'etre
Later stage of development of organisations

Organisations run in all of these different ways exist alongside each other today.

In Laloux's book, Nick Petrie from the Center for Creative Leadership is quoted explaining that 'There is nothing inherently "better" about being at a higher [later] level of development, just as an adolescent is not "better" than a toddler. However, the fact remains that an adolescent is able to do more, because he or she can think in more sophisticated ways than a toddler. Any level of development is okay; the question is whether that level of development is a good fit for the task at hand."

What appeals to you about each kind?
Which do you really dislike and why?

8.2   JOHN KOTTER'S EIGHT STEP PROCESS

John Kotter, change leadership expert, describes his eight step process[xiv]. It is widely used in large corporations across the Globe and is also a useful framework for SMEs. Smaller companies can modify this framework by engaging more people in the development of the vision.

1. Leaders describe an opportunity that will appeal to individuals' heads and hearts and use this to create a group of volunteer change agents
2. This change team, with representatives from across the organisation, will guide, coordinate and communicate progress with the envisaged change
3. Form a strategic vision and 'activities that, if designed and executed fast enough and well enough, will make your vision a reality.'
4. Cross organisation change can only happen when everyone (or almost everyone) understands the vision, buys in and drives in the same direction.
5. Enable action by removing barriers
6. Generate short term wins and communicate them throughout the organisation
7. Sustain acceleration. Change leaders adapt quickly to maintain their speed of change
8. Communicate the connections between new behaviours and the organisation's success

8.3   IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

8.3.1   GETTING READY AND CREATING CAPACITY

It may be stating the obvious that change in itself creates work: managing the change project plan, extra internal communications, extra time spent with affected staff, extra time for the change team to meet etc. Talk with colleagues to work out how to create capacity to deliver the change. You may need to review and reprioritise existing plans.

Involving staff in making the implementation plan, including setting the goals and timescales will build their commitment to achieving the goals and making the changes. Articulating each individual's role and contribution with them, as part of the goal setting for their own performance management will also show that the organisation knows what their contribution is and values it.

> **How can you create the extra capacity you need?**
>
> **What are the priorities for the organisation?**

8.3.2   CREATING A SENSE OF URGENCY

It is important to keep up the momentum for change to maintain staff's commitment and focus. Work out how can you keep listening and refining the plans and keep focused on where you are going, whilst continuing with 'the day job'.

8.3.3   INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IS A PRIORITY

Begin by sharing as much information as possible about the reasons for the reorganisation. Describe how the organisation will look in the future and explain any implications for people working there. There will be much which is not known at the beginning but communicating what is already clear will start to bring some clarity and certainty for everyone.

Tell people when to expect further information and about the process and about how they can feed in their views.

Leaders who are able to be transparent and who share information frequently and in good time, build people's trust and can keep people engaged and motivated through change processes. If people believe that changes are being managed fairly and they understand the rationale for any cuts, they can accept them more easily.

8.3.4   A CHANGE TEAM

Create a change team, made up of a cross section of staff. They will be champions of the change process and have a role in communicating with colleagues about progress of the change programme and flagging up information from across the organisation which could be useful in adjusting and in implementing changes as the programme progresses.

The change team can help identify some 'quick wins' to boost confidence and celebrate successes.

8.3.5   ORGANISATION REVIEW FOLLOWING STRATEGIC REVIEW (SEE ABOVE)

After reviewing your strategy, you need to create an implementation plan, which includes:

1. An analysis of skills needed to deliver the strategy
2. Reviewing the structure of your staffing and creating a structure to deliver the strategy
3. Considering whether you have the right roles and people with the right skills and experience to deliver the strategy?
4. Creating job descriptions for new roles

5. Looking at the implications of the new strategy and staff structure for the people currently employed. Work out who is in line for the roles – either by application or if their job is ring fenced. ACAS[xv] (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, a publicly funded independent organisation in the UK that aims to promote better employment relations), are a very useful source of information about the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees, where people are facing redundancy, short term contracts and other changes to their jobs.

8.3.6 HOW TO MANAGE STAFF LEAVING

You must adhere to the laws and best practice requirements of the country where you operate. ACAS provides guidelines for how to manage redundancies in the UK here.

Understanding the impact of someone leaving on the dynamics of your organisation's system is also important to the future health of your organisation.

When anyone leaves, there is a rebalancing in the organisation. There is also a balance in what the person has been able to give to the organisation and to take from it. In fact, it isn't possible for there to be a true balance. The person will always have given more than they have taken or taken more than they have given. This is not just about the money they have received in return for the work they have done, it may also be about the emotion and loyalty they have given or their creativity. Often, there is an attempt to forget all the useful things a person has given to an organisation 'when there have been behavioural or performance issues or a change in leadership which has led to interpersonal tensions.'[xvi]

The best way to leave is to know fully what the exchange has been and to acknowledge it. Even saying and feeling it to be true to say, 'I will not make any claims', as in many compromise agreements (a legally binding agreement between an employee and employer in a number of different circumstances e.g. redundancy, by mutual agreement, dismissal, to settle an Employment Tribunal claim). This will enable both the person leaving to move on stronger and the organisation to maintain system health.

8.3.7 STRENGTHENING PEOPLE AS THEY LEAVE

Leaving as the result of a restructure can be a bruising experience even when the person leaving has had a successful career and their contribution has been valued highly. If people can work with a coach and take control of their story and tell it in a positive way, they may feel more in control, less vulnerable and in a better place to navigate the change and their next steps to a new job. This also has a beneficial effect on the organisation they are leaving.

8.3.8 RECRUITING NEW LEADERS

When radical change is needed, organisations often recruit a new CEO and other key leaders. Recruiters should think carefully about the kind of leader they need. In appointing a new CEO, consider their understanding of how to integrate a business around a clear set of guiding principles about *how* people work as well as what needs to be done. How has the prospective leader achieved their success to date? How do their own values fit with those of your organisation?

8.3.9 THE BEST CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

The first six months are critical to build trust and respect and people will follow him/her. A new leader must listen to staff and show his/her genuine respect for the past achievements of their predecessors and others in the organisation. After all, without the people who have gone before, the new person would not have this role. If s/he does this well, s/he will build trust and ensure that s/he is in the right place to move forward. S/he will notice that people will be on his/her side

8.4 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

> *There is always an inner game being played in your mind no matter what outer game you are playing. How aware of this game can make the difference between success and failure.*[xvii]
>
> Tim Gallwey

Leaders of change need to understand their own emotions and reactions to people and situations. The 'inner game' takes place in our minds, where we all deal with obstacles to being at our best, including fear, self-doubt, lapses in focus, and limiting beliefs or assumptions. Working with a coach will help you manage your own obstacles and keep you focused on where you want to get to.

8.5 IT'S LONELY AT THE TOP

Leading change presents challenges and CEOs might benefit from considering these questions:

> How do I cope with change myself?
>
> What support do I need to manage the weight of my responsibility?
>
> Do I understand my own impact on others – both positive and negative?

8.6 ABOUT LEADERSHIP AND POWER

Position power is the power you have because of your role and status. Personal power is the power you have, because colleagues in the organisation trust and respect you.

Position power can be used to control staff: ultimately to 'hire or fire' them. The person with most position power can assert his/her will, often gathering the support of others with position power and some who might see where the power lies and align themselves with it. However, taking a longer term view, this will almost certainly set up problems for the future. Where a leader can win hearts and minds and people buy into a change programme, change is more likely to happen.

> **On a score of 1–10 how much position power do you have in your organisation?**
>
> **On a score of 1–10, how much personal power would you say you have?**

8.7 INVOLVING AND MOTIVATING EVERYONE IN THE ORGANISATION

Spend time exploring options and invite people to come up with suggestions. This way of leading change is backed up by research into what drives people's internal commitment to their work, to finding creative solutions to complex 21st century problems and to sustained behaviour change, which shows that *autonomy, mastery and connection* are the three essential factors.

Autonomy is the feeling of having choices and not being controlled by others

Mastery is feeling competent and continuing to learn and develop

Purpose is the feeling of work having personal meaning

In 2009, Daniel Pink[xviii] reviewed the research comparing extrinsic motivators, the *carrot and stick*, with intrinsic motivators and found that the former (traditional rewards) aren't always as effective as we think and questioned why traditional management relies so heavily on them.

More recently, Nik Kinley and Shlomo Ben-Hur[xix] have researched the conditions needed for behaviour to change and critically, what makes people want to change. They found that despite the enormous resources organisations put into incentive systems e.g. connecting pay and performance and bonuses, only 28% of managers felt confident that they knew how to make change happen.

The leader needs to be able to assimilate many different perspectives. Everyone will have useful contributions to make from their place in the organisation: the people who answer phones; the people who pay the bills and send out the invoices; the people who develop new products and services and everyone else will have views and ideas. The leader's skill is to hear and assimilate them effectively. Often these ideas from across the organisation could not be arrived at by the leaders because they simply cannot have the whole picture. Moreover, if people feel that their views and ideas are being heard and assimilated, their motivation and loyalty will be strong.

You can show that you are genuinely interested in staff's views by discussing what the change will mean for everyone's energy and time and asking what they think and feel about the proposed changes. If you notice resistance, ask questions so that you have a full picture of the issues and make sure that people feel that their concerns have been heard.

You can appeal to people's sense of pride by talking about the organisation or team becoming 'the best' or doing something as well as it can be done.

8.8   NEUROSCIENCE

An iceberg is often used to describe the small proportion of visible behaviour that we can observe above the surface of the sea – with everything we don't see, but which affects our behaviour, below the surface, including beliefs and mind-sets, values, unconscious fears etc. Understanding behaviour by understanding how our brains work is very useful in managing change.

Naomi Eisenberger, a social neuroscience researcher at the University of California at Los Angeles wanted to understand what goes on in the brain when people feel rejected by others at work. Her research[xx] used MRI scans to show that the same area of the brain is triggered by social pain as is stimulated by physical pain.

People who feel side-lined or unrecognised, for example, when they are given work which doesn't recognise their experience and skills, have a neural impulse, 'as powerful and painful as a blow to the head'. Not surprisingly, this damages the psychological contract between the employer and worker! Most people manage their response by rationalising and getting on with the job *and they begin to limit their commitment and engagement*. They become 'transactional employees', doing the minimum possible to receive their pay and reluctant to give more of themselves to the company.

However hard people try to 'be professional' by acting normally at work, even when they feel a threat hanging over them, 'humans cannot think creatively, work well with others, or make informed decisions when their responses are on high alert.'[xxi]

It is useful to understand that the *fight or flight* response to stimulus or possible threat is still what drives us. There are many triggers which may prompt disengagement and uncooperative behaviour (fight or flight), and you can consider whether you are doing anything to stimulate negative responses and consider whether you might approach things differently.

As a leader you will be perceived as having power (status power) and you are in a position to threaten or reward people: to trigger dopamine (reward) or cortisol (threat: fight or flight) in the brain. David Rock[xxii] talks about five key triggers:

Status

Certainty

Autonomy

Relatedness

Fairness

Each of these can work as reward or threat for different people. Consider how much each of these triggers affects you and understand that others will have different responses to these stimuli. You could try the self-assessment test online: http://www.scarfsolutions.com/selfassessment.aspx.

8.9   PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Review your performance management system so that it becomes an opportunity to motivate staff, taking the approach suggested by this research. A key principle is to ensure that the purpose of goal setting and review meetings is to discuss and agree clear and motivating goals. Building upon the research cited above, consider separating pay and performance conversations so that the meetings are primarily opportunities to:

- Emphasise strengths – and build confidence
- Explore how the manager can remove obstacles to achieving the goals
- Find out what particularly motivates the individual e.g. are they motivated by having a 'stretch' goal to achieve or by their own sense of learning and developing? Are they motivated by perfecting something that is a fairly routine part of their job or by doing something completely new to them? This will enable you to discuss and agree how best to express the goal in a way which works for the individual
- Give praise for what they have done well

In relation to your change programme, use performance management meetings to:

- Explore what the benefits and other consequences of the change might be for them
- Explore what matters to the individual and what effect the changes will have on these
- Make sure people know what actions they personally need to take to make the change happen

Clearly, you will only be able to have the generative conversations you need to achieve all this if you build trusting relationships with all your staff.

8.10 WHAT YOU CAN DO TO MANAGE STRESS CAUSED BY CHANGE IN THE ORGANISATION

The U.K. Health and Safety Executive's standards for managing employee stress[xxiii] provide a useful checklist:

The Standard is that:

- Employees indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing an organisational change and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns
- What should be happening/States to be achieved
- The organisation provides employees with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes
- The organisation ensures adequate employee consultation on changes and provides opportunities for employees to influence proposals
- Employees are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs. If necessary, employees are given training to support any changes in their jobs
- Employees are aware of timetables for changes
- Employees have access to relevant support during changes

Talking with a trusted leader, colleague or external coach alleviates pressure *and* results in more constructive behaviour. When people talk about their emotions, they are better able to manage their responses: to regulate themselves. Stored up fear or anger come out in negative ways.

9 MORE ABOUT LISTENING TO STAFF

'Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently.'[xxiv]

The way people tell you their views varies. Some always sound professional and reasonable: others are more confrontational; others speak without conviction. People have very different voices and it will be easier to listen to some than to others. When you have more status power, you can inadvertently silence other voices – either because you haven't got the time and the patience to hear them or because they are too challenging to hear. Take care to create spaces where:

- the quieter voices are heard. You may have people whose first language is not English or who do not communicate as powerfully as others for a number of different reasons – but they may have really important views and perspectives.
- the rebels are heard. Their voices may be confrontational but may have the seeds of brilliance in them. You may be aware of a rebellious voice in your organisation. You may be tempted to silence it if it feels challenging. Before you do though, they may have important messages for the organisation. Take the time to consider what they are saying.

> **Whose voices do you not hear?**
>
> **Where do you get the courage to really hear them, when
> their voice feels challenging or even destructive?**

9.1 WHAT PEOPLE WANT – DIVERSE VIEWS AND ASPIRATIONS OF DIFFERENT GENERATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

An awareness of the different aspirations of different generations of workers may also help. Organisations need to listen to employees to understand their different aspirations and needs. If you do this, you are more likely to have motivated, loyal and productive employees. For example, two separate research projects at Ashridge Business School have looked respectively at what 'Baby Boomers' want and what 'Millennials' want.

9.2 BABY BOOMERS (BORN BETWEEN 1946 AND 1964)

One Ashridge Business School survey[xxv] of more than two thousand over 50s, and HR staff working in organisations that employ over 50s, showed that older workers are mainly driven by having interesting work, a sense of achievement, pride and being able to leave a legacy. They are still ambitious, want challenging jobs and are looking to continue to grow and develop.

The report suggests a number of practical actions to help over 50s maximise their contribution and continue to thrive at work:

- Give them advisory roles and special projects which utilise their strategic, leadership and interpersonal skills.
- Have informal and individual conversations about their skills, aspirations and future instead of 'retirement planning' conversations.
- Find ways to help them share their knowledge and expertise – through initiatives such as coaching, mentoring, job shadowing and networking.
- Offer them a wider range of development opportunities to support their interest in personal and professional development.

9.3 'MILLENNIALS' (BORN BETWEEN 1981 AND 2000)

A report entitled 'Great Expectations: Managing Generation Y' from the Institute of Leadership and Management with Ashridge Business School has useful insights. Their research[xxvi] shows that there is a big gap between the priorities and expectations of millennial (also known as generation Y) workers and their managers. For example, 57% of graduates expect to leave their employer within two years; 40% within a year and 16% intend to go as soon as possible. Generation Y graduates are ambitious, strongly motivated by money, status and career advancement, and expect to progress rapidly. It is not always possible to meet these expectations. The three top priorities in the workplace for graduates are: challenging/interesting work (33%), a high salary (32%) and advancing their career (24%).

Millennials also value having a high degree of freedom and autonomy in the way they carry out work, whereas managers favour a more balanced mix of freedom and control, and do not always understand how important independence is. As a result, managers risk demotivating graduates with a hands-on management style. Millennials prefer a coaching style of management to a more traditional paternalistic style.

The research also shows that graduates and their managers have a different understanding of the psychological contract with work. Millennials and their and managers both value work-life balance, but managers underestimate its importance to their staff. Despite having high expectations of career advancement, millennials do not buy in to a long-hours culture in the same way their managers do.

All of these factors contribute to a new picture of careers, outlined in an article about the 'gig economy'[xxvii]. Arun Sundararajan quotes Hillary Clinton in a speech laying out her economic plan, "This on-demand, or so-called gig, economy is creating exciting economies and unleashing innovation. But it is also raising hard questions about workplace protections and what a good job will look like in the future."

For employers managing change, it means there's an even greater need for good managers, who offer autonomy to their staff and who build trusted relationships and loyalty and who give the best of their skills and experience to elicit the very best from employees while they're in a job and to retain them because their job is rewarding. Learning and development opportunities are part of the job every day – through mentoring and coaching by managers and peers.

9.4   WHAT IDEAS DO YOUR STAFF HAVE ABOUT THE CULTURE OF YOUR ORGANISATION?

What ideas do your staff which would make them happier at work? Have you asked them? These may be more manageable than you would think. They might surprise you.

What stops you talking to your staff about this?

How could you make it safe for you to ask staff these questions?

10 BRINGING ABOUT CHANGE THROUGH SYSTEM LEADERSHIP

'The deep changes necessary to accelerate progress against society's most intractable problems require a unique type of leader – the system leader, a person who catalyses collective leadership.'[xxviii]

In this volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world, where the old certainties of employer: employee relationships are changing, an understanding of 'system leadership' is useful for leaders of SMEs. 'System leadership' validates an approach many may instinctively feel and strengthens them when they feel at odds with the certainties of people more familiar with traditional kinds of leadership and management. 'Today, many of us are "swimming in the same river" – trying to cultivate collective leadership in diverse settings around the world even while our larger cultural contexts remain firmly anchored to the myth of the heroic individual leader.'[xxix]

'System leaders…understand that collective wisdom cannot be manufactured or built into a plan created in advance. And it is not likely to come from leaders who seek to "drive" their predetermined change agenda. Instead, system leaders work to create the space where people living with the problem can come together to tell the truth, think more deeply about what is really happening, explore options beyond popular thinking, and search for higher leverage changes through progressive cycles of action and reflection and learning over time. Knowing that there are no easy answers to truly complex problems, system leaders cultivate the conditions wherein collective wisdom emerges over time through a ripening process that gradually brings about new ways of thinking, acting, and being[xxx].

Whilst so-called system leaders have different personalities and styles, their impact is similar. Not only is it beneficial to their own staff and organisations but it also goes beyond those boundaries to other organisations and wider society.

10.1 WHAT ARE SYSTEM LEADERS?

According to Senge, Hamilton and Kanya[xxxi], system leaders:

- 'Hold a deep commitment to the health of the whole, which develops similar commitment in others.
- Move the focus from reacting to problems to creating the future vision together.
- Have the ability to see diverse others' perspectives, which encourages others to be more open as well.
- Build relationships based on deep listening, and 'networks of trust and collaboration start to flourish.
- Are sure that things can be improved and they do not wait for a fully developed plan, which frees others to learn by doing.
- ask obvious questions and embody openness and commitment to their own learning and growth which contribute to larger change'.

The beneficial outcomes of systems leadership include:

- What had seemed like impossible problems becoming opportunities for innovation
- Taking a longer-term view and being less reactive

'[The change] typically happens gradually as leaders help people articulate their deeper aspirations and build confidence based on tangible accomplishments achieved together. This shift involves not just building inspiring visions but facing difficult truths about the present reality and learning how to use the tension between vision and reality to inspire truly new approaches.'[xxxii]

11 CONCLUSION

The world is changing rapidly and old certainties about the workplace are now in question. Whilst small and medium sized organisations can change quickly, there can be many human and cultural factors that mean that they do not. As the world is changing so are the attitudes and expectations of workers born in different decades and working alongside each other.

Leaders and managers who understand themselves and who know how to collaborate with others and how to motivate others are needed. They need to keep an open mind and to keep on learning.

Creating an organisation which is more than the sum of its parts is the goal. As Patrick Lencioni said, 'Not finance, not strategy, not technology. It is teamwork that remains the ultimate competitive advantage, both because it is so powerful and so rare'. Systems and processes that support collaboration rather than individualism are needed and emotional intelligence to manage the human relationships well is critical.

Understanding that change will be continuous and shaping organisations as resilient and positive workplaces where all the staff flourish, will offer the best chance of success.

Ensuring the well-being of organisations by including and respecting all the staff who have contributed to them since they were founded will make for more human happiness and a better world.

The image of a child's mobile compares with, and shows how delicate the balance and wellbeing of the organisation is and how every part moving has an impact on every other part. It is an image of the importance of the whole. It will not stay still but will always move and change and look to rebalance.

The world of *organisational change* is constantly evolving. Small and medium sized organisations may not have the capacity to keep on top of new ideas and sources of help. Support is available for individual leaders to thrive and to understand the *people and organisation* aspects of leading positive organisations in our rapidly changing world. I hope I have given some insights and new ideas which have provided food for thought and a starting point.

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