



Why Change Leadership is More Crucial than Ever

Whether you are a director, vice-president, functional leader, or program or project lead, one of the most powerful and pivotal roles you can play in your organization is that of a change leader.

Markets change, technologies evolve, the competition shifts, and mergers and acquisitions occur. As a result, your organization must constantly change in order to succeed and survive. And it is your job to lead the transformation.

The Challenge of Being a Change Leader

You know that changing will help your organization gain a competitive advantage, enter new markets, improve the productivity and effectiveness of your workforce, and so on. Yet, when your employees hear about a new change effort, most will shudder and roll their eyes. In fact, when we interviewed leaders about change efforts, they repeatedly cited resistance as the primary obstacle to transformation. We heard countless stories like the two below.

“Our executive team had a vision of becoming an end-to-end service provider for government IT projects. Rather than trying to get there through organic growth, we have been aggressively acquiring smaller competitors to round out our portfolio. We’ve acquired eight companies in just over three years. On paper, we look good. We’ve managed to get everyone migrated over to the same ERP, e-mail servers, and performance management systems. In reality though, it’s a complete mess. We are still operating like nine different companies. The leaders from each of

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the acquired companies refuse to take any action that doesn't serve the interests of their group first. At leadership meetings, everyone pretends to agree with the integrated strategy. But as soon as they are out of the room, they compete with each other. Our customers have been complaining that we sometimes have three salespeople calling them. They think our left hand doesn't know what our right is doing."

~ Senior Manager, Aerospace Industry

"Our agency used to be organized by the target groups that we serve. We had separate units responsible for elder care, foster children, people with disabilities, and so on. Over time, we came to realize that while our staff was doing their very best, people were falling through the cracks. Earlier this year, we moved to an integrated approach, where we assigned each family one case worker. The case worker would have overall responsibility for helping that family with all of the issues associated with navigating public services. Each case worker is supposed to work with specialists as needed. We thought that employees would be excited about the reorganization because it is clearly better for our clients. Instead they are resisting the change at every step of the way."

~ Managing Director, Public Service Agency

Why is change so painful for so many? One reason is that changes are typically dictated from the top and are imposed on people rather than implemented with them. At the same time, changes often occur simultaneously—with one change initiative overlapping and/or overtaking another. Employees at all levels begin to suffer from fatigue and frustration. In many cases, people feel victimized by change. They might ask:

Introduction: Why Change Leadership is More Crucial Than Ever

- Who decided this?
- What are “they” doing to “us” now?
- How can we possibly do everything that needs to be done all at once?
- Don’t they know we have our day jobs too?

How can you preemptively address negative emotions? How can you proactively engage, empower, and align your people for joint success?

This often leads to sentiments like:

- I feel manipulated and mismanaged.
- I hate it here.
- This stinks.
- I can’t wait to get out of here.

The answer is Change at the Core.

These are the very last thoughts and emotions you want your people to experience! In today’s knowledge-based economy, your people are your most critical resources. People are the lifeblood of your organization. The last thing you want to do is cause doubt, disengagement, and cynicism among the very people you are counting on to be customer-focused, innovative, creative, and productive!

So, how can you preemptively address negative emotions? How can you proactively engage, empower, and align your people for joint success? How can you engage your employees to volunteer for change initiatives at the grassroots level? Where can you turn when you don’t know where to begin? The answer is learning to lead *Change at the Core*.

Change at the Core is a process for leading change that focuses on the individuals at every level of your organization.

What is Change at the Core?

Change at the Core is a process for leading change that focuses on the individuals at every level of your organization. The process merges overall best practices in change management with recent developments in assessment methodologies to provide a powerful new approach for leaders at all levels.

Thanks to these new developments, we can actually predict with great certainty how individuals will react and adapt to change. By being able to predict those reactions, leaders can create implementation strategies that not only reduce resistance, but that actually create a firestorm of support.

Change at the Core is grounded in the belief that the most effective way to get people to embrace and accelerate change is to unleash the energy that is at the core of each person. It is not a magic bullet, but it is a crucial tool for anyone who strives to be an effective change leader.

How to Use this Book

This book is both an introduction to a new perspective on change management and a practical field guide. We suggest that you first read the book in its entirety and then come back to specific sections and chapters to delve more deeply into the areas that most interest you. The worksheets and activities will help you translate the general concepts into specific actions you can implement with your own team.

- **Section 1** presents the need for a new perspective and introduces you to the process you will learn in later chapters.
- **Section 2** goes into depth about internal energy—a concept that is critical to understand in order to apply the Change at the Core process.
- **Section 3** provides the details of the Change at the Core process and tips and techniques for mastering each step of the process.

- **Section 4** offers practical advice for putting everything you have learned to work in order to launch and sustain change initiatives.

Will You Rise to the Challenge?

Organizations of all sizes in all sectors need more people at every level who can lead the human side of change. They need leaders who can:

- Communicate a vision;
- inspire people to take action;
- engage stakeholders;
- respond to resistance; and
- deliver results.

Many of the leaders we've met report that their proudest accomplishments revolve around a time that they led a change successfully and accomplished it through a total team effort.

In fact, in their bestselling book, *The Leadership Challenge*, Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner suggest that the study of leadership is in fact “the study of how men and women guide us through adversity, uncertainty, hardship, disruption, transformation, and transition.”¹ In other words, leadership is all about change and change requires leadership.

Up until now, you may have dreaded being assigned to transformation teams. If so, you've probably been the victim of poorly planned and badly implemented change programs. You have had firsthand experience with the common problems that plague change efforts. You know that research shows that up to 70 percent of change efforts fail.² Who would want all of the stress and headaches? If that's the case, this book is for you. After learning our model

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CHANGE at the CORE

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for leading change at the core, you will be equipped to tackle these problems and guide your team and organization to success.

On the other hand, you may be a natural change leader—someone who thrives on complex challenges and who understands both the people and process sides of any transformation project. If that sounds like you, this book is for you too! You recognize that since change is complex, you need to continually learn more tools, techniques, and approaches that will enhance your ability to address and resolve challenges. You are constantly on the lookout for approaches that will help you lead your team to better, faster results. As you read about Change at the Core, you will discover that internal energy is a competitive advantage that has been largely untapped.

In either case—read on! You'll be glad you did.