

TEAM FOR CHANGE

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# TEAM FOR CHANGE: A PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTING CHANGE IN THE MODERN WORKPLACE

BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*To my husband, Fraser Smith, my children, Channing and Dex, and my parents,  
siblings and friends for their support and belief that I could do this.*

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Photo Credit: Kristie Schram

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# FOUNDATIONS OF CHANGE

*Change is easy to propose, hard to implement, and especially hard to sustain.*

*Andy Hargreaves, Professor of Change, Engagement and Innovation*

“Plans are nothing; planning is everything,” is Dwight D. Eisenhower’s famous admonition (Dwight D. Eisenhower Quotes, n.d.). This couldn’t be more true than when it is time to execute an organizational change. Most people need a framework to refer to when working on the most intractable and murky aspects of the change process: the human aspects. This book focuses on various facets of working through the change process while validating, affirming and meeting the needs of the people with whom you are working. This book provides a framework for the new practitioner to engage the multi-dimensional aspects of human beings during a change process.

The reality, however, in organization change is that nothing ever goes as planned. And that’s why the ideas framed in this area are so important. There are principles that underlie successful approaches to change. That’s the goal of this book: to help you, a person starting out in change, to create a good plan to successfully implement change in your organization, but to also help you deal with the things that can’t be planned for – the unpredictable decision-making process of human beings.

To be clear, there are lengthy books (see [Holman, Devane, & Cady, 2007](#)) dedicated to various change management approaches. This book is not one of them. This text will help the change agent see change in a holistic and implementable way, regardless of what method is chosen for a project.

This book may even help you select a method based on the nature of your project, the relationships between the people involved or it may help you to adapt several different approaches to meet your needs. Most importantly, this book will provide guiding principles to use as a way to make good decisions and maintain the trust and integrity already in your organization.

In change management and organization development, there are two basic types of practitioners: an internal and an external. An internal practitioner is an employee of the company that is undergoing change. This person may be an expert in organization change and do that work as their primary role within the organization. Or an internal may be a person who the organization sees as a successful implementer of processes or a good manager of people. Internals have an advantage, because they know the systems of the organization, they understand the culture, know where to go to address a problem and who to see to get things done. Internals are at a disadvantage, because they see the organization through the lens of their own experiences. They come with pre-existing ideas about people and processes, and other people in the organization may view the internal with their own pre-existing ideas about them, as well. An internal will be able to call people by name, he/she may have pre-established and powerful relationships in the organization which will help him/her accomplish aspects of the plan and will understand the process for how decisions are made in the organization.

An external is the employee of a consulting firm – whether a sole-proprietorship consulting firm or a large firm that employs hundreds of change management consultants. Externals have an advantage because they've seen a wide variety of problems and have a lot of resources to draw upon. They can easily discuss problems or situations with other consultants and get workable advice quickly. An external has the benefit of seeing the organization with new eyes, comparing the organization to other organizations like it and will have a wide variety of tools, techniques, assessments, software and colleagues to consult with as things are happening during the change process. Externals are at a disadvantage because they don't know the players, the culture, the history or how to get things done in the organization. They have to rely on internal partners for direction about how to do anything from using the copy machine to managing the air conditioning in the conference room or finding the bathroom.

There are benefits and drawbacks to either way of engaging change – whether with an internal or an external. For the ease of communication, internals and externals will both be referred to as change agents within this text.

Ultimately, this book is a practical guide to creating change in organizations that keeps human well-being front and center during the process.

## COMPLEX OR MERELY COMPLICATED?

*Out of intense complexities, intense simplicities emerge.*

*Winston Churchill, Former Prime Minister of the  
United Kingdom*

Famously, Harvard University's [Norhio and Beer \(2000\)](#) debated economic versus organizational approaches to change; they also pessimistically warn us that roughly 70% of change efforts fail. There are mechanisms to calculate the risk of change and its likelihood of success, such as the Duration, Integrity, Commitment and Effort Framework, known as the DICE model for short, which through risk analysis of duration, integrity, commitment and efforts categorizes change initiatives into Win, Worry or Woe (Sirkin, Keenan & Jackson, 2005). However, as noted by Henri Atlan, no matter the depth to which we plumb the characteristics of a project and potential changes, there is always an element of risk ([Atlan, 1979](#)).

Henri Atlan, the French philosopher and biophysicist, offers some relevant insight on the notion of why organization change is so difficult. Atlan explains that *complex systems* differ from *complicated systems* because complex systems are ones in which all the information about the different variables, or even the variables themselves, are not known. Conversely, complicated systems are ones in which the diversity of the variables and their dimensions are known.

*Complexity is thus a measure of lack of information and thus renders it more difficult for us to form pertinent ideas of the organizational realities we enact and which can impinge upon us.*

Atlan's ideas, that we don't know all that we need to in order to implement change properly and successfully, are very much true. His ideas are also the reason why this book is necessary and helpful.

To reduce issues from complex ones to simply complicated ones can be assisted by discussing the underlying principles that support change practices from the human perspective and providing enough information so that the change agent can take on a "non-conforming" or atypical situation and still make a good decision. While this may only increase our adaptation and responsiveness on the part of change managers and participants, this can be enough to make the difference.

It seems that a better route is to look at each aspect of the situation under consideration and to review the various issues and the merits or potential pitfalls and strengths in it. In this book, distinct and diverse aspects of change are discussed and given some grounding in research. These concepts are then illustrated in terms of application, templates for action, checklists and decision-processes are provided in the hopes of reducing what is a complex issue, to simply a complicated one.

Regardless of what method of change is used, the animating force of organizational work is human beings, and human beings can develop synergistic outcomes when they work in effective teams. So employing teams in your change efforts makes excellent sense. Effective teams leverage involvement, participation, reduce resistance, drive engagement and use vision as a motivating force. These are all aspects of change that are covered in this work.

## HISTORY OF CHANGE AND HOW CHANGE IS CHANGING

*Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end.*

*Seneca, the Younger, Roman Philosopher and Statesman  
(and Semisonic, the Band)*

Change itself is as old as humanity and began with ancient philosophers the likes of Aristotle, and Lao Tzu. Early ideas around change were furthered with the study of human beings in the field of anthropology by observing and noting how humans formed groups and worked toward common goals. But the formal academic study of change didn't begin until World War II when the US government was trying change domestic consumer behavior to use different products in order to better support the war effort in Europe. The reality of this problem was to determine how to convince households to eat organ meat in lieu of traditional cuts of meat, so that those traditional cuts could be sent to support the troops. Kurt Lewin began this research at University of Iowa and directly involved homemakers in the research by sharing recipes and cooking together. It is through *this process of involvement* that we can see the seedling of Lewin's larger approach and current approaches today. Lewin's three-step model is now foundational to most other approaches to change, but change keeps changing. Connecting a few of the major approaches to change with Lewin's three-step model can help visualize that evolution.

Unfreezing, Moving, Re-Freezing

*The measure of intelligence is the ability to change.*

*Albert Einstein, Nobel Prize-Winning Physicist*

What Lewin found was that in order to create change, there needed to be a disruption in the status quo. In the World War II situation mentioned above, a proper, relevant reason had to be provided in order to convince people, in this case homemakers, that they needed to do something differently.

Lewin's approach to change developed from his experiences with the homemakers in Iowa and grew into a three-step process for change: Unfreezing, Moving/Changing and Re-Freezing. In the Unfreezing step, the change agent provides reasons for why change must occur. These reasons are called disconfirming data. It is disconfirming because the change agent is trying provide information that proves that the current approach is no longer working and that the organization or individual needs to "unfreeze" their behavior. In Lewin's work that process would be explaining to the homemakers how they can contribute to the war effort in their own kitchens and allow the war effort to better feed the troops. In the Moving/Changing phase of change, the shifts in behavior actually occur. Old behaviors are left behind, and new behaviors are established. This is where Lewin brought the homemakers into kitchens to work together to test recipes and share tips about the ways to feed their families and still help the US government provision the front lines. And finally in the Re-Freezing phase of change, these new behaviors are firmly established and codified as the way to approach the process or task. This is when the homemakers went home and incorporated these recipes and ideas into their usual routine for menu planning and food preparation.

## Transitions

*All changes, even the most longed for, have their melancholy; for what we leave behind us is a part of ourselves; we must die to one life before we can enter another.*

*Anatole France, French Poet and Novelist*

The notion of "transition" as being separate and fully different than change was brought forward by William Bridges. [Bridges \(2016\)](#) in his famous text, *Managing Transitions*, writes that change can be plotted on a calendar and executed. However, transition has nothing to do with calendars and action, but is an internal, psychological shift for the individual person.

Bridges takes Lewin's three phases of Unfreezing, Moving and Re-Freezing into similar, but qualitatively different sections: Endings, Neutral zone and Beginnings. "Endings" are the letting go of old ways. It can include denial of the realities that are driving the change, resistance to the change or even sadness or grief. This can take the form of denying data or claiming it is not relevant to the problems being solved through the change, resisting change through foot dragging or refusals and even being upset and being grief-stricken.

The “neutral zone” is a place of ambiguity and ambivalence, where the person going through change is unsure of exactly what is happening, may lose motivation to make the change or feel at loose ends. During the neutral zone, lots of encouragement is needed, job aides are helpful and previous training might need to be refreshed and revisited. The Buddhists call this in between phase, *bardo*. *Bardo* is the state of being between two separate parts of one’s life (Rinpoche, 2007). Others might call this phase ambiguity. Regardless of the name, the reality is that there is an uncomfortable phase in the process of change where uncertainty and feeling ungrounded can take hold.

Lastly, in the “new beginning” the benefits of the change are being realized, and people are beginning to feel positively about it. Individuals might find needed short cuts in their work. They might have greater access to useful data. Or streamlined processes might speed their progress along and become increasingly beneficial to their work.

The distinctions between change and a transition are important, because it recognizes that *internal motivation and engagement* with the change is required for success and that emotions are a primary driver of behavior. If we were to apply this idea to Lewin’s homemakers, the endings would be the loss that they might have felt as they gave up their Saturday evening barbeque or Friday steak dinner. The neutral zone would hold the uncertainty they experienced at the grocery store selecting their family’s cuts of meat. And the new beginnings would be when the kids like one of mom’s new recipes and asked for it again. As change agents recognizing when your organization is in this phase is important so that you can offer the encouragement, support and rewards that will move the organization in the right direction.

## Kotter’s 8-Steps

*We should be guided by theory, not by numbers.*

*W. Edwards Deming, Management Scholar and Consultant*

Just like many technologies rely on vintage theories like gravity and thermodynamics, many of the more current models of change use the Lewinian approach as a foundation on which to build more sophisticated models. Such is the case with John Kotter’s approach to change (Kotter, 2012).

Assuming that Lewin’s observations and theory are generally correct, can we subdivide the change process further? John Kotter wrote a magnificent book, *Leading Change*, delineating the 8-steps each change process must go

through in order to be successful. Kotter's 8-steps really take Lewin's three steps and simply expand on them to make the ideas that Lewin outlined more implementable. The eight steps are:

***Establish a sense of urgency** is about providing the rationale for change.*

***Creating a guiding coalition** is about forming a broad-based group of people who are committed to the change.*

***Develop a vision and strategy** is about forming and implementation plan and job supports to buttress the change as it's implemented.*

***Communicate the change vision** is about describing the future state of the organization in vivid and exciting ways, but also ensuring that the message is heard.*

***Empower broad-based action** is about giving people the freedom to act around implementing the change.*

***Generate short term wins** is about identifying early successes and allowing others to model on that behavior.*

***Consolidate gains and make more change** is about developing and sharing successful approaches to the change and sharing those approaches as a way to be successful and accelerate the process.*

***Anchor new approaches in the culture** is about codifying the change as the new way of doing business, and the culture supports this way of doing things as the best way to approach the problem.*

You'll note in Kotter's 8-step approach the value of engaging a group of people behind the change, finding moments when the change is working and working the new state of affairs into the usual routine of work.

## ADKAR

*None of the five steps could be avoided: they cannot be skipped or reordered*

*Jeff Hiatt, Founder of Prosci*

The ADKAR Model is a change management model developed by Jeff Hiatt. The model can be used to guide both individual and organizational change. ADKAR is an acronym that stands for:

*Awareness about the nature of the problem;*

*Desire to change the status quo;*

*Knowledge of how to change;*

*Ability to implement the needed changes; and*

*Reinforcement to maintain the change.*

Hiatt now runs an organization, Prosci, that offers a professional designation in change management using the ADKAR model that many project managers and change agents seek out.

## Appreciative Inquiry

*We have reached the end of problem solving as a mode of inquiry capable of inspiring, mobilizing, and sustaining human system change. The future... belongs to methods that affirm, compel, and accelerate anticipatory learning involving larger and larger levels of collectivity.*

*David Cooperrider, Scholar, Consultant and Pioneer of  
Appreciative Inquiry*

Appreciative Inquiry takes the whole Lewinian model of change and tosses it out the window! Appreciative Inquiry (A/I) was pioneered by David Cooperrider. A/I asks organizations that instead of focusing on what's going wrong and changing it, as we see in a traditional Lewinian model, Cooperrider asks us to focus on the very BEST parts of the organization: our greatest core competencies and grow them. Cooperrider then asks us to use those core competencies to achieve our organizational Destiny. The A/I approach uses a 5D model: Define, Discovery, Dream, Design, Destiny.

*Define is about creating clarity around what exactly the nature of the issue is.*

*Discovery is about determining the strengths.*

*Dreaming is deciding how those strengths can be used.*