

“THE ABILITY TO CHANGE IS ESSENTIAL”

The Change Business

ChangeIn

Supporting change in your business



The Change Business

“To effectively define, manage and deliver change within your business, will ultimately decide your success”

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How we all cope with and manage change has never been more important than it is today. It is imperative, that as individuals and businesses, we are able to adapt and have the flexibility to respond in what is a fast, unpredictable and relentless changing environment.

Unplanned change can cause chaos, panic and a high degree of uncertainty. This is something which we have all witnessed more than ever, during these unprecedented times. This means that businesses need to be more adaptable to change than ever before, with the ability to respond quickly and alter course in line with changing circumstances. This goes beyond being able to just manage change, which can be challenging

enough. It will require you, your teams and your business to introduce and embed a culture of change that runs through the very core of your organisation.

What is clearer now more than ever is the need to have an environment which enables you to change your plans, realign your strategy and redirect your resources and investment to move forward and continue to succeed. This isn't about preparing for the next pandemic but importantly identifying the core areas that you need as a business to create a 'culture' where change is the norm and that provides your business with the platform to grow and thrive whatever the external environment may throw at it!

1. Introduction

We continue to witness increased competition throughout all industries and businesses across the globe and the requirements for driving efficiencies and innovating to remain competitive in an ever-changing marketplace are increasing at an exponential rate.

How we shop, communicate, engage and work will continue to evolve and it is difficult to predict or plan for what will happen next, so it is vital that businesses are able to adapt, change direction and reallocate time and resources to changing priorities. It is not enough just to have a 3-year strategy in place with a

plan to deliver this, businesses have to be more nimble, with the ability to adjust their sails in line with the prevailing winds.

We have all seen many businesses, some of which have been household names for a number of years, fail due largely to the fact that they haven't moved with the changing demands of consumers, increased competition or innovation.

We refer to Business as Usual [BAU] as the day to day operational running of our organisations, but I would argue there is no BAU, not as we knew it anyway. Yes, of course, all of us have to work and undertake the operational activities to keep the hub of businesses operational,

but we ALL (each and every one of us) have to be able to understand and play a role in change. There is an absolute requirement for us, as individuals to become more aware of change and what it means for us on a personal and professional level. In addition, industry professionals need to ensure that people are engaged, supported and guided through the change. Only when these two things meet can change be successful. Those businesses that embrace this, invest in it and recognise the importance of it will thrive, others won't!

There are many, many websites, reports, posts, blogs, vlogs, tweets and books that demonstrate the importance of change

and that also attest to the fact that most businesses don't do it very well. They will show that no matter how many courses, qualifications and consultancies there are specialising in the change area, we are still missing something, or more likely a number of things to make how we define, manage and ultimately deliver successful change.

This book is not a 'how to' guide which will offer a certificate upon completion! It is however a companion for change that should be read by everyone who is involved on any level of change. The content is based on practical and professional experience gained over the past 20+ years in the change business, across multiple industries and sectors.

Where possible, I will not use business or change terminology, instead I will reference this wherever appropriate [] to add context to the discussion. So, before we begin, I just want to be clear on what I mean when I reference the word ‘change’.

‘Anything that we undertake that modifies or alters our current state.’

In the change profession, these are referred to as programmes, projects and portfolios which are intended to effectively structure and deliver change in a business environment. However, the success rate of these has been less than

impressive across industries and we will look at some of the reasons for this later as this will allow us to support some real solutions for change success as we move forward at an increased pace.

The following chapters do not present stages, phases, templates, process diagrams, plans, board structures, risk logs or business cases. Although, each of these do have their place within a change environment, the purpose of this book is to be more of a motivational statement and overarching guide of the core principles that anyone can read and gain value from. My ultimate aim is to improve how we manage change because if we improve this then we create a better environment for lifestyle and work. This

will also make us feel engaged and empowered by the change and not smothered, confused or ignored by it.

Change isn't going away and without wishing to revisit overused rhetoric; as pace of change increases it is imperative that businesses adapt and become more flexible in relation to change.

Businesses must be more flexible, nimble and better at defining and delivering change than ever before. We must accept that historically, change hasn't been delivered into businesses as well as we would have wanted, and it has often taken more time, investment and resources to deliver what we wanted than we first imagined or probably more

appropriately, planned for! This book isn't about developing a new methodology or reinventing an existing one, but more importantly about how we can look to ensure that your business can approach change in the most effective and efficient manner to maximise success.

In essence there are two types of change that we have to manage. Firstly, change that is designed to deliver your strategy and is defined and planned in accordance with this strategy, in line with other business priorities. This is often planned and agreed at the beginning of the financial cycle and aligns to the business planning / strategy approach that your business adopts. This is often

the easier type of change, due to the fact you are able to match this to your available resources, time and other priorities. So, all other things being equal you can begin this change with the confidence that you will deliver it to the agreed plan and therefore fulfil your vision and picture that you have painted to your teams. (If only it were that easy...!)

Secondly, and rather more difficult to manage, is unplanned change. This is change that is required due to something unexpected that has happened i.e. a global pandemic, a change in market conditions, competition, new products or services, consumer demand, innovation and invention etc. Forcing

you to reprioritise, re-plan, rethink, stop certain projects, create a different end picture and story and also being able to do this quickly but efficiently.

Fundamentally, this may mean having to review everything that you took care and time to plan effectively in the first place.

The one thing I ask of you, as you read through the following pages, is to challenge yourself a to ask if your business has these elements, that underpin successful change, in place.

The other two key questions that I would ask you to consider and which encapsulate the key messages in this book are;

‘Are you doing the right change?’

This is determined by how clearly your change is aligned to your strategy and the future direction of your business. How you prioritise and alter direction effectively in line with the internal and external environment.

‘Are you doing change in the right way?’

This refers to how you define, manage and control change and ultimately embed that change and the benefits it delivers into your business.

2. Answer the ‘Why’ Question

We all know that to a greater or lesser extent dependent upon the size, shape and complexity of any business that there will be a need to undergo some form of change at some point in time and quite often numerous changes running in parallel with each other at the same time. Unfortunately, for a lot of businesses a couple of things can happen here. Firstly, the ‘why’ is not fully understood and assessed in enough detail by the people who have defined the need to change. i.e. it is misguided or doesn’t align with the strategy or contradicts

something else that is happening in the business. Secondly, even if this is understood, the ‘why’ question has not engaged the people and teams in the business who are involved or impacted by the change. Therefore, most changes in businesses irrespective of industry, will fail or at the very least reduce the chance of success right from the outset. Engagement should not be interpreted as just sending out a newsletter announcing a new IT system or a press release stating a new office has opened. Yes, these may make up part of a wider communications approach, but this section is about the upfront effort required to engage and get people’s attention before any change is even planned and taking them on the change journey. If you fail to engage

your teams and customers in the ‘why’ question at the outset, then they will be the ones asking ‘why’ when you are trying to deliver the change. Some of these may sound familiar;

‘Why have we bought that new system?’

‘Why have we gone and merged with another company?’

‘Why is this the first I have heard of this and I be expected to use it from tomorrow?’

‘Why have we expanded that line when the industry has seen a downturn?’

And probably the best or worse is;

‘Why are we doing all this change, I just don’t understand any of it. . .’

I am not saying this applies to every single business. As with every aspect of

this book, there will be some businesses that do these things really well and others less so. This is about raising the bar of quality of change across all businesses.

It is also not meant to be critical, but more to challenge your thinking and help to evolve and improve the management of change in your business.

The most effective way to engage the ‘why’ change question, is if it is linked to your business’s strategy. This only works if the strategy is understood and embedded into the business. This is a separate area and the topic of many other books, but if there is a clear direction for your business then it makes

it easier to engage in the ‘why’ we need to change. i.e. our strategy states that we are going to grow by 20% over the next 3 years and therefore a change to our sales approach or a new acquisition can be easily linked back to this target.

However, I do stress this is only the very start of the engagement in the ‘why’ question.

There is a need to understand, identify and engage with those individuals, teams and customers [stakeholders] that will either be required to contribute to the change or be impacted by the change.

The main issue here is that a lot of businesses fail to recognise that this takes effort and it takes time. Unfortunately, the pressure on ‘just getting started’ or

‘to just crack on’ overshadows the absolute need for this ‘buy in’. Never sacrifice the engagement of stakeholders in the ‘why’ we are implementing change for the perceived fast pace delivery of the change. Time invested at the outset in shaping change will be handsomely paid back in the quality, engagement and embedding of the change in the business as it is managed and delivered. This is as close to a fact as successful change can represent. If you fail to do this effectively it will increase costs, reduce the return and demotivate your teams.

The ‘why’ question, wherever possible, needs to be personal.

‘What does this mean for me?’

‘What do I get from this change?’

Like everything this has to be proportional as we shouldn't expect the CEO of a large organisation to go and speak to every single person individually however they should reach out to everyone so that they feel individual. How effectively this is undertaken defines the platform on which to build successful change. Failure to build a solid platform means that it will eventually break.

The vital part of this approach is to ensure that people feel that they have

genuinely been listened too. You may not be able to satisfy everyone's needs or wants or answer every question that people have, but people need to feel listened to and engaged in this process. There is however, a careful balance to be had because you need to engage and listen to your stakeholders. However, the pace of change is unrelenting, so equally, you cannot afford not to progress at the appropriate pace. This is where a business is reliant on the support of change professionals, to be able to understand the business, the pace of change and engage at the appropriate levels to balance engagement with speed.

The second aspect of 'why' has to be centred on what it means for the

business, team, individual or customer. This can never be, but often is, expressed in the terms of a system or process or material thing [output] but always, without exception should be articulated as to how the change will impact these stakeholders in relation to a positive or even negative result [outcome].

3. Paint the Picture and Tell the Story

It is difficult to determine which are the most important aspects of change, because for different reasons all the principles that I outline in this book are equally important and due care and attention must be given to each of them. However, being able to create and communicate a clear picture of how it will all look and feel once you have delivered the change is vital. People need to **SEE** the end picture so that they can start to understand the journey that you are going to take them on. This not only supports and validates the 'why' are we

doing it question, it actively starts to create engagement and commitment for the change.

Painting the picture [creating the vision] should be exactly that. It should be visual, and it should be visible. Put it in a frame, put it on the wall and talk about it regularly. There is nothing more compelling and engaging than a well-defined picture of change. Sometimes there is a need to be creative with this because it can be challenging to create a picture of a new process or a new system or even a new way of working. The key here is to create the picture in the eyes of the customer or end user. What is going to be the result of the change? More time to collaborate, improved time to work

together, slicker process that removes some of the mundane tasks. It is less important for people to know that it is a new system or process but what will be different for them [outcome]. Painting the picture starts with the end user or customer in mind; Always! This is the fundamental reason as to why change should never be led by IT and should always be led by the business and driven by the customer or user need.

The picture is only the beginning. It needs to be clear, it needs to be engaging and it needs to mean something to the people and teams that will be part of the change. From the end picture people need to understand how they are going to get from where they are [current state]

to this end picture [future state]. The picture, if created effectively, will develop a sense of excitement, engagement and hopefully passion. However, in the absence of a route [roadmap] to get from here to there, this excitement will very quickly develop into fear, confusion and resentment. At this early stage of any change you will not have the level of information to define all the details of the journey but that's ok, just build up the route with the key changes, again with the end user in mind. This should be approached as if you were creating a map. Provide enough information so that people can see their own way to the destination but accept, at this stage, you are unable to plan for roadworks or diversions, and

there WILL be some. This is the nature of change.

As with every great picture there should be a great story. The story brings the image to life and should make the change compelling.

There is a need to give people the background, the reasons, the context, the start the middle and the end. The three key principles here are:

- 1. Be clear and ensure the story is engaging and supports the picture.***

2. The story is not just told once and then put back on the shelf.

3. Ensure there is a Chief Storyteller [sponsor] who is the narrator of the story and therefore the change.

The good news here is that you don't have to write a book! BUT you do need more than a newsletter, email, conversation and a blog post. Don't get me wrong, each of these contribute to the ongoing communication of change but they never replace the initial engagement. This, as with most of the principles outlined here, will take some

dedication and time. Again, this should be proportional but more importantly it should be dedicated time, not an afterthought, not a 'when I get around to it'. No, this has to be a priority, that is if you are going to take change seriously.

4. Change is Personal

Change encompasses many moving parts, but the most important aspect of any change are the people. Virtually every change you undertake in any business will involve or impact people, so it is always slightly bemusing as to why people come second to products and systems, particularly IT systems, when we talk about change.

We have to accept and understand that a lot of people fear change and are not willing to engage in it or accept it. This is just human nature but if you fail to recognise this then your change will more than likely not succeed. We have to

acknowledge that change is personal and as such people will make individual decisions and react to change based on their own personal perceptions or feelings. These perceptions and feelings are influenced by many factors and the success of any change will be largely dependent upon your ability to identify, engage and manage them.

The human factor with change is complex. Emotions, politics, opinions, gossip and rumours all play a role, whether you like it or not. People may become demotivated, defensive, obstructive, confused or worried and all of these will have a negative impact on those individuals themselves as well as

(upon) the wider change that you are trying to achieve.

Change should be seen as an opportunity and something that is positive for those involved. No one deliberately sets out to change something to make it worse, although the view from people following the implementation of change is sometimes exactly that.

*“Why did they go and change it?
Everything was working just fine as it
was.”*

Or even worse than this. . .

*“This is so much worse that it was before
they started, why didn’t they just speak to
us before and we could have told them it
wasn’t going to work?”*

Unfortunately, statements like this or similar variations thereof are all too common with change. The good news is that it doesn't and shouldn't have to be like this, BUT we need to recognise the importance of people throughout every aspect of change and the right time and effort needs to be invested to ensure that this happens. Again, there is a balance to be struck with all of this and we can't ignore the pace that change sometimes needs to move at. One of the most effective ways to support organisational change is to create a **change culture** in your business. We will look at this in more detail later but fundamentally this is about breaking down barriers and engaging your teams in the principles of change so when you are actually

undertaking a change, people are already invested and engaged so thereby enabling you to move quicker and with more agility.

Being clear on the ‘why’, painting the picture and telling the story are important parts when engaging your teams and / or customers, but this is only ever the starting point.

People have to feel a part of the change and not a recipient of it. They need to be involved and engaged and their thoughts, concerns and ideas must be given the correct platform. Of course, there are some changes that your business will undertake that may have a negative impact on people. Efficiency

improvements could mean a change in organisational structures which may lead to people's jobs being at risk. In this situation it is vital that you are transparent in relation to the potential outcomes and look where possible to create a positive situation. Having a clear picture that everyone can understand will assist greatly with this and whilst some people may not always be happy with the proposed results from the change the first and most important step is that they understand it and crucially understand how it may affect them as individuals.

This always has to be at the earliest opportunity in the process and it has to be two way. Clearly, the level of personal

engagement that you are able to do will be dependent upon a number of factors such as size of organisation, the complexity and scope of change as well as the maturity of your business when it comes to managing such changes. It still has to feel personal, even if you can't sit down with everyone in your business.

Another perspective is to focus on the individual and ask the 'what's in it for me?' question. This helps to tailor your engagement to specific groups of people in your business [stakeholder analysis]. There are some good approaches that should be considered here. Reward, recognition and development.

Ideally you want your people to be ‘at one’ with the vision and direction of the company, fully bought into the strategy and leadership that’s in place. This may be the case already or it may be the ultimate aim but either way change still has an impact on people, irrespective of how understanding they may be to business goals.

Reward is rarely linked to change initiatives, and, in my opinion, this is often a missed opportunity. Rewarding people for the part they play in change can be very beneficial, particularly if they are positive advocates of change and are invested in spreading the message and engaging other teams and individuals. This, of course, has to be proportional to

the level of change but remember the reward doesn't always have to be financial. Giving people back time to spend with their family, inviting people to an event they wouldn't normally get to go to or providing vouchers for something that they are interested in. Again, taking time to understand your people allows you to get closer to their interests and there is nothing quite as rewarding as being given something that is personal to you. I have seen this work very effectively on a number of occasions where someone has done a good job and received a voucher that contributes to a hobby that they have a particular interest in. This not only provides a reward for the additional effort but demonstrates to that person that you have taken the time

to find out what is personal to them. This is not difficult to do, doesn't cost a lot of money and creates a real sense of being valued. A reward structure aligned to a change initiative can be a valuable tool, particularly if it is aimed at creating a sense of value for teams and individuals. This can help in offsetting the disruption and potential disengagement from change, BUT it does require some careful consideration as to what is appropriate for each particular change initiative.

Recognition is often under-utilised across business in general but particularly in relation to change. Unless you are a change professional it is rare that 'change' is part of people's job

descriptions, it probably should be, but that's a discussion for another chapter. Therefore, anyone who is involved in change, at any level, is probably engaging in it outside of their normal day job. Well placed recognition can have a very positive impact on individuals and teams. This can range from a 'pat on the back' to a call or note from a senior leader offering personal appreciation for the extra effort or a job well done. Quite often this can have a greater impact than a financial reward and can result in a real sense of being valued. Someone else, particularly a senior leader, taking the time to recognise people's efforts should be a fundamental element of any change. To be honest it should be a fundamental part of business life itself and I am often

surprised about how little I see recognition being offered, particularly as it costs absolutely nothing.

As an aside, and as you are reading this I would like you to make a personal commitment that you will go into your place of work tomorrow (or Monday if you are reading this over the weekend) and recognise someone's efforts or achievements. It doesn't have to be some great achievement, it can be small, and it can be anyone. From the office cleaner, receptionist or personal assistant to the team leader, accountant or marketing officer. The only rule here is to be sincere, be genuine and show that you really care and appreciate what they have done. Can you imagine if each of us took

the time to do this every week for someone, what a difference it would make to the engagement and motivation within your business.

Recognition can be both personal i.e. delivered directly to an individual or more widely in a team meeting, presentation or even a specific awards ceremony.

Celebrating success is a core part of recognition and successful change.

The other area to consider in relation to aligning change to individuals or teams is to consider it as a development

opportunity. Providing additional learning of new skills and experiences that could provide future promotional or job opportunities will also compliment or add value to their existing job. A lot of skills required for defining, managing and implementing change are transferable into most areas of work and even people's personal lives. A good example of this is 'planning'. Detailed project planning does require specialist skills, software and knowledge and is often, in complex change initiatives, a role in its own right. However, the basic principles of planning can be applied to any type of plan and the thought process can even support daily tasks and activities that you may need to undertake.

The key principles are that a plan is made up of 3 core components.

1. A list of tasks.
2. Time taken to do each task.
3. A list of the people who will undertake each of those tasks.

As change increases in complexity then the number of tasks, number of people and amount of time can increase and therefore the management of the change requires some specialist resource [Project Manager]. But this does not prevent people applying these principles to simple tasks and activities and this is certainly something that can be learnt as part of being involved in a change initiative. Providing teams and

individuals with the opportunity to learn is a great way to build engagement. What started out as something that people felt was being done to them becomes something in which they are now engaged in and rewarded for. They are also offered learning opportunities as part of the process. When this happens, change becomes part of everyone's goals and opportunities and not just something that is undertaken behind closed doors in the board rooms of large organisations.

5. Ambassadors of Change

I have chosen the word ‘Ambassador’ carefully here. I could have used leader, director, champion or a number of others, but the reason I have chosen this is that people who are driving the change in the business need to believe in it, they need to be invested in the change, passionate about its success and look for any opportunity to engage with others and make them passionate about the change also. Ultimately, they must be Ambassadors of change. The ‘Chief Storyteller’ [Sponsor] is the main role when it comes to ambassadorial duties, but it does not stop with them. You have to develop a network of change

ambassadors in the organisation. These are the people who will be the eyes, ears and mouthpiece of change. This won't be a specific or full-time role so this needs to be considered when engaging people to undertake this position.

Change often happens without a real ambassadorial role to drive it and then we are surprised when the initiative loses its way and people become disengaged. This is often after significant resources, now wasted, have been invested in the change. Being the ambassador [sponsor] of a change requires a real vested interest and passion for that change to be a success. Quite often we see people allocated into this role because they are asked to do it and not because they have

a genuine interest or passion. Can people become beacons of change without a real interest or passion in it? Yes, it's possible, but highly unlikely. They would undertake the role in name only and if the storyteller isn't that interested in the story then they won't convey any passion to people listening. This is seen all too often across the change industry and then we are surprised when it fails for lack of sponsor engagement, one of the most cited reasons for why change fails across industries.

We will discuss change culture in a later chapter but for any business to be successful with change, it requires the leaders in the organisation (CEO,

Managing Director, COO's and Directors) to understand, support and become the guiding force that provides each of the change initiatives with guidance and decision making based upon the relative priorities informed through the strategy for the business. The challenge with a lot of leadership teams (and I mean no disrespect when I say this) is that they are not the change professionals. They are experts in many aspects of commerciality within organisations and they rely on certain specialisms around the corporate boardroom for guidance on HR, IT and Finance over which you will find a senior leader but rather confusingly there is rarely someone around that table who provides the

guidance and specialist knowledge when it comes to change.

My personal view is that there is a requirement at board level for a change professional to not only support the executive team but to work as a peer alongside this team. This role would assist in the alignment with the change required to deliver the organisational strategy and also how to define, manage and deliver this change in relation to the investment and resources required. This is one of the fundamental reasons why the management and delivery of change is unsuccessful. Ultimately, change cannot be delivered if it is not supported and driven by the leadership teams and this is difficult to achieve if there is not a

peer-to-peer relationship between a change executive and other senior executives that lead the different areas of the business.

6. Change Control

Change doesn't happen by itself and left uncontrolled can cause more harm than good to you and your organisation. The correct level of control [governance] is imperative as it can be the difference between success or failure, cost overruns, delays and engagement with your teams. Too much control can stifle and delay change and lead to frustration and can also reduce the level of innovation in your business. No one will want to bring forward a good idea if they are required to complete reams of paperwork and go through a myriad of approvals to get their idea heard! Conversely too little control will result in

projects growing and spinning off in all directions, absorbing resources, money and time. Either one of these outcomes will have a detrimental impact on change in your business so the balance of control needs to be right.

To get the correct controls in place requires the people shaping the change to know and understand your business. One of the biggest failings of the appropriate level of controls around change is that people tend to use an off the shelf framework or methodology and force fit this into the organisation rather than integrating the right framework aligned to the maturity and structure of the business. To create the real value requires you to have the appropriate

knowledge and experience to apply the right level of framework and methodology that is fit for purpose for YOUR business. This should not be misinterpreted as picking and choosing what to use as this weakens the entire change framework, but more to ensure that the core pillars of control are addressed and are appropriate for the change and the business. This is where the right support of a change professional can add significant value, on the basis that they take the time to understand your business and apply the appropriate controls to change. Never get trapped into a position where someone is enforcing an off the shelf solution into your business. Although it may look fit for purpose, it may well end

up costing more in the long run and have a negative impact on the delivery of change. The best solution is to partner with someone who is able to add real value by understanding your business, your maturity with managing change and your current skills and capability and translating this into a specific solution for you and your organisation. As mentioned previously, if you can have a permanent change professional at an exec level in your business then this would add the most value. The money you need to invest in this would be returned many times over in the delivery of structured, prioritised and strategically aligned change.

The level of control should be scalable to the size, complexity and level of risk of the change that you are undertaking but should never dilute the core principles of that control which is primarily there to maximise the benefits that you and your organisation receive from any change initiative.

Unfortunately, the control of change [governance] across industry generally needs improvement. This is not the part when I outline the perfect control framework with just the right amount of governance to always ensure successful change because I can't and anyone who tells you they have the perfect solution to manage change for your business, without actually knowing your business

should be avoided at all costs. I love a good change methodology as much as the next change professional, but would I assume that this is right for your business on the basis that I have just passed an exam? No, I wouldn't, and neither should anyone else.

7. The Board Game

My intention here is not to trivialise the importance of ‘Board Meetings’, but when it comes to making decisions in relation to change, they do need some attention.

Boards appear in all shapes and sizes when it comes to change (Project, Programme, Portfolio, Steering, Exec, Risk, Change . . .) and sometimes it is absolutely appropriate to have some of these in place to support a change. However, there are a number of considerations that need to be taken into account.

1. **Clear purpose.** What is the board in place to do?
2. **Fit for purpose.** Suitable for the type and size of change that is being undertaken as well as the size type and change maturity of the organisation.
3. **Clear roles and responsibilities.** Everyone needs to be clear of their part on the board.
4. **Right information.** To enable clear decisions and actions to be made.

In general, there is often too much paper, too many pages in packs, far too many graphs, charts, tables and far too much text and narrative.

It is easy to dismiss this due to the perceived need for large amounts of information, particularly on large, complex change programmes but I would argue there is very little need for such swathes of information in order to manage change successfully.

Boards and meetings that are utilised to provide direction and decisions in relation to change should be focused on exactly that. Decisions and direction and not lots of discussion. If a 'change' has been defined clearly, with a picture and story that everyone has bought into then 'board meetings' are about enabling that story to remain on track and to make decisions or take alternative actions if, for whatever reason, the story deviates

from the one that was communicated at the outset.

I have quite often known the preparation and development of ‘packs of information’ that feed into meetings to take 5 - 6 times longer than the meeting itself . . . and however you look at it, that just can’t be right!

The duration, frequency, content and attendees will always vary, dependent on the size and complexity of the change, however there is a real need to be more disciplined when it comes to these meetings. You will need to develop a structure, format and approach that is right for your business and the change that is being delivered and a lot of the

time, this will be influenced by the style of the senior executive or management. Some people like lots of information, others are happy with a 'one page' dashboard. There is no right or wrong way BUT the level of information has to be fit for purpose and enable the efficient decision making in relation to that change.

Challenge yourself as to how can we do this better? How can we make meetings more productive, shorter, more focused? How do we optimise the amount of information going into meetings? Who needs to be there? What are the key outcomes we want from the meeting?

What are the key outcomes we want to achieve?

Always start with this last question, first. Be clear what the outcome is that you are looking for from the meeting and build the meeting structure around this. Invite the right people and build the information to achieve this outcome. If you don't have a clear outcome defined that is accepted and understood by everyone then I would question if you need the meeting at all!

There is a skill involved in developing the format and structure of information and there are many versions of dashboards and visual reports, supported by

numerous software packages out there. You need to develop what is the right approach for your business without making an industry out of it! This is actually more challenging than it sounds and will take concerted and focused efforts to create the right balance of flexibility, agility and control.

8. Can you see it?

This chapter links back to where we started with the compelling picture and story to drive the change. Specifically, this section covers the importance of the visibility and transparency as change progresses along the roadmap towards the ultimate destination [future state].

Not only does the story, picture and map need to be visible and consistently referred to as part of the change discussion, the progress of all the component parts, that will ultimately deliver the change, need to be visible to everyone involved or impacted [stakeholders]. People need to see

progress, next steps, what is changing, when and what it means for them as teams or individuals. There is little point in ‘painting the picture’ of a 3-year change journey and then not demonstrating the progress made against this!

It is also important to make visible the challenges that you come across on the journey (and there will be challenges), some of which may require a change in direction.

For some reason, challenges, issues or problems with change are often only discussed amongst small groups of people within the confines of a board meeting. That is not to say that everyone

needs to see everything BUT change must be transparent and that includes sharing some of the key challenges that are encountered on the change journey. Some of the best engagement I have seen, is when wider groups of people are engaged in developing solutions to the challenge or issue that is being faced. This not only creates a high degree of transparency but also engages people in becoming a vested part of the solution. Don't hide away from problems and don't see them as a negative reflection on yourself, teams or individuals. Change is constantly evolving and sometimes it is difficult to predict what is around the next corner so remain true to the end goal or picture, manage the detour and engage your teams in developing

solutions to keep the change journey heading in the right direction.

Another element that falls under transparency and visibility of change is ‘honesty’. I am not suggesting that people involved in change avoid the truth but sometimes they find it difficult to be open and honest about the current and future state of the change journey; some of these comments by senior leaders are rare, often hard, but refreshing to hear;

‘Due to a change in market conditions we need to pause and realign our change initiatives to avoid unnecessary costs and our time’

‘Our ultimate destination is no longer valid, so we need to rethink’

‘We are going to stop this piece of work as it no longer contributes to our wider change journey’

In my opinion, those organisations who are able to recognise this and either pause or stop to rethink or realign, are those organisations who have a high degree of maturity and capability in delivering change. Too often, pausing or admitting there are problems or challenges, are seen as a weakness, when really, they are the greatest strengths.

The approach to communication and engagement with change is crucial. Too much and you can hinder actual progress, but too little can alienate your teams, disengaging them from the story,

blurring the picture and ultimately derailing the change journey. The balance has to be right for the level of change that is being undertaken and taking time on the planning for engagement and communication at the earliest point in the change will provide a solid platform on which to maintain momentum.

As with all stages of change, there are many processes, templates and tools you can use. However as with any aspect of change, they have to be fit for purpose for your organisation and the level of change that you are undertaking. There are generally no advantages on picking one tool or methodology over another and a quick 'google' search will produce

a myriad of ‘ways to effectively plan and manage change’. There is nothing wrong with this, but you can bury yourself and your organisation in producing tools, templates and techniques that people don’t actually understand, don’t read and don’t engage with.

The key here is to stick to the core principles that I outline in this book, the detail below this can then be tailored to your organisation. Again, to reference a point made earlier, help from an external change specialist, who will take the time to understand your organisation, can assist in providing the right tools and methodology to support the change. The point to note here is that templates, tools

or techniques will only ever ‘support’ and never drive or embed the change.

So, back to the question that the chapter poses, ‘Can you see it?’. One way to determine if people see and understand the change is to ask them! If you undertake a regular survey with those involved or impacted by the change and get their feedback on the level of visibility and engagement that they have, then this is a great way to realign and validate your communication and engagement approach.

Despite the previous point about balance, the general feedback, when it comes to change is that there is not enough engagement and

communication, particularly outside of the teams involved in the actual delivery of change. So, without exception, time dedicated to developing the right approach to communication and engagement, will positively contribute to the success of the change.

There are multiple options that can be applied here, from briefing sessions, blogs, video messages from senior leaders, drop in sessions, posters, email to engagement workshops, newsletters, promotional materials etc. The key points are that whatever options you choose you have to;

- **Make it relevant to the audience**

- **Be clear and concise**
- **Define what your message is and what impact you want it to have**
- **Make it regular enough to engage but not stifle teams**
- **Make it engaging and two way (embrace the feedback and tell people what you are doing about it!)**

9. The Change Team

When I refer to a ‘change team’ I refer to those people who have the professional skills and capabilities to define, plan, manage and deliver change [Portfolio, Programme and Project Managers, Business Analysts and Change Managers].

To deliver successful change will require a combination of these roles and dependent upon the size of your organisation and the size and complexity of the change will determine the number and role types that are required to deliver the change. This is where it can become a little more challenging! Do you

recruit a permanent team? As with any other area of your business, that is in place to support the definition and deliver change. Or do you bring in flexible staff, such as contractors or consultants that are employed temporarily to deliver a specific change and then leave the organisation?

There is no right or wrong answer to this. Businesses generally employ a combination of a permanent team and then contractor or consultant resources to compliment and support this team through specified change activities.

Whatever the combination, you have to build the change team for 'YOUR' business. Traditionally, change

professionals are focused on and skilled in executing and delivering change projects. They are able to take the scope of something that the business wants to achieve, articulate this into a clear plan of activities, resources and timescales and deliver against this. This, however, relies on two fundamental principles. The first is that the change that the team has been asked to deliver is the 'right' change and secondly that the people you have in place to deliver the change are actually a team.

Let's consider the second point here. This may sound a little strange because a group of people brought together to deliver a change are generally considered to be a team and in some respect that is

true. However, in my view, work has to be put in, at the outset, to build a team and ultimately with the aim to create a High Performing Change Team (HPCT). There are numerous books, training programmes and coaching approaches that look at how to develop high performing teams and this is equally if not more important for a change team. It is more important because this team have to work closely together, often in a pressurised environment, to deliver multiple outputs against a plan that requires close coordination, multiple and frequent engagement and for that team to act as the delivery driver to that change. This team have to ensure that there is a high degree of transparency to all aspects of change and as such need to

be closely aligned and joined up towards achieving those deliverables.

You cannot just put a group of people together and expect them to deliver successful change. At best it will take longer, cause greater friction that will impact quality and importantly increase the risk, creating a negative perception of change across the organisation. So, it is important that time is taken at the outset to recruit, form and develop not just a cohesive change team, but a team that know each other, understand each other and who will work together to support each other for the benefit of your business and the change. If you get this right, you will have a team that can deliver pretty much anything!

So, what do you look for? That unfortunately is a difficult question to answer. You need to understand the individual, their drivers, motivations, weaknesses and strengths. You need to know their preferred style and what their predominant behaviours are. Then you need to blend those together with other's strengths, styles and behaviours, to form a successful, coherent and world beating change team. The principle of forming a HPCT is often overlooked as the urgency to 'get started' on delivery quickly overtakes this. However, time taken to form, develop and build a HPCT will pay off many times over.

I would go as far as to say that the best change teams I have worked with, been

part of and led are friends. They understand each other, they know each other and because of that, the support, drive, commitment and engagement of those teams is never in doubt. They will work together for the benefit of each other and for the success of the change and the business. So, take the time and develop a clear plan as to how you want to build that team. I would go as far as to say that developing a programme to create, develop and maintain a HPCT, in your business, is well worth the investment. It will add value in engaging some external support to help develop this programme, which again needs to be aligned to the structure and specific needs of your business, not just an off the shelf solution.

Do you need someone who understands your business to lead change in your business? It's an important question. If you have clearly defined the change then you can hand this to a change professional to undertake the delivery. In this respect you are reliant on the delivery skills of that person and the wider change team and not necessarily knowledge of your business. However, my argument would be that your business would benefit from a Lead or Head of Change, with both the knowledge of change methodology, frameworks and techniques and also with the understanding of your strategy and your business. This would enable that person to assist in aligning the changes to the strategy of the business

and to manage the dependencies across numerous change activities whilst developing the right balance of permanent and temporary change resources that can work together and develop into a HPCT. Not an easy task! Critically, this role will provide the link between the Chief Change Officer (discussed in the next chapter) and the delivery teams as well as the wider groups of people across your business that will be involved in the change.

As you build your change team, it is highly likely that you will be bringing in people who have vast experience on other change activities and projects from other organisations, industries and sectors. You need to harness this

experience for the benefit of your business. As part of the development of your HPCT you need to identify areas of your new teams' skills and experience that you can utilise to build and develop your own framework and approach to change. There is however a risk with new team members and their pre-existing programmed ways of working. You do not want, at any cost, for those people to start managing and delivering change how they did it previously, or in the last organisation! This will cause chaos and ultimately confuse and potentially derail your approach, undoing all the effort and work you have put in to establish the framework of change in your business.

It is worth creating an ‘Induction’ approach, which would form a part of your HPCT programme. This not only engages new team members with your ‘ways of working’ and change framework but will minimise the risk of creating different working approaches, whilst enabling you to identify those skills and experience that individuals will bring into your business and that you can benefit from. This will then form a wider approach to knowledge transfer and skills development.

10. The Chief Change Officer (CCO)

It continues to perplex me as to why there is no role on the board for a change or transformation specialist. All other key roles in an organisation are covered. CEO (Chief Executive Officer), CPO (Chief People Officer), CFO (Chief Financial Officer), CRO (Chief Risk Officer), CTO (Chief Technology Officer), CIO (Chief Information Officer) . . . but rarely do you see CCO!

Normally you find that the responsibility for change resides with the CTO as traditionally change has been seen as

technology led (change should always, without exception be business led) or maybe with the CPO because change impacts people the most. In some instances the CEO themselves take on the responsibility. My strong argument is that each of these roles has a distinct responsibility in their own right and to add the responsibility for change on to this undermines the importance of change itself! A CCO needs to be able to work with all those roles around the boardroom to ensure;

- **As a business we are ‘doing the right change’**
- **We are delivering this change ‘in the right way’**

- **We are developing a change culture that enables the business to be more flexible to a change in strategy or change in the external environment.**

On the surface this seems to be a relatively basic and almost ridiculous question. Why would anyone or any business undertake the wrong change? It is not so much a point of the wrong change, as most changes that businesses embark on will deliver some form of benefit (not all, but most) to that business, but how do you ensure that the collection of changes [portfolio] are the optimum set to deliver the business strategy? This is the role of the CCO, to work at board level, with their peers, to

articulate the businesses strategy into a series of change activities [programme and projects] that will drive the business forwards. They would also provide the link into the Change Lead or Head of Change role, as previously discussed, to ensure that ‘change is delivered in the right way’. i.e. with the optimum framework, controls and the right change team.

The other key accountabilities for the CCO would encompass;

- Executive owner of Change across the business
- Accountability for developing a ‘Change Culture’ (see separate chapter)

- Support the Chief Storyteller in engaging the business in the story, picture and roadmap of change
- Accountability for the effective translation of change activities aligned to the business strategy
- Reporting progress on change activities to the board
- Accountability for the Change Team (s) and line management of the business change lead or Head of Change
- Working with the CTO to align the technology enablers of change
- Working with the CFO to align ROI from change and ensuring anticipated benefits are effectively defined and realised

- Working with the CRO to ensure change risk is effectively managed and incorporated into organisation risk frameworks
- Working with the CPO to develop engagement strategies to support the development of a change culture
- Supporting the CPO in defining a Change Development Programme across the business
- Working to ensure that Change is a part of everyone's role in the business and along with the CPO build this into objectives and development opportunities

As with any board or senior level appointment within any organisation it is

difficult to find the right person with the right experience, skills and overall 'fit' for your business. This is no different to the CCO role. The person must not only have the relevant experience and skills across all areas of change but also be able to engage the business in that change and be passionate and driven to achieve those changes on behalf of the business and the board.

11. The Need to Focus

There is always a demand to try and do more than we are already doing, the need to strive for improvement, new ways of working, ideas, new services, products, operating models, structures... In principle this is a sensible and a proactive approach to remaining ahead of the competition through leading your business to a new and improved future. But there is an inherent risk that by trying to do too much, you lose focus and that this will ultimately reduce the benefits that you are trying to achieve.

It is easy to try to do lots of things, most of the time with good intentions but not

focusing on the ‘right things’ will have a negative impact on your business. At best it will reallocate resources and investment on the wrong or less beneficial changes, at worst it will confuse and overload your teams and divert attention away from the real and ‘right change’ that you need to deliver to move your business forwards, in the right direction.

Your business strategy is clearly articulated, you have defined the ‘why’ question and you have painted a clear picture with a roadmap to take you there. This is your framework on which to provide the required focus on change in your business. Never move away from the picture or vision that you have

created and engaged your business in and remain within this framework of what you are trying to achieve. If you do this, every change that you instigate can be traced back to your strategy and will have a place on the roadmap. Your teams, customers and partners will understand and engage and through this understanding, they will be more committed to the change you are looking to achieve.

Remaining focused and aligned to your ‘story’, ‘picture’ and ‘journey’ of change will help to keep your teams motivated with a clear line of sight to what you are trying to deliver.

Even if there is a specific change [project], that in isolation, your teams can't see what it delivers, then as long as they can see it forms part of the change journey [roadmap], there is a much greater chance that people will remain engaged. They will be able to see the bigger picture as it forms part of the overall story. This is a significant challenge for most businesses, as they

are unable to articulate what each change actually delivers and therefore people become disengaged, uninterested and generally demotivated and confused.

You have to be able to clearly articulate all changes in your business, why you are doing them, what the benefits are (particularly to individuals) and how they fit with the strategy. If you are unable to do this then there is a real need to question why you are doing the changes in the first place.

As a general observation, businesses are not good at saying no! What I mean by this is that if a change [project] is developed, the rationale, cost and some benefits are articulated [business case] then quite often this will be approved

without the necessary level of rigour, challenge and alignment to the strategy, vision and roadmap. It may appear, that in isolation the change looks a good idea, it may even improve certain aspects of your business, however you need to continually challenge as to whether this is aligned to what you, as a business, set out to achieve and therefore is it the ‘right’ change to be undertaking. If it isn’t, then you have to remain focused and say no. If you do approve such a change then at best you are wasting time and resources that could be better allocated on other, aligned, change activities and at worst, if this is a pattern, then you will create a state of confusion, overload and inertia of change throughout your business and once this

happens it is very difficult to get it back under any real control or direction. This is primarily one of the key issues we see across businesses today, in relation to change.

It is also worth considering that even if your changes are aligned to your strategy and form part of your roadmap and overall vision for your business, you won't be able to do everything you want to at the same time. There is always a drive to want to get to the end of the journey as quick as you can, ensuring your business achieves its new future operating state, ahead of the competition and the changing face of industry. Again, there is a word of caution here:

You can't do everything you want at the pace you want to do it!

Prioritise change. You can't do everything at the same time!

It is essential that you are able to effectively prioritise change in line with the resources and investment that you have to deliver it. Some businesses would argue that they are able to move faster through increasing the size of their change teams and even by outsourcing the change or engaging consultants. This can work, but only to a certain extent as the real risk is with the availability and engagement of your other teams across

the business. If the pace is too fast and there is too much change, irrespective that it may be the 'right' change, then your teams will become overwhelmed and ultimately disengaged. You therefore have to strike the right balance between pace of change, availability of investment and change resources, but most importantly the capacity and engagement of your wider teams [stakeholders] in that change. You have to remain focused and also prioritise, for your change to be successful.

Ultimately, there are too many businesses trying to do too much of the wrong change. This is caused by a lack of focus and prioritisation of the right change that is in alignment with the picture and story they set out to achieve. This is not easy

but it is an absolute requirement to ensuring successful change delivery in your business.

In addition to focus and prioritisation, another issue that plagues businesses is the need to just get on and deliver, or as some refer to as the JFDI (Just F***ing Do It) principle.

There is a very fine balance between creating a sense of urgency, which is an essential part of successful change, and the lack of control and time required to plan and structure the change and how it will be delivered. All too often we see change being started with a sense of impatience for the right level of planning. This approach may deliver

some quick wins, which unfortunately perpetuate the rush to move forwards, however what this undoubtedly leads to, is mistakes being made, duplication of effort and a reduction in quality of overall deliverables and outcomes, not to mention a sense of chaos and panic that can then cripple change activities.

Building the foundations to successful change is vital.

The need to implement the right controls and structure does not mean a need to 'go slow'. It just means that the pace should be dictated by the resources you have available aligned to the right engagement with your teams across the business, managed within the right

structure and control framework. Time taken to plan, establish the right engagement and ensure everyone is aligned is valuable effort and time. This should never be comprised for the perceived need to just ‘get on with it’.

There is a worrying trend in that businesses continue to rely on the type of methodology used to dictate the pace of change. For example, ‘agile’ methodology is often used as a reason to just start and adapt as you go. My view is that this is misunderstood and misleading. Agile, like any other change [programme, project] methodology has its place in supporting and controlling change, but it is only that, a tool to support change and not the driver or

determining factor of change. There is no substitute for the core principles outlined in this book.

Create the picture [vision]

Tell the story [articulate the change]

Define the steps [create a roadmap]

Create the right framework

Build the right structure

Follow the right methodology

12. Do we Need Help

Simply put the answer to this question is often, yes. It is a fact that you will not have the resources, skills, experience and knowledge to deliver every change in your business in the timescales that you want to. You will need external help and support to guide and manage change. The key is knowing what support you need and when it will be required.

There are many options that you can look to for support. The optimum approach, dependent upon the size of your business and the complexity and scale of the change and transformation that you are looking to deliver, is to have

an internal platform on which to build temporary specialist resources. Any resources or wider support you bring in to the business should have a clear aim of not only delivery but also developing the knowledge and skills of your existing capability. This will mean that you will rely less on external support in the future as the capability of your internal teams develop.

At ChangeIn we specialise in providing short-term, targeted support to assist businesses in all aspects of Change and Transformation.

Our approach centres on fractional and interim support, allowing us to deliver significant value by providing businesses

with quick access to specialist resources in areas where additional expertise is needed. This enables businesses to optimise their own team's skills and knowledge and continue to get benefits from established processes and ways of working.

This would add value for smaller and medium size business, where they may not have in house Change and Transformation Teams or alternatively, can also drive significant value to support larger scale transformation, where additional expertise and support may be required.

13. Creating a Change Culture

In essence this chapter forms one of the key areas of the entire book. I am confident when I say that every business will have had some form of success of delivering change, as well as a number of not so successful attempts, as much as we like not to admit them! It is also a fact that if you effectively apply the principles outlined in this book, your business will be able to deliver change more effectively and efficiently in the future. This will however rely on you remaining true to these principles and being driven and passionate about

change, to ensure your teams and your business embrace this.

Being able to deliver change is vital and being able to do this effectively with the right framework in place for your business will increase the benefits and reduce the costs of change.

The bigger and somewhat more important question, in my view, is how do you create a 'change culture' that runs through your organisation? A culture in your business where everyone is aligned to your direction and vision, everyone understands the role they play and are willing and encouraged to engage in change. A culture where your teams are offered development in change skills and

are rewarded and recognised for their contributions towards it. Where it is commonplace that change forms a part of everyone's day job and it is built into everyone's job role, profile and wider recruitment processes.

To develop a culture where there is no fear of change and a team willing to embrace it and be passionate and committed to working together to achieve it.

That is the business I want to be part of, and I am sure it is the same for most others too.

Through developing such a culture in your business, it will enable you to remain truly flexible, agile and with the ability to change direction quickly and smoothly in accordance with a changing strategy, vision and end goal. Having a clear roadmap in place is only part of the challenge. If something changes (and by the definition of the word, it often does!), then you need to be able to adjust your direction, review your current position, validate the vision, maybe create a detour on your roadmap and potentially even stop some of the things you are already doing, as they no longer deliver the thing you are now aiming to achieve. Having a truly embedded change culture enables you to do this more effectively. It avoids chaos, confusion, disengagement

and more importantly it makes you more competitive as a business and you and your teams adapt as one rather than individual splintering in different directions.

A change culture, as you would expect, is not developed overnight but with the right approach, support and commitment, the benefits of developing such a culture are significant. To be clear, no one can do this to you or for you. You have to develop a change culture from the inside. It is beneficial to get the right support and guidance to help establish the plan, approach and areas you want to develop in, but ultimately it is you, your teams and your business that have to adapt to these ways

of working and look to embrace change. If you do this successfully then it puts your business at the forefront of change, being able to deliver the right change in the right way, with the ability to change direction in a controlled and efficient way.

We have covered a number of principles in this book already that contribute to developing such a culture in your business but let's look at some of the main areas that you will need to consider;

From the Top

I don't want, or mean to create a sense of hierarchy, as I believe most businesses

benefit from a more balanced leadership structure, however it is important that those people and teams ultimately leading your business set the example, lead from the front and define the tone of the business they wish to create. I would go even further to say that their role and one of their key objectives should be to define, develop and embed a culture of change throughout the business.

There is, rightly, considerable focus on people, profit, revenue, growth, risk and other key strategic pillars in all organisations, so why should this focus not equally apply to change? Particularly when change is pivotal to the success of all of these.

So, what must the leadership team do to create a change culture? As previously discussed, recruit a CCO role if the organisation is of the right size and structure to accommodate such a role. If your business is smaller, the same principles of what a CCO role undertakes, would still apply. You need someone with the relevant experience, knowledge and skillset to shape and define not only the change activities, resources and plans but to lead the culture change required on behalf of the wider leadership team.

Passion, drive and Commitment

Passion, drive and commitment may be obvious, and you probably wouldn't find anyone in a business who would be

willing to admit that they lack any of these. I think it is fair to say that sometimes each of these can dip, as it can be quite challenging to remain committed, passionate and driven during stressful periods, when there is a lot of pressure, or when there is a conflicting priority which means you lose the focus on change. Not only does the leadership team need to clearly demonstrate each of these attributes but these need to be instilled in all of your teams across the business. You can't just tell people to be passionate about what they do. You can't just expect them to be driven and never take commitment for granted either! You have to create the conditions for these to thrive in your business.

Engaging your teams in defining the change, helping them understand the benefits and being completely transparent about progress and the impacts will all help in creating the culture that you want to develop. We will go into some of the key areas within this chapter but fundamentally by creating the right culture will inspire your teams to be more engaged, passionate, committed and driven and this in turn creates a stronger change culture. One has to feed the other to succeed.

Passion, commitment and drive are actually very tangible things to see in a business. If people are truly bought into the changes you are delivering, and if they understand them and what they are

going to deliver, they will want to be part of it, and they will naturally become energised to drive these changes forward with you. Of course, your teams can't remain highly motivated all of the time and that's when you need both your leadership teams and wider change ambassadors to reenergise the teams. Some of this will be about creating and celebrating quick wins and successes as you move through the change roadmap and it will also be about making visible the progress that you are making and how your business is evolving, how your vision is becoming closer and how better you and your teams will be when this is achieved.

Retell the story, revisit the picture and celebrate the progress against your roadmap and do this often.

The main drive should always come from the sponsor of the change. This is the primary purpose of this role and if the sponsor is not passionate and driven to make the change successful then they shouldn't be undertaking this role. All too often sponsors of change are allocated the role rather than truly engaged with it and when this happens, it fails to create the right levels of engagement and energy across your business which in turn can lead to change fatigue, lack of motivation and

lack of any real progress. This means that the change and benefits will not be embedded in your business and your teams will resist the changes that you are trying to implement. It is easy to see now, that without the right passion and drive, led by the right person, why change fails. The importance of creating this throughout your business should never be underestimated. If you are not passionate about the change you are looking to undertake you really need to question why you are doing it in the first place.

If you adopt this approach you will begin to create a culture where everything you undertake is not only the right thing for your business, but there is engagement

and buy-in from the outset. It will enable your business to move more quickly, be more agile and have highly motivated and engaged teams.

Have a look at the changes you are currently managing in your business. Would you describe them as being passionately led, driven and with an unrelenting commitment to deliver?

Visibility and Transparency

If your teams can see what you are trying to achieve, they are more likely to be engaged. Being clear on your changes,

the rationale, what you want to achieve, how you are going to achieve it, is important and therefore should be visible to your teams. I don't mean a newsletter or monthly email announcing the latest launch of the latest piece of technology, but visibility of all aspects of change. The good, the bad and even the ugly should be made more visible. If something isn't going to plan, then let the teams know and, in my experience, they can often suggest some of the better ideas to solve the issue.

Clearly, there has to be a balance, as you can't spend all of your time telling all of your teams about all of the change and the progress they are making! What you can do however, is make the information

accessible to people and encourage them to view this information.

A really good way to create the right levels of visibility is through the creation of a 'Change Hub'. Avoid locking the change teams and those involved in change away in an office or corner of the floor. Take the opportunity to create a hub, where you can show your roadmap, share plans, have stand up engagement sessions, point to pictures, brainstorm, troubleshoot and most of all open it to your teams to come and ask questions, gather interest, foster engagement and start to create the visibility that will support the building of the change culture that you want to create. Get members of your leadership team to

undertake regular huddles and provide opportunities for Q&A from wider audiences across your business. Make this the way your business ‘does things’ rather than a one off or planned event, it should become part of how you work and be woven into the fabric of your business.

Engagement and Communication

It is one thing to create visibility and transparency, but you have to engage and communicate with your teams to help build the right change culture for your business. The ‘change hub’ is a great way to support this, if this is built and developed in the right way, but it is only part of the solution.

The right level of engagement and communication will be different for every business, but as a standard rule and based upon my experience, it is often best to over communicate and do more engagement than you thought would be enough. You don't hear, 'I wish they would stop telling me all of this' or 'I get too many updates on our change initiatives' all that often, so you need to focus a lot more on your communication and engagement in relation to change.

Each change activity should have its own plan in relation to communications, but it should align to the framework across the business. Your teams should be engaged in defining this approach and asked what works for them. Clearly, you won't

satisfy everyone but a broader, well thought through communication and engagement framework that is applied consistently across your business will support the wider change agenda and provide you with a platform on which to speak to and engage with your teams and get their input and feedback.

Training and Development

Providing the right training and development in relation to change, in my view, is a crucial part of adopting and developing a true change culture. I don't just mean traditional training courses, but this should include mentoring, coaching, active and on the job training and a much broader spectrum of

development opportunities. I also strongly advocate that this should not be limited to the change teams in your business, but you should design a development programme for different groups, dependent upon their involvement and engagement with change.

Everyone in your business should have a basic and robust understanding of the principles of change and specifically how you, as a business, define, develop and deliver change. Importantly, this should cover how those teams are expected to play a role (everyone in your business has a role to play) and what support, learning and development you are going to provide for them to do this. This level

of development should be mandatory for everyone in your business as a greater level of understanding helps build greater levels of engagement. This level of development should also link strongly to your wider business strategy and plan demonstrating how the changes you undertake support and drive the delivery of this strategy. It should be seen as an excellent opportunity to provide the foundations for engagement and communication across your business.

It is really important that the development programme you implement is not out of the box. There are plenty of courses, delivered through online and offsite options, that provide more generic change training, but it is imperative that

the learning and development that you design is built specifically for your business and how you manage change. This approach will develop your culture whereas the more traditional approach will only develop an individual's CV! Of course, there is nothing wrong with this for the individual and may even form a wider part of your development strategy, but the priority has to be to design a programme that will add the right value for your business.

Your 'Change' development programme should also incorporate Executive level Development, Sponsorship Training and the more in-depth Portfolio, Programme and Project Management principles and

fundamentals that support the technical delivery of effective change.

As with many of the items in this chapter, and indeed in this book, trying to develop an effective and sustainable change culture will take some time, effort and investment. Having a development programme that reaches wider than to just those responsible in delivering the change will build the engagement, set clear expectations and provide personal development opportunities for your teams to become more involved in change. This is something that would also benefit from the right external support and engagement.

Recruitment, selection and induction

You need to ensure that the people you bring into your business, not only have the right skills and experience but also recognise, accept and become part of your change culture. You want people who will want to work within this and also help support, grow and develop this culture.

As mentioned previously developing the right partnership with the right recruitment business, who understand the culture of your business as well as the skills and experience required will help, provided that you have designed and developed the right interview and wider

recruitment process this will maximise the opportunity to bring in the right people to help continue to develop a high performing change team.

This recruitment process has to be designed and embedded in your business and you must ensure that the people that you bring in are committed to your business, share the same values and buy in to the vision you want to achieve.

Reward and Recognition

Consideration should be given for change outcomes and benefits being linked to reward structures, in that teams pay, or bonus is partially aligned to the successful delivery of change. This is

relatively easy to achieve on specific pieces of change but how do you create a reward structure that is fair and also drives value, wider across your business? You do have to be careful to avoid linking reward to timescales in isolation as quicker doesn't often mean better. However, if you get the right balance across time and quality of delivery and you align this at a team level as opposed to individual level, then it can add considerable drive and engagement for you change teams.

Almost more important than financial reward is developing a culture in your business that recognises achievement and success. If your teams know that they will be recognised for their

contribution, commitment and delivery, they are much more likely to be engaged in the change.

Creating a ‘golden thread’

In most organisations, individuals and teams struggle to see how their contribution plays a part in achieving the strategy and objectives of the business. The strategy can often be seen as some distant and remotely created document that has been developed in the depths of a boardroom. This may sound harsh, but we need to do more, to not only get our teams engaged in developing the strategy and direction of the business but also, so they are able to clearly determine how their roles and the activities they

undertake contribute to the delivery of this strategy.

This is what I mean when I refer to the ‘golden thread’. A thread that you are able to trace from an individual objective through to the strategic objectives, benefits and outcomes that your business needs to achieve to deliver its strategy. Feeling a sense of worth in any role is vital to motivation, engagement and commitment and understanding how you, as an individual, play a part in this is essential.

This is no small undertaking as it is heavily dependent on a number of factors. Firstly, you have to engage and fully involve your teams in the design and

development of your strategy. This can be done in a number of different ways, but the most important aspect is that your teams feel engaged in not only the process but the meaning, purpose and direction of the strategy. Just remembering what the vision statement says doesn't count as being engaged!

This initial step is vital in ensuring that your teams have a vested interest in developing the business strategy, they feel part of it and therefore part of the business. They want to achieve what you want to achieve and are driven and motivated to get there.

When you have developed the strategy and the core objectives you can then

start to develop the ‘thread’ by first focusing on how the different functions across your business are going to deliver against these objectives. This will ultimately form a functional level business plan that you should be able to literally trace the ‘thread’ from to the business strategy. Again, this process has to be inclusive and engaging and can’t just be developed in functional silos.

One of the best approaches I have seen in relation to this is where each function of the business plays back their draft plan of how they will support delivery of the business strategy, the wider business teams then get to contribute, shape and challenge this. This was done offsite with a lot of time and effort (well spent) in

ensuring the right inputs, structure and outcomes were agreed at the outset. Not only does this provide improved transparency but also presents the opportunity for the rest of the business to be involved and engaged. Coming away from this, each of the functions not only knew how they aligned to the company's strategy, but they were also engaged and involved in the process. This creates an excellent platform on which to weave the 'golden thread'.

It is important that you maintain visibility of the 'golden thread' and at the level described above this should very much be articulated as a picture and avoid locking it away on page 54 of a strategic document. The key to keep this

alive is to make it visible. Everyone in your business needs to see how their function and team contribute to the delivery of the strategy that they have helped define and if you can achieve this then you have gone a long way in creating the engagement required to build a cohesive business.

To complete the 'golden thread' view you will need to align this to individual objectives in the team. Keep them relevant, concise, meaningful and above all make sure that they are part of the thread.

It is no different when it comes to change activities, you need to demonstrate how these activities [projects and

programmes] contribute to the delivery of your business strategy and like functional, team and individual objectives, you must be able to trace the benefits and outcomes that the change activities deliver against your objectives across the business. Make them visible, display them in your change hub and talk about them regularly.

Embedding the change

There are many components that contribute to the development and ultimate embedding of a change culture. It is not an ‘overnight’ process and it takes the right expertise, passion, drive and commitment across a large number of people in your business. It requires

unwavering focus of wanting to create such a culture in your business and rest assured there will be hurdles to climb and diversions that you will need to take in ultimately reaching where you want to be.

Make this a priority in your business, not an afterthought or a slight intention. Dedicate the time, resources and investment to start developing a culture of change and make it a strategic objective. This will make your business more engaged, motivated and driven to deliver and you will be able to adapt to changing external influences more quickly as you will have created a business that is much more agile and adaptable.

As change continues to grow and an exponential rate there really is no other option than to create and embed a true change culture.

14. Your Business

Although the main aspects of this book refer to businesses that have some form of management or executive leadership structure, the principles of change that have been discussed apply to each and every business of any size.

It doesn't matter what you sell or offer as a service, but let's say you have a team of 50 people across the business, you may be thinking that these principles don't apply to you and I am afraid you are wrong.

If we break the principles down and take a step back all we are actually saying is

that, you need to know the direction you want to take your business [strategy]. It doesn't mean you need a 50-page strategy document, but it does mean that you need to understand where you want or need your business to be in 6, 12, 24 months or even 3-5 years' time. You need a plan [roadmap] to show how you are going to get there. Again, this should be tailored to the size, complexity and scale of change you want to implement, but the principle of having a plan is the same for any size of change or any type of business. You need someone to lead on the change, you need to create the right level of visibility on progress and involve others in your business to help shape, engage and deliver the change.

In many ways, managing and leading change in smaller businesses is easier as you can engage and communicate with your teams more effectively and by definition, through having less people, it is easier to change direction when your strategy needs to change.

Being able to change and adapt in response to movements in the external environment is fundamental to your business. As we have all witnessed some of these changes happen quickly and your business needs to be able to be agile enough, with the right frameworks in place to reassess, redefine the direction and make alternative plans. If you can do this successfully then you increase the chance of your business continuing to be

a success. Ignore it and continue as if it is business as usual, then you put at risk your business long term prospects and even survival.

Take the time to step back and take an objective view on your business in relation to change;

- Do you have a clear view of where you want your business to be and is this shared by your teams?
- Is there a plan in place and does everyone understand where this takes them?
- Are your teams engaged and aligned to the future direction of your business?

- Are their objectives and reward structures linked to this?
- Do you have a clear mechanism to review and check progress and alignment to the agreed direction?
- Are you able to change direction quickly in response to changes in the external environment and do you have a clear approach to do this?

Every business is different. Each business will have its own way of working, own strategy, stakeholders and product or service that it offers. Similarly, each and every business will manage change in a different way. Some businesses will have large change teams

and complex transformation programmes that are underpinned by a framework and methodology. Other businesses may just ‘get on’ and make changes utilising existing teams and non-specialist skills to deliver that change.

In my view the core elements outlined in this book remain true for ANY business, it is just a matter of scale and complexity.

It is you and your teams that understand your business the best. However, it will require the help of an external specialist to support you in developing and enhancing your change capability.

In essence this is what this short book has all been about. It is focused solely on helping you develop your business to more effectively define and deliver change in the future and the more you develop this, the more agile you become to respond and adapt to an ever-changing external environment, particularly those events that are unpredictable or that you have very little control over.

Every business needs to develop a culture of change, where your teams are engaged, skilled and ready to adapt to any change that your business needs to deliver. It is about developing the fundamental culture at the core of your business. Developing your teams, putting in place the right frameworks,

developing and sharing a clear picture and telling the story so that your people become engaged by it and want to be part of it. It then no longer feels like something different but just ‘the way we do things round here’.

To find out more about how we can support you in developing change in your business please see;

www.ChangeIn.co.uk

