

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

1.1 THE BEGINNING

Several years ago, I was part of a program to introduce the concept of “quality” into our plant. For a very large fee, we hired a consultant to work with us and make our “quality process” a success. Site management imposed ground rules on the project team, most of which (in retrospect) set us up for failure. The program had a kick-off date less than three months from the time it was introduced to management. With such a tight time-frame, there was inadequate time to prepare for the meetings that were an integral part of the process. To make matters worse, the meetings were to be mandatory for everyone. The official message was, “meetings are mandatory, participation is voluntary.”

The consultant set up measurements to track things such as meeting attendance, quality suggestions submitted, and number of people trained. However, these were more about how the program was functioning than about the savings we were trying to achieve. Training was provided over an extended period, yet it was not started until after the program had already begun. This was confusing to the participants who were being asked to do things for which they had not been trained. A plan to make change self-sustaining over the long term was never developed. Instead the focus was on getting it started and reporting on how well it was doing. The two leaders of the effort went to extreme, sometimes even coer-

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cive, lengths to make sure the process was functioning well on all of the designated levels: meetings, measurements, and training.

A few years after its inception, both of the program leaders retired, virtually on the same day. And guess what? The process officially died the day after they were gone. If the truth were told, the process had been dead for at least a year. The plant was just going through the motions to maintain the illusion. Because the managers believed the program was still in place, they were satisfied. They never looked for the truth; the illusion was sufficient.

I was also involved in another effort that was designed to install a computer system in a multi-plant environment. Again, the management hired a consultant whose purpose was to work closely with the project team in order to make the effort a success. One of the things that the consultant told us was that the system implementation was nothing more than an enabler of change and, that to be truly successful, we needed to address the work process first, then use the system to support it.

With a clear vision of changing the work process and then supporting it with the new system, we made a detailed presentation to senior management. We were never even allowed to finish our proposal. What senior management wanted was for us to simply install the system in the shortest time-frame possible. It was their belief that the system would foster change and generate the benefits that were assumed to be associated with its use.

The implementations were completed without the work being redesigned. The result was that the users were not satisfied with the product. The system had not been designed to function within the current work process. The lack of change in the existing process made use of the new system quite difficult. Ultimately, the project designed to reduce costs and improve productivity fell far short of expectations.

Several years later, under different management, all of the sites developed processes that improved the work, enabling the system to be used in the way that it had been designed. This led to a higher level of user satisfaction and, finally, to overall success of the original effort.

Had the company chosen to change work processes first, the original project would have taken longer. But the results would have been more significant, they would have happened sooner, and they would have been far less painful to those involved.

Clearly, the examples I have just described point out that the process of change and the degree of difficulty in making the effort a success often go unrecognized. Furthermore, even when they are recognized, insuf-

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ficient attention is given to the careful planning and execution of the actual work to provide for a successful outcome.

Nothing is more prevalent in industry today than change. Some of these change initiatives happen as organizations evolve, and often require little intervention. Others are more far-reaching. They involve efforts specifically designed to improve organizational functions. You probably have experienced these process design changes in whatever business you are in, maybe more times than you care to think about. These changes have been undertaken to address competition, a changing product line, productivity improvement, mergers, plant shutdowns, and the list goes on and on. What is important to recognize is that this condition we call change is probably the one constant in business today. To further complicate matters, this change not only affects our businesses, but it has a very real and personal effect on each of us. Some of these effects can be positive, some otherwise.

We get involved in the change process in many ways and for many reasons. Some of us have been asked to lead change efforts. Some have been assigned the responsibility, whereas others have openly attempted to initiate change in order to make things better. Whatever your reason for being involved, you probably have had occasions when you knew you needed to do something but could not figure out the next step. From the personal examples that I provided at the beginning of this chapter, you can see that I have been in the same place that you are now.

When you find yourself in this position, there are only a few ways to attempt to solve your problem. The first is to work with someone in your own company who has experience with the change process, either formally or through having already done the same work that you are trying to do. These individuals can help, but their perspective is usually limited to the functional areas where they have experience.

The next and most prevalent solution is to hire a consultant. There are both good and bad points about this approach. If used correctly, however, a consultant can be of value and can help you through the process. The plus side is that what you are asking them to do is their area of expertise. They usually have a great deal of experience working with firms undergoing change. The down side is that this is their business. They most likely have created a process model that they follow, a model that may or may not fit your needs. Another problem with the use of consultants is that many firms abdicate their responsibility for the effort to the consultant. This withdrawal can hurt. As good as some consultants are, they eventually have to leave you on your own. If you have abdicated all

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of the responsibility for the work effort to them, the work that they have done leaves when they do.

The last approach is to take ownership of the process with support from senior managers who understand the time and the complexity required to move an effort of this sort forward. Knowledgeable resources are needed for your team; these may be found within the company, or externally in the form of a consultant.

I believe in this third approach. Taking ownership is a significant step towards long lasting success. Ownership means you will design it, you will develop the details, you will roll it out to the workplace, and most importantly you will assume accountability and responsibility for its success. The prospect of such a step is frightening, but the value that you can bring to your company and yourself is immense.

To add more complexity to the issue, work process change is not a single initiative targeted at a single problem. Usually process changes span many areas of the business. They are usually linked together, so that a change in one area affects activities in others.

It is my guess that you have the skills and the knowledge to handle these problems and manage these complexities yourself, or within the group responsible for your change process. The problem is that you may not know where to start, how to proceed, what questions to ask, or how to measure whether what you did was successful or if it caused bigger problems in other areas.

Having experienced many of these situations, I have written this book so that you and others involved in the change process

- Do not have to “reinvent the wheel,”
- Can understand and even measure the interrelationships between the various change efforts,
- Will be able to figure out the next steps on your own,
- Can recognize potential problems before they happen,
- Can persuasively communicate to your management (at all levels) regarding the need for time, consistency, focus, and understanding.

1.2 WHY I WROTE THIS BOOK

When I first became involved with management of organizational change, I didn't know where to start. I didn't understand the relationships between the various elements associated with this type of work, and I didn't know how to recognize potential problems. However, more than any-

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thing else, I wanted to be successful and help my company be successful. In addition to the help that I got from the consultants we hired, I spent a great deal of time looking for, buying, and reading books on the subject. I guess I was looking for a “magic pill,” just one book that would help me make sense out of the chaos of change. Many books that I read helped me conclude that change was needed, but I already knew that. Many helped me understand the difficulties and potential roadblocks to success, but I was already learning that first hand, in a very painful way. The problem was that none of the books addressed the problem globally. Nor did they cover the steps needed to help me create order, to develop a game plan, and to understand from a user’s perspective how to make it all work towards a successful outcome. I was frustrated, and if you have been in this position yourself, you know exactly what I am talking about.

Then I had two opportunities that changed my situation. First, I returned to school where I learned about organizational dynamics and the complexities of the change process. Second, I began to work with someone in my company who had a clear vision of where he wanted the organization to go, how to make it happen, and how to empower others to take ownership and move the process forward.

The frustration that I had experienced in my work within the world of change management, coupled with what I feel are a lack of user-oriented guidebooks on the subject, were the two driving forces that interested me in writing a book “by a user for users.” However, the most important reason is that I wanted to help those of you out there who are finding it difficult to make your change process a success. I want you to have a single source of information that will help you as you proceed.

1.3 WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM READING THIS BOOK?

When I started to write this book, my focus was on those whom I will refer to as “users.” To me, a user is a person who has been assigned the task of developing, designing, implementing, or working with the change process. In a sense, you are using the ideas, theories, concepts, and processes developed by your management, consultants, your team, and others to successfully carry out a change process within your business. You are the users of the ideas and plans, and it is your job to “make it happen.”

As I thought more and more about the book, it occurred to me that users work at many levels. Upper-level managers are users because, although they may work at a global level, they still have responsibility for

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a successful outcome. Middle management are all users because they work within the organization to bring a successful change process into being. Those at the “bottom” of the management organization are also users because they have to actually implement change as part of the day-to-day work effort. Further, those at the working level (usually an hourly workforce) have to take the changes that have been envisioned by others and help make them a success.

The point is that everyone is a user when it comes to the process of change. Yet not everyone understands how they can contribute to successful change within their business.

This book was written for all the users who want to understand how it all works, what role they can play, and how components interact in a very complex dynamic system. Granted that as individuals at different levels in the organization read this book, there will be different levels of understanding and ways to apply the information. However everyone will be working with the same basic understanding, and ideas will be centralized and all focused on the same topic.

1.4 WHY MY BOOK IS DIFFERENT

This book is different because it's for users, but the difference goes beyond just this simple statement. As you will learn when I introduce the chapters that follow, this text is different for many reasons;

- *It is not about convincing you of the need for change.* If you are involved in the process, you are already well past the point of recognizing that there are problems and change is required.
- *It is not about getting started.* If you are reading this with a serious interest in using it to help you through the effort, you have already started.
- *It is not written at a CEO's level by a CEO,* it is not written by a partner in a consulting firm, and it is not written as an academic work. It is written by a user for users.
- *It is not written as if change were a time limited project* to be started and taken through to completion. This process has no completion, it goes on and on.
- *It views change as a complex and dynamic system within your organization.* It addresses individual elements of the process (such as leadership), but it does not treat them as stand-alone elements.

This book is for you to use throughout your process. It will provide some theory and what I feel is a lot of practical experience and useful ideas to help you as you proceed.

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1.5 HOW TO USE THE TEXT

If possible, you should read the book from start to finish. It was designed in four parts and they follow a sequential order. The first part discusses getting started; the second addresses concepts that will contribute to your success; the third addresses the execution phase of all that you have learned; and the last discusses how to move forward after the initial effort.

However, there may be readers who have an interest or specific need to go directly to one of the later sections or individual chapters. It is not a problem if you read the text out of order. However, if you take this approach, you should realize that information contained in previous chapters may be needed if you are to fully understand some of the things I am describing in subsequent ones. To help make this easier for you, Section 1.6 describes what is included in each of the chapters. If you choose to skip around, this annotated index will help you to keep from missing important and linked parts.

1.6 WHAT IS INCLUDED—A LOOK AHEAD AT THE CHAPTERS

This book is written in four parts, each divided into individual chapters addressing specific material relevant to that part. What follows is a brief description of the content of each chapter. You should be able to identify specific chapters of interest as well as see the overall logical sequence in which this book was assembled.

PART ONE GETTING STARTED

Part One focuses on laying the groundwork of the book. It's designed to bring everyone to a common level of understanding.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

This chapter provides the introduction to the entire subject by focusing on the fact that change efforts can be successful. All too often, people's experience is to the contrary. The discussion centers on what the book is about, why it was written, what makes it different from other books on this subject, and a brief look at what is included in the chapters.

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CHAPTER 2 LAYING THE FOUNDATION

When people speak about work in the change arena, they believe that the terminology they use is immediately understood by every one else involved in the effort. This is not true and leads to confusion and misinterpretation. This chapter lays the groundwork so that you can proceed with a common understanding of terminology as you work your way through the book and, eventually, in your individual change efforts.

CHAPTER 3 CHANGE: NOT LINEAR, BUT NONLINEAR

Most people, when they think of a change process, think linearly. They think of a starting point, a logical process to be followed, and then a point at which the process is complete. Change doesn't work this way. While there is an apparent starting point—the time when you begin thinking about change—the process is nonlinear, and it never ends. This chapter focuses on the concept of spiral learning. In this mode, you plan what you will do, execute it, and then reflect on the process and outcome before you take the next step. It is nonlinear because each time you execute a spiral you learn, and the next step may be something which was not even conceived when the process started.

CHAPTER 4 THE VISION OF THE FUTURE OR HOW DO WE KNOW WHERE WE ARE GOING SO WE'LL KNOW WHEN WE HAVE ARRIVED

Without a vision, there is no common understanding of where the change process is to lead the organization. This chapter addresses the need for an overall vision and who needs to develop it. It also addresses how the vision needs to be communicated, understood, and ultimately owned by those who have to “make it happen” with in the organization.

PART TWO CONCEPTS WHICH WILL CONTRIBUTE TO SUCCESS

Part Two discusses many important concepts that must be understood to prepare for and conduct the change effort.

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CHAPTER 5 FROM VISION TO REALITY

Change efforts should not proceed without a vision of the future. Every member of the organization needs to have some understanding of where the company wants to go. The hard part is translating this vision into something tangible that employees can accomplish and, at the same time, clearly see how their efforts support the work of the company. This chapter makes that connection. It introduces the Goal Achievement Model, which uses the vision and goals set by upper management to create a framework for more concrete initiatives, activities, and measures.

CHAPTER 6 THE ROADMAP OF CHANGE

As an organization moves along a nonlinear path to reach its vision, a roadmap is needed. Its purpose is to act as a guide along the pathway to the vision. The roadmap illustrates the organization's progress and helps avoid obstacles along the way. The roadmap also links the diverse components of the change effort so that everyone can understand the big picture.

CHAPTER 7 A CASE FOR TEAMS

In today's businesses, no one works independently. We rely heavily on others to help us accomplish any activity or project on which we are working. Therefore, some form of teamwork is necessary for success. This chapter addresses and supports the valuable role teams play in successful change efforts. This chapter looks at the concept of critical mass; which states that you do not need to have everyone embrace change for the change effort to take hold.

CHAPTER 8 WORKING WITH CONSULTANTS

All too often, a company hires consultants, pays for interviews and studies, and finally receives the report—only to do nothing with the results. There is a better way. Consultants can play an important role, that adds value to the change effort. However, you need to have a clear understanding and a proper working relationship to get the results you want. This chapter discusses how to use consultants, while stressing the importance of ownership by the organization.

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CHAPTER 9 RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Every change initiative will be met with resistance. Among the many reasons is the fact that people are often not comfortable with change. Yet in today's business world, change is part of the equation. To succeed with a change effort, you need to transform resisters into supporters. Otherwise, resistance will be an ongoing problem, slowing down or even destroying the change effort. This chapter addresses the problem of resistance and discusses ways to overcome it.

CHAPTER 10 THE WEB OF CHANGE

Books that address only specific components of the change process miss the larger picture. Change has many components; they must all be equally addressed in order to achieve success. Furthermore, work done in one area affects all of the others. In fact, a positive change in one area could even have negative or disastrous effects in others. This chapter introduces the Web of Change. The eight elements of the web are then covered in detail in Chapters 11 and 12.

PART THREE EXECUTION: IT'S MORE THAN MAGIC

Part Three moves to the execution phase of the change process. It identifies and discusses in detail the eight elements that comprise the effort.

CHAPTERS 11 AND 12 THE ELEMENTS

Throughout this book, change has been viewed as an effort comprised of many integrated elements. They consist of leadership, work process, structure, group learning, technology, communication, interrelationships, and rewards. These two chapters discuss each of these so that the reader can see why they are important, how they fit into the effort, and how they fit together. A survey that is included in the appendix and on a disk helps readers to create their own web diagram.

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CHAPTER 13 FITTING THE ELEMENTS TOGETHER

Chapter 10 introduced the concept of the Web of Change. At this point, the elements of change have been discussed along with the survey that generates the data points for the web. Chapter 13 uses the web to elaborate on the interaction of these elements, analyze their interactions, and evaluate what to do with the results.

CHAPTER 14 HOW TO HANDLE THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

This chapter addresses the process of change itself. It addresses the following questions: How do you change? When do you change? How extensive is the change? Who should be involved in the change?

CHAPTER 15 MEASUREMENT

A key component of a successful change effort is measurement. The idea that “what gets measured and receives attention gets done” is explained. Most organizations measure results monthly based on their criteria and existing financial procedures. This chapter proposes that to measure a change process, monthly measures are not always the best approach. Instead weekly measurement is more useful and can have a positive impact on the change effort.

PART FOUR COMPLETION AND A NEW BEGINNING

This last part of the book ties everything together. It explains various methods for moving forward, both to begin the process and once the process evolves.

CHAPTER 16 TECHNIQUES OF CONTINUED GROWTH

Many projects have a clear beginning and ending. A change effort, however, may have a beginning, but it never ends. The process needs to continually grow and improve upon itself. This chapter discusses core competencies, skills acquired from doing the work that cannot be duplicated by competition. It also looks at work process assessment and redesign, methods that help provide focus on the process.

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CHAPTER 17 CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes the text. It also describes the web site that will be used as a method to create a dialog with the readers.

1.7 LET'S GET STARTED

I hope that you will find this guidebook useful, not just as a place to start or as a text to provide the initial information for your effort, but also as a book which will help you through all the phases of the process and into the future. I wish you success in your efforts and offer you this quote from Nicolo Machiavelli;

“There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things, because the innovator has for enemies, all of those who have done well under the old conditions, and luke-warm defenders in those who will do well under the new.”