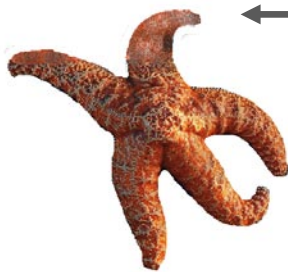


Moving in Symmetry :



The 5 elements of change

By Diane Sarah Bégin, BA, CMC, CHRP

Introduction

In a survey conducted in 35 countries in 2004-05 by PricewaterhouseCoopers on behalf of the World Federation of Personnel Management Associations (WFPMA) change management was selected by 48% of the respondents as the greatest Human Resources challenge faced by organizations.¹ This no-name skill emerging from a need for order and results has become the challenge of the decade.

Nevertheless, managers to this day often have difficulty circling a clear definition of change management. Some even refer to change management as an elusive theory spring-loaded by academics and management gurus; something to occupy air time at strategic planning sessions. A reason for this may be that many of these managers were making changes to organizations way before the term “change management” appeared on the menu of management competencies.

Since the complexity and frequency of application may have been less obvious at the time, the business of managing change was probably achieved instinctively - somewhat synonymous to swallowing while eating. Whatever the case, organizations did manage to successfully institutionalize new legislation, new structures and even the all-mighty computers without managing change per se.

Change management practices were masked by more traditional management functions of planning, organizing, leading, co-ordinating and controlling.² Managing change was a spoke in the wheels of more

¹ Pricewaterhouse Coopers. Survey of Global HR Challenges: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, 2005

² Henri Fayol. International Institute of Management

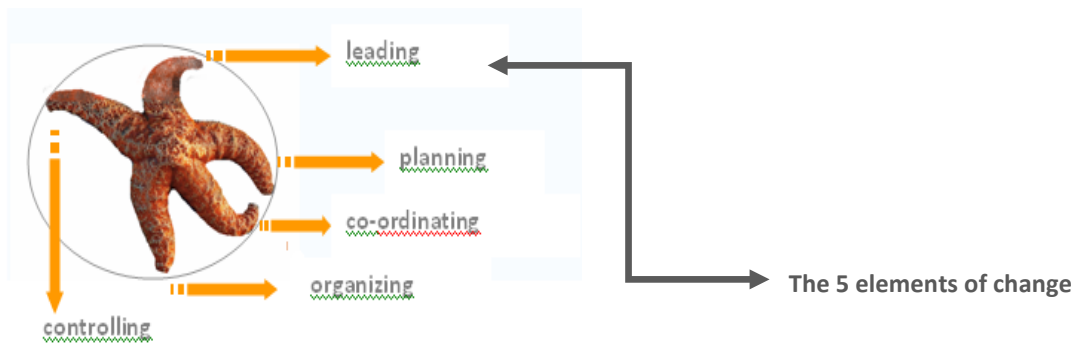
entrenched management responsibilities, making it difficult to single out. This probably continues to be the case in numerous organizations and the way managers practice change management to this day.

Nevertheless, the practice of change management does exist. Profiling a “change management” perspective means putting more traditional management functions - or elements - second to the practice of change management. As such, each management element consisting of leading, planning, organizing, co-ordinating and controlling becomes part of change management. Change management becomes a solvent: a process solution consisting of five elements of change coming together to achieve a greater purpose. In short, change management is the wheel that makes everything else spin.

This change management wheel calls for a symmetry of events across all five elements to achieve results. Each element has a role to play in achieving a new outcome and the process demands that each be dependent on the other. If the goal is to move in one direction, harmony across all elements is key to achieving desired results.

This approach to change management provides the basis from which to explore the symmetry required across each management element of a change process.

Figure 1: The Change Management Wheel and the Elements of Change



The Five Elements of Change

1 Leading

The leadership legitimizes a change and orchestrates its integration. This element focuses on the **human aspects** of change and from that perspective, what needs to be done to facilitate the manifestation of a desired state. In brief, this element of a change process involves:

1. establishing trust
2. creating a momentum for change;
3. articulating the vision, the end state;
4. role modeling desired behaviours;
5. engaging others to make the change;
6. approving the means to make the change;
7. obtaining resources to make the change;
8. monitoring, redirecting and celebrating results.

People make the organizations – not the other way around. Without the people who lead, and others to contribute, inertia and disorder will set in. The leadership allows all other elements of the change process to break ground. Leaders are entrusted with the responsibility to make decisions on behalf of everyone in

the organization and put the required changes into motion. Barring a mutiny, very little change will take place without the appropriate leadership.

2 Planning

Planning is a process that itemizes what needs to be done to effect the change described by the leadership. This element of a change process is a preliminary step to execution.

1. The planning process should begin with an appraisal of everything that will facilitate and sustain the proposed change and maximize the probability of success. Some call it a readiness assessment. This appraisal includes: the structure, the values, the resources, the competencies, the processes & systems, the rules, the risks, the stakeholders and the conditions (e.g. political, environmental).
2. Secondly, to bring clarity and order to the change, the planning process will normally necessitate a series of focused discussions resulting in the production of one or more of the following planning documents: a strategy, a budget estimate submission, a business case, an operational plan or a project workplan, to name a few. These planning documents have different purposes. A plan may be written to obtain approval, articulate a change, serve as a reference or to organize, co-ordinate or evaluate results. It is important to understand the purpose of a plan and its relationship with the other four elements of change.
3. Thirdly, if the focus is in fact to execute, the plan must be doable and time bound. Prioritizing what needs to be done first is one of the most difficult tasks in planning. Identifying realistic targets and having leadership that can get everybody on the same train are close seconds.

Planning is required to effect change and is an ongoing process – as with all five elements of change. It is continuously reconfigured by the leadership and does not stop at the production of a document. Whether a decision is made by a leader or the leadership changes – plans are continuously adjusted to reflect lessons learned and changing environments. Recognizing this cause and effect relationship is important to managing change.

3 Co-ordinating

The ability to create interoperability between distinct functions requires horizontal co-ordination internal and external to the organization. This second pre-execution element is important regardless of how small the change. Very few get to accomplish great things without the involvement of others. Within hierarchies it is essential that people establish a network of stakeholders at across levels to maximize the potential for change. Whether it be through co-operatives, partnerships, associations or advisory committees more is achieved by working together. Stakeholders include groups:

1. responsible for implementing the change;
2. contributing to the change;
3. impacted by the change.

This will not only facilitate implementation but it will also build ownership and sustainability – two key ingredients to a successful change. Project management units are often assigned the role of co-ordinating stakeholders, their working relationships as well as their communication needs.

The approach used to co-ordinate across organizational boundaries should be clearly identified in the planning process and a centerpiece to the preoccupations of the leadership cadre. Similarly, interventions

(legislation, policies, training, and software) should always be endowed with industrial quantities of consultation and communication activities.

Since many organizations of the 21st century suffer from silosis³ it is particularly cross cutting changes are particularly challenging. An example of this might be the creation of a travel passport that also serves as a driver's license, a library card, a key to the fitness centre and a calorie counter. In this instance, good co-ordination becomes a critical element of a change process - especially when it requires the co-operation of partners with extensive dissimilarities.

4 Organizing

Organizing a meal refers to the completion of all tasks required to produce it. In the same way, organizing a change includes all activities required to achieve the desired results. Therefore, organizing is execution and execution is renowned to significantly challenge organizations undergoing a change. Having leaders that can make the plan work is central to this element. Simply, there are five core parts to organizing a change:

1. Prepare the people
2. Put the resources in place
3. Produce the tools
4. Adjust the infrastructure
5. Strengthen for long-lasting durability

It sounds easy but it is filled with raw edges and twisted knots. The list is not linear, and not all inclusive depending on the people involved and their will to make it happen. The way the change is introduced is also key to its success. An organization has several implementation approaches to consider depending on the urgency, risk tolerance and state of readiness:

1. Pilot project (testing in the real world to maximize implementation)
2. Laboratories (testing in a made-up world to maximize implementation)
3. Computer simulations (to test out assumptions relevant to a proposed change)
4. Parallel implementation (the old and the new running simultaneously)
5. Incremental approach (sequential steps are taken over a period of time until fully implemented)
6. The Big Bang approach (everything is implemented all at once)
7. Permutations and combinations of the above

5 Controlling

Performance management, performance measurement and performance indicators make their official appearance in this element. Controlling results refers to an ability to locate the organization on the map and determine whether it is on the right path. No change process is complete without a mechanism to demonstrate that a change has or is taking place – regardless of how much decentralization, delegation or devolution appears to have taken place. There are various approaches to achieving this:

1. Performance management at the institutional level
2. Performance management at the individual level
3. Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation system
4. Performance measurement and monitoring system
5. Balanced Scorecard

³ Term coined by the author to refer to organizations whose business units have difficulty communicating and achieving results deemed to require cross functional involvement.

6. Dashboards and cue cards⁴
7. Management by Objectives
8. Project management report
9. Accountability Framework
10. Program evaluation
11. Audits
12. Surveys
13. Interviews and focus groups
14. Permutations and combinations of the above

Where change requires regulatory compliance it is necessary to inject policy instruments that will promote compliance or discourage non-compliance. Where compliance is not at issue, reward and recognition programs are usually a preferred way of institutionalizing a change. Various means are available to organizations to encourage a change in behaviours that will support and align with desired results. Transparency of results and the recognition of achievements are definitely at the helm.

Conclusion

Between leading, planning, co-ordinating, organizing and controlling there is a tapestry of unforeseeable events or new information that require a symmetry of events across all five elements to make a change. Whenever one element takes a turn the other four elements should follow in harmony to ensure the change process from one element to the other does not create conflict, confusion, inertia or waste.

Of course, change management is not just about managing these elements of change. It is about great leadership, courageous people, risk taking ventures and more. It takes great commitment to achieve a change successfully. The approach presented here is just one other structured perspective to a complex subject. ▼



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⁴ Term used by the author to refer to internal briefing notes and impromptu briefings.