# Successful Change : The Inner Business Perspective

## 1.      People are the problem and the solution.

In most major change programmes the logistics of the change are well thought out.

The change is intended to produce a positive effect on the organisation and can offer significant benefits to individuals as well.

Nevertheless the process is always more difficult than anticipated.

Where do the problems come from ?

Even when change is welcomed blocks to change emerge from people's reaction to and participation in the process.  This is exacerbated when open, or covert, opposition exists

Blocks arise at organisational, team and individual levels.

## 2.      Conflicting imperatives at an organisational level

Change is the only constant in business today.  The are few, if any, organisations that have not undergone significant change in the last five years.  Many have experienced radical change.  Most anticipate more change in the future.

The drive for change can emerge from a number of sources including response to :
*        changes in the business environment
*        identification of new opportunities
*        a need to improve performance.

The need for change can be imperative especially for organisations faced with the choice of making radical changes or going under.

There is however a parallel need to maintain the smooth, predicable, day-to-day running of the business.  Indeed it is often only through careful financial management that the resources for the change programme can be generated.

There is also a strong emotional imperative which applies here.  Most people are happier working in a safe, familiar, predicable environment.

Their preferred way of working can be described as :

*If you always do what you've always done*
*You'll always get what you've always got*

........... a recipe for inertia.

This desire to stay in familiar territory can be almost irresistible.

**Paradox**.  There is a paradoxical relationship between the need to change and the need to maintain control which every manager involved in initiating a change programme will recognise.

This inevitably leads to conflict, as shown in the diagram.

This conflict will often take the form of opposing camps forming within the organisation.

One camp will be driving the change and will complain bitterly about the negative, recalcitrant attitudes of others who keep creating problems and blocking the process.  They will cite lack of vision and irrational fear as the motivation of their opposition.

The other camp will have deep, and well founded, concerns around the potentially catastrophic effects of runaway change. They will recognise the need for good financial control.  They will see it as their duty to restrain the more violent excesses of their colleagues.



need for control    conflict    need for change

control resources
maintain viability

do new things
work in new ways

improve
performance

**The Problem**

**Neither perspective is entirely right (or entirely wrong).**

**The key to successful progress lies in teamwork, communication and creativity.**

Involve people equally, make them all part of one team responsible for driving the change process.

Give them tools to communicate and interact positively : even when they have opposing views.

Use creative process to invent new possibilities, to resolve issues and overcome consequential problems are essential.
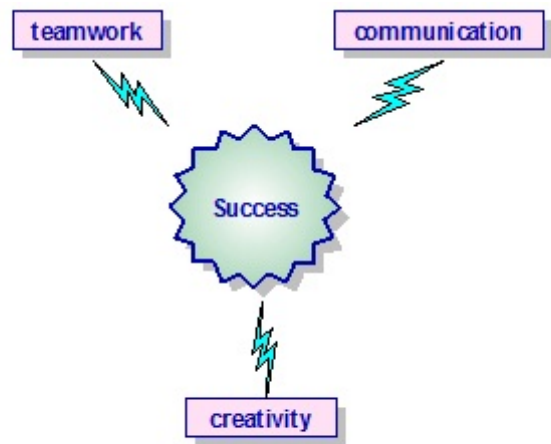
## 3.      Confusion for teams

In this context a team can be a small task force convened to drive part of the change programme, an existing common working group or a specific department within the company.

Two key sources of confusion are **conflict of interest** and **invisible changes**.

> **Conflict of interest** : Typically encountered when a task force is set up to drive through or pilot an organisational change.  Often this group of people will be allocated to the task force on a part time basis.  As part of the task force they have to follow a strategy and set up systems and procedures which are at variance to those operating for the rest of the organisation.  In extreme cases they will be direct opposites.
>
> Problems arise in managing the conflicting interests of their role in the task force and the main part of their job.
> - They may report to one boss for task force activities and another for the rest of their job.
> - Different bosses will have different priorities.
> - Members of the team will owe loyalty to different parts of the organisation.
> - Usually their annual appraisal, remuneration system or career progression will be dependant on their performance away from the task force.
> - The old system might emphasise local company performance while the new one performance at a pan-national level.
> - They will often be required to work in a collaborative framework of open minded communication in the task force and in a cynical and competitive way back at the office.  In extreme cases the competition will be other members of the task force.
>
> Skill in flexibility, creativity, teamwork, communication and personal resource building are vital for these people.

> **Invisible Changes** : In some organisations large scale changes do not necessarily make a radical difference at an operational level. Individuals still find themselves sitting at the same desk doing essentially the same job with the same people. The changes which do take place seem more like the normal evolution of the job. In these circumstances it can be difficult for staff to find the energy to make changes on a personal level.
>
> There is great scope for creativity here. One way to signpost that real change has happened is to invent other, indirect indicators. Even relatively small changes in the operating environment can emphasise that more important change has happened.
>
> The right approach will ensure that there is little or no cost penalty. Making positive changes to people's working environment can lead to increases in personal productivity.

## 4. Individuals come first

Ultimately the success or failure of any change process depends on the actions of those involved.

Despite positive intentions the effect of change on people can be counterproductive :

➢ **There is confusion and uncertainty about the future** : personally and about the business.
➢ **high levels of anxiety**, even long afterwards if there have been redundancies, there can be persistent worries of the, "Am I next?"type.
➢ **Loss of motivation**, "Is what I am doing worthwhile?" "They are only going to change it later anyway." "In the long run it will make no difference."
➢ **Loss of direction** - not knowing what to do for best.

Our experience has shown us that people make *real* changes in their behaviour and views *by choice,* often brought about by personal experience.

For people to make changes they need to have intrinsic motivation to do so as well as extrinsic motivation :

| **extrinsic motivators include** | **intrinsic motivators include** |
|:---:|:---:|
| money | personal aspirations |
| being told to do it | desires |
| fear | a sense of rightness |
| political pressure | a sense of fit |
| doing the right thing | inner harmony |
| peer pressure | personal responsibility |
| laws and legality | personal integrity |
| (company or national) | |

*Our mission* : to make a difference
*Our field* : creativity, innovation, change
*Our approach* : facilitation, consultancy, training,

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Companies often put enormous effort into getting the extrinsic motivators right, intrinsic motivators are more often forgotten.  Culture changes are mediated by senior executives *TELLING* subordinates to behave differently.

Such interventions inevitably produce results.

Unfortunately the results/changes are almost always small or short lived.  Like stretching a rubber band .........

> **The hysteresis effect**
>
> A lot of energy is put into deforming the natural situation
>
> The rubber stretches easily and stays stretched for as long as the force is applied
>
> When the force is released the rubber returns to its resting state - having deformed slightly.

As soon as senior management start putting energy elsewhere the organisation relaxes into an approximation of its old condition.

That this happens is evidenced by the very real cynicism exhibited by individuals who have been around in the organisation for some time,

> "*Here we go again.  Just keep your head down.  It will all blow over soon and then we can go back to doing our jobs*"

They know, often from previous experience, that these things rarely last.

Yet companies do make successful culture changes - How ?

The key seems to be in lining up intrinsic and extrinsic motivators and by providing a REAL answer to the question,

<center>"*What's in it for me ?*"</center>

As part of this it is important to take into consideration all levels of motivation :

the total environment where individuals operate

the observed actions and
behaviours in that environment

people's inherent attitudes and
abilities

the underlying values and beliefs
(personal, departmental and
corporate) which underpin those
abilities attitudes and behaviours



the connection to the sense of corporate (and departmental) identity

the overall purpose (individual and corporate) which provides the foundation for
everything.

Clarity must be achieved and successfully shared about what these elements are and where
individuals' power to act to make changes lies and how it all relates to the strategy of the
organisation..

A clear, concise description of the current situation and a vision for the future must be
communicated.

Decisions will be made about key indicators to measure the success of the project.

The change process will be mapped out and the time and nature of individuals involvement
defined.

It is vital that individuals at all levels in the organisation are involved - major changes are doomed
to failure if those at the top merely require that everyone else does things differently. Senior
manager have to be seen to be making changes in what they do as well as asking for change from
others.

It is often very difficult, if not impossible, for people inside the organisation to gain a truly
unbiased perspective on all of these factors and to act in a way that is perceived to be completely
impartial.

**Inner Business** has considerable experience, and a good track record of success, in making the
difference that matters in these programmes