

## CHANGE PROCESSES: A Reminder of Essentials

May 2020 – Koenraad Van Brabant

### I. You Will Experience Change

In your work life you will experience change. Often it will have been initiated by someone else, and you are requested to go along with it. Perhaps sometimes you will have initiated it. Possibly it will have been initiated by someone else, but you are asked to make the change happen in your department or with your team. Constant change, it is said, is the ‘new normal’.

### II. Change Management

Change management is the application of a structured approach to take the organisation from its current to a future state. That future state is supposed to bring extra benefits to the organisation, network, coalition or alliance concerned, in line with its objectives.

In most instances, the change initiative will be initiated at the top of the organisation that, in the case of a network or alliance, may be a very influential key player. It can be triggered by external developments, such as developments in the broader operating context (the market, the geo-political situation...) or what your competitors are doing in your segment of the market. It can be triggered by financial or technological changes that affect you directly, or by the evolving interests and tastes of your customers or clients. It can also be triggered by a new chief executive or senior manager, who comes with fresh eyes and different ideas.

Whatever the triggers, most organisational change processes tend to be top-down. There is likely to be a thought-out change plan, with a schedule, and a change team to lead and direct it. The plan may have been developed with external consultants, who may be part of the change team. One or more individuals are nominated as change champions.

Change initiatives are underpinned by a theory of change, which may or may not have been rendered explicit. A theory of change essentially states that if we do X, then Y will result in the medium-term that in turn will contribute to Z as a positive outcome, further down the time horizon. That reasoning is based on a lot of assumptions. Rendering a theory of change explicit means surfacing these assumptions, questioning them, and regularly reviewing whether they actually hold when the change plan is put into practice. The overall assumption is of course that, when the change is completed, it will result in significant benefits for the organisation and its primary stakeholders, that could not have been realised if one had continued in the old ways.

Often, the change process is one of rational analysis, followed by design and systematic implementation, without letting different ideas and preferences of other stakeholders interfere – the change process is highly planned and structured; it is steered in a tightly controlled manner. Two Dutch change analysts, de Caluwé and Vermaak, identified 5 different change approaches, corresponding almost to ‘ways of thinking’. They gave each a colour. The above mentioned, rational, approach, they call a ‘blue change strategy’, derived from ‘blue thinking’.



Alternatively, or in combination with that rational logic, the change approach is based on a recognition that organisational life is shaped by interests, power and influence. The change approach is now designed to try and get all influential players on board, create win-win situations or powerful coalitions, and resolve outstanding differences through negotiation. The change process will be difficult to structure and plan and the eventual outcome not guaranteed; it is steered but very adaptive to power and interest dynamics. Our Dutch change analysts called this a 'yellow' change strategy: Those with power will negotiate among each other if needed, about what change will be supported, those with less power must change because those in power tell them so.

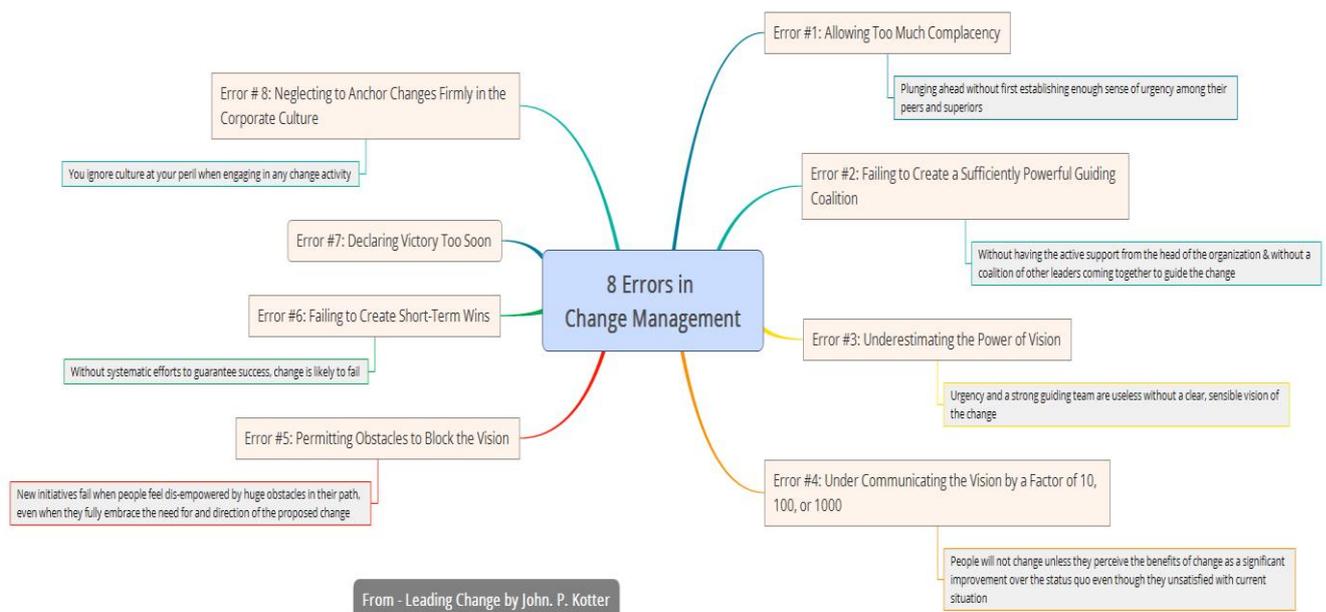
Still very popular is John Kotter's outline of a competent change process, in eight steps.<sup>i</sup> Calling it 'eight steps' gives the feeling it is a framework for a 'blue' rationally designed change plan. But it includes the creation of a guiding coalition. Presumably, this should be made up of a significant number of the powerful and influential individuals in the organisation or network – a 'yellow' component to the strategy. See Annex 1 for a summary description of the eight steps.



### III. Many Change Initiatives Fail

Management consultants not only advise on change processes, they also study them comparatively. Kotter in 1996 already observed that 70% of change processes fail to deliver the expected results.

But why? One not too clever explanation is that the change managers did not apply Kotter's good advice. That of course is a form of circular reasoning. It forgets to ask whether the advice was the right one in the first place. In fairness to Kotter, he developed his step process *after* observing key factors contributing to change failures.<sup>ii</sup>

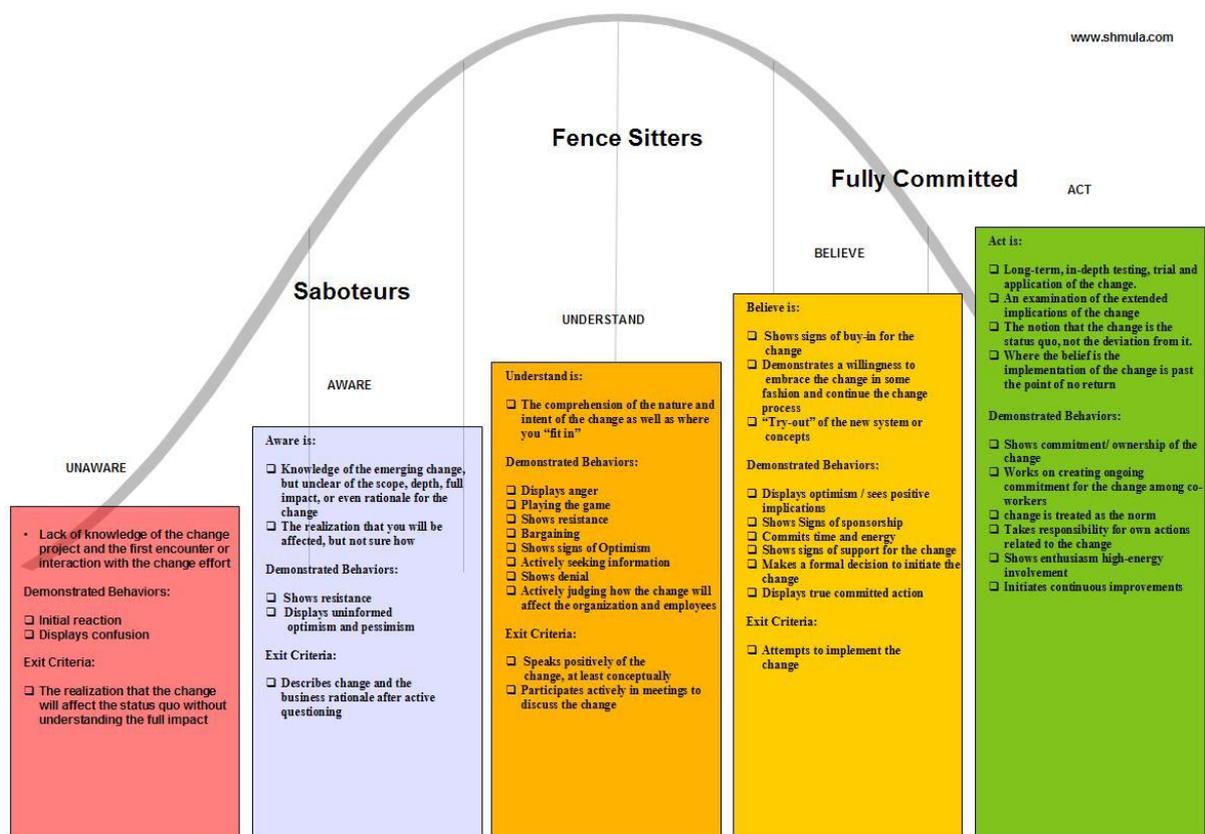


The most commonly cited reasons for a failed change process are: the energy and momentum of the change effort are not sustained long enough, resistance to change, and managers failing to behave in ways that support the change.

#### IV. Resistance to Change

Listen to any organisational change process and very quickly you will hear ‘*resistance to change*’ being mentioned, typically by those who see themselves as the drivers of change. Very likely it carries negative connotations, of colleagues who are now ‘part of the problem’ that the change can’t advance, very likely for reasons of self-interest: they want to stay in their comfort zone, they don’t want to lose their job or see their pay level or power or opportunities for career advancement put in jeopardy.

The language used can be revealing. In the following picture of a change process, mention is made of ‘saboteurs’ and ‘fence-sitters’.<sup>iii</sup>



Kotter himself at times took a hard stance and ended up suggesting that strong resisters should simply be let go off.<sup>iv</sup>

Others with significant experience of change processes will warn against such dismissive attitudes and too quick an assumption that one understands what lies underneath the perceived ‘resistance’.

*“If you run into resistance, you know you have hit on something important – this is a learning moment.” (Jan Ubels).*

*“Watson (1969) regards resistance as: all the forces that contribute to a stable personality or social system. This defined, it is a normal and valuable reaction that probably protects us from chaos. (...) In that sense, resistance is an integral part of change processes, neither entirely good nor entirely bad.” (de Caluwé & Vermaak 2003:125)*

*“Resistance can be the result of an accumulation of past events, in existence long before the new change came on the scene. Sometimes resistance can also be regarded as energy that goes in a different direction. (...) Conversely, some changes are met with a great deal of energy and enthusiasm rather than with resistance and opposition: these responses can be the seeds and experimental plots for renewal. Not recognizing this kind of energy is just as undesired as failing to understand resistance...” (idem: 126).*

There can be multiple reasons for people to resist change.<sup>v</sup>

#### **a. Why?**

The reason for the change has not been explained or not clearly or convincingly enough. As Simon Sinek admonishes: “start with why”!<sup>vi</sup> Not bothering to explain the change will certainly come across a signal of the instrumental view you have of your employees and colleagues. You move them around like pieces on a chess board. Simply stating that ‘*the status quo is not an option*’ is not enough. Most people do not experience it that way and will need to be convinced with more facts and detail. They also know that data and facts do not necessarily speak for themselves, they can be selectively presented and are open to interpretation.<sup>vii</sup>

#### **b. Distrust**

Those undergoing the change distrust the real motives and integrity of those initiating and driving the change. This is a widespread yet generally underappreciated occurrence. Those undergoing the change may perceive it not as being driven by the best interests of the organisation or the alliance, but those of the individuals at the top championing it. It can be perceived as ego-centric vanity: the new boss wants to change everything for no better reason than that s/he wants to signal s/he is now in charge. Or as driven by personal interests: The organisation is restructured or downsized supposedly to give it a better fit-for-purpose and fit-for-context, but it is perceived as a maneuver to hide the mistakes made by senior management that brought it into difficulty in the first place. Or to create a set-up that increases their personal benefits or puts them in a position more protected from demands for accountability. Change processes are seen as expressions of individual ambitions and institutional politics. Those undergoing the change will be very attentive to who benefits and who loses from it – and whether those driving the change actually also incur some ‘losses’. Some undergoing the change may resist it because they are loyal to one or other senior manager who they may value for her or his approach and/or because s/he has been supportive of them. Sometimes a restructuring is perceived as a stratagem to get rid of one employee by managers who are afraid to confront that person on her or his performance – a lack of managerial courage that many then have to suffer for. And many suspect that the bright new future will come after redundancies, that managers already know who will go but are not saying so until the last minute.

The more hierarchical the structure and culture of an organisation, the higher the risk that change initiatives will be met with deep distrust.

#### **c. Cynicism and disengagement**

Top-down change initiatives are often introduced with some hype. The change champions talk about how ‘excited’ they are and promise a bright future. But if the working environment is a graveyard of failed change initiatives, this hype may be met with cynicism. Those undergoing the change will see it as another fashion of the month, another initiative that will not be concluded and quickly superseded by the next one. The cause of this may be one or more top directors and managers who constantly generate ‘great ideas’ but have no sense of what and how long it takes to actually implement them. It may take three minutes to have a brilliant idea or see a great opportunity – and many months or even years to actually make it happen. Passive feet-dragging until the irritation goes away, is a rational strategy under such circumstances.

Distrust and cynicism are also triggered by ‘clean slate’ change initiatives: the rhetoric about the change gives the strong impression that everything that people did and how they did it until then, was mistaken. So the building of the past has to be knocked down and a completely new one built. Such message may hammer people’s sense of professional competence and pride. The negative energy thus generated is not a good foundation for the new construction.

#### **d. Change overload and change fatigue**

Organisations and coalitions can be pushed into a series of change initiatives, in rapid succession or simultaneous, or create them for themselves. Whether they are small or big, incremental, transformational or disruptive, all require time and energy and emotional and practical adjustment. Change overload and change fatigue are common occurrences. They lead to overload, overwhelm, stress, fatigue and burnout, and demotivation. How many team leaders and managers are attentive to the energy levels of their colleagues, individually and collectively?

#### **e. Skepticism**

Those asked to undergo the change see the risk of the proposed change, with benefits that may rest more on hope than rationality, as greater than the risk of continuing as is. Or they genuinely believe that the proposed changes are a bad idea. This cannot be dismissed out of hand. They may be right.

Summarising: All of the above are very real and very understandable reasons to resist change. People cannot be motivated and do not engage, because they are not convinced by the stated reasons for change, they doubt it serves the collective purpose and are skeptical to cynical that it will lead to something better. Self-interest and personal inability to change are by no means the main drivers of resistance.

You can push ahead regardless, and you may get people to *comply* with the change – but not *commit* to it. If so, the change will not embed itself, the overall functioning of the organisation or alliance will not turn out as expected. Perhaps a new change process may then be needed!?

### **V. Change is an Emotional Process**

No human being always embraces change. As Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey have pointed out, all of us can feel ambivalent and have our areas that are immune to change.<sup>viii</sup> There is always an element of uncertainty about what the ‘new’ will look like, old and dear habits to give up, a sense of loss of what will be left behind or an era of the organisation or a chapter in your own life coming to a close, anxiety perhaps about whether you have or can learn the new competencies and ways of working that are expected. Add to this lack of understanding of the ‘why’ and perhaps skepticism that it is such a good idea, and you get some strong emotions. If distrust is also present, you may end up with a possibly well-hidden but no less present emotional rollercoaster. And emotions are contagious – soon there is a general emotional field or atmosphere in the office that you can sense – if you have enough emotional intelligence. Alternatively, just listen in to the conversations around the coffee machine, in the office canteen or kitchen, or among the smokers outside.

Even when, overall, there is acceptance and willingness to change and enough trust in those driving the change, there will be an emotional dimension to the change process. Not everybody will go through that emotional process in the same way and at the same speed. Many individual conversations may be required, as well as individualised support in the form perhaps of coaching, mentoring, training and, in the first place, simply attentive listening and empathy.

This leads to what de Caluwé and Vermaak have called a ‘red’ change strategy: You engage with people at a deeper emotional level, to stimulate genuine motivation to make the change.

### **VI. Change is a Learning Process**

Change may require new competencies (not only technical or functional but also in terms of self-management and interpersonal skills) and new habits. If so, change processes will be facilitated when accompanied by early opportunities for learning. This can be in the form of training but also mentoring-on-the-job. Some people are eager to learn, in which case change will appeal to them as a learning opportunity. That, in de Caluwé and Vermaak’s framework, could lead to a ‘green’ change strategy. In a blue change strategy, you may fire those who don’t have the new competencies required. In a green change strategy, you appreciate willingness to learn and keep those who show it. Remember however: the hardest learning challenge in adults can be unlearning old habits and beliefs.

## VII. Change Strategies and Theories about Workers

The choice of change strategy can be influenced by the, often implicit, assumptions the change managers hold about workers. In his 1960 book *“The Human Side of Enterprise”*, Douglas McGregor made a distinction between Theory X and Theory Y management styles.

In a Theory X perspective, workers are seen as intrinsically lazy, avoiding responsibility and initiative, self-centered and resisting change. They are mostly motivated only by financial rewards and some status and power, and by threats of their withdrawal. In a Theory Y perspective, workers are seen as naturally inclined to be interested in their work, willing to take responsibility and be creative and collaborative, and will do so if provided with an enabling environment and atmosphere.

In his 1981 book *“Theory Z: How American Management can Meet the Japanese Challenge”*, William Ouchi tried to blend the best of both. In Theory Z, management deliberately creates multi-skilled workers by rotating them through different functions in the organisation, whereby they learn different skills and see the whole through different perspectives. Because organisations are thus investing extensively and over a long period in staff development, it is expected that staff in return will be loyal and committed to the organisation.

Theory X	Theory Y	Theory Z
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People dislike work and will avoid it if possible</li><li>• People must be coerced, controlled, directed and threatened with punishment to get them to work</li><li>• Managers emphasize the chain of command, reward or punishment motivational techniques along with close supervision of subordinate behavior</li><li>• Assumes that individuals are interested in safety and physiological needs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Managers assume that the people they supervise are as committed to work and as capable of finding solutions to work-related problems as they are themselves</li><li>• Assume that people inherently prefer to work rather than not to work</li><li>• Managers attempt to structure the work environment so that employee goals coincide with organizational goals, resulting presumably in greater creativity and productivity</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Workers are more participative, and capable of performing many and varied tasks</li><li>• Emphasizes things such as job rotation, broadening of skills, generalisation versus specialisation, and the need for continuous training of workers</li><li>• Workers have a high need to be supported by the company, and highly value a working environment</li><li>• Workers have a very well developed sense of order, discipline, moral obligation to work hard, and a sense of cohesion with their fellow workers.</li><li>• Assume workers can be trusted to do their jobs to their utmost ability, so long as management can be trusted to support them and look out for their well being</li></ul>

In reality, organisations who practice a Theory Z approach tend to do so for a limited number of people they have identified as ‘talented’, while the rest of the workforce tends to remain managed with a Theory X approach.<sup>ix</sup>

## VIII. Change Strategies and Personal Preferences

Returning back to de Caluwé and Vermaak's framework, four change strategies have so far been identified:

**Yellow strategy:** You must change because I have the power and tell you to. Or: You have power so let us negotiate what change you may agree to support.

**Blue strategy:** We must change for very compelling reasons and arguments and here is the change plan.

**Red strategy:** It is worth changing because the change proposed is really attractive.

**Green strategy:** Let us take this change as a great learning opportunity.

We can see how yellow and blue can fit fairly well together, as well as red and green. The first two seek to get a top circle of power players on board, then imposes change on the many others. The latter two hope to generate more broad-based commitment to a change.

White change strategies and 'white' thinking are the opposite of blue and yellow. They are the hallmark of the outliers, the free spirits, who believe that change will emerge, organically, when the time is ripe and the energy is there. In other words, they sense whether there is 'readiness for change', and don't take a senior manager's word for it at face-value. They are prepared to wait and are comfortable with uncertainty. This makes them quite the opposite of blue and yellow thinkers who want to reduce uncertainty and create predictability. Meanwhile, white thinkers are creative and innovative, but will operate more at the edges of organisations whose main culture and functioning is controlling. 'White' thinkers are often involved in start-ups; they may run into difficulty when the venture is successful, and the investors want to see more blue and yellow driven approaches.

de Caluwé and Vermaak also observe that, as individuals, we have personal styles and preferences, probably for no more than two of the strategies.

*Each strategy relies on assumptions.  
Can you articulate, for each, its theory-of-change?*

*What strategy or strategies come most natural to you - as a driver of change?  
What change strategies would you prefer to see applied if you will be affected by a change driven by someone else?*

## IX. Choosing a Change Strategy

Is the choice of strategy only a matter of preference? Or of organisational culture? Awareness of different possible change strategies puts in you in a position to make more informed choices.

### a. Some possible considerations

- *The Intended Outcomes:* The chosen change strategy should be compatible with the intended outcome. A blue approach is not conducive to an outcome that seeks to engage more stakeholders more actively (for that a green towards white approach are more appropriate). While a white approach is not conducive to change process to replace the current IT infrastructure with a new one.
- *The Present State of Affairs in the Organisation:* Most organisations have a prevailing culture that corresponds to one of the colours. A change strategy that fits well with the prevailing culture is more likely to be effective as people are familiar with it and know how to deal with it. On the other hand, the prevailing culture may be suffocating and precisely part of the problem. Then clearly another colour strategy is called for, knowing that different strategies are not easily compatible and sometimes directly contradictory.
- *The Difference between the Present and Desired Future:* A change process of incremental improvement (doing more of the same and better) tends to be best served by a colour approach

that matches the dominant culture. If the change process however requires significant renewal, a qualitative change, then another colour strategy will be called for.

- *Resistance and Energy:* Understanding the nature of the resistance (see above) will help choose the most appropriate colour strategy: Where the resistance is linked to power factions, a white approach will not be effective as it will increase the fragmentation. Where emotions run high, a blue approach is not appropriate, as it will only aggravate the situation. Resistance however can also be an indicator of strong positive energy, which can benefit from a yellow, green or whitish approach.
- *Personal Style:* Change agents tend to be most comfortable with one or two styles. It is possible to learn to use a broader repertoire of styles. But it may also be the case that the key change agents (the initiator, the orchestrator or process manager) have a personal style that is different from the most appropriate change approach. If they realise this themselves, they may ask to be replaced, or they may have to be replaced, or it must be anticipated that the change process is going to run into trouble.

The combined reflections on these five factors should give some indication whether the proposed change is realistically speaking feasible.<sup>x</sup>

Another key consideration must be added here

- *Is there formal authority and how easily can it be wielded?* In today's world, many companies and organisations operate in coalitions, alliances, networks, brought together around a shorter or longer-term common purpose, or because they must in the context of a certain eco-system. Such multi-stakeholder collaborations are characterised by a mix of common and diverging interests which will dynamically play out as an ongoing dance. Even if there someone in a position of nominal authority, a 'coordinator' or the Chair of a Board made up of a mix of different stakeholders, that person cannot wield straightforward authority without risk of the collaboration breaking up – or powerful actors in it removing her or him. Yellow tactics can be called for, not as the exercise of an at best feeble authority, but as a negotiation process with the most influential players. That however, risks alienating a lot of others, so more blue and red in the mixture, may be recommended.

### **b. Combining change approaches?**

Is it possible to combine different change approaches/ colours, either consecutively or successively? Based on their experiences, de Caluwé and Vermaak offer two points of advice.

- There has to be one dominant colour or style of approach, otherwise much confusion will arise that will undermine the whole approach.
- Different colours/approaches can –possibly- be used consecutively (itself already tinted with blue thinking of 'steps' or 'phases'), but only if each phase is given enough time and space to do its work. A prevailing impatience means that this seldom is the case, again increasing the risk that the whole process will lose credibility.<sup>xi</sup>

## **X. Facilitating Change in Today's World**

You do not want to simply execute a change plan: you want the change to lead to meaningful and lasting improvements and benefits. You can get shorter term benefits from making those who undergo the change *comply* with a yellow-blue strategy. Command and control work, typically associated with pyramidal hierarchies, were after all the hallmark of the industrial revolution and the development of large-scale manufacturing. They still work in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, but less so.

Their intrinsic weakness is that the energy of compliance is weaker and more sluggish than the energy of commitment. Beyond that, command and control work less well in the rapidly changing world we now live in, that requires fast and nimble adaptations. They work not well in the knowledge-economy as they stifle the creative thinking that can generate the leading edge. They certainly do not create a culture of innovation. They work less well with younger generations of the workforce who are less

inclined to simply obey authority. It is noteworthy that Kotter's thinking also evolved along those lines.<sup>xii</sup> And of course command and control does not work well in multi-stakeholder collaborations, where there is no strong authority. To get broad-based buy in and emerging commitment, change strategies need not only blue and some yellow where power brokers need to be brought on board, but a good dose of red and possibly some green.<sup>xiii</sup>

We have identified important attention points:

- *Ensure Broad Understanding of the Why:* Present a convincing case why change is required. Be clear about the purpose and the vision: what would the change outcome look like, how would it work, why would it be better? Allow people to question and examine it. A critical workforce is a great asset if it is collectively oriented towards continuous improvement.<sup>xiv</sup>
- *Assess Change Readiness:* Be particularly attentive to change overload and change fatigue. List, together with colleagues and other key stakeholders, all the changes going on, and what the cumulative impact is.
- *Take Resistance as Normal and an Opportunity:* Find out what its different sources are, address them appropriately, and take on board what is valid and valuable.
- *Honour the Positives of the Past and Be Clear about What Needs Preserving.* Rhetorical polarisation that portrays all the past as bad so that only total change will do, is rarely accurate and stimulates resentment and distrust. Have the conversation about: what do we need to protect and preserve?
- *Attend to the Emotional Aspects of Change Processes:* Much emotional intelligence is called for. Have conversations about 'hopes' and 'fears' and listen more than tell. People need time to process changes. Allow peer-support to come forward. Some individuals embrace change more quickly and easier than others, they are 'leapers'. Some will act as 'bridge-builders', helping their slower colleagues over the edge.<sup>xv</sup>
- *Communicate and Do it Well.* But communication means listening as much, and possibly more, than telling. Insufficient, poor, one-way, and unempathetic communications all decrease trust. Be honest. Do not put a spin on things: many people sense it immediately, and you will in any case be found out later.
- *Build Broad Acceptance if not Support for Difficult Decisions:* The change may lead, for example, to redundancies or so it is assumed. It are not redundancies per se that destroy trust and with it the effectiveness of the change process - it is how it got to that point and how possible redundancies are handled. Staff layoffs as a result of mismanagement, while those responsible for it retain their positions and high salaries, are a trust killer. Untransparent decision-making about who gets fired and why, will add to it. Some organisations have very successfully handled the possibility of redundancies through participatory approaches. In some cases, that has resulted in negotiation e.g. with trade union representatives. But in other cases, alternatives were found to avoid (most) redundancies, or to give people whose post disappeared the possibility to find another role for themselves in the organisation. Broader participation, and creative thinking around difficult decisions generally lead to broader acceptance.



That takes us to a key question: *when to involve more people who are affected by the change in the change process?*

The following table contrasts the sequencing of key questions and steps in a top-down approach, with a more participatory one.

<b>TOP DOWN</b>	<b>PARTICIPATORY -1</b>	<b>PARTICIPATORY-2</b>
(Why)-What-When-How-Who	Why-What-Who- How-When	Why-Who-What-How-When
In this approach, the why question may be paid limited attention and is possibly not shared more widely. Quickly, the emphasis is on what change will be instigated, and by when. Having determined the what and when, then a technical plan is drawn up about the how. Only then more attention is given to who has what roles in the change process.	In this approach, the why is given the attention it deserves and will be shared. A small group of people may work on 'what' change outcome is aimed for or develop some options. At that point however, more stakeholders are brought in the process, to start mobilising buy-in. This larger group now works on the how, taking into account the current situation, perceptions, sensitivities, interests etc. of different stakeholders. The 'when' will be determined by what the 'how' needs.	This approach involves stakeholders at an even earlier stage. There will be intensive conversation about the 'why': why change is required. But then, various stakeholders explore together the 'what' and from there the 'how' and 'when'. The participatory process becomes one of strong co-creation.

## **XI. GO SLOW TO GO FAR**

What about the sense of urgency and the risk of losing momentum that Kotter warned about? Are participatory approaches not time wasters and course muddlers? As pointed out, some change processes do not need strong buy-in. But many do. Nothing is as wasteful of time as change processes that fail to produce the expected benefits. More often than not this is because how they are designed and executed generates a lot of unhealthy, negative, energy.

Building broad-based commitment to a change is laying strong foundations. Without it, your new post-change house will be built on unstable sand.

Highly effective teams are the result of sustained attention to team building. Comparative research between organisations that practice top-down, performance-focused change processes, and those that balance performance and individual, team and organisational health considerations, show that the latter achieve better outcomes.<sup>xvi</sup> Go slow first to get fit-for-change, then you can go far.

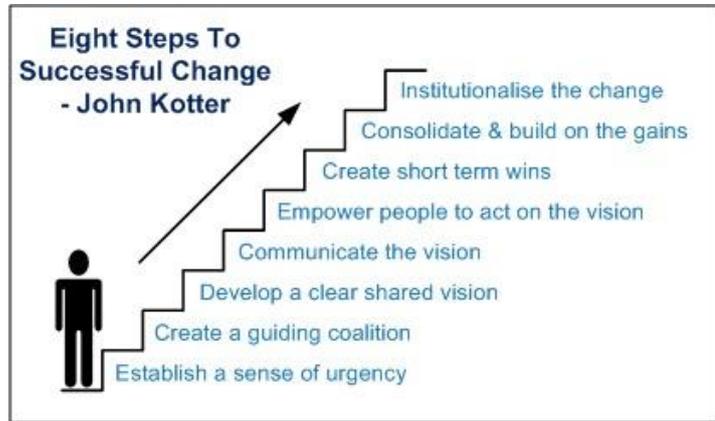
### **A VOCABULARY AROUND CHANGE**

Change manager  
 Change champion  
 Change plan – change process  
 Change strategies or tactics / colours of change  
 Theory of change  
 Change readiness  
 Change fatigue  
 Change overload  
 Resistance to change  
 Immunity to change  
 Leapers-bridgers-tradition holders  
 Incremental – adaptive- transformational – disruptive change

## Annex 1: Kotter's Eight Steps Change Model

John Kotter (1996), a Harvard Business School Professor and a renowned change expert, in his book "Leading Change", introduced 8 Step Model of Change which he developed on the basis of research of 100 organizations which were going through a process of change.

The 8 steps in the process of change include: creating a sense of urgency, forming powerful guiding coalitions, developing a vision and a strategy, communicating the vision, removing obstacles and empowering employees for action, creating short-term wins, consolidating gains and strengthening change by anchoring change in the culture.



- 1. Creating an Urgency: This can be done in the following ways:**
  - Identifying and highlighting the potential threats and the repercussions which might crop up in the future.
  - Examining the opportunities which can be tapped through effective interventions.
  - Initiate honest dialogues and discussions to make people think over the prevalent issues and give convincing reasons to them.
  - Request the involvement and support of the industry people, key stakeholders and customers on the issue of change.
- 2. Forming Powerful Guiding Coalitions** This can be achieved in the following ways:
  - Identifying the effective change leaders in your organizations and also the key stakeholders, requesting their involvement and commitment towards the entire process.
  - Form a powerful change coalition who would be working as a team.
  - Identify the weak areas in the coalition teams and ensure that the team involves many influential people from various cross functional departments and working in different levels in the company.
- 3. Developing a Vision and a Strategy** This can be achieved by:
  - Determining the core values, defining the ultimate vision and the strategies for realizing a change in an organization.
  - Ensure that the change leaders can describe the vision effectively and in a manner that people can easily understand and follow.
- 4. Communicating the Vision**
  - Communicate the change in the vision very often powerfully and convincingly. Connect the vision with all the crucial aspects like performance reviews, training, etc.
  - Handle the concerns and issues of people honestly and with involvement.
- 5. Removing Obstacles**
  - Ensure that the organizational processes and structure are in place and aligned with the overall organizational vision.
  - Continuously check for barriers or people who are resisting change. Implement proactive actions to remove the obstacles involved in the process of change.
  - Reward people for endorsing change and supporting in the process.
- 6. Creating Short-Term Wins**
  - By creating short term wins early in the change process, you can give a feel of victory in the early stages of change.
  - Create many short-term targets instead of one long-term goal, which are achievable and less expensive and have lesser possibilities of failure.
  - Reward the contributions of people who are involved in meeting the targets.

**7. Consolidating Gains**

- Achieve continuous improvement by analysing the success stories individually and improving from those individual experiences.

**8. Anchoring Change in the Corporate Culture**

- Discuss the successful stories related to change initiatives on every given opportunity.
- Ensure that the change becomes an integral part in your organizational culture and is visible in every organizational aspect.
- Ensure that the support of the existing company leaders as well as the new leaders continue to extend their support towards the change.

Source: <https://www.managementstudyguide.com/kotters-8-step-model-of-change.htm>

- <sup>i</sup> Kotter, J. 1996: *Leading Change*. Harvard Business School Press
- <sup>ii</sup> See e.g. Kotter, J. 1995: *Leading Change. Why transformation efforts fail*. Harvard Business Review (May-June issue) <https://hbr.org/1995/05/leading-change-why-transformation-efforts-fail-2>. See also Kotter's observation that the sense of urgency must be maintained. "Why do change efforts lose momentum?" YouTube 2012 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1417S5AolU>
- <sup>iii</sup> <https://www.shmula.com/turnaround-and-change-management-do-not-waste-a-good-crisis/1466/>
- <sup>iv</sup> J. Kotter – *Resistance to change*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wdroj6F3VlQ>
- <sup>v</sup> This draws on Schuler, A.J. 2003: *Overcoming Resistance to Change. Top ten reasons for change resistance*. But structures the reasons differently. Rick Maurer 2008 summarises reasons for resistance to change under three headings: I don't understand it; I don't like it; I don't like you. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aosdpX1JOrU>
- <sup>vi</sup> Simon Zineck 2009: *Start with Why. How great leaders inspire action*. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4ZoJKF\\_VuA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4ZoJKF_VuA)
- <sup>vii</sup> See Huff, D. 1954: *How to Lie with Statistics*. Norton & Co, which remains a relevant classic
- <sup>viii</sup> See e.g. 'An Evening with Robert Kegan and Immunity to Change' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFYnVmGu9ZI> and Lisa Lahey 'How to Create Lasting Change' [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfQBEi\\_ksJM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfQBEi_ksJM) or <http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/immunity-to-change.html>
- <sup>ix</sup> Listen to Pia Maria Thorén 2019 "Motivation beyond Sticks and Carrots" for a passionate perspective from an HR specialist on this. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6W-625i7J-o>
- <sup>x</sup> de Caluwé & Vermaak 2003: *Learning to Change. A guide for organisation change agents*. Sage Publications pp. 130-134. Listen to brief explanations of the 5 colours of change on Introduction <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RgEvLoaQxoE&list=PL972BD3471758AC34>  
 Yellow strategy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcDntbsuh4w&list=PL972BD3471758AC34&index=2>  
 Blue strategy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGH9fzi3I-g&list=PL972BD3471758AC34&index=3>  
 Red strategy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXvptWviUBI&list=PL972BD3471758AC34&index=4>  
 Green strategy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ko0aqNYLoL4&list=PL972BD3471758AC34&index=5>  
 White strategy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8Q6gPN8b1o&list=PL972BD3471758AC34&index=6>  
 Applications <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9KPPQBqvuw&list=PL972BD3471758AC34&index=7>
- <sup>xi</sup> de Caluwé & Vermaak 2003: pp. 134-135
- <sup>xii</sup> In his 2012 article 'Accelerate', also in the Harvard Business Review <https://hbr.org/2012/11/accelerate#>, subsequently expanded in his 2014 book with the same title, he has come to see the rigidities of hierarchical organisations as a major obstacle to the greater agility that is required in a more rapidly changing world. The solution he envisages is the simultaneous co-existence, within an organisation, of a dual 'operating system' of hierarchy and network-like functioning. This should lead to many people driving change, not just a small change team, and doing so because they want to, not because they have to.
- <sup>xiii</sup> A mixture of 'blue' and 'green' strategies is used in 'deliberative democracy'. Simplified, a set of people is asked to vote on a contentious public policy issue. Then they are brought together in conversation, where different perspectives and arguments are put forward and heard. This is part of the 'blue' component. When subsequently asked to vote again, it is noticeable that most of them have shifted in their opinion, i.e. experienced 'green' learning, as a result of the broader debate. If the contentious issue is also highly emotional, then the facilitators may bring techniques to engage the emotional field, i.e. more 'red' strategy.
- <sup>xiv</sup> What has been called a 'kaizen' culture i.e. continuous improvement. When copied by Western organisations, kaizen has often been reduced to more efficient processes and better products and services ("total quality management"). Not understood, and missed out, is the notion that kaizen in the first place want to continuously improve the people and teams involved, to be and act with integrity, share and actively take responsibility, have strong interpersonal skills, be better at problem-solving and decision-making. See e.g. Miller, J., M. Wroblewski & J. Villafuerte 2014 *Creating a Kaizen Culture. Align the organisation, achieve breakthrough results and sustain the gains*. McGraw-Hill Education. Chapter 2
- <sup>xv</sup> The terms indicate different responses to change, and comes from the Centre for Right Relationships, which is the source of Organisational and Relationships Systems Coaching (ORSC) See <https://www.crrglobal.com/leapers.html>
- <sup>xvi</sup> Keller, S. & B. Schaninger 2019: *A Better Way to Lead Large-Scale Change*. McKinsey & Co.