

SUSTAINING CULTURE CHANGE



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CULTURE CHANGE

To stimulate thought, discussion and action.

This paper shares with colleagues, both in our company and beyond it, our current thinking about culture change and how to sustain it. The challenge for all leaders is how to have a positive impact on their culture. How can you shape it as you want and then sustain it so that the impact reaches to the heart of the organisation?

We all know that producing change of any kind is a devilishly difficult thing to do. Where do you start? How do you even think about it to make any sense? That's what this paper is about.

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INTRODUCTION



Faced with a world altering at bewildering speed, many people now find themselves needing to re-invent their team, department or organisation.

If you are Hewlett Packard facing the onslaught from Apple, Google and Samsung, for example, or retailers responding to the increasing threat of Amazon, you cannot assume your old ways of working and trading will survive. Something more fundamental may be needed to improve or sustain performance.

Likewise, any organisation in turnaround mode, will require changes that are pervasive and impinge on every aspect of the business. The enlightened outfits are already planning ahead and ensuring their operations are fit for the future.

Anyone can make an impact wherever they sit in an organisation. Leadership is about stepping up and taking responsibility for improving the performance for your area of influence. You might be a manager, team leader, head of department, supervisor, someone employed at 'C' suite level or perhaps working in HR. Whatever your title and role, you can produce positive change.

But, where do you start? This paper offers a holistic and systematic approach to culture change that will enable you to take practical steps that stand the best chance of success.

Setting the Scene

At the end of the last century the military came up with the acronym V.U.C.A to refer to the new 'theatre of war'. It describes a world that is **V**olatile, **U**ncertain, **C**omplex and **A**mbiguous.

It didn't take long for people in business to realise that this was also an accurate description of the new global marketplace. The situation challenges us in profound ways making planning and prediction almost impossible. How on earth do you shape a suitable change for the future when faced with such doubt? Bob Johansen at the *Institute of the Future* offers some hope by suggesting that the way to respond to this challenge is with **V**ision, **U**nderstanding, **C**larity and **A**gility.

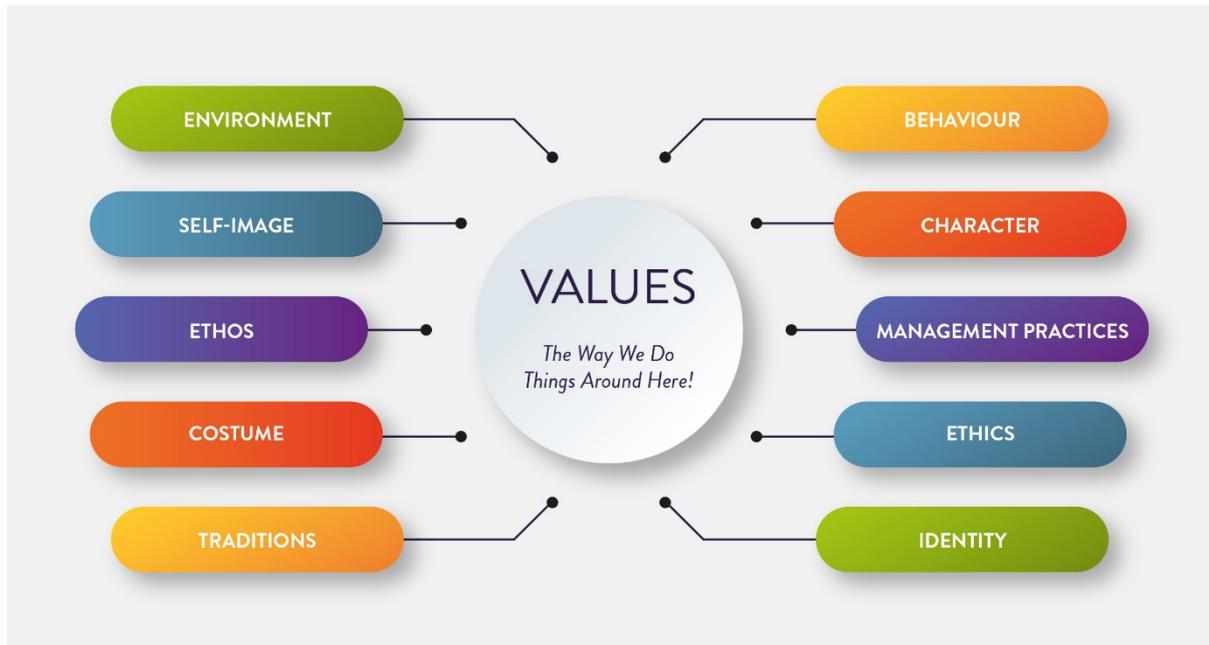
Those wanting a fundamental shift in performance are likely to talk about transformation, a new style of leadership, a new business model, a search for strategic advantage, re-engineering, or regulation and compliance.

Yet whatever the label on the tin, the contents involve a company examining many aspects of its practices and processes – that is, its culture. And that will take considerable time and reflection.

So, What is Culture?

Formal definitions of culture tend to confuse rather than enlighten. As a workable one we like the simple “the way we do things round here”.¹

There are also plenty of guides to good practice in culture change,² and this discussion document draws on these to some extent, while sharing our own practical



Culture also tends to be explained in terms of how we act or the way we think. We believe it also depends on how people *feel* and this has a profound influence on attempts to sustain change.

So it's about behaviours, attitudes, values, and beliefs, and how these show themselves in the way people act and interact.

Those experienced at seeking cultural change know it is neither cheap nor quick. As others have remarked, “It’s a marathon, not a sprint.” Sustaining culture change is likely to be a continuous process, not a one-off, extended event. People talk about ‘making it business-as-usual’ or ‘getting it into the DNA of the organisation’.

experience of helping companies sustain cultural changes.

We therefore recognise culture as multi-dimensional and not easily measured, though you get a sense of it the moment you enter a company’s reception area and from wandering through the building, even without anyone saying anything.

The look of a place may seem a superficial element, yet it is part of the equation. For instance, it would be hard to move to a flatter managerial structure, or to alter a command and control style of leadership, while maintaining numerous private offices and executive dining areas. So, central to any change process is a strong set of values that people recognise and live.

Complex Adaptive Systems

Addressing culture change, and making it stick, means accepting organisations are organic, constantly evolving in response to their environment and consequently affecting their environment. You cannot manage cultures, you merely try to adjust them.

Companies are *complex adaptive systems*.³ That is, they are largely unpredictable, even with intensive study. Simple mechanistic rules of cause and effect don't necessarily apply. Predicating what results a particular change will produce can be more miss than hit.

While this has many implications for sustaining culture change, two seem particularly important to us.

First, relatively small changes in how a company operates can trigger significant, unpredictable effects, rather as lighting a match may eventually cause a raging forest fire.

Secondly, despite the complexity, simple principles still govern what happens. A classic example from nature is "all the water systems in the world, all the streams, rivers, lakes, oceans, waterfalls etc., with their infinite beauty, power and variety, are governed by the simple principle - that water finds its own level."⁴

Similarly, despite their variety, corporate cultures also have a simple guiding principle - they evolve from the combined behaviours and interactions of all employees, and indeed stakeholders. That is, they result from literally countless individual thoughts, feelings and actions.

When, for instance, Sam Palmisano, IBM's CEO, launched three-day "Values Jam" on the company Intranet, some 50,000 employees posted nearly 10,000 comments about the proposed values.⁵ As Palmisano himself pointed out, "You just can't impose command and control mechanisms on a large, highly professional workforce...the CEO can't say to them "Get in line and follow me." Or "I've decided what *your* values are." They're too smart for that." In other words, executives now have to lead by persuasion rather than by coercion.

In essence, employees *are* the culture. This too has important implications for both triggering culture change and sustaining it. Organisations now undertake large-scale re-organisation at least once every three years, frequently damaging corporate performance along the way.⁶ Often this stems from too much attention to technical issues, while undervaluing the underlying processes and relationships which prove critical for achieving sustained cultural shifts.

Our Experience

We have been involved in cultural change for over two decades, working with various clients from different industry sectors on the practical issues associated with it. These include Hewlett Packard, DHL, Deutsche Telekom, Campbells, SAP, Burton's Foods, Cancer Research UK, Carlsberg, FT, SES, Astra Zeneca, VISA and many others.

This practical experience, and our continuing internal dialogue around the

issue, plus our various published books and articles touching on aspects of cultural change, inform our present thinking about this elusive topic.

Although "there is no magic bullet in organisational design"⁷, we offer below our own view of what it takes to embed and integrate change, rather than just set it in motion.

A FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING CHANGE

Since much of our client work reflects practical business issues, mere models or theories of change can seem fanciful.

Yet we find it useful to have a framework for an approach to culture change so that you know how best to make an impact, how to plan, where to start and where to make the most appropriate and effective interventions. This holistic overview can, for instance, guide the application of development initiatives, communication strategies and capital investment to support the change. It can help identify the necessary action to produce behavioural change as well as being a potent way to promote strategic thinking.

The fundamental message from previous work on frameworks is identical: "...structure will work well, only when fitted properly with human resource practice."⁸ Relying on a superficial tick-box requirement tells you little about whether people take actual

responsibility for the right kind of behaviours.

Companies also have a natural inertia. Even the most imaginative development programmes can be nullified by a reversion to the old ways of working and behaving. So cultural change becomes the challenge of making it persist and finding ways to ensure it becomes irreversible.

Individual behavioural change programmes lie at the core of creating culture change in any company. Yet here too we need some kind of framework to highlight the assumptions about what kind of behaviour contributes to it.

For example, take the current widespread demand for businesses to ensure an ethical culture in the light of the various scandals and the resulting legislation and corporate governance codes across the world. The well-meaning attempts to legislate and regulate people into good behaviour have

spawned a climate of compliance rather than an ethical culture.

Compliance is seldom enough where people just go along with what's proposed. It breeds a reactive approach from those 'following orders' thus killing creativity and innovation.

Nor is simple commitment enough, where people become involved in the change, while remaining frustrated at their inability to affect it. Encouraging people to proactively be part of the change is an essential element of success.

Wholehearted Engagement

What's needed is an approach recognising that sustained cultural change demands more than compliance or commitment. We call it **wholehearted engagement** which goes deeper, involving both values and meaning.

The evidence is now in around engagement. All recent studies have emphasised that every measure of success within an organisation, for example profitability, customer satisfaction, sales and innovation, all improve when employees are engaged. There is a direct correlation between high levels of engagement and high performance. And yet surveys reveal low levels of engagement in many countries.

In the UK there is now a strong movement called *Engage for Success*, dedicated to improving national engagement scores and best practice. It is intended to encourage all sorts of organisation, large and small, public and private, to engage their people wholeheartedly.

The broadcaster ITV's turnaround was attributed to a very successful engagement process. They ran a highly visible campaign which included a series of road shows asking people to make suggestions for improvement on post-it notes. They collected 9,000 of these, all of which were processed and responded to. This had an immediate impact and the company became profitable within the next 18 months.

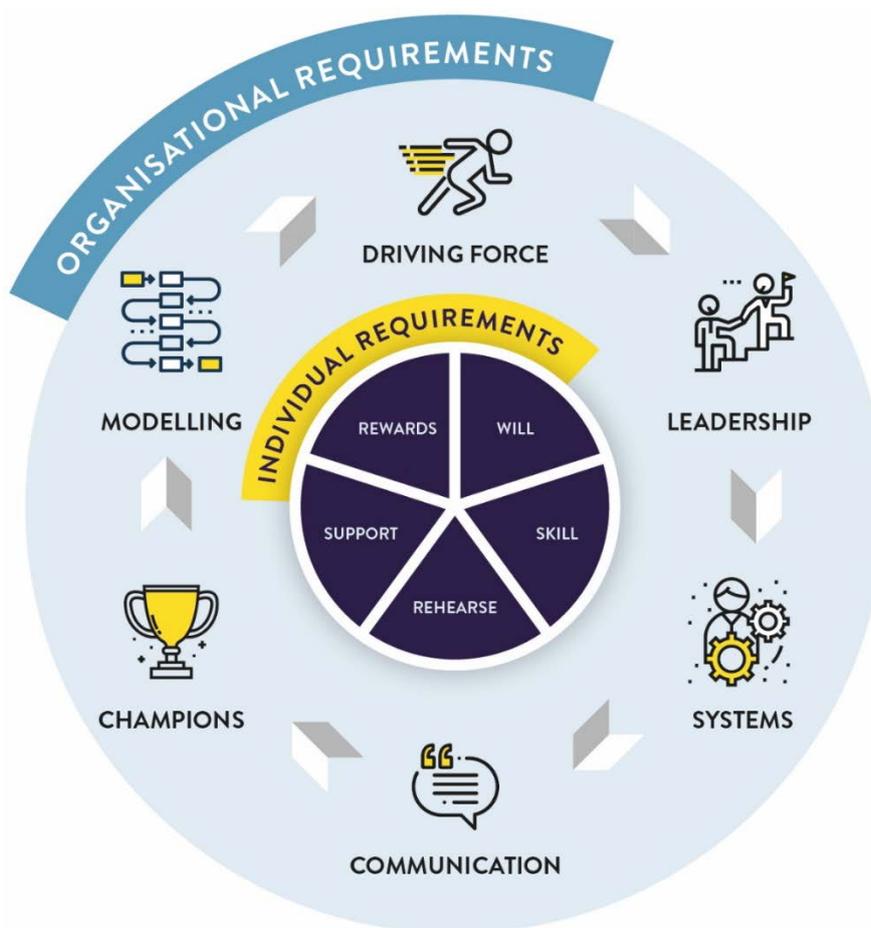
To achieve such success, though, companies must be willing to examine both the systemic issues of culture and the commercial imperatives.⁹ This is why cultural change is seldom a quick fix, requiring instead a strong underpinning of sustained support.

You cannot expect success by altering the organisational elements and ignoring the individuals. Equally, companies sometimes focus on changing people's behaviours and attitudes, yet not have the systems to support and reinforce those changes.

Jim Collins' seminal study into what makes companies great, found that there was "no single defining action, no grand program, no one killer innovation, no solitary lucky break, no miracle moment. Rather, the process resembled relentlessly pushing a giant flywheel in one direction, turn upon turn, building momentum until a point of breakthrough, and beyond." ¹⁰ This applies

equally to deliberate attempts at cultural change.

Our holistic approach framework explores the relationship between the two main elements of successful culture change, namely *organisational* shifts and *individual* ones. (See diagram.)



Often we encounter clients who have previously tackled major change by placing an emphasis on only one of these, rather than both. This can explain why past efforts to achieve persistent change have not always lived up to their hopes and expectations.

We will now explore each of the essential elements for these two main areas in more detail.

ORGANISATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Driving Force

Given the challenge of sustaining any cultural shift, there needs to be an absolutely compelling reason to attempt it. Culture change efforts are generally more successful when there is a clear link between culture and business strategy.¹¹

In practical terms, we look for something so irresistible that almost everyone in the company recognises that change has become unavoidable.

Such a driving force can stem from a variety of sources, often financial.

There is a sudden threat to the company's previously robust business model, an innovation undermines the company's present product or service, new expectations arise, such as the demand for increased transparency, within which the company and its employees must now operate.

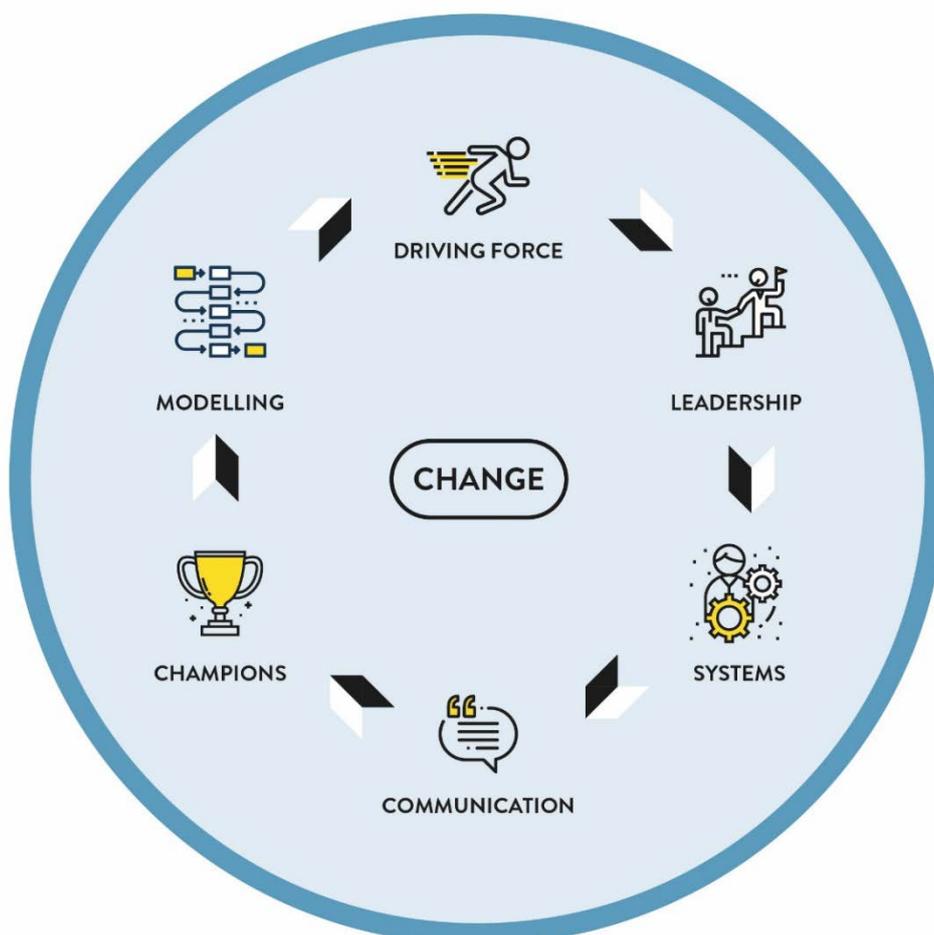
Examples of driving forces at work include:

- GM shifting its culture following the debacle of the faulty ignition switch.

- Penguin merging with Random House to form a more powerful publishing company better equipped to face the digital revolution

- Energy companies altering their resistance to accepting climate change, and are now pledging to develop cleaner energy and cutting harmful gas flaring.

- VW needing to change in the light of the deception over diesel pollution levels.



- And many organisations who are adapting to issues such as downturns in global economies, migration or technological revolutions.

However, it doesn't have to be impending doom or disaster scenarios that drive change. A strong vision of an improved future, or an enhanced recognition of social responsibility can do the same. Unilever have decided to amend their culture to include a whole raft of issues around human rights and this commitment is now formalised as part of the company's current change effort.

In 2015 Cancer Research UK launched a culture change programme called "Fit for the Future".

Here, the compelling narrative was about ambitious targets to cure cancer in the next ten years. There's nothing like saving lives for engaging people's commitment.

The nature of the driving force may vary, but its effects are generic. They justify a major investment in change, sending it straight to the top of the company's agenda for action, and

galvanise everyone from the CEO outwards.

There are also many driving forces that happen at a small level and help fuel local change. Any manager can see the value of shifting the culture in their team or department. There may not be a crisis – simply an appreciation that there can be improvements in the way to team operates.

When embarking on a process towards sustained cultural change, you will need to be clear about the primary driving force that will engage, excite and mobilise action. Without it there is little chance the desired changes, however rational or sensible, will persist.



- Identify the driving forces before starting any change process – either a powerful vision for improvement, or the push of dire consequences unless you adapt.
- Engage a wide range of stakeholders in the task of finding and agreeing on the driver and its impact
- Ensure people realise how the driver will affect them personally and how vital their involvement is.

Leadership

Persistent cultural change relies heavily on whether senior management plays its part in identifying, articulating, promoting and supporting the changes. Whether it's a CEO, a head-teacher or a supervisor on the shop floor, leaders often shape the culture of the team, department and organisation. Their approach and behaviour are crucial in determining the success of any change. As with any leadership, they need to *add value* and *have an impact*.

We call such behaviour *Vital Leadership* – because it is both essential and spirited. In our book *The Vital Leader*¹² we identify two foundation elements that a leader needs: *Individuality* and *Insight*. We then explore the five vital capabilities a leader needs in order to engage and inspire people to deliver outstanding results. They are to:

- Initiate, Involve, Inspire, Improvise and Implement.

We find these Seven I's useful in practice to clarify inspirational leadership - one that engages people with the cultural shifts. It is also vital that the leadership take responsibility for creating the vision for the future and the strategic narrative, as well as a small number of values that underpin all action in the new regime.

In working with vital leaders, or ones who aspire to be, we have also found it useful to

attempt to measure this kind of impact within the organisation. Based on the Seven I's, our leadership profile guides people in developing their inspirational leadership performance, which helps underpin the cultural change.

We also know from research that leaders who use styles that positively affect the climate of an organisation generally produce better financial results than those who do not.¹³ Emotional and Social Intelligence both play an important role in a leader's impact on sustaining change, particularly culture change. This often means leaders must expand their repertoire if they want to actively sustain it.

- Ensure senior leaders are committed to the change
- Enable leaders find their authentic voice to be inspiring and win people's wholehearted engagement with the changes
- Provide reliable and insightful feedback about individual leadership impact.



Systems

Company systems potentially play two roles in achieving cultural shifts. The first is to precipitate change and the second is to sustain it. Research by the CIPD has demonstrated convincingly how systems and capital investments tend to be far less effective at influencing company performance than its people practices.¹⁴ Nevertheless, it is a necessary factor in any change process.

Systems include all aspects of ongoing measures to support culture change, whether these are control factors such as metrics, to monitor changing elements such as new behaviours, or culture tools, such as formalising ways to run performance reviews, intelligence sharing, promote folklore, rituals and values.

Suitable organisation-wide systems may, therefore, be required to underpin cultural shifts, for example:

- Communication system to promote the new behaviours in action
- Ending silos through creation of mixed professional teams
- Different working environments, such as moving to a new building to re-enforce the message of change
- New methods of remuneration and financial incentives – linking desired behaviours to bonuses
- Revised operating procedures
- New recruitment practices

You will need to identify the ‘*Dramatic Touch Points*’ that will have most impact on the culture. These are the critical factors that will ‘touch’ people in some way and make a defining statement about how you want the culture to be. For some of our clients it has been new IT systems or decision-making processes. Others it’s altering the budget-holding power or instituting suggestion schemes. This area could also include reorganising roles and responsibilities, or even restructuring the organisation.

A useful metaphor is that of Traffic Lights and Roundabouts. A roundabout is a highly efficient system for allowing traffic to flow and progress. It demands that drivers remain conscious, alert and negotiate. Traffic lights, on the other hand, command people and encourage them simply to follow orders - a form of compliance. In order to respond effectively in a fast-changing environment you will need a culture that is agile. This means having the equivalent of less traffic lights and more roundabouts.

- Continually ask the question “do the systems we have support the approach and activities we want to pursue?”
- Highlight and prioritise the most impactful *dramatic touch points* in the system that will support the change
- Get the timing right. Implement changes in the system to coincide with the other behavioural changes you are encouraging.



Communication

Whether the required shift starts to happen and then persists depends critically on the ability of leaders, champions and those promoting cultural change to communicate and present their vision of the new way of working.

It usually means an organisation needs to be open to questioning and amending its behaviour in response to the feedback and concerns of its employees, managers, shareholders, customers and other stakeholders. Lack of response to such communication can be disastrous.

BP claimed to be moving towards a more environmentally conscious culture, yet senior managers ignored feedback from the front line of serious safety problems occurring that could, and did, have adverse environmental consequences.

Those seeking to affect employee behaviour on a large scale sometimes resort to branding exercises for promoting deep change. These are high powered internal PR campaigns for creating awareness and increasing engagement. While branding has its place in the armoury of sustaining change, it is no substitute for systematic development of new behaviours through programmes of personal change.

Many communication strategies are extensive and well thought-through plans to spread messages throughout an organisation. Many of these prove to be less effective than the way gossip and rumours spread. There is no doubt that these are often unhelpful and

sometimes nasty, yet we can learn a lot from the way they work.

They often deliver the greatest impact at a gut level in the shortest time. Rumours have impact because they are 'rite'.

R = Relevant. The messages are communicated at the level of the audience. They speak to the current person and their situation and normally carry just the right level of information to engage the person's interest.

I = Intimate. They are normally communicated through relationships and feel very personal.

T = Timely. They normally have an urgency about them and come at just the right time.

E = Emotive. They tend to generate an excitation in the listener because of their emotional content or delivery.

We are hard-wired to respond with emotional force to any information which might result in a change to our safety and status. This is especially true if it relates to changes affecting the leaders, providers and co-workers in our personal domain.

- Create a sustained campaign to keep spreading the word through sharing examples of change that have been successful, using intranet, social media, newsletters, emails and so on
- Explore how rumours spread in your organisation and set up similar communication systems to convey the messages you want to get across
- Since cultural change usually involves new behaviours, to help people adapt, there may be a need for development programmes



Champions



Any persistent culture shift relies initially on the activity of internal champions. They usually form a select group, yet have a disproportionate influence on the wider organisation.

These champions may play many roles, including explaining the need for the new behaviours, coaching people to adopt them and personally demonstrating them daily. Ultimately though, everyone in the division or organisation needs to champion the new behaviours.

Identifying suitable champions is therefore an important task for those wanting to trigger and sustain culture change. Often these may emerge from various layers throughout a large organisation, not just from the top echelons.

When HR and development specialists choose to act as champions they rarely possess sufficient leverage to promote new behaviours in a sustained way. Invariably they rely on line managers and front line supervisors to integrate new behaviours into normal ways of working.

Having identified suitable people you then need to support them. It's useful to run 'champion forums' or other such sessions where they can share-best practice and practise ways of having an impact. Also get them connected on-line so that they can exchange ideas and progress, and also support each other trouble-shooting.

Build in some rewards for those who are making this extra effort promoting the new culture. Make sure their contribution is honoured and they have a chance to mark their achievements and celebrate.



- Identify potential active supporters of the cultural shifts needed – seek those with key networks
- Coach champions on practical ways they can support the changes
- Look for a critical mass of champions and bring them together to explore how they can become *more than the sum of the parts*.

Modelling

It was Ghandi who said “Be the change you want to see in the world”. He was not only urging people to step up and take a stand, but also implying that they will need to embody the change by becoming role models. “Do as I say,” is no longer a viable way of ensuring any form of major change in today’s organisations; rather, “do as I do” produces a more credible impact.

So, a challenging message for those wanting to alter the organisation’s culture, is first be willing to change yourself. Only when leaders reveal a readiness to behave differently, to lead by example, will others realise it is now acceptable to behave differently too. Leaders need to be exemplars of the new ways of working.

For years, developers have stressed the importance of top management leading by example. Yet often we find insufficient role models at the top for others to feel optimistic about the viability of the changes needed. We often encounter participants attending our workshops who will come out with the classic statement, “my manager needs to do this course!”

After the financial crisis, Citigroup embarked on a shift towards a new ethical culture. However, it ran into trouble because its top

management did not model the way. Despite a code of practice, training programmes and ethics courses, they failed to censure ethical miscreants and this undermined the morale of those who did believe in the values. As the Financial Times observed, it was “a classic example of how a huge effort to instil values could be subverted by top executives failing to enforce them.”¹⁵

Most developers have their own stories about how people returning from training programmes experience the exact opposite of reinforcement, resulting in un-sustained behavioural shifts. Consequently, we find it also pays dividends to give special attention to follow-through, and ways to ensure people encounter daily examples of what the new behaviour looks like.

In many of the change programmes we’ve worked on with clients, we’ve encouraged the sponsoring managers to highlight specific and visible actions they will undertake in order to showcase the new culture. It might be removing the walls to their office, relating in a different way, changing their work routine or eating in the canteen with everyone else. One client called these sort of demonstrations of intent as ‘signature moments’.

- Ensure senior leaders understand their own need to change so as to promote the change initiative
- Use 360 degree systems to provide leaders with accurate feedback on their behaviour
- Build ongoing follow-through into the development effort to constantly strengthen new behaviours
- Identify and enact significant action modelling the new culture.



INDIVIDUAL REQUIREMENTS



Individual behaviour lies at the heart of persistent cultural change. Often clients will describe the new forms of behaviour they want as “people being more proactive”, “less silo mentality”, “a willingness to take risks”, “a readiness to speak out”, “a greater acceptance of diversity”, “more creativity and innovation” and so on.

Companies generally seem more comfortable with a strategy for culture change than the mechanics of how to actually get people acting differently. So, for instance, while it may be desirable for

employees to exhibit social and emotional intelligence, how exactly do you achieve this in practice? We will now explore each of the individual requirements in more detail.

Will

People like change, while rather disliking the prospect of being personally changed. So they need a powerful reason to alter behaviour, whether a push due to pain, or a pull from something attractive, such as the chance for promotion or personal recognition. This is the equivalent of the Driving Force mentioned earlier, for

organisational change. People need a personal compelling reason to change – a strong ‘will’.

Experts in the field of integrative neuroscience are providing us with useful information about how people respond to change. Dr. Evian Gordon says it succinctly, “everything you do in life is based on your brain’s determination to minimise danger or maximise reward”.

Dr. David Rock has taken it a stage further highlighting five domains of human social experience that are particularly relevant when embarking on any change process. These are the areas that can trigger our primitive stress areas of the brain as we identify threat or reward. They spell SCARF.

- **S**tatus - relative importance to others
- **C**ertainty - being able to predict the future
- **A**utonomy - a sense of control over events
- **R**elatedness - sense of safety with others (friend or foe)
- **F**airness - perception of fair exchanges between people

In each case the way the change is handled can support people to move towards the desired

outcome, or feel threatened and move away from it. If you want people to develop the ‘will’ to change then these five areas are often the determining factors.

To better support the change effort, much of our work with individuals revolves around helping them uncover this personal driving force. For leaders it may be their need to revive their passion for some aspect of the business; for others it may be hunger to find more meaning in their daily work.

Change will not succeed unless there is an individual and collective will, rather than a collective ‘wont’!.



- Discover the “what’s in it for me” reason for each person’s potential shift in behaviour; collect views through surveys, focus groups, and one-to-one interviews
- Help individuals practise the new forms of behaviour and recognise the need for them in safe, stimulating learning environments
- Ensure those required to shift behaviour can fully engage with the effort and are able to give it their wholehearted support.

Skill

Change at the individual level often involves people acquiring new capabilities, such as increased emotional intelligence, the ability to work in a team, new attitudes to decision making and authority, more attention to quality and general higher levels of performance. This is where development programmes can really make a difference

There are numerous technologies on offer – experiential workshops, skill-development courses, one-to-one coaching, blended learning, outdoor experiences, mindfulness,

and so on. Whatever the methodology, it is crucial to bear in mind what enables people to perform at their best.

In the same way as we are approaching the whole change process holistically, a similar approach is needed in order to produce behavioural change in each human being. We have found a practical approach involves three basic areas, regardless of the nature of change required from the individual, how they:



Think: Includes cognitive, cerebral and psychological aspects of learning that influence the neo-cortex



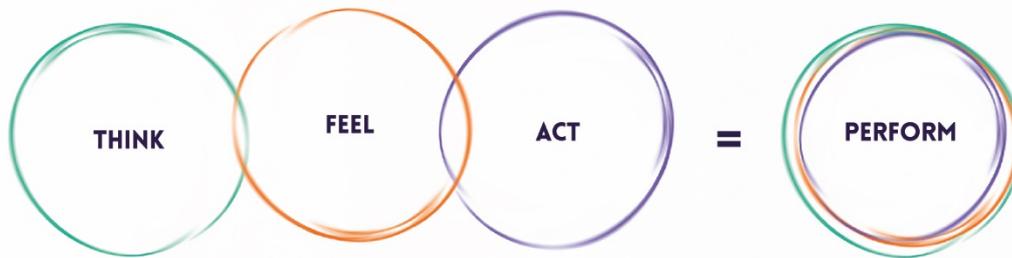
Feel: Deals with the heart or the affective, emotional and limbic aspects of learning



Act: What needs to occur in terms of practical activity, including behavioural and physiological influences

We probably all know people who are brilliant thinkers, but don't exhibit any ability to form relationships. Or those who are warm and caring, but don't get anything done. Or others who are continually busy doing things, yet do so without seeming to think before they act.

Human being need to develop all three areas in order to give of their best. When all three activities combine correctly, they prompt performance or behavioural change. When all three align effectively they also promote peak performance.



We call this approach *whole-self learning*, because it involves cerebral, emotional and physical intelligences—in fact, all aspects of a person’s being. Thus, our framework for individual change is underpinned by the

commitment to develop whole human beings who are able to perform at their best and contribute to shaping and sustaining a new culture.

Support

People may have the will to change and then develop the skills and capabilities to help them perform in the new cultural environment, but if they aren’t supported their best endeavours might come to nothing.

The widespread growth of coaching within companies, for example, reflects a growing realisation of the power of this kind of support to encourage shifts in attitudes and behaviours. It may be that the new culture includes a shift towards a coaching style of management. In which case the support offered would be in line with the change itself.



- Identify what abilities may be needed to support the new behavioural assumptions, so there is a specific focus for development
- Assess the size and nature of the skill gap
- Create a development programme to bridge the skills gap
- Produce the appropriate solutions to develop the necessary skills.

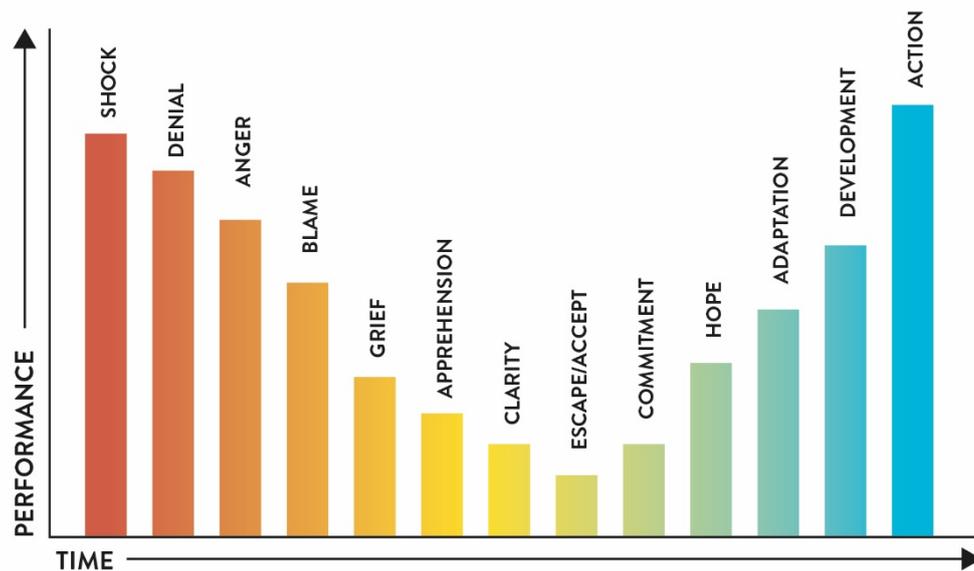
The ‘Change Curve’ is familiar to most people. Whilst it was originally designed to describe people experiencing loss and bereavement, it has been adapted to

describe people experiencing all sorts of change.

Our own version of it (see graphic) reflects our experience of people's feelings whilst

experiencing change within organisations. It also suggests some of the ways managers can support people during the process.

RESPONSES TO CHANGE



LEADERSHIP ACTION

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe vision & benefits Provide facts and information Convey the big picture Listen with compassion Provide emotional support Show personal commitment Support champions Be candid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasise choice Feature opportunities Provide facts and information Deal with leavers in-line with values to impress those staying Provide support Show personal commitment Communicate priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See quick wins Recognise achievements Provide feedback Rewards effort Celebrate success Tell stories
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- Develop a varied support programme underpinning behaviours
- Offer tailored support through personal reviews, coaching, regular feedback, buddy systems and other on the job approaches
- Once established, the support effort must keep moving forward with constant additions and creative ideas.



It's important that people are treated in line with whatever values there are to define the new culture.

Rehearsal

People need to be able to experiment with new behaviours and be allowed to fail without recrimination. This can prove a major challenge for companies burdened with a critical or punishing culture.

Many learning environments provide opportunities for people to rehearse new ways of functioning. Simulations are, of course, the obvious tool most used to experiment without doing any damage. SES, a Luxemburg-based company, launch and maintain telecommunication satellites. They develop their operators' skills using simulations. However, their changing culture demanded that the managers develop new coaching skills in order to provide a different style of learning support.

Our own use of theatre-based learning technology provides a particularly safe and enjoyable way of adopting new ways of thinking, working and behaving. It relies on fully engaging people with their learning, often involving them in what sometimes proves a life-changing experience.

The result from such development is often greater confidence in tackling the new forms of behaviour and the realisation that personal change really is possible.

Other rehearsal opportunities can be provided on-the-job. For example, people who do presentations can practise on an internal audience, before being let loose on clients; creative teams can work on prototypes before building the actual product; customer-facing staff can try out new ways of relating; organisational values can be explored and actions rehearsed.



- Provide a safe, stimulating and realistic learning environment in which to practise new behaviours
- Create opportunities at work to practice new learned behaviours
- Help line managers recognise the value of rehearsal and give encouragement, rather than “you’ve had your training, now get back to work.”

Rewards

In order for individuals to change they need to see the benefits in advance and then be rewarded for their commitment to the new culture. People are unlikely to stick with it if they have no sight of a return on their investment.

The extent of re-enforcement radically affects whether individuals continue with new behaviour. A considerable body of literature describes the benefits and effectiveness of reinforcing behavioural changes through rewards and punishments. Certainly new learning needs to be rewarded - often summed up as “catch them doing it right”.

Much of our own work in companies concerns helping managers and leaders to recognise the importance of this and acknowledge or celebrate people’s achievements.

Rewards take many forms, from remuneration to public praise, from share



- Acknowledge attempts at new behaviours even when not yet fully evolved
- Give public recognition for when people demonstrate desired behaviours; everything from awards to simple, instantaneous gifts
- Consider team rewards, rather than individual ones where appropriate

options to promotion, from more interesting work to partying.

For example, suppose the desired shift is for people to work better together in teams. A shift to team, rather than individual, bonuses, may prove the key to sustaining new ways of working.

CONCLUSION

We hope that this framework and the suggested approach, that gives an equal focus to organisation and individual factors, will assist those who want to improve the culture of their workplace. It is intended to support your own thinking rather than be a template that you follow dutifully.

Changing a culture and sustaining the change is a creative process. As such it won't be as linear as it appears in theory. The elements we have outlined provide a way of thinking about it, not a 'tick-box' list of requirements.

And like all creative endeavours, it will involve experimentation and risk. The best way of dealing with these aspects and the potential failures you will encounter on route is to stay alert and awake – and learn as you go along. And make sure you learn fast!

While continuing to develop our thinking and approach we recognise that there are still many unanswered questions about organisational and individual inertia and resistance. Issues that currently concern us include:

- Is the general direction of company culture moving away from, or towards, more respect for the individual?
- What are the blocks that prevent companies that have already identified a need for some kind of culture shift from taking sustained action?
- What is the most effective role for HR practitioners in promoting cultural change, and how best can they contribute to sustain it?
- How best can we help organisations that continue to exhibit dangerously outmoded cultures based around sexism, bullying and resistance to diversity?

Workplaces everywhere deserve to be enjoyable places for employees to spend their time and produce outstanding performance. Having a healthy culture that inspires people is something we should all aspire to. We hope this paper will help you make a positive impact.

You have been reading

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