

## « CHANGE MANAGEMENT » PUTTING THE HUMAN DYNAMIC AT THE HEART OF TRANSFORMATIONS

Change management is still far too often considered as a specific process focused on communication and training activities which help to « sweeten the pill » of a transformation that has been « invented elsewhere ». In fact, change management, meaning the mobilization of intelligence and the human dynamic, should rightly be considered as the backbone of all project management and all transformations.

Therefore, the first area of application for change management is indeed « the way » in which the project is constructed in order to guarantee that the results will be understood, accepted and applied by the teams. « Co » (co-construction, cooperation, cohesion, competition) is at the heart of this approach. Here are a few principles and practical means enabling them to be implemented.

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### SCOPING AND GENERAL DESIGN

**Change management means, above all, co-construction with the affected teams**

We know that the lack of understanding of and buy-in into change are the leading causes for the failure of such projects. The aim of change management is therefore to guarantee, and even accelerate implementation...and, to succeed, change management must form the backbone of the project from the outset.

As it is line management that drives change, committing to the project (and the change) means « sweeping the stairs from the top down » by uniting top management around a common understanding of the need, the vision and the scoping of the target to be reached. This is not a simple approval of the scope by the EXCO, but a truly collective effort that needs to be made to achieve cohesion.

This approach makes it possible to 'sell' the project outside the company (to the stakeholders), and upwards (strategic alignment). In this frame of mind, it would seem crucial to devote one's energy to strategic alignment and the analysis of the objectives to be reached, rather than to a detailed analysis of the current situation or of any malfunctions.

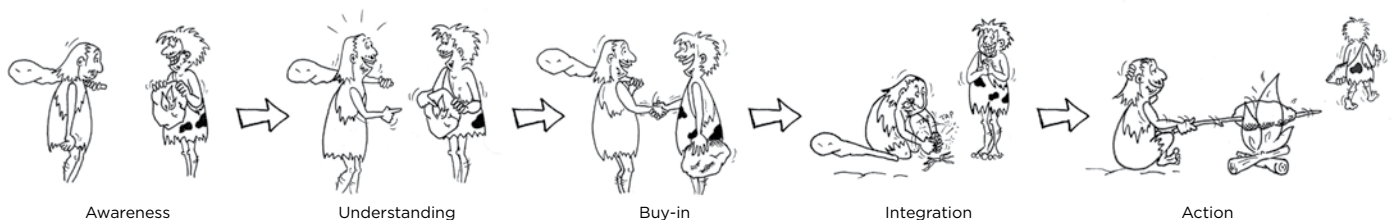
### Organization and the way the project works : the change management laboratory

The first sign of true change management is the way in which the substance, the content of the project are put together. This might seem obvious, but too many projects are embarked on without answering the question of how to manage them of the change once the target has been set.

Thus, the definition of the project structure (sponsor, steering committee, project manager, workstream leaders, project teams) and ways of working on the workstreams, is the first change management activity. The project structure must include players who are representative of the different functions and cultures that are going to be affected by the change. This helps all the visions and perceptions to be understood and taken on board early on, and to anticipate any issues with buy-in and implementation that may well arise.

It is then important to move the project along in such a way as to bring in the managers and teams on the right issues and at the right times, so that they can all approach the project as active players, rather than as victims.

### Change management in 5 steps



## EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

A « mirror group » consists of a representative panel of employees and is used to gain an in-depth understanding of perceptions in the field and to test hypothetic solutions, and validate and adjust them before they are finalized.

The rules for mirror groups are as follows :

- / A mirror group consists of similar profiles. As a general rule, during the upstream design phases, mirror groups tend to consist of management profiles, and in the downstream phases they also consist of « field » staff.
- / The participants in mirror groups are chosen for their positive (solution seeking), but also critical (pertinence of their opinions) attitude.
- / They are sworn to secrecy about the projects that are discussed (there are no minutes). They have a guarantee that their remarks will be taken into account, but there is no guarantee that they will be used in full. These rules are systematically communicated to them at group kick-off meetings.

Experience shows that running a mirror group always results in a very pertinent analysis, which is based on the scenarios shared with the group, of the risks related to the buy-in, or not, of the employees, or of the language used to communicate. It either reconfirms the working hypotheses, or results in the approach being adjusted to create greater buy-in by the employees.

For this reason, it is a good idea to proceed in stages while working, during each stage, with the people who will be involved in the following stage. During the early stages, the broad issues should be covered before gradually going into the detail while limiting the number of constants to the strict minimum, so as to leave some room for maneuver and be able to adjust to all types of situation. The objective is to converge quite quickly on the major points of the general design in order to be able to empower the managers for the detailed design and implementation.

Sharing the need for change and defining the major points of the target to be reached is the first thing. During this upstream phase, it is also necessary to work on qualifying the effects of the change and analyzing the obstacles and the drivers.

### Co-constructing at the right time, on the right issues, and with the right players

Co-construction is essential in any approach to change management... It is a powerful driver to help the teams understand and buy-in, but is also more than that ; it is also a means, through comparing and contrasting different visions and points of view, of bringing out new and innovative ideas to construct a more pertinent target and trajectory.

From that point onwards, and for every stage of the project, the objectives and ways of working through coconstruction need to be clearly defined while paying particular attention to selecting the points at issue, the participants and the ways of working.

**Scenario based approach to encourage openness, thinking outside the box and debate**

Very often, one or two « obvious » scenarios emerge, and these then tend to become the primary focus. We believe that other scenarios need to be developed, if necessary by forcing the issue, in order to see the target from different angles and explore « nuances » that often make the scenario that is eventually selected more powerful.

The collaborative platform for those involved in the transformation The objective is to further develop the evaluation and the argumentation in order to be able to clearly explain the reasons for choosing the final scenario... even if it was the first scenario to be discussed.

The time taken to work on the scenarios is also an opportunity to flush out any misunderstandings and to clarify interpretations. For some people, the word « organization » is, for example, synonymous with «structure», while for others it includes « outcomes, missions, structures, steering systems and ways of working ».

**DETAILED DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION**

**Allowing all those involved to run through the 5 steps that lead to an action**

In a nutshell, change management means allowing every employee affected to go

**Change management collaborative platform**

The deployment of a transformation in networked companies means that the management of all the entities affected must take charge of implementation. Investing in a collaborative platform, which must then be actively managed, is currently the best way of saving time and securing the project. This means making available the expectations and formal decisions and sharing the methodological tools, the « products » of communication and feedback. This platform serves to unite all those involved in steering the transformation, meaning both the project teams and the managers.

The collaborative platform for those involved in the transformation				
DISCUSSION THREAD - QUESTION - PUBLICATION - RESEARCH				
SCOPING	COMMUNICATION	ACTION PLANS	HR	STEERING
Reference documents	Testimonial videos	Specifications	Skills and career paths	Timetable
Records of decisions	Management toolbox	Methodological tools	Training plan	Risk analysis
Project organization	Argumentation / FAQ	Productions	Individual support	Project dashboard

through a cycle that moves from awareness to action in 5 steps : the table shown below presents what each of these steps means.

**Moving from a project « pushed » by the project team to a project « pulled » by the operational teams**

For the change to result in the lasting implementation of new practices, the managers need to be empowered to make the project a success.

The management teams have a key role in the success of the transformation. They are the leading ambassadors for the project, the essential relays to communicate with and motivate the teams : their words and deeds are decisive in committing the teams to

change... and yet the managers may even be the first to obstruct progress! It is therefore essential to be able to rely on the managers. However, during times of transformation, the tension between the objectives set and the available resources is at a maximum because « the shop is still open during renovation ». This perception of a mismatch between the desire to perform and the means available can stifle progress. To succeed, it is necessary to be able to rely on the managers by giving them the necessary resources :

- / Systematically give them early warnings so that they can react, prepare and plan for the key stages.
- / Equip them to be the real project leaders in the field.

**The 5 steps that lead to action**

step	Objective of the step	Example of a pertinent method
<b>Awareness</b>	« I know that a change is coming and that I am going to be affected. I am aware of the timetable. »	Traditional and regular communication to raise awareness of the project. Availability / publication of documents.
<b>Understanding</b>	« I understand why this change is important for the company and I understand what it consists of. »	During this step, everybody must be allowed to ask questions, including of themselves. Ways of working should be open and encourage interactive brain storming. Meetings in the field and participative workshops to analyze the situation are examples of ways of working.
<b>Buy-in</b>	« I agree with the pertinence and the nature of the change and I have grasped what the effects will be. »	Of course, a simple «acceptance» would make it possible to move on to the next step, but the leverage obtained by true buy-in is far greater. Three drivers for this: being led by a manager who has bought in, taking part in the collective construction and evaluation of the implementation plan, and sharing a feeling of buy-in and commitment (for example, thanks to impactful events).
<b>Integration</b>	« I understand what I personally have to do to implement the change. I also understand what my manager and my colleagues have to do. »	Depending on the nature of the changes, it might be good to «hand over the controls» so that the teams can find their own solutions to move forward and /or organize a structured «training - action» plan to pass on the formal items of content and thus enable each individual to change their working practices.
<b>Action</b>	« I implement the change, meaning that I now operate within the desired framework. »	At this stage, feedback on the results achieved is the most useful driver for consolidating the change.

/ Giving them the information to be able to carry out actions of communication and motivation during the course of meetings, interactions or existing events: team meetings, seminars, visits, web conferences.

In the same spirit, attention must be paid to dealing with changes that directly affect the managers. For example, changes to the steering system (indicators, objectives, routines and pace of work) is often a key workstream in the co-construction of a project.

Furthermore, if the project includes any reorganization of the structure, the first step, after « broad brush » general design, consists of appointing the future managers destined to lead the detailed design project.

### Communicate, communicate, communicate

Instinctively, the spontaneous reaction to any change is resistance, in order to preserve the status quo. In this phase, communication is essential to allow the employees to ask questions and brainstorm the planned

change. It is not so much about trying to convince them as confronting the teams with factual information to make them think.

The content of this interactive communication revolves around three themes :

/ **Necessity**, meaning the reason for which change is needed. Key figures, verbatim customer quotes and benchmarks are generally used for this purpose. Before communicating the target, it is important to explain why there has to be change, and it is necessary to repeat this at each stage of communication: the « why » before the « what » and the « how ».

/ **Vision**, meaning the sense and the direction of the target to be constructed. The vision is further refined and clarified throughout the project.

/ **Confidence** in the ability of the company to rise to the challenge and succeed. Confidence can be fueled by past successes or those of other organizations. It is also bolstered by

a project structure and an action plan that are seen to be pertinent and deliver the easy wins early on.

Change means changing perceptions. And a change of perceptions relies to a large extent on the words we use. Working on « words that express change » (the words we keep, the words we add, the words we « discard »), is a very useful exercise.

## CHANGE MANAGEMENT : A FUNDAMENTAL SKILL FOR ALL MANAGERS

These days, change is almost permanent. Managers are therefore required, at the same time, to achieve the objectives that have been set for their area of responsibility and to steer the changes implied by projects that concern that same area. Managing means channeling the collective dynamic and intelligence to meet these concurrent challenges.

### 7 basic tools for moving to the action stage

- 1 Identifying the affected groups and qualifying, for each of them, the changes (expected role, benefits, sacrifices, competing projects).
- 2 Analyzing the roles of the players, and identifying and recognizing the « enablers » among them.
- 3 Identifying the right testimonies to develop awareness of the need for change and giving ideas about the target and the way to manage the project / change.
- 4 Constructing a trajectory for change based on the benefits expected for the customers and making sense of each stage.
- 5 Coordinating a collaborative platform, a center for resources and sharing between all those involved in the transformation.
- 6 Implementing a very active communication strategy using all the channels and receiving regular, structured feedback, as a complement to the management hierarchy.
- 7 Training the project teams in methods to mobilize the collective intelligence.

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