
Resistance to Change: What the Organisations Can Do

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Abstract

In simple terms *change* can be defined as a process of making a concept that helps to do things better than before. Change is Conversion or transition from one state, situation, condition, or stage to another. Change means that what was before was not perfect. People want things to be better. The business world is replete with examples of the organisations that did not change early with time and as per the requirement of the market have relegated in the race. It is difficult to adopt change or new idea as it attempts to change the very human behaviour. A reluctant person will make an idea flop, no matter how noble it is. We resist when the reason for the change is not known or not clear and when change has not been shared and consulted with those who are affected. We do not resist change when the information offered corresponds with current ethics, principles, and outlooks. It is supposed that the change will of greater value than its cost. There are various factors which affect the acceptance of change and these factors are related to features of change and features of the business or the organisation where change is being envisaged. New ideas involve risk and success is not assured every time. Reaction of the organization to a failed attempt to implement a change is very crucial. If penalties are handed out and those who muster the courage for attempting to implement change or they are belittled for trying something new that doesn't work, they will never be willing to do it again. Real Innovation comes out once something is messed up. An attempt has been made by the author to understand different aspects of resistance to change and what the organizations can do to overcome it.

Key words: *Awareness, Business, Change, Desire, Fear, Idea, Implement, Knowledge, Process*



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Introduction

How to change undesirable conduct in children? Children should know what they are doing is wrong. This consciousness normally comes when a distressed parent tells the child that what he is doing is something wrong. Simply knowing it is wrong, however, will not stop most children. Their natural desire is to touch the boundaries and push the limits. Consequences, either positive or negative, are usually vital. These consequences eventually influence the child's desire to change.

Take for instance, a child, on seeing a glowing candle, gets attracted and starts crawling towards the burning candle, not knowing the consequences of touching a burning candle and its flame. Parents, however, know the consequences and therefore pull the child back. The child again moves towards the burning candle and parents again, scold and, pull the child back - - this act is repeated a number of times until the child actually touch the flame of the candle, feels the heat, and retreats back on its own. Now the child is also aware of the consequences of touching a burning candle -- the child is now changed and this change has come to the child with the knowledge -- the child is now aware that burning candle is harmful to play with. This is what actually happens in the organisations opting for a change. Our normal reaction to change, even in the finest circumstances, is to resist and repel. Knowledge of the facts is very essential for bringing about change and it must come first of all while attempting any change. Knowledge leads to desire for change -- and once there is desire then there is no stopping -- the required change will happen by all means.

What Is Change?

If 20 people are asked what they understand from the word *change*, without doubt, you will get 20 different explanations of the word. Further, if they are asked how this change is done? You would get to see curious and quizzical responses. In simple terms *change* can be defined as a process of making a concept that helps to do things better than before.

Change is conversion or transition from one state, situation, condition, or stage to another. Change means that what was before was not perfect. People want things to be better. Change is something that gears us up for betterment and be in line with the present – it takes us out of our comfort zone. Change is for the better. Change is here to stay. First of all change happens in the heart and then it is translated in our working. Unless there is change in the heart there cannot be change in work working and in our life. Change is dynamic. Change is a continuous phenomenon and does not stop. Change brings out the best of one's abilities.

The discovery or creation of a new idea is important but it is more important that how this is brought and implemented in put to practice in such a way which brings about quality and adds value to the existing way of work.

Why Change Is Required?

The Business world is replete with examples of the organisations that did not change early with time and as per the requirement of the market have relegated in the race. Products like Telephone Directories, Carbon Paper, and Encyclopaedia etc. are some of the examples of not changing and have eventually become redundant. It will be sensational to note about the fate of the telecommunication industry, as the internet takes over as ideal carrier of voice traffic.



Source: <http://mylifeinterrupted.blogspot.in/2009/11/be-change.html>

As we all know that change is required to keep pace with the present. If we do not change we will be relegated and remain behind. Take for instance why do we change engine oil in our car? Because the oil enables, the moving parts of the vehicle, to work smoothly. If we do not change the oil when required or when necessary the car will not perform as well as it should and will spoil the pleasure that we were supposed to derive from the car.

Let us take another instance - what happens when the rain water accumulates at one place and does not move. After some time the stagnated water it starts emitting foul smell making the environment obnoxious and eventually becomes breeding ground for mosquitos that transmit dangerous deceases like Malaria and Dengue. It is, therefore, essential that water keeps on moving so that it is fresh and gives new lease of life to us.

Change is normally difficult in the beginning but it allows you to enjoy your life ahead if you adopt it. Those who do not go with the change experience whirlpool and go down in the life and those who embrace change experience whirlwind and go up in the life.

Why Resistance to Change?

It is difficult to adopt change or new idea as it attempts to change the very human behaviour. A host of factors are responsible for resistance to change or for adoption of new idea. A reluctant person will make an idea flop, no matter how noble it is.



Source: <http://pinterest.com/pin/507217976752204344/>

We Resist Change when:

- Idea or change has not been shared and not consulted. Everyone likes to know what's going on, especially if their lives may be affected by the proposed change. Knowledge about the change tends to have greater level of understanding and willingness to change.
- The reason for the change is not known or not clear.
- The change intimidates to transform established arrangements of relationships between people.
- The benefits and rewards for making the change are not adequate for the distress involved.

The change threatens to tear the very fabric of life, power and status. How the change process is being brought and how it is being implemented in practice to improve the quality of work also plays a vital role in resistance to change. At times the ego between the implementer and the subjects becomes the main reason for resistance to change.

We do not Resist Change when:

- The information offered corresponds with current ethics, principles, and outlooks.
- It is supposed that the change will of greater value than its cost.
- The change requires minor, not major, changes in the views or lives.
- There is confirmed need for the innovation and
- The change is introduced slowly, with the involvement of all those being affected by change, so that adjustment can be done to the resulting change.

Factors Which Affect the Acceptance of Change

The factors which affect change can be either related to the ‘change’ itself and/or the business.

Features of Change

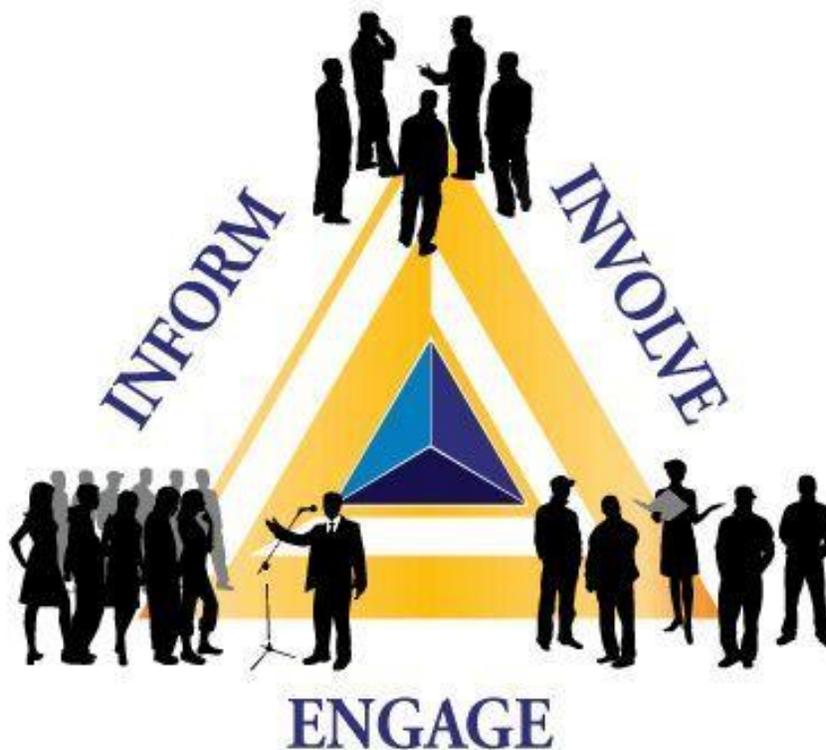
- *Should be of Good Advantage:* Mostly, change is understood and viewed as generating a substantial progress over existing systems and skills in order to be adopted. The benefits of change must be so abundant that they are worth the unavoidable problems and the price related with any change.
- *Should be Simple:* The change should be simple and the way it is presented should be easy to understand and not too complicated to implement.
- *Should be Easy to Try:* The new change must be easy to familiarise, as well as easy to abandon if it doesn’t work out. Extreme changes in procedures in order to try something out will always be resisted, no matter how noble these changes are. It is good if a change can be tried and tested in phases before it is finally implemented.
- *Should be Easy to Measure:* Once the change is implemented, it must be easy to measure the benefits that would accrue, whether in terms of money, time, efficiency or any other meaningful evaluation measure.
- *Should be Inexpensive:* To bring about changes entails expenses. The up-front cost of a change is often a hurdle. If there is a large immediate increase in costs, it becomes difficult to implement change if there is immediate spur in the expenses, even if long-term and huge benefits are assured.
- *Should be Harmonious:* If the change that is required to be implemented is harmonious and friendly as compared to the existing way of work, it is more likely to be adopted.

Features of the Business

- *Fear of Risk:* Is the management of the business willing to take risks? Willingness to take risk in business depends on the age and size of the business. Relatively younger business establishments are usually more willing to take risks. As the business grows in age and structure, risk taking takes a back seat, except for those business establishments where change and innovation is the basis of success.
- *Fear of Failure:* Even good judgments can have bad outcomes. New ideas involve risk and success is not assured every time. Reaction of the organization to a failed attempt to implement a change is very crucial. If penalties are handed out and those who muster the courage for attempting to implement change are belittled, or put down for trying something new that doesn’t work, they will never be willing to do it again. The embarrassment associated with making mistakes curbs learning process. In many organisations we see officials who are very uncomfortable in dealing with mistakes or failures. However, if efforts are made to learn from the failure and encourage making it work, it will boost enthusiasm and change will be easily implemented. It is essential to build a mistake tolerant culture to enable experimentation and innovation. An environment which allows mistakes and views failures as opportunities to strengthen the learning process is necessary. Tolerance for mistakes and failures can become stepping stones for enabling new ideas and innovations. 3M is a wonderful example of mistake tolerance leading to innovation success. 3M brought out an idea in 1922 that sand paper could replace razor blades. It was a big failure. However, they later used the same product, a few

years later, for polishing car paint. This was a great success. Great ideas never come to minds bound with the fear of making mistakes. Failure must be seen as doorway to new ideas, thought and innovation. Real Innovation comes out once something is messed up.

Process of Change:



There are various Change Models/Processes which make the basis of this paper. Some of the noteworthy ones are:

1. Lance Haun (2009) – Six-step process to manage *change* in an Organisation

The process can be reduced to six words – Purpose, Plan, Action, Feedback, Adapt, and Repeat.

2. Kurt Lewin – Three-Stage model of Change (Simms, 2005)

Unfreeze → Change → Freeze

3. Susan Heathfield (2008) – A 3 step process to change organisational culture

First: Understand the current culture

Second: Decide what the organizational culture should look like.

Third: The individuals in the organization must decide to change their behavior to create the desired organizational culture.

4. John Kotter's - Eight step change model (1996)

The Model can be summarised as:

Increase urgency - inspire people to move, make objectives real and relevant.

Build the guiding team - get the right people in place with the right emotional commitment, and the right mix of skills and levels.

Get the vision right - get the team to establish a simple vision and strategy focus on emotional and creative aspects necessary to drive service and efficiency.

Communicate for buy-in - Involve as many people as possible, communicate the essentials, simply, and to appeal and respond to people's needs.

Empower action - Remove obstacles, enable constructive feedback and lots of support from leaders - reward and recognise progress and achievements.

Create short-term wins - Set aims that are easy to achieve - in bite-size chunks. Manageable numbers of initiatives. Finish current stages before starting new ones.

Don't let up - Foster and encourage determination and persistence – on-going change - encourage on-going progress reporting - highlight achieved and future milestones.

Make change stick - Reinforce the value of successful change via recruitment, promotion, and new change leaders. Weave change into culture.

5. ADKAR – by Jeffrey M. Hiatt (2006)

Effective management of the people aspect of change requires managing five key goals that form the basis of the ADKAR model:

- Awareness of the need to change
- Desire to participate and support the change
- Knowledge of how to change (and what the change looks like)
- Ability to implement the change on a day-to-day basis
- Reinforcement to keep the change in place

ADKAR Model of Change is most effective model for change in an organisation as it persuades the organisation to:

- Build Awareness about the Change
- Create Desire to participate and support Change
- Develop Knowledge of how to Change
- Foster Ability to implement the Change on day-to-day basis.
- Reinforce changes in your organization to keep the Change in place.

The ADKAR Model is changing how we think about managing the people side of change, and provides a powerful foundation to help us succeed at change.

Conclusion

Change must involve the people – change must not be forced upon the people. Change is a natural phenomenon. Those who do not change with time get relegated and eventually become redundant. Our normal reaction to change, even in the finest circumstances, is to resist and rebel. Knowledge of the facts is very essential for bringing about change and it must come first of all

while attempting any change. It is difficult to adopt *change* or new idea as it attempts to change the very human behaviour.

A host of factors are responsible for resistance to change or for adoption of new idea. We resist change when the envisaged change has not been shared and not consulted. Everyone likes to know what's going on, especially if their lives may be affected by the proposed change. Knowledge about the change tends to have greater level of understanding and willingness to change. We resist change when there is lack of awareness about reason for the change. A reluctant person will make an idea flop, no matter how noble it is.

To ensure smooth transformation it is essential to inform, involve and engage the people. It is also essential to ensure a mistake tolerant environment to enable experimentation and innovation. An environment which allows mistakes and views failures as opportunities to strengthen the learning process is necessary. Tolerance for mistakes and failures can become stepping stones for enabling new ideas and innovations. True change comes when hearts are changed. If success is required then it should come from within not by force. Real Innovation comes out once something is messed up.

“It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg. We are like eggs at present. And you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad”.

– C. S. Lewis

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