A PEX Network Compilation

Street Smarts for Change Management

By Jeff Cole

INTRODUCTION

By Jeff Cole

Thank you for reading this e-book!

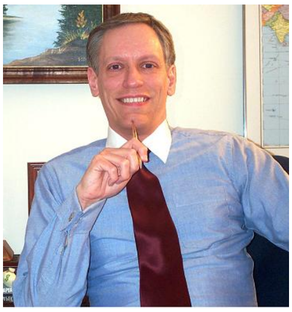
You and I have a shared interest – Managing Change. Have you noticed that it's one thing to have a great process but an entirely different animal to get people to use that process? This has been a passion of mine since I stumbled across the topic quite by accident in the early 1990's as a quality manager in a global company. I was always looking for ways to improve processes and we constantly struggled with getting people to follow our processes.

One day, my director went to the white board and sketched out a change management model from a class he just attended. Two things happened: (A) every axon and dendrite in my brain snapped to full alert and (B) my life and future were changed forever. This was the missing link I'd searched for my entire career.

I quickly set about absorbing the somewhat broad and deep body of knowledge on organizational change. After much trial and error, I hit upon what seemed to be a great balance of seamlessly integrating these concepts and tools into the worlds of Six Sigma, Lean, and all other improvement endeavours that I would encounter.

Along the way I witnessed change efforts work beyond my expectations and others crash and burn. It's my hope that by sharing some of the "reality vs. textbook" aspects of process change that readers can share my excitement for the topic and boldly stride forth and experiment with the techniques.

Many thanks to Diana Davis, my London-based editor since 2010 who has made writing these columns a great pleasure. Thanks also to Genna Weiss, who first contacted me in 2008 and invited me to write a monthly column for what was then called e-BIM. Six years and sixty columns later here we are with the first compilation – a sampling of a baker's dozen of the most popular columns. Feel free to send me a note and let me know your challenges with managing change. I'll be happy to address those in future "Street Smarts" columns.



Before you start reading…. Here's a secret – when these columns were originally published, they addressed practitioners of "Six Sigma" so you will see that phrase throughout. However, we've selected those columns that are applicable to anybody – even if you don't know or care what Six Sigma is! Let's get started …

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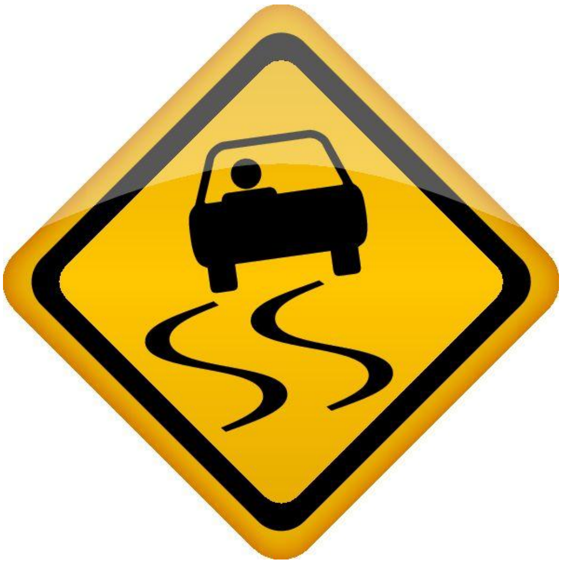
A FEW THOUGHTS ON CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Whether you're new to process improvement or a seasoned veteran, being able to manage the human side of a process change is vital. Heck, some say that's 80 percent of the battle in many DMAIC projects. You and I can create the best process in the world, but unfortunately there's no button inside Minitab or Excel that we can click to get the workforce to engage.

If the people who need to follow this new process don't do so, you've lost your investment. The body of knowledge for change management rivals that of Six Sigma—it is both broad and deep. Use these tips to help weave change management into your next project.



TIP #1: RECOGNIZE THE NEED FOR CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Think of the need for change management as a spectrum ranging from 0 percent (no need) to 100 percent (definite need). Any project that impacts people has some need for change management—the question becomes "How much?" As part of your project risk assessment, consider the extent to which your process change potentially impacts others. If you're conducting a small-scope Green Belt project on a process you personally own and you're the only person impacted, you likely don't need the full arsenal of change tools. If, however, your project potentially impacts a number of people, recognize that the need to formally address change increases.

TIP #2: START CHANGE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES EARLY

Don't wait until the control stage of a DMAIC project to start addressing change. It begins in Define and should be integrated into all steps. Start early on by identifying who might be impacted and understanding what their concerns or issues might be.

Ask questions such as: What are the best ways to communicate with those impacted? How can we establish two-way communications? What should our messages be? Who should they come from? How often and in what format? How will we involve those impacted in the project so they feel a sense of ownership?

TIP #3: SELECT A CHANGE MANAGEMENT METHOD

When you enter the world of Six Sigma it's hard to avoid running into methods like DMAIC and DMADV. It's nice to enjoy standard, proven ways of fixing broken processes or building new processes. When you read the books on change management, however, there is no one industry-standard. There are many methods. If you're just starting out, read several books and pick one. Personally, I'm partial to anything by Daryl Conner, although there are many other useful authors. One client had a best practice—they evaluated several leading change methods and used a Pugh Selection Matrix to build their own hybrid approach.

TIP #4: DON'T MAKE HUMAN CHANGE A SEPARATE "TO-DO" ITEM

Integrate your efforts in managing the human side of the change into your plans for managing the technical side of the change. Try to weave change management into the fabric of your DMAIC and DMADV efforts rather than tacking it on. Apply your existing Six Sigma tools to the human side as well as the technical.

TIP #5: ANTICIPATE RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

In any project where you may need to tell someone to stop doing things the old way and start doing things a new way, you can expect resistance. While you can't eliminate resistance, you can minimize it. Understand where resistance may come from, and why people may resist. Is it ability—they'd like to follow the new process but can't? Or is it willingness—they can follow the process but choose not to? Tools such as force field analysis, FMEA, CT trees and C/E diagrams all help you proactively understand this so these issues can be addressed.

In a methodology that's jammed with technical aspects such as degrees of freedom, residuals and p-values, it's easy to get absorbed in the technical side of a process improvement while the human element gets short-changed. More than a few projects have crashed and burned because of this. However, managing change in a Six Sigma project becomes second nature after several times and helps ensure success.

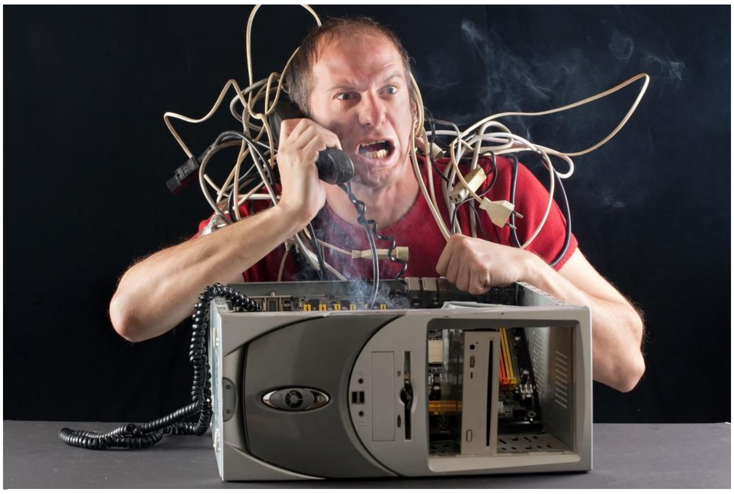
IS YOUR COMPANY EXPERIENCING "CHANGE OVERLOAD"? THREE DIALS YOU NEED TO KNOW

We all know that if you try to change too much at once it can be a disaster. When met with too much change, people go into "change overload" and start behaving in a dysfunctional manner beginning with a loss of focus, minor frustration outbursts and it builds from there.

The phenomenon is called Change Saturation.

Each of us only has a finite amount of change we can absorb until we've met our limit. It's like a sponge full of water. Once fully saturated, a sponge can no longer absorb any moisture.

It gets worse though… Your change "sponge" is not the same size as the person's next to you. Based on our upbringing, life experiences, etc. we all have different capacities to absorb change. Plus, you don't get one sponge for home and another for the office. For all you know the fellow in the office next to you just had his identity stolen, his dog ran away, and his mother-in-law announced she's moving in! And the boss wonders why this guy is not focused.



Feeling a little bit saturated today?

If you and I are driving process change in an organization, it's wise to understand and keep an eye on the level of change saturation your audience is undertaking. How saturated are they now and how much will the emotional, mental, and resource burden of your proposed change add to this toxic cocktail?

If you are met with an audience whom you suspect may have a high level of change saturation, don't fret. There happen to be three magical dials you get to control in your management system that allow you to navigate around such road-blocks.

DIAL #1: LOCATION

Think of all the changes in your organization as blips on a radar screen. You have a few jumbo jets out there, a bunch of regional jets, and a handful of smaller private jets darting back and forth. Any change you launch needs a clean landing strip. Know what's in your airspace and what's on the tarmac. Sometimes jets get re-routed to alternate airports because runways aren't free. Are you operating out of five offices? Three regional zones? Twelve different departments?

In choosing where to pilot your change, or how to roll-out a change, keep the saturation concept in mind. Simply changing the location sequence can be a great way to maintain momentum in a rollout without breaching people's assimilation capacity for change.

DIAL #2: TIMING

As simple as this is, it's sometimes overlooked and sometimes flat out ignored. There may be no perfect time for you to intervene with your change, but there are likely some better times than others. Coordinating the timing of the changes in your airspace so as to not overload your audience is sound advice. Sometimes a one or two day/week delay to allow the "jet wash" from the preceding change to settle down can greatly increase the chances of meeting your change goals on time and on budget.

DIAL #3: CONTENT

If an audience has a very full plate and not much capacity, consider altering the content of your process change. Can you implement a phased approach, providing the change in smaller bite-size pieces? Can parts of the change be done in a non-invasive fashion? Can training be done in a "Just in Time" fashion or in a self-paced manner? Can any of the process changes be transparent to the user? Can you make use of simple poka-yoke or error-proofing mechanisms at appropriate points?

All three of these dials are at your disposal immediately. Over the longer-term you can also work to increase your audience's resilience levels so they can take on more change – in essence increase the size of each person's change sponge.

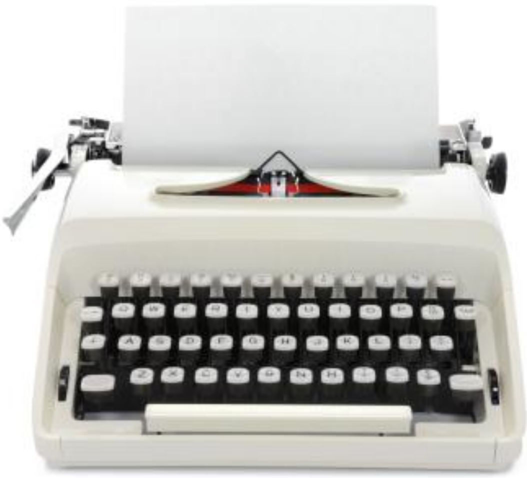
Until then though, feel free to man your radar screen and bring your next change in for a perfect three-point landing!

DON'T LIKE CHANGE? DON'T WORRY, SURVIVAL ISN'T MANDATORY

Famous quality guru W. Edwards Deming had a great quote that went something like this: “You don’t need to change – your survival is not mandatory.” Futurist Joel Barker notes that “When paradigms shift, everyone goes back to zero.”

Whether we like it or not, we’re in for a lot of change between now and retirement. Add to that the speed with which change is happening and competitive pressures and you have to be constantly scanning your environment for signals to change.

Can you think of any businesses that are no longer around because they failed to change? Chances are you didn’t turn off your pager, drive home in your Pontiac, listen to an 8-track tape, fire up a betamax video and do some calculations on a slide-rule (but if you did, let me know – I’d like to meet you). Those who stay on top of change and adapt will win market share over competitors who fail to change as rapidly or change at all.



Chances are you don’t have one of these in your office anymore…

Barker cites an excellent example in his DVD “The New Business of Paradigms.” In 1968, the Swiss employed thousands of watchmakers, held 65% share in the world market share with 80% of the profits. By 1978, as the digital watch gained in popularity, it dominated the analogue watch industry causing the Swiss market share to drop to under 10%. They had to layoff 50,000 of their 65,000 watch workers. The irony? The Swiss themselves invented the digital watch. They thought so little of the idea they failed to protect it legally (after all points out Barker – it didn’t meet their paradigm of watches – no bearings or precise hand-crafting). They displayed their prototype at the 1968 World Watch Congress. Seiko of Japan saw it and the rest was history.

It’s a very seductive proposition to keep doing things the same way – even in the face of a changing competitive landscape. The Swiss were not the only ones to fall prey to this allure. National Cash Register almost went out of business in the early 1970’s as they steadfastly stuck to producing mechanical cash registers while the competition was converting to digital. In 2004, when Motorola released the ultra-thin Razr cell phone it was revolutionary and they enjoyed massive sales (even though it only came in silver or black). When the industry analysts asked Motorola “What’s next?” their answer was “Razr’s in different colors!” (including 4 shades of pink by the way). While Motorola busily dipped cell phones into vats of paint, Apple was silently leapfrogging the industry to create a new paradigm and release the iPhone in 2007.

Does this impact you personally? As I sit here typing this, I realize I am making most of my income using methodologies, tools, and software that weren't in existence when I went to college. If you are in your 20's or 30's it's a very real possibility that when you are retirement age, you may be reporting to someone who was just born this week (assuming, of course that "retirement" is still a valid paradigm in 30-40 years…).

Since 2008, all the rules we learned growing up have changed: financially, flat is the new "up", homes don't always increase in value over time, you can't count on putting your money in a safe bank and being able to live off the interest in retirement, etc. There's no telling what other rules will change in the future. Who will be the competition for your next job? Will they be in the same age bracket? Same geography? Same industry?

So, what are the cautionary tales and lessons learned from all of this?

Paradigms change – always have – always will – sometimes even the ones you think have the least chance of changing and thus don't even think to question.

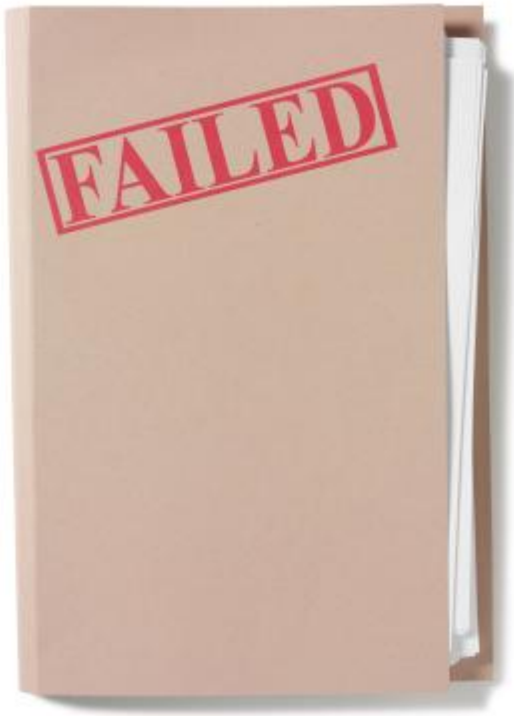
When they change, it's adapt or die. Those who adapt fastest and best win the market.

It's sometimes best to be on or near the leading edge of the power curve when the shift happens

Companies need to keep a very close strategic eye on the competition and trends within and beyond their industry. The very best companies create the new paradigms.

Individuals need to work hard on their skills in being adaptable, flexible, and nimble. Proactively scan your environment for upcoming changes and get ready. Learning does not stop when you leave college. Look forward for the next 3-5 years and establish a career/life plan that addresses the most likely potential scenarios and allows you 3-5 alternate paths toward your goals.

10 WAYS TO MAKE CHANGE FAIL



It's not a failure…it's an opportunity to learn

Have you ever experienced a project failure? If not, you're really missing out on one of life's more vivid learning experiences. There's something to be said for having at least one (hopefully minor) failure during your career. Not failures of BP oil leak or Toyota accelerator proportions mind you, but just enough to let you know you're not invincible. Enough to humble you a bit. The benefit of a failure is we get to do a post-mortem, understand what went wrong, and make darn sure that never happens to us again. The lessons learned are ingrained in you at a cellular level — a much deeper learning than you'd ever receive in a classroom.

Is this guy nuts? Recommending failure? Absolutely not! I am, however, recommending learning from failure. If you've had a personal Six Sigma project failure, don't feel too bad — you've received a potent education! For those who have not yet felt the searing pain of crashing and burning, a great deal can still be gained by observing the misfortunes of others.

This month, we'll review 10 actions that will pretty much guarantee failure of any Six Sigma change project. With tongue firmly in cheek, I'll paraphrase the logic used by those who advocate employing these tactics. Please don't try this at home! Let's get started…

#1: DON'T TELL PEOPLE THE CHANGE IS COMING

Ever have a surprise party as a child? Exciting wasn't it? After all, who doesn't like a surprise? An added benefit is that people won't be in the hallways ahead of time talking about the change or worrying about it! Sure, they might not be prepared for the change and productivity, morale and trust may tank for awhile, but I'm sure they'll get over it. Man-up and enjoy the surprise, I say. By the way — that person in the cubicle who is constantly twitching when you walk by has been here awhile — maybe too many surprises for him…

#2: DON'T LISTEN — JUST KEEP TALKING

If you just keep telling people this Six Sigma change is good for them, they'll eventually believe it. Two-way communication is way over-rated and time consuming too. A simple memo or intranet

Two way communication is soooo over-rated?

video should do the trick. This change is coming whether they like it or not — their needs and questions are irrelevant. If you do accidentally get forced into listening to feedback, immediately defend your position by speaking louder and in an angrier tone. In addition, be certain to share how you personally will benefit from the Six Sigma change — audiences love to hear that.

#3: DON'T MEASURE OR GOVERN THE ROLLOUT

People in general don't like being monitored, so leave them alone and let the rollout unfold naturally. Everyone in the company is excited about this as you are, so I'm sure there will be no implementation roadblocks to address. Other projects, systems, and processes should naturally make way for the Six Sigma change you are installing.

#4: DON'T BOTHER YOUR SPONSOR

Sponsors (or Champions) are busy people. Please don't bother them with your whining requests that they communicate, govern, manage consequences, remove roadblocks, or really in any way get involved. That would be a sign of weakness on your part.

#5: IGNORE THE CULTURE

Who really knows what culture is anyway? It's kind of invisible so it may be something that exists only in the minds of consultants. Whatever worked at your last company is bound to work here.

#6: ALLOW MULTIPLE WORK-AROUND SOLUTIONS

Sure your process only works if people do things the new way. That stifles creativity. Let people do things any way they want and come to the conclusion that your new process is the way to go. Yes, this may extend your timeline a bit, or infinitely, but people thrive on variety. We're really good at providing new stuff but really bad at turning off the old stuff anyway. Go with your strength.

#7: IGNORE RESISTANCE

Quite honestly, you are too busy to have to deal with people who don't see things your way. They don't understand, and anything you say won't help so why bother? Steam rolling this Six Sigma change right over them is the fastest way to go. I'm sure the changes will work short term and the organization will heal in the long term. Resistors will either stop resisting or leave the company.

#8: WING IT

There are way too many change methods and books. Six Sigma with its technical skills was hard enough to master. Change seems too "soft" or "touchy-feely" anyway. Anything I can't do in Minitab is not that important. Plus, some of the best comedians around came out of Second City and they are all about improvisation. If I hit any "human" issues in the project, I'll improvise as it comes up. I'm more worried about these p-values…

#9: NO CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT

Implementing any kind of rewards or positive consequences for the early adopters of the change feels kind of like bribery. They should do it because it's part of their job. Also, the sponsor doesn't feel comfortable in enforcing any negative consequences for those who don't adopt the Six Sigma change. Not much I can do about that. I'm sure everyone will rally around all of our changes in an efficient and effective manner without any intervention needed.

#10: READY OR NOT — HERE IT COMES

All this talk of assessing the organization to ensure they are "ready" for the change is pure rubbish. We're all overworked and there will never be a perfect time to roll out a change. If we swamp the workforce, so be it. Other Six Sigma change projects are welcome to navigate around mine. I really don't have time to coordinate, and heck the corporate guys don't talk to the business unit guys anyway!

HOW HOT IS YOUR PLATFORM?

July 6, 1988. North Sea. 21:56 B.S.T. At 110 miles northeast of Aberdeen, Scotland, the oil rig Piper Alpha stands with a crew of over 200 aboard. For this crew, it's been another normal day. Some are winding down by watching Caddyshack. Others are quietly settling in for the evening. No one is aware that a disaster is about to unfold that ultimately would take the lives of over 160 men. In a few moments, a series of errors that were made earlier in the day would trigger the worst oil rig fire in history.

When the rig ignited, those who survived the tremendous initial explosions were faced with a critical choice. According to survivor Roy Carey, the men had to decide whether to burn to death or potentially drown. If a man decided to stay on the rig, he would die a certain death. If he jumped, the fall (over 75 ft.) would likely kill him. Surviving that, he had to contend with flaming debris on the surface of the ocean and the risk of hypothermia. But there was, however, hope of survival if the men jumped. In the end, a number of men were able to jump, and over 50 people were picked up by rescue boats.

By the early 1990s, because of the Piper Alpha disaster, the phrase "burning platform" had entered business vocabulary. But I've found that many people use the phrase with no real understanding of its meaning. Common definitions of a burning platform include "the compelling business reason for making a change," and more generically, "the bad things that will happen to us if we don't change now." Taking a leap into a frigid ocean was uncertain and terrifying for the survivors of Piper Alpha. But it beat the alternative of certain death, and it drove them to take action.

What does this mean to us in the world of Six Sigma process improvement? If you are integrating change management into your Six Sigma process improvements, you'll definitely want to be aware of the burning platform concept because it's helpful to process excellence in numerous ways.

DOES YOUR PROJECT CHARTER INCLUDE A BURNING PLATFORM?

Six Sigma project charters take on different forms, but most have a portion labeled "business case" or "project importance" wherein you explain why this Six Sigma project should be done. This section should include more than WIIFM (What's in it for me)—i.e. the vision of good things that will happen if you do the project. Include a burning platform statement: If you don't make this process improvement now, what would be the consequences for your business? If you have a SWOT matrix, the intersection of "Threats" and "Weaknesses" is an appropriate place to find a burning platform.

WHAT IS YOUR PROJECT PITCH?

While you're at it, integrate the burning platform into your Six Sigma project's elevator speech (a brief description of your project and why you are doing it). When you have an elevator speech for your Six Sigma project make certain everyone on your team understands it and can consistently relay it. (Remember—variation is the enemy!)

CRYING WOLF: IS YOUR PROJECT *REALLY* A BURNING PLATFORM?

It can be tempting to exaggerate a burning platform for a Six Sigma project. Don't. Stakeholders are smart and will see right through an insincere burning platform. In one company where I worked, several people's credibility on future projects were diminished by "crying wolf." Lay out a legitimate burning platform for your Six Sigma project or don't use a burning platform statement at all. You want to consider the burning platform as a Six Sigma project selection criterion as well.

A STREET SMART TIP

Pay special attention to the "communications" people. Throughout any large Six Sigma project, you'll be drafting messages for the sponsor or champion to communicate to the workforce. The burning platform is a vital part of the message because it drives change as much or more than the WIIFM vision. The higher up in an organization a sponsor is the more likely they'll have communications people on staff and you'll be asked to run any messages through them. They are often involved in the newsletters, speech writing, Web content, etc. Caution! You may see these people as roadblocks that want all sponsor messages to be "unicorns and rainbows." You may feel they have more of an interest in the "journalistic pyramid" than in helping to drive change. Yes, an untrained communications person may have an allergic reaction to a burning platform. But, they are your ally, not an enemy. Like you, they're just trying to do the right thing.

Several clients have engaged in real head-banging "discussions" over communicating burning platforms. Great practices to leverage the synergy include first making certain the sponsor understands the importance of and is on board with his or her role in driving process change—including public and private communications of the vision and burning platform. Secondly, ensure the communications people are educated in Six Sigma change management and brought into the process rather than just having an obscure burning platform message dumped on them at the eleventh hour.

A legitimate burning platform, communicated properly by the right people, can go a long way toward helping lock in the success of your next Six Sigma process improvement project.

PROCESS CHANGE – ARE YOU YOUR OWN WORST ENEMY?

Have you ever been frustrated when trying to change a relatively mundane organizational behavior or improve a simple process? At some point have you stepped back and said "it should be easier than this"? You're right - it should! Many times an organization is its own worst enemy when it comes to process change.

When I do Lean Six Sigma and Organizational Change training, I tell students that we live in a PhD-level world of complexity, but many of our problems often reside at a grade school level. Are you seeing any of that? Billy doesn't work and play well with Susie. Bobby won't talk to John. Passive-aggressive acts, overt aggression, and general dysfunctional behavior ranging on a spectrum from "Leave it to Beaver" to "Jersey Shore". The frustration of simple things we can never seem to get right because we're focused on 100 things at once. If you've ever looked around your workplace and said "Somebody should do a reality show about this place" – that's a bad sign.

How prevalent is this? I've actually had conversations with folks who are so caught up in their own lingo, systems, 3-letter acronyms, methods, etc. that after a 45-min. explanation from them I can sometimes restate what they've just said in two sentences of plain, simple English. Driving process change is hard enough on its own in simple environments. The more complex we make the environment, the harder our job becomes.

We have to be able to brush aside the "fog" of corporate-speak and complexity and get down to the fundamental blocking and tackling of process improvement.

It's getting the simple tasks right every time that enables stability and excellence. It's that level where we often lack a focus. People worry about the 30,000-ft direction being correct, but forget the ground level details that make it happen. Organizations that can't even play their scales right are attempting to play Beethoven. Tom Peters once said something akin to "the most important quality person in your company is the guy on the loading dock who decides not to drop the box he's loading into the truck".

What can we do? Here are a couple tips for clearing out the fog and getting down to the fundamentals:

#1: FOCUS AND DRILL DOWN

Remember famous physicist Richard Feynman testifying in the Challenger Space Shuttle hearing? Classic case of a grade-school level problem clouded by an enormous amount of PhD-level politics and complexity. Problem – it was too cold to launch (here's a photo of the launch pad– remember this was Florida) – and the little O-ring wasn't certified to work in that temperature range.

Sometimes you need to ignore the fog, focus and drill down to the "O-ring level" in order to find a root cause or change a process. Simple techniques like 5-Whys help. I've seen multi-million dollar global sales processes with over 100 steps on the process map brought to their knees over a simple issue – the salespeople didn't enter the data like they should. Why not? There was no governance to make them do it. One simple little box on that process map was blinking red and broken. Often it's some small binary moment of truth gone wrong. Our job – focus like a honey badger to find it.

#2: ELIMINATE "CORPORATE SPEAK"

This one sneaks up on us. After a bit we may not even realize that our speech is saturated with corporate buzz-words. Some may justify this as a "common language" that "facilitates a short-hand way of communicating". Granted, in some cases it does, but boy can this go overboard. It can lead to a really bad disease in which one uses 500 words to describe something where 50 words would have sufficed. There's something to be said for getting your point across succinctly, clearly, and directly. To do otherwise is akin to cranking up the corporate fog machine. Return those calls and emails, communicate often and clearly, check for understanding, train everyone in the organization on proper listening and communication skills.

#3: PROCESS MAPS – KEY CONTROL POINTS

If a customer is not getting what they need from a process it's not often that the entire process is broken. Rather it's one or more mundane tasks in the process that did not go right. Work on the fundamental blocking and tackling of a process – does the process have an owner? Have measureable customer requirements been established? Has the process been mapped with key control points identified? Are measurable specifications for those control points established, monitored, personnel trained, and closed-loop corrective actions taken? A well-running process can be very boring. But it's that dependably delivering consistent, on-spec output from every small step along the way that leads to reliable output. You may have a PhD-level process, but quality and change happen at the grammar-school level individual tasks.

#4: SIMPLIFY

If something seems complicated, simplify it. 5S the heck out of the organization. Remove clutter both physically and metaphorically. Look at your process maps do a simple exercise. Green-flag the Customer Value-Add steps and Red-Flag any waste or Non-Value Add steps. Yellow-flag the Operational Value-Add steps. Anything with a yellow or red flag is likely open to either being done simpler, faster, a different way, or flat out eliminated from the process. Authors vary in their opinions, but a typical American business process only has 2-10% Customer Value Add. That makes most processes a target-rich environment for simplification and error-proofing!

Real life often tosses us situations like those "story problems" from school that you remember – "if Train A leaves the station at 11:15 and Train B …". It's up to us to look at the 100 words in that problem, distil out the vital few words that are relevant to the situation, and solve it. The better we get at focusing on the vital details and ignoring the fluff, the faster we can improve. Even better, let's track down and turn off the fluff-making machine!

NINE SECRETS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE YOUR EMPLOYEES WON'T TELL YOU

Sometimes it feels like change is everywhere we look. The frequency of change, the amount of change, and the complexity of those changes are greater today than at any point in human history. It's no wonder then that when you change a process in your organization things don't always go as planned.

Here are some important things your employees won't tell you about change:

#1: "WE'RE SCARED OF CHANGE"

We won't come right out and say it, but it feels at times like we're barely in control here. We just get the hang of how to do something and it changes. We're concerned it will be disruptive to the pattern we have grown accustomed to. We need you to be as clear as possible in describing the change so we know what to expect.

#2: "WE WANT TO HEAR IT FROM OUR BOSS"

We get so many changes coming at us, the first thing we do is ask our direct boss if we really have to do what you asked. If you want to speed things up, be sure we hear about any new changes from our direct boss.

#3: "DON'T EXPECT US TO HEAR IT AND REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME"

Your carefully crafted email announcing your process change is just one of 154 emails I may get today. Chances are I won't remember. If you really want us to know about it and remember, please tell us multiple times and in multiple ways.

#4: "WE DON'T ALL THINK THE SAME – OR THINK EXACTLY LIKE YOU DO"

Employees are not herds of sheep that simply follow the leader. We're complex creatures who each have different perspectives. We think at different speeds, in different sequences, and focus on different questions. What makes sense to you as you sit in your office writing a change communication may not necessarily make sense to us. If you want your message to get across, think about the change from our perspective and be sure to address the questions we'll have.

#5: "IT TAKES TIME FOR US TO GET USED TO THE IDEA"

Big changes are a shock to our system – mentally emotionally, and resource-wise. You can lessen that impact if you give us time to get used to the idea before implementation.

#6: "WE'RE RESISTING THE CHANGE BECAUSE WE THINK IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO"

We don't come into work each day thinking "How can I screw up the company today?". If we're not following your process it's either due to ability (I don't have the information, access, permissions, training, etc. to follow the new process) or willingness.

If I am unwilling to follow your new process it's likely that I find the new way more painful than the old way and think that not following the new process is the best thing to do. I may have misunderstandings that lead to this. You may want to explore ways to make the rationale and benefits very clear to me and find ways to make it hard for me to follow the old process.

#7: "WE'RE NOT ENGAGING BECAUSE WE THINK YOU'LL SELF-DESTRUCT"

No one will raise their hand and tell you this, but we've been here for quite a while and seen changes like this come and go. We've learned that if we just stay in the shadows and wait it out, this change will self-destruct. If you want us to engage, you'll have to tell us how this will be different than before.

#8: "WE'LL ENGAGE IF WE FEEL LIKE WE WERE INVOLVED IN THE DECISION"

Life today is full of indignities and struggles. We don't want another change shoved down our throats from some anonymous corporate staff office. We'll be much more likely to engage if you involve us in the decision and design process along the way. We'll feel a sense of ownership and feel like we have a hand in our own destiny.

#9: "MY CAPACITY TO ABSORB THIS CHANGE ISN'T THE SAME AS THE PERSON IN THE OFFICE NEXT TO ME"

My ability to absorb your proposed change is a function of how much capacity I have to take on more change. That mental, physical, and emotional capacity is determined by what is going on in not only my work life but my life outside work as well. We don't all have the same capacity to absorb. I may be fine, but the person next to me just had his mother in law move in, his basement flooded and his dog bit him. He may be a tad bit distracted when you unveil your plans.

There you have it, straight talk from those on the receiving end of your changes. Great info to keep in mind as you proceed to roll out your next change!

WHO RESISTS CHANGE THE MOST?

Do you intend to retire some day from the exact job you are in at this moment? If not, then change is definitely on your horizon. Change is something we all must live with as part of our daily work lives. It's coming – it's just a matter of when and where and if it's good or disruptive change. A disruptive change that catches you by surprise can lead to resistance.

It's no wonder then that people in organizations all over the world are resisting changes in the workplace. It's a natural phenomenon to be expected in any large or complex process change.

No amount of resistance will make change go away...

For those managing change, a key activity behind the scenes is to proactively look at the workplace and try to determine where the "hot spots" of resistance will be – by function or role or department or individual. What does your experience tell you? Who is the most resistant group in general?

Here's a quiz: Suppose you had a large organization with multiple levels of management:

- Executive leaders
- Senior managers
- Middle managers
- Line supervisors
- Individual workers

Which of these groups do you suppose is the most resistant to change? When I first saw this I thought it would be individual workers. Others have guessed at executive or senior management. The answer may surprise you. According to a survey by Prosci, hands-down the most resistant group on this list is Middle Managers! If you think about it for a bit, it starts to make sense.

When the economy tanked, many workers left, but the work didn't. People all have their plates full. Senior management is pulling middle management in one direction. Their workers are pulling them in another direction. Add a time-consuming, complex, or disruptive change into this mix and it's a perfect recipe for resistance. The very nature of middle management leads to this effect.

Once we have identified a potential pocket for resistance, we can follow the advice of Stephen Covey to "Seek first to understand, then to be understood." In other words, figure out why the group is resisting. Is it due to ability? They don't have the knowledge, access, tools, etc. to engage in the change? Is resistance due to willingness? That they understand what to do but they choose not to do it?

While we may never eliminate resistance to a large change, we can manage it if we know about it. Thus, there are several tactics you can employ to deal with this:

People tend to do what their immediate boss asks them to do. Focus on cascading open and honest communications throughout the chain of sponsorship – from senior management through to individual workers. Ensure there is a feedback loop and that people can voice their concerns.

Understand people's different communication preferences and the need to possibly generate your message multiple times and in multiple ways to get it across. There are visual, verbal, and tactile preferences. People who prefer a call to an email, a 1:1 meeting versus an all-hands session, etc.

In your communications, be sure to honestly highlight the benefits and the burning platform of the change.

"Weave" the change into the organization rather than loosely stapling it on. If you picked up your organization and shook it really briskly, would this change just fly off? Or is it firmly embedded into all the appropriate systems like IT, performance objectives, reward and recognition systems, reporting systems, etc.?

Highlight and reward early adopters of the change. Establish consequences for not adopting while making adopting the change the easiest path to take.

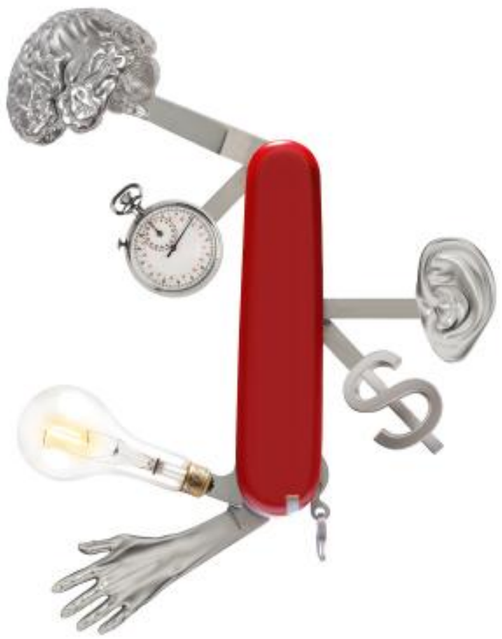
Keep in mind that you may never really eliminate resistance. However, taking a proactive look at who may resist and why, and ensuring you have a solid plan for integrating and communicating the change can go a long way toward making your next rollout even smoother!

HOLY CHANGE, BATMAN! THE SIX ESSENTIAL TOOLS EVERY CHANGE AGENT NEEDS

A highlight of my misspent youth was the first time I saw the television show Batman. Those images burned their way into my skull and will remain forever emblazoned in my cerebral cortex. Twice a week, on Wednesdays and Thursdays at 7:30 EST on ABC (network broadcasting was a bit different back then) my little friends and I were transported into a different world, helping Batman and Robin save Gotham City from a cavalcade of colourful guest-villains. The next day we would meet in the backyard with paper masks and towels for capes to re-enact what we had seen.

The holy grail to any young boy at the time was to get their mitts on an official Batman Utility Belt. Sadly, those were not available in our town (or so my parents claimed), so we cleverly fashioned makeshift Utility Belts out of Army surplus web gear and small individual cereal boxes. Fully stocked with vital crime-fighting tools such as marbles, candy, and the occasional insect, we set forth on our youthful adventures.

Alas, we all must grow up. Instead of fighting crime, some of us ended up fighting broken processes, waste, inefficiencies, and morale issues. I would posit that while the "enemy" has changed, the Utility Belt has not gone away. Instead, it's gone virtual. The individual old-school pockets of the belt have simply been replaced by icons on your laptop. The question becomes, what should be in your Change Management Utility Belt? Batman had his bat-a-rang, smoke bombs, climbing rope and Bat-Shield in his belt. What do you have in yours?



Here are several tools that every change agent should have waiting just a click away:

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN:

Every change project, large or small requires communications. Having a communications plan template standing by will always speed things up.

WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE (WBS):

Rolling out a large change has much in common with any project – you ultimately need to list all the tasks and figure out who will do what by when and in what sequence. A WBS will always be helpful.

PROCESS MAPS:

Businesses are made up of a series of processes and it's often useful to have a picture of how that process works. Process mapping software such as Visio or iGrafx would be helpful.

SPONSOR ASSESSMENT:

Every process has a Sponsor who, if they're not willing and/or able to do their job, can cause your change project to crash and burn. Check out our prior column on Sponsor assessments at: Street Smart Six Sigma Sponsorship for Process Change

RISK ASSESSMENTS:

Change projects can fail due to resistance, cultural mismatches, lack of change agent skills, etc. Having assessment instruments in place to gauge how great these risks are will allow you to proactively launch countermeasures or adjust your strategy to ensure success.

CHANGE READINESS ASSESSMENT:

Organizations (a code word for people…) can only absorb so much change at one time and still be productive. This assessment lets you know if the organization is ready to take on your change. See our earlier column for more information at: Prepare for Change: Don't Inhale Underwater!

Those are a few must-haves for any change adventurer. Plenty of room left to add your favorites as well. Stock your Utility Belt now and have it ready. The next time a change jumps out at you – "Pow!" "Blam!" – you'll be ready.

THINK YOU NOTICE CHANGE? WATCH OUT, ALL OF US HAVE "CHANGE BLINDNESS" TO SOME DEGREE

As we get older, many of us begin to suffer from more and more ailments – minor to major. There is one ailment, however, that humans suffer from and don't even realize it! It even has a mysterious, scientific name – Change Blindness. This month, columnist Jeff Cole explores this phenomenon and talks about how to counteract it.

I'd like to try an interactive experiment with those readers who happen to be in the United States. Sometimes this works and sometimes it doesn't. I'm going to ask you some simple questions. The only way this can work is if you don't think – in other words you have to answer immediately with your first impression. Ready?

How many sides are there to a stop sign?

If you just said eight, congratulations. It is indeed an octagon. I once had someone tell me ten – the eight sides plus the front and back! So, we'll accept eight or ten. Here come the rest. Answer them quickly with your first instinct:

What is a stop sign's dominant color?

How many sides are there to a yield sign?

What is its dominant color?

Did you just answer Yellow? If so, are you certain? The reason I ask is that in the United States, since at least the 1980's, we have adopted the international Yield sign. Yield signs in this country are red and white. I don't expect you to have noticed that because you have only seen a Yield sign maybe 10,000 times. And thus the topic for our column. Don't feel bad if you said Yellow – it just means you are human. Over 90% of audience members in my seminars say Yellow. (By the way, the answers are: Red, Three, and Red & White)

We are all creatures of deletion. In order to stay sane and productive we must unconsciously (and consciously) delete things from our environment. You can drive by a billboard on the way to work every day for a year and not be able to tell me what it says. People who live near airports eventually stop registering the sound of the planes landing (thanks in part to a portion of our brains called the reticular activating system).

Chances are, right now you are not focused on the pulse in your left wrist or the sound of the blood rushing through your right ear. Every waking moment you are hit with a tsunami of sensory input and information. If we focused on everything, we'd be like deer in headlights and never get anything done. Nature helps us along by making it easy for you to "blind" yourself to much of the extraneous input you are met with daily. Sometimes though, it can go too far and get in the way of those of us trying to drive change in organizations.

In an interesting experiment conducted by Harvard psychologists, subjects were engaged in a conversation with another person. They were subtly interrupted and while they were momentarily distracted, the person they were talking to was switched with another person. Amazingly, a very large percentage of subjects did not notice this switch! They called this phenomenon "Change Blindness".

At this writing, you can see a short video of the experiment on YouTube by clicking here (the experiment begins at 01:20). For a more entertaining version of the experiment conducted on the streets by British entertainer Derren Brown, click here. Brown went on to switch himself out with people who look less and less like him and the phenomenon still continued.

Not only do people delete much of what is in their environment, they tend to see best what they expect to see. They see poorly or not at all things that don't match what they expect to see and focus on. This can pose a bit of a challenge to those of us tasked with driving process change in an organization. What is to be learned from this and tactically what can we do as a countermeasure?

Recognize that Change Blindness is a very real phenomenon. You're subject to it. Your loved ones are subject to it. Everyone you are communicating your change to is subject to it.

You know that recent email you sweated over for three hours to get the wording just so? Don't feel downhearted if people don't read it or even if they do and don't remember it. It's one of 150 emails they saw today that fell into the background of change blindness.

Eight Times / Eight Ways. My mentor used to have that as a saying when it came to communicating change. If you want to pop out of the background of everything else that's being deleted, you have to get your messages out multiple times and via multiple communication channels. Stand out – be unique. There is massive competition every second for your audience's attention. Once you have their attention, there's something to be said for being succinct, sincere, and simple.

In an environment, where everyone is trying to do their own job plus the jobs of two other people who have been laid off, you can bet the dial on the delete-o-meter is in the red zone. Not a lot of excess attention capacity when people are spread thin and trying to stay focused as they nimbly jump between multiple projects.

Bottom line – recognize the phenomenon, and be prepared to adjust the length, frequency, content, and delivery methods of your change communications. Also, recognize you are prone to this as well. Work to periodically change your frame of reference and focus – you never know what you may find!

CULTURE EATS PROCESS FOR LUNCH

I vividly recall a meeting I attended in Atlanta around 1996. During a discussion of company efforts to improve quality, one of the managers said, “You know, culture eats process for lunch.”

While I never ran into that person again, his statement stuck with me all these years. At the time, I knew immediately that he had street smarts—he “got it” when it came to managing process change and his sound bite captured it perfectly. Culture does indeed devour massive amounts of well-intended process change throughout corporate America. This leaves some unaware teams scratching their heads as they stare in amazement at the smoking wreckage of what was anticipated to be a simple process improvement.

How do we avoid that? It all starts with the basics.

I’ve always been partial to the definition of culture as the shared beliefs, behaviors and assumptions of an organization. Think of culture as a silent, raging river flowing through an organization. If you launch a process change going in the same direction as the culture, that culture will serve to propel your process change forward. However, if your process change is headed in the opposite direction, you can experience what I refer to as “cultural blowback”—where your well-meaning process change blows back in your face at 200 mph.

Avoiding cultural blowback is conceptually pretty simple. First you assess the consistency between the current culture and those cultural attributes required for your process change to work. If there is a great deal of overlap between the two cultures, you are in good shape. If not, some

Would you like fries with your culture?

adjustment will be necessary. We'll also take into account the strength of the current culture when determining our actions.

How does one assess the culture? Excellence guru Tom Peters once told me that he had a good handle on a company's culture just by looking around the first 5-10 minutes he was there!

For our purposes though, we'll need to develop an assessment instrument to uncover those shared beliefs, assumptions and behaviors. There are several tools out there. According to noted consultant and co-creator of the CultureScaipe assessment tool, Jay Fedora, "One reason for failure is often stated as 'poor cultural fit' or that the 'culture needs to change.' Unfortunately at this juncture, the team often finds itself working with almost a complete lack of data to help in the analysis and problem solving. A simple cultural measurement process can provide useful data to aid in the team's change management planning."

Once you have used such a tool to understand some of the attributes of your current and desired cultures, you will also want to look at the strength of the current culture—how deep, wide and raging is this cultural river flowing through the company?

Armed with this information, we can now take appropriate actions. The table at the bottom of this page depicts four different scenarios you may encounter.

CASE STUDY

In the early 1990s, the Midwestern firm I worked for acquired a data warehousing company in southern California. The cultures were polar opposites. The parent company: a suit-and-tie, multi-national, conservative, Fortune 100 firm with lots of red tape. The acquired firm: a shorts and sandals, flex time, fast moving organization that was started in the founder's garage. Many large cultural disconnects existed. While it would have been easy for the parent firm to suck the soul right out of the smaller company, to their credit, they didn't. Sure, there were bumps in the road. However, the parent firm was smart enough to see that part of the "magic" of the smaller firm getting the results they did lay in the shared beliefs, assumptions and behaviors of their people. By being sensitive to their culture, they successfully merged and over time grew into a new culture together to the point where that division became the parent firm's leading unit!

Cultural Consistency (Current vs. Desired)	Strength of Current Culture	Potential Actions
Little Overlap	Strong	Modify timing or objectives of the change, identify and change key attributes of the culture itself
Moderate—Good Overlap	Strong	Leverage the culture to propel the change forward
Little Overlap	Weak	Modify or strengthen the key cultural attributes that will support the change
Moderate—Good Overlap	Weak	Identify and place an emphasis on the attributes that will support the change

Sometimes, the cultural issues aren't readily apparent. They lay hidden in the corporate landscape. I call these "cultural landmines." One such cultural landmine occurred during a simple process change as part of another merger. The change: everybody in the acquired firm would exchange their existing ID badges for new ones with the parent firm's name and logo. *click* Kaboom! They stepped squarely on a cultural landmine that took weeks to unravel. In the acquired firm, name badges for one particular unit were slightly different and in their culture that ID badge was really a badge of honor. Reporting to that unit was a big deal and people looked up to them. So by giving everyone the same generic ID card, they weren't simply standardizing a process, they were effectively lowering the status of some personnel and messing with their identity. Fortunately, they resolved the matter albeit in a reactive manner.

BOTTOM LINE

Don't underestimate the power of an organization's culture. Food for thought as you serve-up your next process change.

ANNOUNCING CHANGE? TOP 10 WAYS COMMUNICATION CASCADES FAIL

Good communication is essential to any change initiative. But when cascading your message from top management on down things can go seriously wrong, says columnist Jeff Cole. Here are the 10 most common ways those cascades can fail.

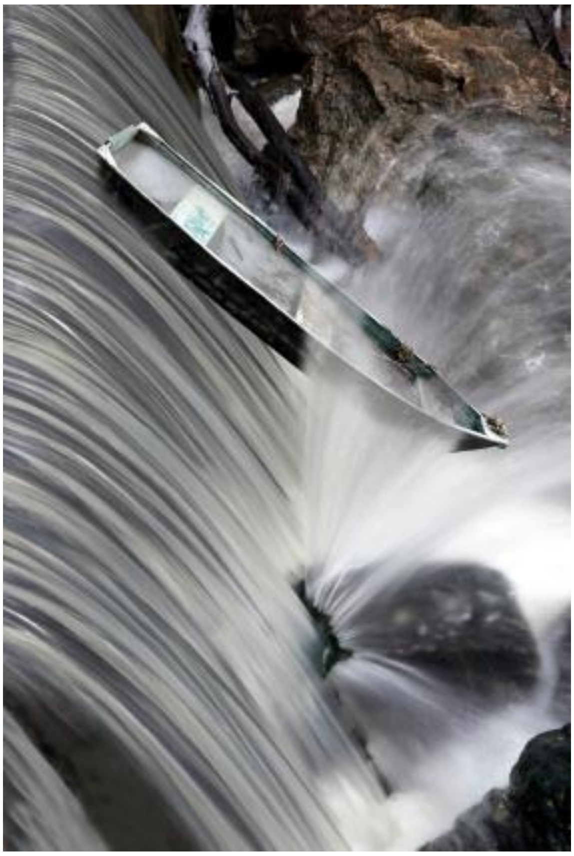
Want to make a change fail quickly? It's pretty simple really – just do a lousy job communicating it.

Poor communication is, unfortunately, a core competency in many organizations today. Thus, it's no wonder the odds are stacked against us on any change project. Many change agents rely on a method called "cascading communications" to ensure their change is properly communicated by the right person to the right audience at the right time and via the best communication medium.

What is a communication cascade?

The idea is this: assume a director has some managers reporting to her and those managers have individual contributors reporting to them. The individual contributors are the targets of this change (they will be impacted). We need to announce a change.

The cascade approach says the director (the change sponsor) first presents the change to her managers (as targets). She gets them on board the change and indicates that they need to sponsor this change in their respective organizations, asking them to repeat the session they've just been in with their direct reports.



Rough waters ahead for your communication plan?

The managers (sponsors for their own departments) then cascade this communication to the individuals in their organizations. This works very well as people tend to do what their immediate boss asks them to do. Everyone is hearing about the change in a very consistent way from their direct boss.

As simple as this approach is, it can and does fail often. Here are some of the main reasons:

#1: THE INITIAL SPONSOR GOES OFF-MESSAGE

The person kicking off the change gives the wrong messages about the change. At best this causes confusion. At worst it kills the change.

#2: SUBSEQUENT SPONSORS GO OFF-MESSAGE

Like the game of "telephone" as a child where you whisper a message into someone's ear and so forth around the room. By the time the message returns to you it has changed significantly. If you have many layers of management through which to cascade your message (especially if it's a verbal presentation), this is a very real risk.

#3: A SPONSOR SKIPS A LEVEL

What happens when a busy worker hears of a new change? They often ask their boss "Do I really have to do this?" If that person's boss has been skipped in the cascade it creates confusion, trust issues, and losses of productivity and momentum.

#4: FAILURE TO PREPARE SUBSEQUENT SPONSORS TO CONDUCT FURTHER CASCADES

This is where you want someone to cascade your message but you don't provide them any standardized resources (i.e. a script or talking points, a presentation or memo, etc.) leaving them to their own devices. This leads to variation in the messaging and confused workers potentially doing the wrong things at the wrong time.

#5: CASCADE STOPS PART-WAY THROUGH

Once a cascade is launched, the initial sponsor makes the fatal mistake of assuming it will all just work out ok. There is no follow-up or management of the cascade to ensure it happens as planned and it limps to a halt in one or more places, leading to uninformed workers and management.

#6: CASCADE DELEGATED / WRONG PEOPLE COMMUNICATING

Change agents understand the importance of having the right people communicate the messages. If this gets delegated, all of a sudden the initiative becomes "an HR thing" or a "quality department effort" rather than something the whole organization owns.

#7: MESSAGE COMMUNICATED TO ONLY PART OF AUDIENCE WITH NO CATCH-UP FOR ABSENTEES

If you are in a large organization, you may never get everyone together at the same time. How will you ensure everyone in the organization hears the message?

#8: MESSAGE TOO COMPLICATED

Taking 1000 words to describe a 100 word concept is bad. So is not breaking it down into smaller understandable pieces. Management might communicate, check off they did it, but nobody they communicated with understands what they said.

#9: WORDS DON'T MATCH ACTIONS / COERCED COMPLIANCE

Good sponsorship does not involve rolling one's eyes and sarcastically saying "I was told by corporate I had to read this to you". Nor does it involve an ad-lib at the end of the nature "I really don't care if you do this or not"….

#10: STAPLED-ON – NO ACCOUNTABILITY, CONSEQUENCES OR FOLLOW-UP

Until cascading communications becomes second nature and a core competency for an organization, it is wise to monitor the cascade like any managed activity with owners, due dates, spot audits, consequence management, etc.

Ok, but so what?

You may be thinking thanks for the tips, but what do I do about it? Sure, simply emailing around a memo or presentation is easier to do, but experienced change agents will tell you that the face to face communications are often more powerful.

The answer here again is rather simple – leverage the quality tools you already know. In this case a Failure Modes and Effects Analysis (FMEA) is an excellent way to proactively look at your upcoming communication cascade, and ask yourself "What might go wrong with this" and "how can I error-proof this cascade"?

For more information on using the FMEA tool, click here to re-visit my column from 2009: New Uses for Old Tools: FMEA

AVOID THE "UGLY AMERICAN" APPROACH TO CHANGE

"Ugly American" was a phrase coined decades ago describing arrogant behavior of Americans abroad. A recent trip to Europe confirmed for me that Ugly Americans are still out there. Watch some Americans visit Europe for the first time. They seem to think English is a universal language and wonder why all the people there don't speak it. They walk up to someone and start rattling off questions in English and then get upset if the person doesn't understand them. (Europeans, on the other hand, must wonder why Americans only know one language.)

Aside from language, some Americans with our "super size" mentality wonder why restaurant portions are so small, don't understand the metric system, rules of the road, or - most noticeably - the importance of culture.

Europe is interesting in that it is saturated with culture and history. It's oozing from every crevice of every ancient structure. The subtleties and intricacies of the myriad cultures and practices can be overwhelming at first. When you greet a friend or colleague is it a handshake or a kiss? One cheek or both? How far apart do you stand when talking?

So what does any of this have to do with driving change? Every organization (domestic or foreign) or even different divisions or departments within a company has their own culture and unique set of

practices. The shared beliefs, behaviors, and assumptions made in those groups can vary widely. Want to get along well in Europe? When in Rome…you get the picture – adapting to the culture of the city you're visiting makes life much easier. The same goes when you are trying to get along in any organization - especially when you are dealing with disruptive efforts such as driving process change.

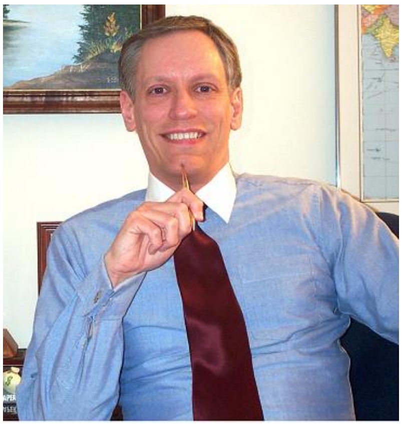
Want to avoid being the "Ugly American" in your organization's next change? Here are a few tips:

What language do they speak? It is our job to adapt to the audience's language. It is not their job to adapt to ours. Keep in mind that your "native language" may not be spoken by the general audience impacted by your process change. Avoid the "sigma-speak" and "OD-speak". A Six Sigma Black Belt excitedly speaking about p-values and t-tests will often receive blank stares from a typical audience of office workers. An Organization Development person pontificating on the advantages of their "enabling triads" and "appreciative inquiry" approach will often be shown the door. Rather, consider adapting to the audience's native language. Executives often speak a financial language. Operations professionals like OPs-speak. HR has their own language, etc. Success in driving process change often hinges on our ability to become multi-lingual.

What are their practices and "sacred" rituals? People successful in driving change are not "one trick ponies" – they do not have some cookie-cutter approach to change that they shove down every client's throat regardless of their environment. It's imperative that we become sensitive to attributes and artefacts of the organizational culture and adjust our approach to best navigate through and around those to reach our goal. Trying to bulldoze over the culture with some form of brute-force implementation may work in the short term, but come back in six to twelve months and let us know how well that worked for you in the long run. These cultural practices can be overt (we always run things by our steering committee…) or surprisingly subtle (Al is not on any org chart. Yet, he is a key opinion leader that everyone looks to before engaging...). Such practices can be scattered across the corporate landscape like little cultural landmines waiting for you to step on them. Early on, it's best to scan your environment, map out your landscape (preferably with the aid of a local 'jungle guide'), and plan accordingly throughout your effort.

Unlike European travel, there is no Fodor's Guide to navigating an organization's culture. However, if you proceed conservatively in any new environment and keep your antenna up and alert to signs and clues to the culture, your journey should be a productive and pleasant one.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jeff Cole is owner and principal of JCG, Ltd., a firm specializing in improvement strategies. A former quality executive in a Fortune 500 firm, Cole has over 20 years experience in improvement techniques and human change. He holds an MBA and industry certifications in Six Sigma, Quality Management and Change Management. Cole also served two terms on the board of examiners for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. He is a frequent speaker at conferences and has helped clients across a variety of industries. JCG, Ltd. can be found on the Internet at www.jcolegroup.com.