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The background consists of several overlapping, wavy, organic shapes in various shades of yellow and grey. The shapes create a sense of depth and movement, with some areas appearing to be cut out or layered on top of others. The overall effect is a modern, abstract design.

IT'S TIME
FOR
CHANGE

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In present times, change and managing change successfully has become a top priority for organizations, for reasons such that organizations today live in a state of accelerated development and high turnover. Moreover, change occurs today within organizations given the industrial climate at an increasing and complex rate. And it presents leadership as one of the biggest challenges facing their organizations. However, effective leadership strategy is coming to senses and it is continuously improving. And as we learn through our contributors - Luc Galoppin (1), Gilbert Kruidenier (2), Natalie Phillips-Mason (3), Jasmine Kernalleguen (4), Céline Schillinger (5), Ket Patel (6), Jason Little (7), Renee Blackman (8), Teresa Mitrovic (9), Dr Temre Green (10), Pauline Melnyk (11), Dr Jen Frahm (12), Jillian Reilly (13), Mun-Wai Chung (14), Linda Y. Brewer (15), Evan Leybourn (16), Pete Behrens (17) in this issue - organizations now are reducing their dependency on managers and insisting more on building leadership capabilities across their organizational system. And this is with good intentions to bring the level of workforce engagement towards the organization's vision and mission in order to make the right and effective change. The ability to deal with change requires a leadership behavior that coincides with the work of the organization and is very frequently termed as transformational leadership. The concept of transformational leadership has become a basic element within modern organizations today. In this issue, we pursue to highlight the level of adopting transformational leadership dimensions and its relationship with change management in organizations across the globe.

This issue provides insight into the significance of transformational leadership as a panacea to change management. This edition was carefully curated by our honorary guest editor Dr Jen Frahm based on our current need for organizations to introspect and learn about the role that transformational leadership plays within change management across organizations. All the articles in this edition touch upon different dimensions of transformational leadership - idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and empowerment. And they show the results of the positive relationship and their effects on change management. Happy reading and learning!



Manoj Khanna,
 Managing Editor & Publisher

Contributors

A New Deal for Change Engagements

Gilbert Kruidenier



In the last half of 2019, I found myself in a funk reflecting on what the Change profession had become and how we could reinvent ourselves back to relevance. Then, of course, the pandemic happened. Considering that no one could have foreseen the tragic course of events and unimaginable grief that would follow, I hope I can be forgiven for thinking right then and there that this was the biggest thing to happen for the profession since the introduction of Lewin's Unfreeze-Change-Refreeze Model in 1951 (however misinterpreted!). Surely this was our moment to shine, to lead by example and use all our Change skills to do good and make the best of what quickly became a terrible situation.

Unfortunately, I saw the exact opposite happen. During all the chaos and mayhem, the global Change profession was suspiciously quiet. Oh, there was no shortage of well-intended posts and articles on any range of 'how to make sense of it all' topics that did absolutely nothing for our clients who were out of breath, out of ideas, and out of their depth. At first I thought this was a symptom of myself and my colleagues being trapped in our little Melbourne bubble, but the farther I looked, the less action I found. The big thinkers among my Australian, European, UK, Canadian, US, and Asian connections all told me they'd decided to focus on their closest network circles and clients, and who can really blame them? →

WHAT GOT US HERE WON'T GET US THERE

It felt like all but the very best practitioners had gone in hiding, keeping their heads down online and waiting for the storm to pass. And pass it did. Two years and a Great Resignation hype² later, and we're now picking up the pieces, reimagining the ways we work, and counting our lucky stars that we're still around to help with the rebuild. The Australian Bureau of Statistics confirms³ that professionals got the better end of a very unpleasant deal, and I don't think Change/Agile professionals are even on the top-50 list of most pandemic-impacted roles. Yet, every other conversation I had was about mortgages needing paying, the market being lean, and clients not having time for "real change".

I found it equally depressing and frustrating. Here was the scenario that gave us every opportunity to do our best work, and what did we do? What most of us always did: play it safe. It felt like the Death of Expertise⁴ was happening right in front of me. Not only did the pandemic show us the true quality (or the lack thereof) of many practitioners, it also highlighted the absolute bankruptcy of the client engagement model we agree to work within.

There was never a better time to renegotiate the deal, so let's have a look at how that might work.

NOT QUITE AS ADVERTISED

To know what to run away from, we need to take a quick look at what's generally on offer. Google "change management jobs" (or Agile/Scrum Coach) in your area and go over 15-20 listings. You'll soon be convinced that all the job ads are written by a single overworked and uninspired recruiter stating that:

- Change happens in increments of three months;
- Rates are 'very competitive';
- All projects are transformational;
- Everyone is a 'leading business' in their own right; and
- If you have three months to 40 years of experience (extra points if you have a shiny certificate), you're the perfect candidate!

And most of us say: "When do I start?"

Of course, you only later find out that things are not quite as advertised. That Digital Transformation is really just an IT-system Change and that a series of Sprints soon feels more like an uphill, barefoot ultra-marathon. You're the heroic individual expected to affect that long-overdue Change, while also doing the job of project manager, comms person, coach, trainer, and psycho-therapist. Did we mention that your scope and timeframes will change while your budget is more of a suggestion than a fixed number? No? Sorry!



Does that all sound familiar? Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice and all that.

The whole “don’t ask, don’t tell, get paid,” engagement model has taken its toll on many of my friends and respected colleagues. It is beyond worrying. Research by the Adecco Group (*Burnout Might Be The New Worker Pandemic*, 2021) across 25 countries will back me up when I say burnout rates are exceptionally high in the Change/Agile/Transformation professions. I hear far too many stories about drinking, eating, or working too much, relationship and mental health issues, and some of the greatest minds in the profession are switching to silent mode because they just can’t cope anymore. What in the name of everything that is good are we doing to ourselves? And for what?



THE NEW DEAL

The pandemic has shown us that we humans and our businesses *can* change if we need to. And change we did! Let’s just not make the mistake of thinking that surviving pandemic circumstances means that everything else is now easy by comparison. We know you can help people and businesses through Change, but you can’t do it *for* them. However, you can *lead* by example by making different choices about how you engage and present your professional self.

1. Negotiate shorter and open-ended contracts

Taking a fixed-term contract offers a (false) sense of job security. It also removes a lot of the project’s sense of urgency, ultimately leading to unnecessary extensions and deliverables being delayed for no good reason. Challenge yourself *and* the client/organization to make the most of your everyday engagement. Job done? Good. Now, on to the next adventure to do an even *better* job!

2. Experiment with new pricing strategies

No matter where you go in the world, the deal on offer is almost always a variant of: you provide expertise, we pay you as little as possible for a fixed term because we have the job/pay you want. What if we changed that dynamic by offering things like Pay-What-You-Want⁵, a retainer model, or a lump sum approach? Our work is very suited to these models, and I personally get very good results when I apply them. I will admit, it’s not for every client or organization, and that tells you something about them too. The negotiation becomes a conversation where you can hear the conventional pricing gears in their heads screech to a halt. Finally we’re *really* talking! Some flat-out refuse to entertain these models, some are intrigued, *and* some will give it a go. If you’re capable of quick turn-around times, you can make good money and have more time for other things. →

3. Focus on delivery

Strategy matters, but delivery matters more. If you are as professional as your profile would have me believe, show me the impact of your work. Everyone can write a strategic plan, but a much smaller group can successfully deliver it as planned. That's the group you'll want to be in.

4. Speak uncomfortable truths

Yeah, yeah, of course we all do this, all the time, every meeting... in our heads. Not in real life, of course! Goodness me, what if the client gets upset? Well, so what if they do? That's where you earn your daily rate. If unpleasant truths offend them, head for the nearest exit. You're wasting your time and you will not succeed. Go. Now!

5. Only say yes to roles that report to the CEO or their direct reports

Making Change happen is hard enough without multiple layers, endless meetings, and tangles of red tape. If you're not reporting progress to executives, the Change is not important and you should be doing better things with your time.

6. Educate yourself outside the profession

Skills maintenance should be one of your highest priorities in our fast-moving profession. Complete that micro-credential, sign up for a workshop or two, read anything you can get your hands on, and, not just in your own field, but *anything* that gets you thinking! If it offends or upsets you, even better. Join events (online or in person, if you're lucky), engage in discussions, share your ideas in the community, and accept their feedback. If you're not a life-long learner, you're not doing yourself any favours.

7. Stop with the superhero-complex!

If the role description reads like a Marvel superhero bio, don't take the job. The client's expectations are likely too high, unrealistic, and misguided. If the money is really good, *definitely* don't take the job. No money in the world is worth your mental health and relationships, and both will suffer from taking on these kinds of roles.

In this article, I used engagement in the more traditional sense, but of course the same applies to speaking gigs, crisis management, strategy days, event facilitation, and other short-term work. Only when you value your skills and abilities will clients value you in equal measure. You owe it to yourself and the profession as a whole to set the highest standard and best example for others to follow. ©

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Gilbert Kruidenier

thinks it's weird to speak about himself in the third person and prefers if others do the talking while he gets on with connecting strategic dots and convincing the elephant in the room that it's a safe space for all and that she can say what she thinks too. He divides his time between advising organisations and boards on change, communication and governance and rescuing animals from people and people from themselves.



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