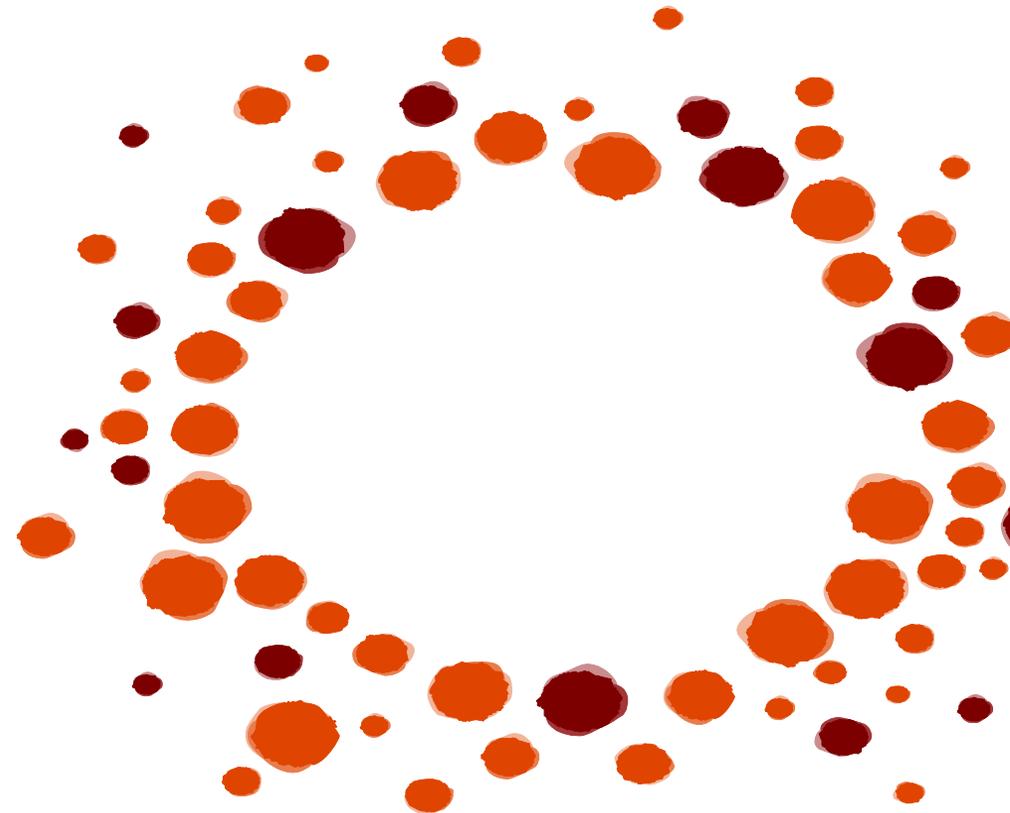# Strategy for building the capability for leading and managing change.

Author: Melanie Franklin

melanie@agilechangemanagement.co.uk

# Introduction

- All organisations are commissioning high volumes of projects and programmes which trigger changes in processes, systems, products, services, target markets, operating models and ways of working.

- To realise the benefits of these changes, everyone impacted needs to be able to manage their own transition from current to new ways of working. How to do this isn't always obvious, and not everyone has the willingness or the motivation to change how they work.

- My job is to help organisations build the capacity and the capability for managing change for every member of staff. I have shared some of my thoughts on the most important things to do so that you can help your organisation get better at change.

- This presentation gives you a structure and an explanation of the content for a strategy for building your organisations internal capability for managing change. My example strategy has 6 sections with guidance on what to include in each of these sections:

Context → Stakeholder Analysis → Stakeholder Groups → Objectives/ Measures → Key Activities → Approach

# Context

In this first section of the strategy, explain why the organisation has committed to increasing its ability to manage change initiatives. These reasons will typically include:

- A summary of the high volume of change that the organisation anticipates in the short to mid term and/or an explanation of the need to transform what it does, who it does it for or how it does it in the face of customer demand, competitor pressures or changes in structure or regulation of its market.

- An explanation of the risks of relying on external consultancies to provide the resources to manage change including the costs, their lack of understanding of the culture and practices of the organisation and the impression given to staff that change is being done to them and not with them.

To strengthen the case for increasing the internal capability for managing change, try and link it to the other strategic objectives your organisation has, so that what you are talking about doesn't become 'something extra' or an after thought but is clearly shown as an important contributor. For example:

- Cost cutting objectives will rely on the ability of the organisation to do more with existing resources, which can only occur if changes are made to existing ways of working.

- Growth objectives will rely on the ability of the organisation to create a culture of innovation and change involving all staff, which means that all staff need an understanding of how to lead themselves and others through change.

# Stakeholder analysis

To make sure you really know the full scale of the work required, make sure you look at the creation of capability from the viewpoint of those affected. This is not just those who have to build up the new skills, but also those who will be responsible for providing the training needed to make this a reality and senior managers who will have to reinforce the importance of these new skills. This will include but is not limited to the following analysis techniques:

- Brainstorming sessions to involve as many people as possible in identifying who they think will be affected by the increase in change capability.

- Grouping the stakeholders so that those with common interests and impacts can be given similar messages. I will give you an example of these groups on the next slide.

- Creation of Personas and Empathy Maps to help identify the specific interests of each stakeholder group so that the most relevant information can be shared with each group. Step back and think about what each group will want to know, why they will be pleased to be involved and why they might not want to be involved.

# Stakeholder groups

As a result of the analysis a number of stakeholder groups will be identified. In my experience, the creation of internal capability for managing change leads to the identification of the following groups:

- **Sponsors** – those with the responsibility for championing the new capability and creating a culture that supports all staff becoming involved in the implementation and embedding of new ideas.

- **Line Managers** – those with local responsibility for making change happen in their areas of the business. There is a lot of overlap with the Sponsor group as Line Managers need to motivate their staff to get involved in change initiatives. Line Managers also have plan how staff are to be allocated between 'business as usual' and change activities and ensure that their contribution to change is recognised and rewarded.

- **Change Targets** – not my favourite word, but describes all those who have to change their way of working. In this context it means they have to learn techniques for planning and managing changes to how they work.

- **Change Agents** – this group can consist of internal and external resources. Their main role is coaching, encouraging and leading by example. They can be at any level in the hierarchy, using their influencing skills to show others the way during the stress of adjusting to new ways of working.

# Objectives/Measures

The reason I have combined objectives and measures is that objectives should always be measurable so it helps to keep me focused. In my strategy documents, I don't want to include objectives that I cannot measure because then they just become good intentions, which are easy to explain away when they have not been achieved!

Once I have identified the objectives/measures, I write another section of the strategy, setting out how the measures will be taken. How something is proven and who takes the measures, how frequently and how they are reported on is a more tactical piece of work so I include it as an addendum at the end of the strategy.

In my experience, building a new capability for anything requires 4 objectives:

1. Awareness
2. Perception
3. Participation
4. Adoption

# Awareness

On the surface, Awareness looks like an easy objective to achieve, because it means that all those impacted by change know what the change is, when it is happening and what their role in it will be.

However, I think the objective is to ensure that everyone affected really appreciates how their work is going to change. I need to ask questions that prompt people to consider what they will need to do differently, who they will need to work with to achieve this and what skills they might need to learn to help them get this work done.

To achieve the required levels of Awareness involves lots of communication using different media, appealing to different preferences for how the information is structured and presented and being willing to repeat the same messages over and over until everyone has heard them.

To measure if Awareness has been achieved involves measuring not just how many people have received the messages, but how many have absorbed the information and asked questions to clarify their understanding. It is this two-way engagement that is the real measure of successful Awareness.

# Perception

Building a new capability means adding to peoples responsibilities, asking them to learn new skills and do things differently. Therefore, it is no surprise that not everyone is going to be happy and excited by this.

However, perception is an important indicator of whether people are going to get involved in creating the new internal capability for change leadership. If they do not feel positively towards this change, they will not become involved in making it a reality.

Positive perception cannot be expected from everyone from day one, so it needs to be regularly assessed to see if the number of people feeling supportive of the change and how supportive they are feeling are both increasing.

These measures are so frequent that staff engagement surveys are a bit heavy handed for the task. I suggest that small measures including likes for articles about the change, a show of hands in team meetings etc are more useful.

# Participation

- Change only happens when all those affected get involved in making it a reality.

- Participation includes learning about change management, devising approaches for identifying, planning and managing the change and taking part in workshops, demonstrations and practice sessions.

- If there is too little participation then the capability will not be developed across the organisation as a whole. The involvement of a few will not achieve the necessary critical mass.

- To ensure participation involves as many people as possible, create a wide range of activities that appeal to different preferences including:
  - Working together and working alone
  - Analysis and planning as well as diving in and having a go
  - Understanding the capability for change from a strategic perspective and viewing it as a series of activities that added together become something meaningful.

- Participation needs to be measured through the number of people taking part but also the number of activities they are getting involved in.

# Adoption

- Adoption is the point at which people start behaving in new ways. In building the capability for leading and managing change, this means the number of people that are involved in sponsoring, managing and delivering successful change initiatives.

- The level of adoption can be measured by the Portfolio Office, who can track the number of initiatives taking place. They should also track who is involved in each initiative to ensure that there is a broad inclusion of staff, and that the organisation has genuinely increased its capability for change by widening the number of staff, the different roles, participation from different departments and teams.

- After all, the whole purpose of this capability building strategy is to ensure a move away from the same old people taking responsibility for all the changes every time.

# Key activities

- To create the capability for managing change, I think there are 3 key activities:
    1. **Developing an understanding** of what change management means. This includes explaining the lifecycle of change, from initial idea through to experimenting with new ways of working and then normalising these new ways of working by adding them into procedures.
    2. **Building support**, creating a momentum for change through communication activities which market the reasons for the change and the benefits of the change as well as activities for enabling those impacted to get involved and learn first hand what the change will mean for them.
    3. **Addressing resistance** requires a set of activities that enable those impacted to be listened to. Some resistance is a product of fear of negative impacts, some is the shock of having to abandon existing habits and start learning new things and some are genuine concerns that the risks and difficulties of working in this new way have not been fully considered.

# Approach

To create a new capability requires the involvement of everyone so in this section of my strategy, I set out how I am going to build a network of people to sponsor, manage, support and get involved in the change.

- I explain the roles, responsibilities and activities needed to implement change whilst still delivering excellent service in the current 'business as usual' work.

- I set out a plan of training and coaching that meets the needs of each of the stakeholder groups identified earlier in the strategy.

- I summarise the contents of the Change Toolkit that includes templates, checklists, guidance notes, sample agendas and plans and webinars.