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The value of Change Management

Author

Melanie Franklin

Director

Agile Change Management Limited



- The risk that staff are so disrupted by the change, that they decide it would be easier to work for another organisation so put their effort into looking for other work rather than creating adopting the project deliverables into their current role.
- The risk that staff find the changes so stressful that they withdraw their enthusiasm for the work, leading to lower productivity and higher sickness rates.

Timing

Many of our colleagues in project management will request assistance with the launch of their project deliverables, turning to their change management colleagues towards the end of the project lifecycle. This is often too late to fully engage those impacted by the change, reducing the positive effect change management could have achieved.

Establishing the value of change management within the project management community is important if we want to develop fully integrated plans containing activities to create the project deliverables and the activities to create the behavioural changes needed for their adoption. These fully integrated plans should also lead to properly costed business cases, where the time, effort and resources needed to achieve behavioural change are included.

Resources

There is a lot of work to do but what holds back resourcing is the lack of understanding of what is involved. There is an assumption that change will happen anyway so it doesn't need people to be allocated to the work.

Those organisations that are successful at implementing change support each initiative with access to a Professional Change Lead and a network of Change Agents that influence and motivate their colleagues to adopt new ways of working.

Outcome

As a profession, Change Management has work to do to establish change management activities as the essential element for the realisation of benefits. When this view becomes accepted, change activities will become mandated, and not optional as they are today.

We need to explain that without our efforts, those who must work differently will not adopt new ways of working. They will stay in denial, working in the same ways as before. Unless they shift their position, the expected cost savings or revenue generation from the change will not happen.

Establishing the value of Change Management

Many of us are trying to raise this awareness but too often, to do so we go down the route of explaining all the things that we do and how we are going to do them. This means we use our own terminology and language; we can exclude those who have not studied our subject. For example, we talk about Impact Assessments, Readiness Assessments, Stakeholder Analysis and the Transition Curve, but this doesn't connect with those not familiar with these terms.

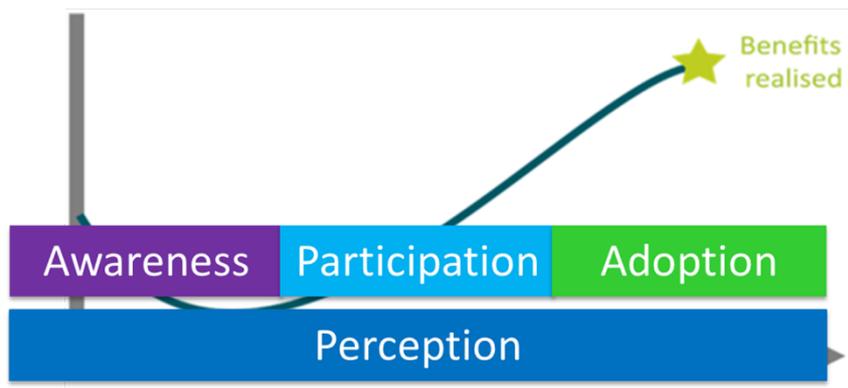


I think it is time that we started talking about the results of our work and the positive difference that we make, rather than our activities. If we want to make friends and increase our support, we must talk the language of business. We need to stimulate the interest of senior managers in our profession who have no formal training in change techniques. This means explaining how we help to realise benefits, how our work can have a positive impact on NPS (net promoter scores), staff engagement, and revenue and profitability.

To simplify the explanation of the business value of Change Management, I have divided the transition from old to new ways of working into three phases:

1. Awareness
2. Participation
3. Adoption

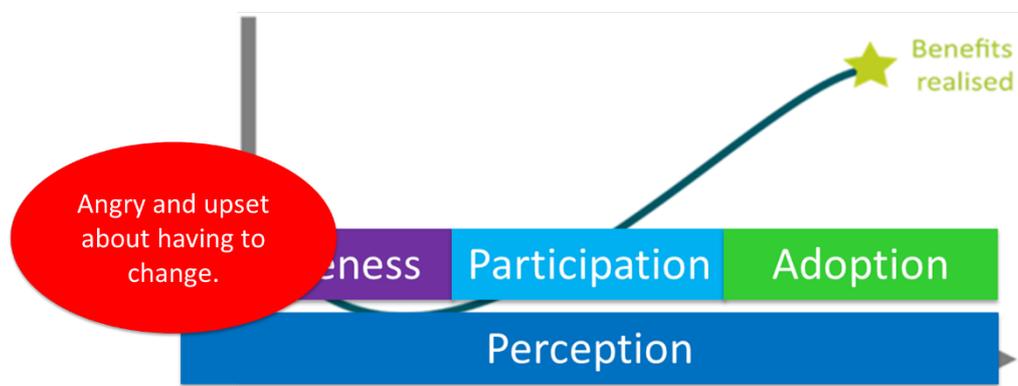
Change management value lifecycle



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Awareness

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Key activities during Awareness

In this first section of the change lifecycle, we have to engage with all those impacted by the change and help them develop a curiosity about what the change is going to deliver. We need to create a realisation and an acceptance that it is really going to happen and gain agreement from those affected to become involved in it and help make it a success.

We want people to feel curious about the possibilities of what the change can bring for them, so your focus must be on sharing as much information as possible, as widely as possible so even those only on the periphery of the change can understand it.

We must provide enough information for people to work out for themselves how they are likely to be impacted, identifying the improvements and advantages and to mourn their losses. These losses relate to the loss of certainty about how they work, what they are responsible for, who they work with, where they work and the skills that they need.

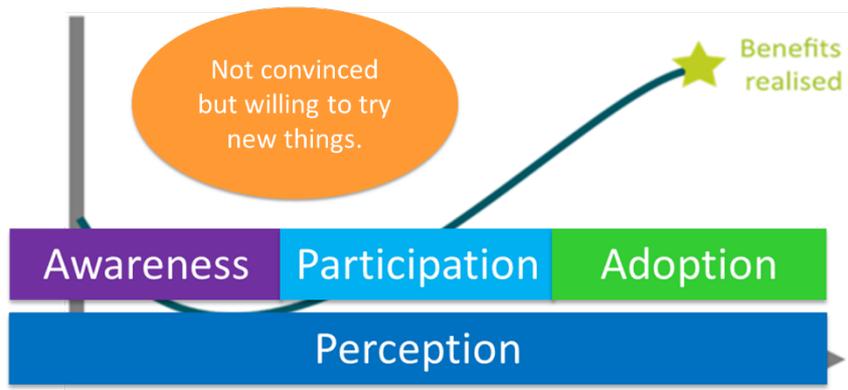
Value of Change Management during Awareness

1. Reduces the costs of refuting negative rumours, as early explanations stop them developing in the first place.
2. Creates positivity, which increases creativity and commitment.
3. Communication of the Change Plan creates a feeling of certainty that the extra effort being demanded of people will not be wasted.
4. People impacted by change are well informed so feel they are being treated with respect which increases their staff engagement scores and decreases the chances of reduction in effort - sick leave and staff absence
5. Communication of the change plan creates certainty which reduces the risk that staff apply for jobs elsewhere (creating certainty for themselves by putting them in charge of their own careers rather than risk the uncertainty of the change).
6. People can start to think about the impact so they can make informed decisions about their involvement, planning their time and what they can contribute to make the change happen. This increases the probability of having the resources needed for successful change.
7. Communication of the change plan and the options staff have for getting involved creates a feeling of optimism that the change is an opportunity and not a threat.
8. Everyone is given access to the same information, which creates equity. If everyone has the same information, no-one feels that others are getting preferential treatment which reduces risk of "them and us" culture building up.

Participation



Change management value lifecycle



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Key activities during Participation

This step in the change lifecycle is where change really happens. It is when those impacted start to participate in creating the details of how the new ways of working will happen. They will take part in workshops and meetings; they will view demonstrations and provide feedback and they will trial new approaches and practice new skills.

We need to provide training in change management so that people feel confident in what they are doing. Understand the impact of the change in more detail via demonstrations, training sessions and walk throughs. Practice working in the new ways. Creating a feedback loop and acting on the feedback to apply lessons learned.

The support needed in this part of the change lifecycle is extensive. The Change Plan must identify the scale of the work so that line managers can ensure staff are given the necessary time to participate whilst still maintaining business as usual.

Activities for discussing and agreeing the likely mistakes that will be made as people undertake the new ways of working for the first time and ideas for how to recover from these mistakes. Explicitly reviewing how things might go wrong reduces the risk of creating a blame culture, where those having a go at the new ways of working worry that any mistakes are going to be punished. If this is a worry, it reduces the chance that people will try out new things.

It is during this phase that staff help to design the new ways of working, experiment with different processes, data and structures, pilot their ideas, gather feedback and apply lessons learned. To enable this to happen, there are a lot of activities needed to provide detailed information about the change and opportunities for participating in its creation through design workshops, planning workshop, demonstrations and feedback sessions.

There is also likely to be the need for formal training and some coaching. Buddying up of staff to address a specific aspect of the change or to train each other will also take place.

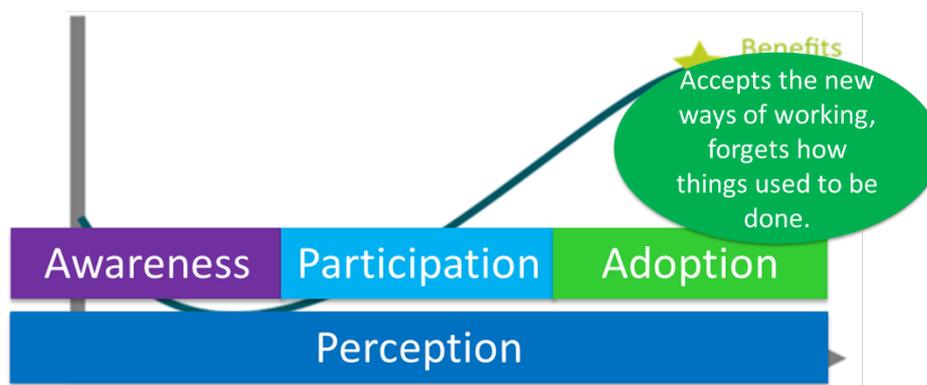
To encourage staff to participate in making the change a reality, their initial awareness of the impact of the change needs to become more detailed. Provide them with guidance so that they can conduct their own personal impact assessment. It is only when they have the realisation that they cannot continue to work as they do now, and that certain things will stop, or change or new tasks are required that the change becomes real.

Value of Change Management during Participation

1. Reduce wasted effort, those who have to work in new ways are designing how to make it work.
2. Creates the right balance, stops all the emphasis being on features and functions, ensuring impact on relationships, collaboration, skills and knowledge are considered.
3. We are providing conditions for personal growth and development, offering the stretch and challenge of creating something new.
4. Earlier validation of our approach, volunteers provide "live" testing of our ideas, giving evidence and not just opinion of the work ability of our proposals.
5. Creating pilots and prototypes which can demonstrate the new capability to enthuse those not yet involved.
6. Reduces probability of staff looking for escape routes, instead putting their efforts into creating new ways of working.
7. Earlier and higher volume of evidence of work ability of the change leads to quicker achievement of the tipping point when change becomes accepted as the new norm.
8. Reduces uncertainty, reduces stress and conflict, improving the quality of engagement with colleagues, customers and suppliers.
9. More engagement with learning new ways of working, reducing the number of mistakes.

Adoption

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Key activities during Adoption

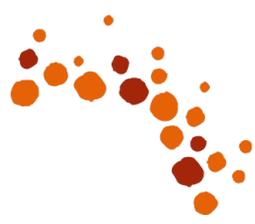
Success as the change becomes the new norm comes from continued practice of the new ways of working. After all, success is when the change becomes the new norm i.e. it becomes a habit and is no longer something strange and different that you are trying to understand. In this part of your Change Plan, you must make sure that the new ways of working have been embedded into all aspects of how your organisation works.

When the majority of staff are working in the new way, embed the change by making sure that performance measures, metrics and key performance indicators have all been rewritten to reflect the new ways of working.

As the change is being formalised at this point, it may require the involvement of functions that were not that heavily involved before including Internal Audit and HR. New job descriptions need to be created to reflect the changes in activities and responsibilities. New processes, procedures and governance arrangements need to be defined. Also, there needs to be the removal of access to old ways of working and the termination of old contracts and old metrics that are no longer relevant.

Value of Change Management during Adoption

1. Achieve the benefits:
 - a) Higher revenue
 - b) Lower costs
 - c) Increased customer satisfaction
 - d) Increased staff engagement
 - e) Compliance with regulations
2. Additional benefits from dismantling old ways of working:
 - a) Removing duplication
 - b) Removing obsolete activities
 - c) Stopping payments for those services no longer required
3. Reduces cost of advertising the benefits of the change to those up and down the value change as we have a motivated army of supporters who can speak positively about their experiences.
4. Change is no longer talked about as a change, it is the norm, so the amount of time spent discussing how things might look in the future, or how people are going to get involved in the change comes to an end. This allows greater focus on day to day business objectives.
5. There is a sense of achievement which can be celebrated, fuelling esteem in all those impacted. This creates a feeling of optimism which gives them the energy to participate in further changes.
6. Creates a new baseline from which more innovation can flow. Once new capability has been established, staff can use this new reality to identify further improvements.



Conclusion

Change Management is a young profession, we continue to evolve what we do, how we do it and the value we can create for our stakeholders. We need to match this innovation in achievement with our ability to communicate our value. As we develop as a profession, we must develop supporters for our work, and that can only happen if we talk with pride and enthusiasm about the positive differences we make in our organisations.

Whenever we are asked about our role, lets try to use phrases that convey the value of our work. For example:

“as a result of what I do...”

“the outcome of my work is that I create....”;

“the difference I make to the business is....”

About the author

My job is to help organisations develop the capability to manage change and transformation. This involves a wide range of activities as no two organisations are the same. For example, I might devise the framework and methods to be used to become more Agile, more digital or more innovative. Other times I am leading the creation of an internal network of change management champions who lead themselves and their colleagues through transformation to achieve new ways of working. I am often in the board room supporting senior leaders to become effective sponsors and I go on to provide executive coaching throughout the life of significant change initiatives.

I love my job so much that I write lots of articles and text books to help transfer my knowledge and experience to the next generation of change managers. I am passionate about my profession and help to lead the growth of the Change Management Institute in the UK as well as promoting our professional globally.

To access more resources about change management, connect with me on LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/melaniefranklin1/>

