



The Human Dimension

THE LEADER WITHIN

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"We help both people and productivity flourish by developing a positive culture of shared leadership."

We find improved performance is the reward for your investing in people.

The emphasis in THE LEADER WITHIN is on the changes and growth we make within ourselves, as leadership is basically a personal growth experience over time.

'For things to change first I must change.'

The Human Dimension of change.

Embarking on a change journey is costly in many ways - financially, emotionally and energetically. It is often said that between 60-80% of change initiatives fail to deliver the expected value and strategic outcomes. A major factor contributing to this poor result is the way organisations view and deal with the human dimension of change.

There are three success factors to increase the odds in times of change, which in most organisations today is ever present and ongoing! We need to move to a mindset, which embraces change and each learn to respond proactively and positively. This is not easy to do, as our lives and our plans are invariably disrupted.

These three key elements to success, which incorporates the human dimension of change, are:

1. Getting engagement
2. Ensuring alignment and,
3. Developing ownership.

If adaptable, change-adept organizations are what CEO's want, then the pre-eminent paradigm that's going to produce the desired result is one that includes instability as a positive element - and ongoing change as "business as usual."

So, are you still thinking of change as "the event" or are you thinking of change as a constant corporate mindset and vital component of organizational success?

We are living in the midst of great societal change marked by:

- Information overload
- Knowledge economy
- Growth in human awareness
- Global outlook especially through media and internet
- Complexity, conflict and constant change at all levels
- Increasing gaps between wealth and poverty
- Environmental devastation of huge proportions
- Deep questioning of how best to live ones life.

It helps if we see the bigger picture beyond our own personal world and realise the deep and pervasive transformational nature of this period of human existence. It does mean we have to check, and possibly change, our operating paradigm, which may have served us well to this point.

We must also upgrade our skills, mindsets and beliefs, which will ensure we actively, contribute to the change all around and not feel a victim of life's circumstances.

The above three factors are important to ensure change is sustainable and achieves the intended results. They are interconnected and all three require our attention. They are not linear, however more people will embrace change if you focus on the order they are listed here.

Each of these key elements is built on the foundation to do with the quality of the relationships you are able to develop as a leader or as a change agent. The quality of individual leaders and those embarking on the first part of the change are critical if you want to have others join you. You are constantly dealing with the intangibles such as underlying beliefs, values and changing perceptions based on a myriad of conversations over which you have no control. We all give special attention and create meaning to what we observe and hear, especially when it affects us personally.

The relationship you have with others relies on your believability quotient, which comes from values such as trust, integrity and consistency.

The approach using these three success factors works, whether you have positional power or not, because the key focus is on the person(s) rather than mainly on the process or strategies. While you need a process and a plan to work from these three factors are typically overlooked or only become important (and urgent) when the wheels in the change chariot start to wobble!

The three key elements to successful change:

1. Engagement.

You can't buy engagement through performance pay, bonuses, benefits and other incentives.

What we are after is engagement freely offered because it is the result of negotiation and strategic thought about what is required and how it is to be done. Too often the focus we have is on the results and not how they are to be achieved. We get results but how much value-add, ideas and insights have we missed out on the way because there was limited engagement from the hearts and minds of our staff?

A senior manager told me recently that an aspiring leader wanted to discuss their future in the organisation and was looking to be promoted. The feedback from the senior manager went something like: " If you want to be promoted you have to change the way you deal with people, while you do get results you have left dead bodies behind in doing so..."

If you want to really engage people they must know what is required and how you want them to lead.

This requires you know yourself and others better than you probably currently do now.

What are the strengths, experiences, talents, abilities, aspirations and dreams of those around you?

It requires we see and work with the unique gifts of each person and in this way relate much more at the level of peoples hearts & passions.

Why do you need to know these things?

It is not because you are a sticky-beak or need more friends; rather that you are now better informed and positioned to get the best people in the right roles at the right time.

If you work this way you increase the level and intensity of personal engagement because in doing so you demonstrate your preparedness to allow and encourage people to do their best work.

2. Alignment

This must occur through organisational vision, values and individual behaviours coming together around the organisational strategic intent.

The vision will ensure there is a strong and compelling reason 'to get up in the morning' because we become self-motivated when we are personally making a contribution to a future we believe in.

Values drive our behaviour and determine our focus because they act as an internal magnet.

Behaviours are what we spend time doing and in what ways we do things. This is what other people notice and then in observing us, make sense of our what

we say or do, (their conclusions may or may not accurately reflect our intentions, which means we have to consistently share our 'inner' world with others, to increase the level of understanding).

Ensuring you are aligned is necessary because you will spend less time fixing problems and will be able to have the trust in place to know that even when the issues are complex your people can decide and act accordingly.

3. Ownership

Developing a shared leadership culture is required, where you trust and allow mistakes and you believe in your people to perform to their best . This will generate ownership. People do not have to be involved in all of the decisions, nor be consulted on everything to get ownership. A sense of ownership translates into a state of mind, which means knowing what you have to do and how to do it.

There are no longer secure jobs only secure people. This outcome is built from trust that we consistently and consciously generate.

Effective and never ending communication on any occasion is essential and can never be overdone. You communicate about the reasons for the change what is the gap, which is to be bridged, and where you want to end up. This generates honest open dialogue where people's feelings, opinions and concerns are shared and heard.

Depending on how you respond to suggestions, ideas, questions, concerns, fears and doubts which invariably come up. You can get more and more buy in as you proceed, because each time you communicate is another opportunity to convey important messages.

If the organisational culture is open and authentic then honest feedback is possible. This is essential so that constant mid course corrections are made with regard to the new data constantly being received from everywhere.

Call to Action:

Examine how you currently build alignment, engagement and ensure ownership across your teams or enterprise. Change is at the same time both a threat and an opportunity.

Ask yourself these four questions.

1. Am I positioning change for others, as an event or a positive mindset myself?
 2. Do I allow myself to be paralysed by the times we live in, or have I found and able to express my own purpose?
 3. Am I positively contributing to, or being merely a passenger, with the changes that are needed?
 4. What is my own legacy going to be?
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