

PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Mastering Organizational Change Management***

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Introduction

Few things in life challenge us more than change. While each of us feel as if we would readily embrace a change for the better, the more cynical nature tends to view change as a threat to our stable lives. Heraclitus is often quoted as stating that "...the only thing that is constant is change...", and in the corporate world of today nothing could be more accurate.

This book approaches change management in a very human, and personal manner. The author consistently weaves the thought processes behind our natural tendency to resist change into a fabric of methodologies designed to assist those of us challenged with planning, championing, and assisting in the implementation of change within organizations. Regardless of the scope of the change, or the organization in which that change is undertaken, she reminds us that change must always be approached both from a top-down approach as mandated by senior management initiatives, as well as from a grassroots approach, to ensure that the changes are not merely tolerated, but embraced.

Overview of Book's Structure

The general structure of the book leads the reader into the subject in a way that is both informative, and logical even if the reader is unaware of the finer points of change management. As the author states repeatedly throughout the book, all lasting change must start and end with the individual. As such, the first portion of the book addresses the various barriers to change that a change agent is likely to encounter. Underscoring the need for successful change to have a grassroots level of participation, she leads us through the various barriers to change, both internal and external.

The text then covers the various reasons that organizations undertake changes, and the importance of understanding the language of change. Key to this language is the importance of both listening to understand, and speaking to be understood. The author

then breaks down the process of change itself, which has both internal and external components. The internal components address how individuals change themselves, how they prepare for change, and how they seek to incorporate change into their altered role within the organization. On the other hand, the external components speak to the various ways in which the organization changes people, how to engage individuals in the change, ways to build confidence while transferring the requisite knowledge surrounding and supporting the change, and the need for positive reinforcement and governance.

Foundational to every change effort is the need to gain a deep understanding of both the business itself, including the ecosystem in which it operates, the business model utilized, key relationships both inward and outward facing, and the organizations' culture. Of equal importance is understanding the people, processes, technology, and goals involved in the change effort, as well as who will be impacted by the change. Upon the completion of a needs assessment, as well as an impact assessment, of the affected individuals, the effort can be planned appropriately.

The book then covers four Organizational Change Management approaches, and delves into the particulars of each one. These include ADKAR (Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement), the eight step Kotter method, IEMO (Inform, Involve, Evolve, Maintain, and Observe), and AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action). In order to make the selected approach effective, various techniques are discussed which enable, support, and reinforce the efforts surrounding the selected change approach.

Included in the remaining chapters is a discussion concerning proven methods of measuring the success of the change, and methods of creating an overall change management strategy that ties into the business climate, ecosystem, and the organization's readiness for the change initiative. The book comes to a close by addressing the attributes of developing a change ready culture, briefly touching on the layers of change, and ideas on how to address change fatigue.

Highlights

Being a student of personality types and how best to interact with wide varieties of people in various situations, I found the overall tone of the book to be quite insightful. Whether one is undertaking the reorganization of a company, or simply carrying out a significant project, encountering barriers to the changes required is something many of us have experienced. The internal, or personal, barriers of fear, trust, control (or perceived lack thereof), apathy, insecurity, motivation, learned helplessness, and change fatigue are seldom standalone, but are instead intertwined in ways that can create a Gordian knot of resistance. Understanding that the sword that cuts through this resistance is often as simple as listening to the concerns of those impacted, finding ways of bringing some of their proffered solutions to bear on the change itself, and providing a way for these individuals to experience some quick wins by embracing facets of the change in microcosm, in many ways simplifies the role of those tasked with managing the change effort.

Of course, for any change to be effective, the organization must seek to both understand and control the complexity of the change. None of this matters though, if the organization fails to provide a clear vision and direction. For individuals to embrace change, they must not only understand the need for the change, but have a clear picture of what their environment will be like once the change is complete. This means that the expectations surrounding the change must be both reasonable, and effectively managed. The organization's capability and capacity for the desired change must also be factored into the change plan.

There can be many reasons for change, from a burning platform (we are being forced to change quickly), to continuous improvement efforts, from the need to facilitate growth, to the scaling back of operations, to the challenges surrounding mergers and acquisitions. Regardless of the reason, it is imperative that the organization carry out the change with transparency, the opportunity for individuals to engage in and be a part of the change, and for their influence during this effort to really matter, in order to effect lasting change. The elements of a winning change management plan include laying the groundwork for the change, establishing goals, objectives, and a primary focus for the change, determining the approach and techniques applicable and appropriate based upon the type of change and the climate and culture of the organization, and establishing an agreed upon method of measuring the effectiveness of the change, and who is accountable for each facet of the change.

Highlights: What I liked!

The general message and tone of the book that I personally found to be the most appealing, and effective in my experience, was the expressed importance of remembering that all change is individual and personal. We must keep in mind that every person in the organization is not simply a "resource", but a living, breathing, feeling human being. Each of these people have not only professional lives, but personal ones as well. To bring about effective change, our challenge is to create an environment and a strategy that engages with this wide variety of individuals and attitudes in such a way that the change effort is as non-threatening, positive, and inclusive as possible.

While this may seem to be a Herculean task on the surface, the author expresses repeatedly, and in many different ways, that the key to success is being transparent, communicating early and often, not only in advance of the change but throughout the change effort, and seeking to engage people in the process. People are the most likely to embrace a change which they were contributors to, or even builders of, the final solution. Even those who are the most antagonistic to the change can be converted to champions, once given a voice and a role in the change.

Who might benefit from the Book?

Certainly not all of us hold, or will hold, the title or role of a change management professional, but each of us will be impacted by changes within the organizations in

which we perform our day-to-day tasks. Gaining insight into the general human psyche concerning change, from the adamant resistors to the ardent adopters, will assist the reader in more accurately framing our emotional responses to change when encountered. Furthermore, understanding the tools, techniques, and methods utilized to facilitate healthy and lasting changes in an organization can instruct each of us in how we can best assist in this process.

Conclusion

Change is all around us, and is an inevitable part of every business venture. Our ability to recognize the need for change, admit to ourselves that change is the way forward, and embrace the changes around us will not only be an indicator of our success, but also of our satisfaction within our work environments. George Bernard Shaw said that "Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything". The truth is that we can either be dragged along by change, swept to the side as it continues on, or lead it so that we can guide and assist the direction of such changes, thereby adding value to and bringing new life into our organizations.

For more about this book, go to: <http://www.irosspub.com/mastering-organizational-change-management.html>

Editor's note: This book review was the result of a partnership between the publisher, PM World and the [PMI Dallas Chapter](#). Authors and publishers provide the books to PM World; books are delivered to the PMI Dallas Chapter, where they are offered free to PMI members to review; book reviews are published in the PM World Journal and PM World Library. PMI Dallas Chapter members can keep the books as well as claim PDUs for PMP recertification when their reviews are published. Chapter members are generally mid-career professionals, the audience for most project management books. If you are an author or publisher of a project management-related book, and would like the book reviewed through this program, please contact editor@pmworldjournal.net.

About the Reviewer



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Michael Morris has over 15 years of experience in all facets of Project Management, covering software, firmware, and hardware products for the high-end consumer market. His extensive experience with both waterfall and agile methodologies of various flavors, allows him to mold his approach to various challenges to fit the needs of the project, and the composition of the teams bringing the effort to a successful conclusion. He currently holds PMP, PMI-ACP, and CSM certifications, and lives in central Texas with his wife Bertie, and son Aiden. He can be contacted at michaelraymorris@gmail.com