

VISION-LED CHANGE

In 1951 Bill and Vonette Bright began the ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ and extended an invitation to students everywhere... *“Come, help change the world!”* Everything we are about as a ministry involves and invites change. Two factors contribute to the change-nature of campus ministry. The first is that we are committed to growth, and all growth involves change. The second factor is the evolution of student culture. We either change to be effective, or we become irrelevant and die. We either move to bring about purposeful adaptation, or we react to the change that occurs around us. We will either shape the change, or be shaped by the changes around us. When we choose to actively participate and help shape the change-process, we become change-agents. At its heart, all effective leadership involves bringing about change--to people, structures, systems, programs, culture and organizations. In the wake of good leadership is purposeful and beneficial change. We say of such a leader, “He (or she) really made a difference!”

The dynamics of organizational and personal change

All change is not equal nor is the effort to bring about change equal. There are five primary arenas of change:

- Cosmetic changes--we’re changing our logo and letterhead
- Programmatic changes--we now meet on Friday nights instead of Thursday nights
- Structural changes--team leaders now report to a Regional Director instead of an National Director
- Directional changes--involves changes in direction, culture and style of ministry-- mission, vision, values, goals and purpose
- Heart changes--involves changing the attitudes, actions, and habits of those within the organization

It is important to understand that in bringing about major organizational change, the most difficult and critical area to change is the minds and hearts of those who will be affected by the change. Change is really not complete until hearts and minds are aligned with the changes. When the change is “owned” by everyone, the change process is complete. The difference between changing structures and changing habits and hearts is fairly simple to recognize. Systems can shape behavior and support structural change, but alone are powerless to change people. Many young men have joined the Marines thinking that they would come out more disciplined, only to discover that once they were separated from their external environment, they returned to being the same old slob that they were before they left.

Three models for change

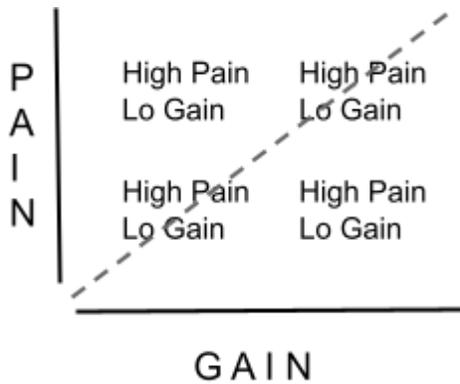
- 1) Evolutionary change is perhaps the most common and least painful type of change. New ideas and methods are slowly introduced into the culture of an organization, and little by little the culture evolves and changes. It is a survival of the fittest ideas, programs and methods. With new and creative ideas being tried and evaluated, eventually the good will be replaced by the better. As cultures and demands of people evolve and change, organizations that serve those people also are forced to change. Unfortunately, evolutionary change can just as easily lead to entropy as it can to progress. When did blatant cursing and sexually explicit talk become so prevalent on television? It did not happen overnight but over a period of years. Like the frog in the kettle, the changes are so subtle that we barely recognize that they are occurring. Evolutionary change, when

applied to dieting produces weight gain much more certainly than it will produce weight loss. It is putting on 5 pounds a year over a period of five years.

- 2) Crisis-led change occurs when you are forced to change because of an impending or actual loss. It's the idea of "change or die." It is going to the doctor and finding out that your weight is appropriate for a man eight feet tall! When the doctor tells you to lose 50 pounds or you will be dead within six months, you suddenly become very motivated to change your lifestyle.
- 3) Vision-led change is neither motivated by immediate crisis nor is it evolutionary in nature. It does not concern itself with 3-5% growth, but rather is about a transformation of the values, heart and behavior of an organization. It is helping to create an organization that has not as yet existed. It is looking at the future and then continually shaping the values, culture, behavior, heart and habits of the people in that organization to step into that future. This takes a tremendous amount of energy to bring about. It does not happen by chance. We cannot expect to reap where we have not sown. With respect to diet and exercise, it is having a clear picture of what your life would be like if you were in shape and were 20 pounds lighter, and then working to make it a reality.

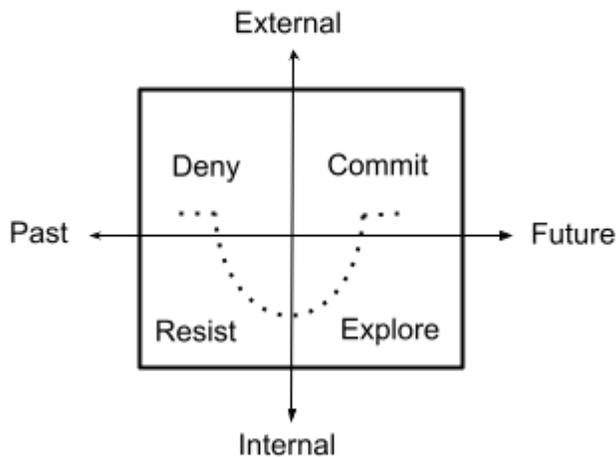
Why people resist change

- The status quo might not be all that good, but at least it is familiar. Apathy and inertia are real obstacles. In Exodus 6:9 after Moses told the Israelites about the impending beneficial changes, the text says "...but they did not listen to him because of their discouragement and cruel bondage." In Numbers 11:4,5 (after being freed from 400 years of slavery) "...the Israelites started wailing and said, 'If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost--also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic.'" They forgot that they were slaves!
- People don't fear change as much as they fear loss. All change--even good, needed and expected change--involves loss. People tend to measure change by seeing how much they have to give up. The potential areas of loss include:
 - Security
 - Competence--people have developed skills that have allowed them to function and excel under the old system
 - Relationships--with restructuring comes repositioning and loss
 - Territory--physical and psychological
- Change is painful. "*Whenever human communities are forced to adjust to shifting conditions, pain is ever present*" (Leading Change by John Kotter, HBS Press, 1996). The most painful time is what Kotter calls the "delta state"--the time between what is and what will be. William Bridges in Managing Transitions (Addison Wesley, 1991) calls this "neutral zone" and likens it to the time between the trapeze bars. Some people are more adaptive to change, but it is important to realize that to some people, even the cosmetic or program changes will be painful because every change is linked to other things that now must change. In order to lead change you must be convinced that the gains will be commensurate to or greater than the pains if you expect others to follow you in the change process.



Helping people through the process

Flora/Elkind Associates have developed what they call the “transition grid.” It would be nice to think that people could immediately adjust to the changes, but they don’t. During the change process most people go through four phases in adjusting to change:



- Denial--It’s not really going to happen.
- Resistance--Where do I stand? Can you make an exception? How will I be affected?
- Exploration—Well, maybe we can make this thing work.
- Commitment--OK, I’m on board!

Peter Drucker defines this process as working through four “concerns” people have. Concern for:

- Information-- “Tell me what you’ve got in mind; let me ask questions about it.”
- Personal-- “Will I be able to survive/fit in?”
- Implementation-- “OK, how’s it going to be done?”
- Impact-- “What’s the benefit?”

“Not until the first three concerns are answered do people care about the benefits.” Effective leadership can help people move through the phases without getting bogged down. Denial and resistance will happen among your best people. When people lose something that matters to them, they go through a

grieving process. This is real. You cannot minimize what people are experiencing. They may be angry, sad, frightened, confused or depressed. This is the time to commiserate with them. Give them extra attention and sympathy without reassuring them with unrealistic suggestions of hope. If you ask people to suppress these feelings or move through the process too quickly, these people may never recover. Shakespeare said, *“He that lacks time to mourn, lacks time to mend.”* Acknowledge the losses openly and sympathetically. *“The question to ask yourself is, ‘What can I give back to balance what’s been taken away?’ Is it status, turf, team membership, or recognition?”* (Managing Transitions) The stronger the trust and the relationship, the more effective you will be in leading them through this process.

The role of leadership

John Kotter clearly defines the need for strong leadership in bringing about organizational change -- *“The engine that drives change is leadership. A purely managerial mindset inevitably fails no matter how talented the people...A guiding coalition made up only of managers -- even superb managers who are wonderful people -- will cause major change efforts to fail...Only leadership can blast through the many sources of corporate inertia. Only leadership can motivate the actions needed to alter behavior in any significant way. Only leadership can get change to stick by anchoring it in the very culture of an organization.”* Any new strategy, no matter how brilliant or needed, will probably fail without someone with power and vision pushing it. Our inability to bring about change is not for a lack of good ideas, but for a lack of leaders who are able to bring those changes about.

As a leader:

- Learn what really matters in your ministry and clarify why. Make sure you really understand the issues. Ferdinand De Lesseps failed to construct the Panama Canal because he failed to understand that the obstacle was malaria more than it was cubic yards of dirt. To be a leader is to focus on the future--to be ahead of trends and change curves rather than reacting to them.
- Measure the change effort by the actual results rather than the change in structure or activities. Remember, we don't ask people to change simply to be creative or unique. We ask people to change in order to be better stewards of what God has entrusted to us.

Vision-led change

- Count the cost. In Luke 14:25-35 Jesus gave timeless instructions to a group of potential change-agents called disciples. The issues he asked them to consider were these: *“Do you have enough to finish? Do you have enough to win?”* Are you prepared to go the distance to bring about significant change? What will happen to the ministry if you don't change?
- Identify what is actually going to change. What will be the secondary effects of the changes? Who will let go of what? What will be different for everyone?
- Create a guiding coalition. No one individual is able to create and effectively cast the vision. He or she needs a team. Moses needed Aaron and Jethro to help him lead. Remember that this guiding coalition need not be a large group. You need to focus on those who are most open to change--the 10-15% of “early adapters.”

William Bridges says that although you cannot force people to change against their wishes, there are four things that you as a leader can do:

1. *“You can explain the basic purpose behind the changes you seek.”* You need to answer the question, “Why are we doing this?” People need to clearly understand the problem before they can buy into a solution. Moses went to his people and talked to them about a land of their own...a place that God had promised to give them--a land that they presently did not possess. Leaving Egypt was the clear solution to their bondage and oppression. This purpose gave the people direction.
2. *“You can paint a picture of how the outcome will look and feel. People need to experience it imaginatively before they can give their hearts to it.”* This is where Moses *“translated the idea of a Promised Land into a picture of a Land of Milk and Honey...He portrayed the destination in a way that engaged their imaginations.”* No single element is more important to the change process than vision. Kotter writes, *“In a change process, a good vision serves three important purposes. First, by clarifying the general direction for change... it simplifies hundreds or thousands of more detailed decisions. Second, it motivates people to take action in the right direction, even if the initial steps are personally painful. Third, it helps coordinate the actions of different people, even thousands and thousands of individuals in a remarkably fast and efficient way.”*
3. *“You can lay out a step-by-step plan for phasing in the changes. People need a clear idea of how they can get where they need to go.”* The picture alone did not get the Israelites out of Egypt, through the wilderness to the Promised Land--they needed a plan. If you are highly visual, you probably underestimate how much others need a plan detailing the steps from where we are to where we are going.
4. *“You can give each person a part to play in both the plan and the outcome itself. People need a tangible way to contribute and participate.”* Every person wants to see his or her name on the job chart. You can also give them a part in shaping the change process. *“Until they know their parts, fantasies dictate their actions and can lead them far from the new realities they will face.”*

Along with identifying the part each person will play we must re-invent systems so that they are compatible with the vision. Unaligned structures, systems and procedures will block needed action. We *“should be loosely enough controlled to promote local experiments (and) variations of the plan. (We) should make it easy for ambitious innovators to grab the power to experiment. It is those variations...that may be the keys to future success”* (Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *The Change Masters*, Simon & Schuster, 1983). We must provide the training that our staff need to live out the vision. If we ask staff to step up the pace in evangelism, without providing new tools they will feel like they are asked to make more bricks with less straw.

As the change process begins we must generate visible short-term wins that communicate that things are different. When Moses crossed the Red Sea, he took time to celebrate this visible, short-term win. When Steve Sellers stepped up to the plate as National Campus Director he did three things that embodied the changes he was advocating. First he raised and funded the operational budgets for the ten regional ministries. Secondly, he funded a four-year leadership development program designed for local team leaders. Third, he put an end to program-driven ministries. These short-term wins demonstrated that the changes were for real.

Application:

The Eight-Stage Process of Creating Major Change

John Kotter (Leading Change, HBS Press, 1996)

The methods used in successful transformations are all based on one fundamental insight: that major change will not happen easily for a long list of reasons. Even if an objective observer can clearly see that costs are too high, or products are not good enough, or shifting customer requirements are not being adequately addressed, needed change can still stall because of inwardly focused cultures, paralyzing bureaucracy, parochial politics, a low level of trust, lack of teamwork, arrogant attitudes, a lack of leadership in middle management, and the general human fear of the unknown. To be effective, a method designed to alter strategies, reengineer processes, or improve quality must address these barriers and address them well.

All diagrams tend to oversimplify reality. I, therefore, offer the following exhibit with some trepidation. It summarizes the steps producing successful change of any magnitude in organizations. The process has eight stages, each of which is associated with one of the eight fundamental errors that undermine transformation efforts.

The Eight-Stage Process of Creating Major Change

1. Establishing a sense of urgency
 - Examining the market and competitive realities
 - Identifying and discussing crises, potential crises, or major opportunities
2. Creating the Guiding Coalition
 - Putting together a group with enough power to lead the change
 - Getting the group to work together like a team
3. Developing a Vision and Strategy
 - Creating a vision to help direct the change effort
 - Developing strategies for achieving that vision
4. Communicating the Change Vision
 - Using every vehicle possible to constantly communicate the new vision and strategies
 - Having the guiding coalition role model the behavior expected of employees
5. Empowering Broad-Based Action
 - Getting rid of obstacles
 - Changing systems or structures that undermine the change vision
 - Encouraging risk taking and nontraditional ideas, activities, and actions
6. Generating Short-Term Wins
 - Planning for visible improvements in performance, or “wins”
 - Creating those wins
 - Visibly recognizing and rewarding people who made the wins possible
7. Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change

- Using increased credibility to change all systems, structures, and policies that don't fit together and don't fit the transformation vision
 - Hiring, promoting, and developing people who can implement the change vision
 - Reinvigorating the process with new projects, themes, and change agents
8. Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture
- Creating better performance through customer-and-productivity-oriented behavior, more and better leadership, and more effective management
 - Articulating the connections between new behaviors and organizational success
 - Developing means to ensure leadership development and succession.