Guiding Change at ECU

A guide for managers and supervisors to support staff through organisational change

Prepared by:
Pamela Basden
HRSC Organisational Development
Phone: (08) 6304 5331
Email: p.basden@ecu.edu.au

Introduction

Samson, D. and Daft, R.L. (2012) define organisational change as "the adoption of a new idea or behaviour by an organisation".

As organisations evolve they need to adapt in order to survive and thrive. Greiner (1972, 1998) as cited on Mindtools.com, describes six stages which an organisation will go through as they grow. If organisations don't change in response to these stages they will restrict growth.

Organisations must be prepared to undergo continual change in order to respond to external and internal influences of new and existing competitors, markets, customer and community expectations and advancing technologies. Some change programs are strategic in nature, while others are more operational. Some are radical and take place only once; others are more incremental, purposefully paced to promote continuous improvement and stability. (Hill, 2013).

ECU's Change Framework

As change is seen as a constant, ECU views the way we manage change as a holistic process. To fulfil our vision "to be recognised for our world ready graduates and leading edge research", we need to develop an organisation which is change ready. This means that we must be proactive in attracting, developing and managing staff to ensure they are able to adapt to change rather than only reacting to the needs of the work force when we progress through change.

Figure 1 shows that all change must reflect the four ECU values and reinforce its strategic priorities. Strong leadership and robust communication channels are fundamental to successful change (outer circle). We must attract, manage and develop change capability at every stage in the employee life cycle (middle circle). As we do this, individual, team or organisational change will become an expectation within the organisation rather than a major event.
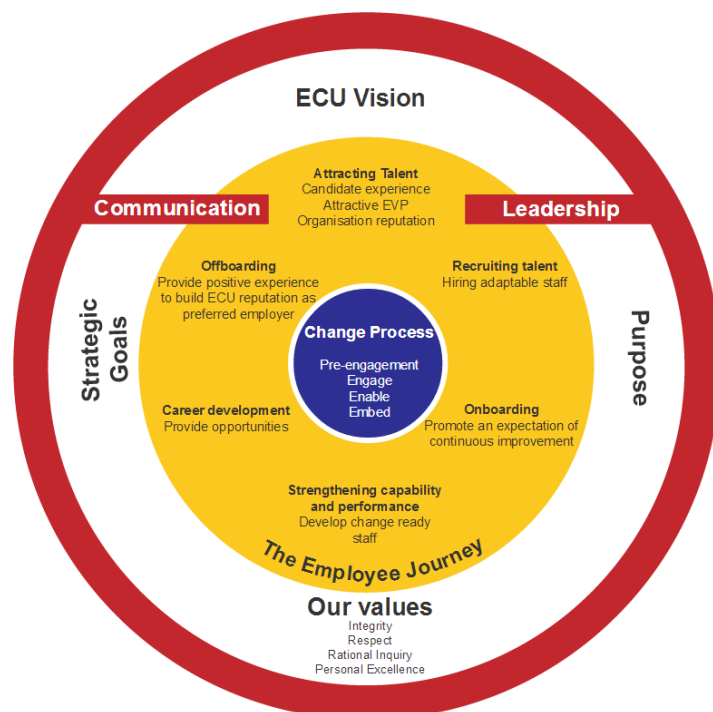

Figure 1: ECU Change Framework

Implementing Change Processes (inner circle)

As shown in Figure 1, ECU has developed a process to enable implementation of change throughout the organisation. This process follows four steps: Pre-engage, Engage, Enable and Embed. This process will be explored later in this document.

Firstly, we will contrast the difference between a change process and people transition.

Change Process vs People Transition

It is important to see change is a process, not an event. It is made by individuals first - and then organisations. The saying, "It's not personal, just business", doesn't hold true, because change is a highly personal experience for those involved and involves a gradual growth in feelings and skills. (Willmot, R., n.d)

There are two dimensions of change.

The business dimension of change includes the typical project elements:
- Business **need or opportunity** is identified;
- Project is defined (scope and objectives)
- Business solution is designed;
- New processes and systems are developed;
- Solution is implemented into the organisation

These are the standard elements of a business change that managers feel most comfortable managing.

The people dimension of change is much more complex. A good example of this is the Bridges Transition Model (Bridges, W., 2004) which recognises the difference between organisational change and the individual transition that accompanies those changes.
- Transition is not the same as change
- Change is what happens to you – externally
- Transition is what you experience – internally
- Transition takes longer than change

Bridges Transition Model

Transition occurs in every attempt at change. It is a psychological reorientation that people have to go through before the change can work. Bridges explains three states that people move through as they transition. These are shown in Figure 2. These states do not necessarily correspond to the process change stages of pre, during and post- change.
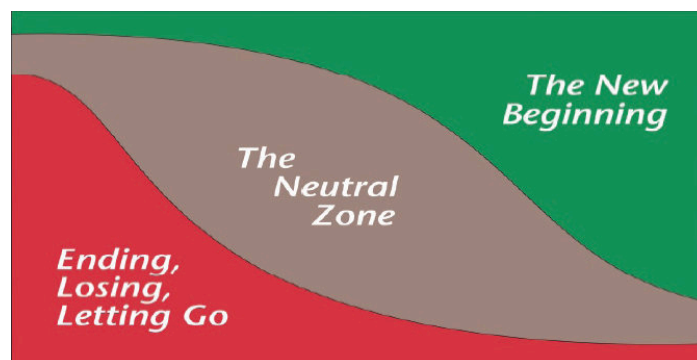

Figure 2. Bridges Transition Model

Helping people through the stages of transition

Ending, Losing, Letting Go

- Identify who is losing what
- Clarify real vs perceived losses
- Acknowledge the gravity of real loss
- Accept the reality and importance of subjective losses
- Don't be surprised by the over-reaction of self and others
- Acknowledge the losses openly and sympathetically
- Expect and accept signs of grieving
- Minimise losses by compensation
- Give people information and do it again and again
- Define what is ending and what is continuing, what we're leaving behind and what we are taking with us
- Mark the endings
- Treat the past with respect
- Let people take some memorabilia if they wish
- Show how endings ensure the continuation of what really matters
- Whatever must end, must end – don't drag it out.

Neutral Zone – The somewhere between the old and the new

- *Dangers of the Neutral Zone*
  - Anxiety rises and motivation falls
  - People miss more workdays than at other times
  - Old weaknesses, long patched over or compensated for, re-emerge strongly
  - In the neutral zone personnel are overloaded, signals are often mixed, and systems are in flux and therefore unreliable
  - Given the ambiguities of this phase, it is natural for people to become polarised between those who want to move forward and those rooted in the past
  - People respond slowly to competitive threats.

- *It is important to keep reiterating the "4 Ps" of transition communications:*
  - The **p**urpose: Why we have to do this
  - The **p**icture: What it will look and feel like when we reach our goal
  - The **p**lan: Step-by-step, how we will get there
  - The **p**art: What you can (and need to) do to help us move forward

- *Capitalise on confusion by fostering innovation.*
  - 'Normalise' the Neutral Zone - Explain it is a normal part of the transition process. It is ok to experience confusion, loss of motivation and bad feelings. However, with careful attention, it can be turned to everyone's advantage.
  - Encourage people to visualise a better future and identify what needs to be done to achieve it.
  - Work with staff to create temporary systems
  - Join staff in creating and participating in special training programs
  - Set short term goals
  - Strengthen intra-group connections
  - Use a transition monitoring team
  - Use the Neutral Zone creatively to capture emerging ideas and experiment with new systems and approaches.

- *Launching a new beginning*

  - Use the 4Ps
    - Purpose – remind people of reason for change.
    - Picture – Outline what the future will be like and how it will operate at a detailed level.
    - Transition management plan – When what and how things will happen – training, information, announcement of new roles
    - Their part to play – their new role, responsibilities and relationships – how they will fit in
  - Reinforce the new beginning – apply plans, targets, rules and rewards.
  - Be consistent
  - Ensure Quick Successes
  - Symbolise the new identity
  - Celebrate success

The Change Curve

The Change Curve is based on a model originally developed in the 1960s by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross to explain the grieving process. Since then it has been widely utilised as a method of helping people understand their reactions to significant change or upheaval.
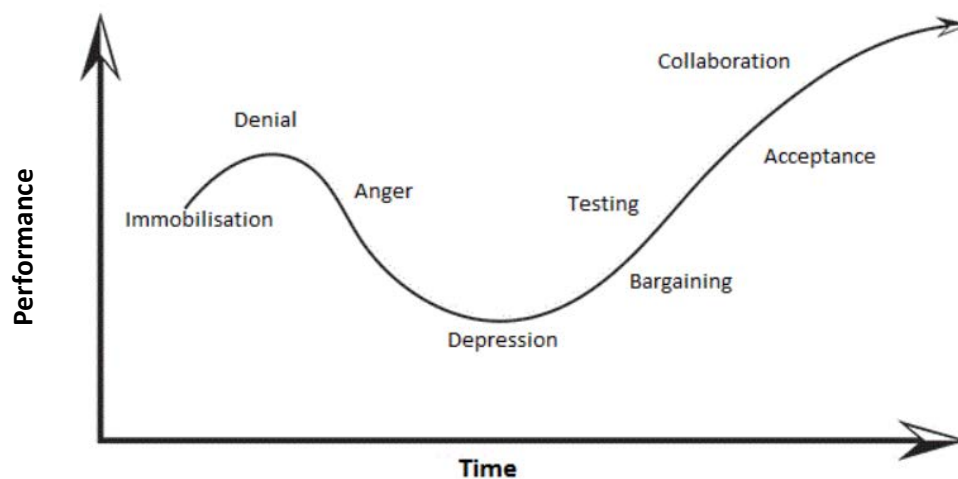

Figure 3. The Change Curve

An explanation of these stages is found in Table 1 (first four columns) *Stages, States, Strategies and Support*

Table 1 - Stages States Strategies and Support

STAGE	STATE	FEELINGS	BEHAVIOURS	LEADER ACTIONS	PD and TOOLS	SUPPORT
LOSS	**IMMOBILISATION** • I'm shocked	• Stressed • Anxious • Overwhelmed • Threatened • Uncertain	• Unable to think clearly • Procrastinate • Overreact • Accuse • Spread/rely on rumours	**360^0 COMMUNICATION** • Ensure open communication lines with Manager/Supervisor • Keep any messages clear & simple (repeat, repeat) • Explain the case for change (& why we can't stay as-is) • Explain clearly next steps	**All Staff** • Beat that Stress • Change Maze • Developing Workplace Resilience • Introduction to Mental Health • Emotional Intelligence • Lynda change playlist	• OD Team - Coaching • EAP • Manager • Colleagues/peers • Coaches/Mentors
DOUBT	**DENIAL** • This isn't really going to happen	• Disbelief • Sceptical •	• Block further attempts to discuss • No attempt to change • Don't seek further information or support	**REINFORCE** • Be patient • Reinforce why BAU isn't an option • Encourage 1:1 discussions with manager or People team • Facilitate access to information and support • Involve in change project	**Managers** • Leading Change • Crucial Conversations • Effective Communication suite • Lynda change playlist • OD Team – Coaching • EAP Managers Support **HR Tools** • Before change – Readiness for Change assessment **OD Tools** • Frydenberg's Coping Strategies • Thinking Traps • Professional Support Network Tool	
DISCOMFORT	**ANGER** • They can't do this!	• Loss of control • Stressed • Frustrated	• Highly reactive • Defensive • Intolerant • Can't focus on work	**LISTEN** • Let people express their feelings and concerns • Facilitate access to information and support • Suggest follow up discussion with EAP / trusted colleague		
DISCOMFORT	**DEPRESSION** • I don't know what I'm going to do	• Helpless • Flat • Worried • Anxious • Pessimistic	• Lack of energy and focus • Quiet • Complaining • Error prone • Procrastinating • Increase dependency	**SUPPORT** • Show care and empathy • Monitor ability to work safely and effectively • Strongly recommend follow up • Encourage EAP and medical support • Ask a trusted colleague to keep in touch		

DISCOVERY	**BARGAINING** • Maybe we can do something about this?	• Hopeful • Optimistic • Interested	• Negotiating • Attention seeking • Influencing • Manipulating	**DIRECT** • Confirm message and present options: • Skills development options • External career opportunities • Refer for Psych assistance	**All Staff** • Skills Training • Get that Job **OD Tools** • Personal Strengths Finding • Mental Toughness Index	• OD Team - Coaching • EAP • Manager • Colleagues/peers • Coaches/Mentors
UNDERSTANDING	**TESTING** • What are my options? • Where to from here?	• Curious • Interested • Sceptical • Hesitant	• Seeking information • Discussing options • Exploring possibilities • Involving family	**ENGAGE** • Help explore potential and realistic options for ongoing guidance • Encourage to involve family / partner in decision making • Encourage towards acceptance	**All Staff** **Managers** • Manager as Coach • Coaching resources (link to M&L Resources) **HR Tools** • Post Change – Change evaluation **OD Tools** • Team Charter template • Team Management Profile	• OD Team - Coaching • EAP • Manager • Colleagues/peers • Coaches/Mentors
UNDERSTANDING	**ACCEPTANCE** • Tell me about next steps and what I need to do	• Informed • Involved • Hopeful • Optimistic	• Keen to be involved • Looking forward • Exploring new possibilities	**COACH** • Acknowledge interest and support decision making • Ask for questions and commitment to action • Encourage to help support of other colleagues who are not comfortable		
INTEGRATION	**COLLABORATION** • We need to… • How can I help?	• Satisfied • Alert • Enthusiastic • Optimistic	• Keen to be involved • Looking forward • Exploring new possibilities • Offering to help others	**COACH/MENTOR** • Acknowledge interest and support decision making • Ask for questions and commitment to action • Encourage to help support of other colleagues who are not comfortable		

Anthony Greenfield (2011) identified five key areas of motivation (key drivers) that are strongly affected by organisational change (Figure 4). By addressing each of these factors throughout the change process productivity is more likely to recover and increase quickly, people will move more easily through the transition and change curve processes.
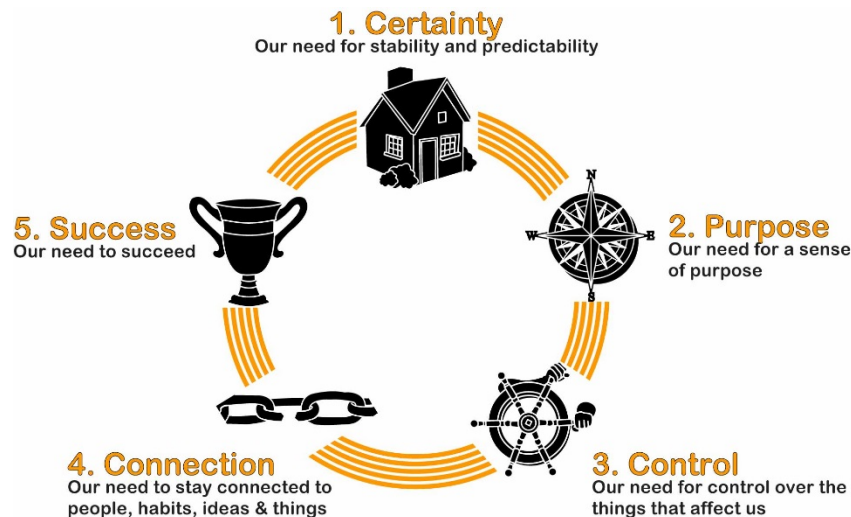

Figure 4. The 5 Forces of Change

1. **Certainty**
   An immediate consequence of impending change can be uncertainty. People may fear for their jobs or at the very least may be unclear about what the future holds and their role within it. This causes anxiety and leads to distraction from work and a drop in performance

2. **Purpose**
   During periods of stability it can be relatively easy to understand the purpose to what you are doing. In times of change things can become unclear. People's sense of direction is diminished and they become less confident about what they are doing.

3. **Control**
   When change is seen to be imposed on people from the outside, this can lead to strong feelings of unease as people sense they have lost control over their working lives and become victims to outside forces. People may rebel against change or quietly opt out of it.

4. **Connection**
   We all form strong attachments to people and things. We identify ourselves with the job we do and how we do it. We value our relationships with colleagues, customers and suppliers. We become attached to our organisation, our team or even our desk. When things change these connections may be broken and new ones formed.

5. **Success**
   People need to feel competent in their ability to achieve the required performance. Following a change at work, performance often gets worse before it gets better. During this time people are tempted to revert back to tried and trusted methods rather than persevere with new ones.

As you work through the four stages of change outlined in the ECU Change framework – Pre-engage, Engage, Enable and Embed, be mindful of the ways you as a leader/manager/supervisor/team member can address the needs of your people with respect to these five factors. Greenfield (2011) provides the following strategies in Table 2.

Table 2 - Strategies to support positive change	
Certainty	• Build up your own confidence in the change before leading others and help other leaders/managers/supervisors do the same. • Lead from the front by being a confident role model for new attitudes and behaviours • Provide those supervisors and managers in your team with development in the art of leading successful change • Build trust through open and honest two-way communication. Make it ok for people to express their concerns so that they can be dealt with out in the open. • View communication as a process, varying the style, content and medium according to people's needs and the stage of the journey. • Communicate and reinforce the benefits of change and the danger of the status quo. • Help people redraw their mental maps of the world by painting a vivid and multi-faceted picture of the future, including new expectations of people. • Let people know uncertainty is part of the transition process and it's normal to feel uncertain. • Where possible, involve people who have already transitioned to the new world to help persuade others to join them. • Provide people with thorough and practical training on the skills, attitudes and behaviours that they need to succeed following the change. • Communicate that it is expected that high productivity will be a process, that it's ok for people to make mistakes. • Advertise and celebrate early successes to create momentum for change.
Purpose	• Reiterate the organisation's purpose and core values. • Define and repeatedly communicate a compelling purpose for change. • Spell out the dangers of standing still. • Explain how the change supports the organisation's overall purpose. • Anticipate and address differences between the purpose of the change and the purpose and values of the organisation. • Identify what will remain the same as well as what will change. • Continue to promote and reinforce the change after it has been launched. • Coach and support people in coming to grips with change after it has been implemented.
Control	• Give as many people as possible who are affected by the change, involvement in or responsibility for designing and implementing it. • Give people as much autonomy as possible. • Ensure all key stakeholder groups including, where necessary, customers, suppliers or the general public are consulted about the change.

	• Engage middle managers in defining and implementing change. • Communicate the change widely and promote dialogue. • Bring some sceptics into your change team as they make powerful converts. • Get negative issues out into the open so that they can be dealt with. • Give people power over change by training them in the skills and attitudes they require to be successful in the changed world of work. • Ensure that the right senior stakeholders have authority over the change.
Connection	• Understand which relationships, ideas, symbols and work routines will be affected by change. • Help people sort fact from assumptions and hearsay. • Help people discover why standing still would leave the organisation vulnerable to outside threats or result in valuable opportunities being missed. • Bring issues associated with change out into the open so that they can be addressed. • Allow people to acknowledge and regret the loss of old connections but also to put the past behind them using ceremony. • Help people forge new connections based on new approaches and a new sense of purpose. • Bring together a team with diverse outlooks and capabilities to deliver the change.
Success	• Create and communicate a new definition of success, including what is expected of people, how they will achieve it and why they need to do it. • Align measurement systems to the new organisational objectives. • Provide thorough practical training that emphasises the new definition of success. • Coach and support people as they get to grips with new ideas and ways of working. • Focus first on getting people to put the right behaviours into practice before becoming too concerned with results. • Act as role models for new skills and behaviours. • Create heroes out of people who make a breakthrough in performance as a result of the change. • Take every opportunity to praise and reward people for practicing the right behaviours and to celebrate early successes. • Actively plan and manage the flow of success following a change through short-term goals that can be publicly celebrated.

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