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NEXT
STOP
*all
change*

We are living and managing through a time of extraordinary change. With uncertainty over the Spending Review, increasing options for consumers through personalisation and significant commissioning changes – there are multiple, major challenges ahead for all managers in care businesses. Irving Stackpole discusses how to manage change so that it can be a positive catalyst.

Social care is facing a whole herd of challenges; in times like these managers cannot stick to the knitting and keep their heads down, without being exposed to the forces of change.

Management and change are at opposite ends of the organisational spectrum. The manager's job is to produce predictable results on a regular basis within established budgets and timeframes. →

→ Structures like policies, procedures and systems help the manager to produce these reliable outputs. When one part of the process is changed errors happen, productivity falls off and people are out of sorts.

Leadership, on the other hand, is about generating change. Leaders create or articulate a vision intended to move people and systems out of usual and customary paths into new territory. Yet change is invading the realm of management at a stunning rate. So we need tools or methods to cope and to proactively prepare ourselves and our organisations.

There are many ways of looking at and understanding change in the organisational setting. But at the most basic level there is: the organisation and its systems; the people, their skills and feelings; and there is the manager and how well prepared they are for the challenge.

Organisations design, adopt and implement procedures and policies to minimise variation (change) so the structures of organisations are themselves change resistant. On a personal level, the prospect of change leaves many people hesitant and unable to press forward with daily routines. So helping our organisations be nimble and

‘Leaders create or articulate a vision intended to move people and systems out of usual and customary paths’

able to change is one dimension, preparing and supervising our people is another and making ourselves personally ready and willing for change is yet another.

A MANAGER'S ROLE

What managers really do, on a day-to-day basis, is attempt to produce predictable results by utilising the physical and human resources at their disposal.

It's the day-to-day manager who has the responsibility for, and the practical need to make change happen. Occasionally the impetus for change comes from the manager herself, but most often, change is required from the outside, forced upon the manager due to circumstances.

The day-to-day manager has the responsibility for implementing change, and is actually in the best position to innovate. It is the manager who observes daily routines, also sees the opportunity to make incremental changes to the processes and procedures being supervised. It is also the manager who is in the position to garner support from front line staff.

Managers who craft and deploy innovation need to navigate their organisation's requirements – such as resident care standards, and record keeping compliance. Managers are the ones who help staff make sense of change, providing trustworthy answers to tough questions (even when the answer is ‘I don't know’). Only managers who are

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change-ready at a personal level will succeed in this rapid-fire environment.

HOW STRUCTURES RESPOND

Most organisational structures respond to change efforts like water rolls off a duck's back. After all, the organisation exists for a set of purposes and objectives, and those in the organisation are participating in this common cause. So when a regulator, a new system, or market changes forces something new on an established system, like a care provider, the pattern of response is in well-established phases. The phases of organisation change are denial, resistance, exploration and commitment.

The first response to change imposed on any organisation is often denial – 'What change?' The bigger the organisation, the more exaggerated each phase will be in most cases. Denial usually manifests as 'fantasy' behaviour – that is, behaving as though nothing has changed. The denial phase is abruptly ended by the introduction of the new outcome or process requirement. This newly introduced procedure or outcome often then encounters resistance – 'No!'

The resistance can be passive, or quite overt, and the degree of resistance may be based on how invested the staff are in the existing system, and the size of the system. If and when it becomes clear to the players that the change is unavoidable, the third phase is exploration. This is a complex and delicate period during which all the impacts of the change are realised, and the staff involved adjust their behaviours and their attitudes. It simply isn't possible to stay resistive over a long period of time. You either have to go along or go (voluntarily or involuntarily). The fourth and final stage is commitment, after which the 'change' becomes part of the organisation's fabric and the stage is set for another cycle.

RESPONSE OPTIONS

Managers faced with required change are best advised to accept each phase as the organisation migrates through it and to tailor their responses. In the denial phase, the best response is to remind staff of the facts. The reasons for the change may or may not be popular, and you as the manager may not fully endorse the

rationale, however, the fact of the change and the inevitability of it should be a regular, clear message communicated by you as the manager to staff. This approach may not be popular but it will earn trust among staff.

In resistance, the manager's job is both organisationally clear and personally conflicted. Resistance can manifest in a range of behaviours from mild, like negative comments, to severe, as in sabotage. The managerial response must be equitable and rigorously focused on enforcing policies directed at continued operations and, of course, the change. This is especially stressful when managers are also friends with staff.

The exploration phase is emotionally easier for most of us than resistance, although no less challenging because here, the tendency is to slip back into the previous ways that task had been done. The best managerial response during exploration is to scrupulously monitor adherence so that individuals don't revert to the prior, 'good old' ways. As Michelangelo said: 'The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it.' →

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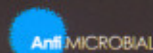
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→ EMBARKING ON THE JOURNEY

Organisational changes are external. Change on the outside often changes us on the inside and vice versa. A formula for solid, satisfying personal results in these uncertain times includes four key steps for personal change.

The first step is 'Get a grip'. Perhaps you are among those who are either denying or resisting change? The facts are undeniable. We are all entering a period of disruptive change. Economics, demographics, ecology, technology, culture – what isn't changing? Managers should crusade to eliminate the 'f' word, as in 'it's not fair'. Life itself is not 'fair' and we mustn't expect it to be, or nurture this mistaken belief among our colleagues.

Step two is 'Get smart'. Are you ready – fit for purpose? A kind, but realistic audit of attitude, skills and knowledge is needed. Where are your gaps? (And what will you realistically do to remediate them?) Are there resources available – human, technological, educational and functional – that you haven't harnessed? What are you reading every day? What are your learning objectives?

'Get a plan' is step three. You must not be overwhelmed, having a plan – even if it breaks down – is far better than no plan and will protect you personally from the experience that you are not in control. If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there and the destination might be the state of confusion. Write objectives down using the SMART model:

- Specific; what will be done,
- Measurable; how the result will be measured,
- Achievable; realism is better than pie-in-the-sky dreams,
- Responsible; who will help – your spouse, your colleagues – do you have a coach?
- Time-based; by when will the objective be accomplished?

The final step is 'Get going!' Motivation and action should flow from the prior steps. Significant action is needed to turn a change challenge on its head. Building and maintaining personal energy are not 'nice' they're absolutely essential. Create an attitude of action and then act. Hope is not a strategy, or a tactic.

Organisational changes are inevitable and accelerating. To be effective as managers, personal change is also required. Navigating these both requires tools and determined application. **CMM**

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PHASES OF ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

- Phase 1 - Denial
 - Phase 2 - Resistance
 - Phase 3 - Exploration
 - Phase 4 - Commitment

FOUR STEPS IN THE PERSONAL JOURNEY OF CHANGE

- Step 1 - Get a grip
 - Step 2 - Get smart
 - Step 3 - Get a plan
 - Step 4 - Get going

OBJECTIVES FOR CHANGE USING THE SMART MODEL

- **Specific**; what will be done
- **Measurable**; how the result will be measured
- **Achievable**; realism is better than pie-in-the-sky dreams
- **Responsible**; who will help – your spouse, your colleagues – do you have a coach?
- **Time-based**; by when will the objective be accomplished?