

Making change feel relevant for those who are being disrupted

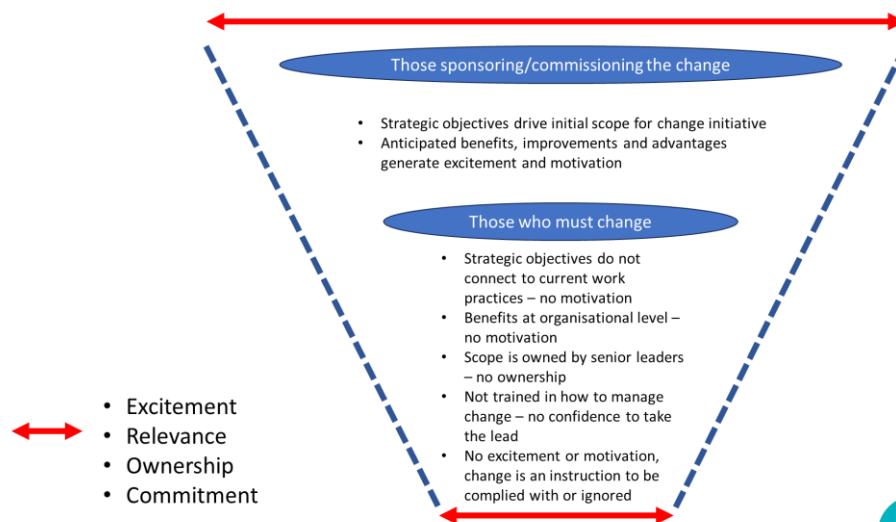
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Introduction

In this event we wanted to see how we make change relevant to those people in the organisation who are disrupted by the change. The challenge for any organisation is that ideas, changes, strategic objectives, improvements, or anticipated benefits to the change are difficult to filter throughout the organisation, particularly when there are things that you don't want to share in the public domain. Even when the strategic objectives are shared widely in an organisation, you still hear people say they don't know what those objectives are. When a change is then presented to them, they struggle to understand the context for the change and an understanding of why it is happening.



The challenge is how do we connect with the individuals to get an emotional connection to the change, let alone drive for ownership. We introduce a change to people without giving them a voice of how this is implemented or how to get the perceived benefits. Let alone give them the opportunity to build greater capability and think through the aspects of the idea to localise the change. For those who must change we see that:

- Strategic objectives do not connect to current work practices resulting in no motivation.
- Benefits at organisational level rather than a local level again no motivation
- Scope is owned by senior leaders resulting in no local ownership.
- Not trained in how to manage change hence no confidence to take the lead.
- No excitement or motivation, change is an instruction to be complied with or ignored.

Activity 1 – Define the issue.

We asked the groups of change experts to identify the disconnects between those commissioning and those impacted by the change. They told us:

- The ring fencing of information while leaders perfect their decisions ie get all their ducks in a row leaves people not knowing what is going on. As senior leaders change that churn at senior level leaves people frustrated as they must implement changes commissioned by people who are no longer there and hence have no skin in the game.
- Truly big disconnect as decisions on how people should do work are made by leaders and the project team but they are not involving those who are doing the work. These decisions might be based on assumptions or insufficient information and undoubtably decisions made by leaders without context.
- Messages can get lost – there is a tendency to use corporate language, so what the message really means and what is changing isn't really understood. There remains a fear about the feedback they will receive.
- Lack of empathy – Leaders are often not willing to think how it affects someone and how it impacts their corporate identity – automation might feel like loss of favourite task or loss of something you are proud of doing.
- Change can be too large – it is not comprehensible by those being asked to change – too broad, not a specific, smart target, so those who are asked to make it happen cannot succeed because it is too big/vague and/or rolled up too high, loses the details, loses the names of processes/systems/types of data that people who do the jobs would recognise – too generic
- Ownership – not having people who are owning any parts of the change, so things fall between the gaps.
- The stakeholders who commission it are not demonstrating the new behaviours – they don't seem willing to change themselves.
- Assuming the change will be easy – when those doing it think it is hard. This is often the result of a high-level scoping exercise, where the low level detail of exactly how work is done is not asked for.
- Communicating in silos, in small groups, so people don't hear the same things and/or at the same time – not connecting everyone who is impacted so we miss the scope that is the knock-on effects.
- Always using the same subject experts so not getting the latest thinking or the full breadth of impact – this matters because by using the same experts each time, we are removing opportunities for ownership from a broader audience
- Change maturity – doesn't seem to matter about the level of the maturity, these issues are common to all organisations – so is a lot of this political/protecting status?
- Too much jargon that only the project team really understands – which acts as a barrier to anyone impacted by the change fully understanding what is changing and what the impact will be on them. Without this understanding of the impact of the change, how can there be excitement or motivation to make the change happen?

After the discussion we went on to consider levelling up.

Activity 2 - Levelling up.

We asked the change groups to find ways to rebalance the level of excitement, relevance, and ownership for the change.

- Create a good change champion network – help cascade and prevent dilution of comms and get past the middle management level – and complete the feedback loop – WE INTRODUCE OUR CHANGE CHAMPIONS TO OUR SENIOR LEADERS
- Effectiveness of a good change plan – what are we communicating and why – we must develop the habit of asking – what are people expected to THINK – what is the perspective/context, BELIEVE- what am I buying into, DO- actions you want me to take because of this communication?
- Let's understand how mature the organisation is.
- Have some credible voices, who are the people they trust.
- Will not change the what/scope but we can change the how.
- Talk to the excitement part – the earlier points are foundational, but we also need to talk about feelings – thought leaders have the chance to inspire and set the context of an exciting future, meet the leadership face to face and feel noticed by them and tie in something learning/development and some fun – piñata?!
- Upskilling leaders – might not be adept at leading change- not assuming they know how to do this.
- Really understanding the audience – a temperature check on their current position, where their energy is currently pointing.
- Building advocacy – bridging the gap between leaders and colleagues – how many sessions do we have which are cross-grade not cross functional.
- Let's involve the people in the change, that re-ignites some excitement – lets have an open demonstration, give them a glimpse, do it early, drip feed, small nuggets, peak their interest, come back for more
- Stop the mis-information – one error is magnified as it is shared.
- Use the know-share-do template.
- reverse mentoring' that was revolutionary and really thought provoking and would probably be incredibly helpful in 'flipping' the excitement 'funnel'.
- drip-feed' analogy - I'm going to use the flood vs drought for some steering around Comms.

Next Event – Understand the qualities of an early adopter to help find yours! Wednesday 18th October 2023 <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/723975328697?aff=oddtcreator>