

Defining our value?

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Introduction

For our first event of 2024 we discussed what is our value as change professionals. We know we are not getting our message across about the value of change management and you tell us we are not getting involved in change initiatives early enough. We know that senior leaders think that managing change is a good idea but instead of resourcing it they revert to the notion that people change without that support and question why their teams need help for something that happens all the time. The implication is that there is no need to set up resources, procedures, frameworks, tools and techniques for change – change happens naturally.

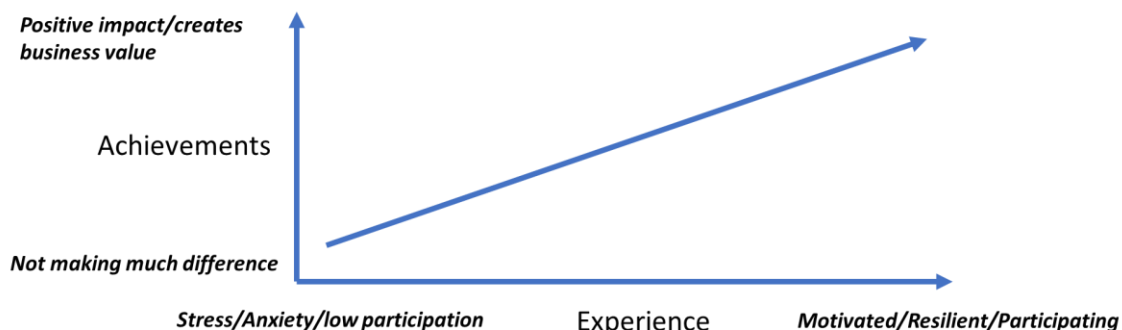
In reviewing the results of the global capability for change survey, there are some key messages:

- Respondents tell us that change management is valued in their organisations
- Respondents also tell us that they are not investing in developing change management skills

We recognise that those involved in projects and programs don't always understand the value of managing change and that includes senior leaders who are sponsoring change initiatives.

Melanie gave a short presentation, sharing ideas about our value, to generate ideas for the breakout rooms for creating our elevator pitch to describe our value. Here is the [video](#) of this presentation.

We all know we help achieve benefits for our organisations. We are a conduit to a change, realising benefits, increasing those benefits to a greater level because there is greater participation, but also realising benefits because we are achieving them earlier because of that greater participation. As people are less stressed people are more willing to try out new ways of working.



We considered the benefits we can bring of ensuring that the journey to achieving the change and the achievements of the change are positive. In this simple diagram, we shows on the left-hand side the need to drive a positive impact for the business, and as change professionals we have our part to

play in this. On the horizontal axis we show the experience that people have as they change their ways of working to realise the required achievements. We recognise that creating a better experience for people impacted by change will create more value for the business. For example, dangling the carrot of simplified procedures as an achievement of the change is not enough. If those making the changes are having a truly awful experience and feeling uncertain about their future, coupled with not having any ownership of the solution, they may in fact withdraw their efforts to make this change happen and instead focus on the more pleasurable parts of their role.

Neuroscience tells us that every time we feel respected and can see achievement it has an impact on how we feel. When we feel heard and see some certainty of what our future looks like we feel that we have some control in what happens this in turn increases the pleasure of the change and reduces the anxiety about the future. The organisational benefit is clear: we reduce staff turnover and build capability and in turn we see an improvement in our staff engagement survey.

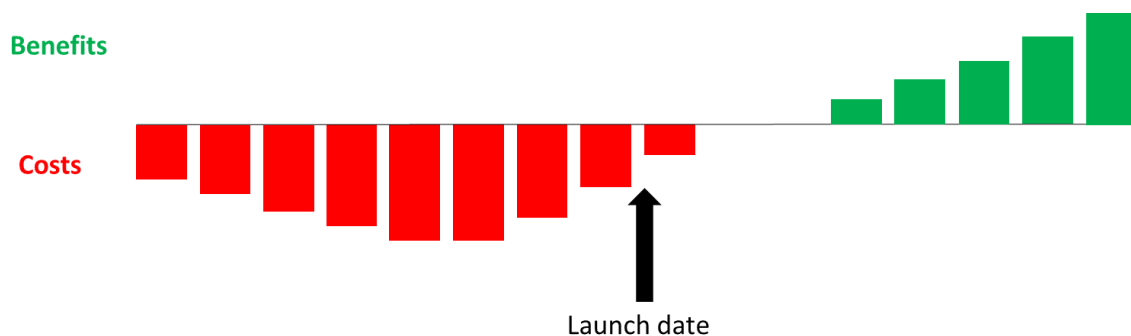
All these ideas could form part of your elevator pitch. If change isn't managed, if it's accidental then we waste the effort of the teams involved in creating the change and the investment in the change. We create a situation where the project teams are spending the money and creating the deliverables and then at the end of their work, they throw the deliverables "over the wall" to those who must work in new ways, with no responsibility for how well they land.

This is an argument we make at senior management level for those who are looking to get the most out of what they've spent, particularly on very large scale, heavy investment programs. We might want to say we're going to spend the money on the project activities. But we've got to take care of the change activities. We've got to help people get to benefits being realised.

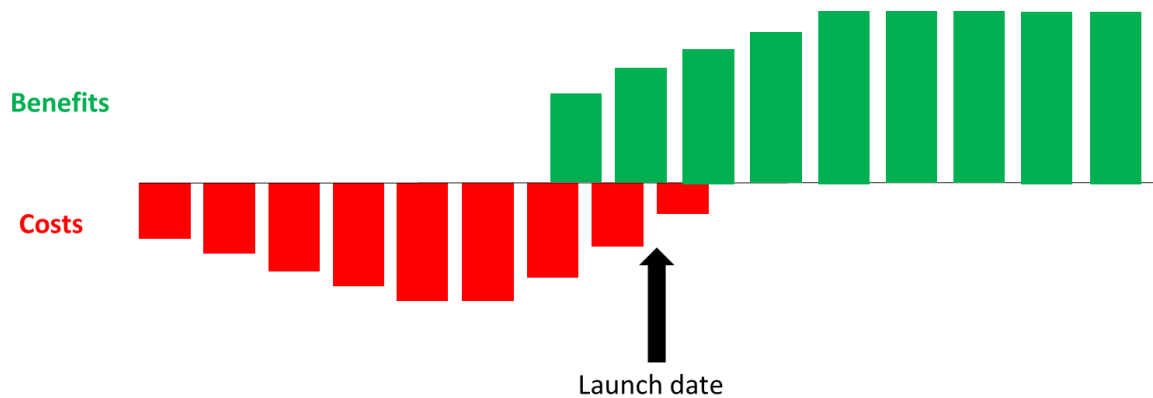
Some of the things that we do is to perhaps bring forward the costs of disruption, of changing our ways of working, the cost of involvement in getting people to identify new ways of working and to practice those ways of working so it becomes second nature and effective.

It is time to become more realistic in our business cases. They may feel fully costed but they often claim the significant benefits for the organisation of the change without including the costs of the change management activities. Perhaps we should argue that all the business case must state the costs of the tangible changes AND the change activities before they are accepted. We should be saying that the business cases that haven't taken account of change management are naive, or even dishonest as they are implying that the benefits are instant.

We could argue we take a business case that will deliver this, **without a formal change management activity**:



And drive this **with project and change management activity**



As a change manager you should be looking to ensure the data for benefits realisation is real and reflects the change life cycle. There is an opportunity cost in terms of the disruption to business as usual that we could use and talk about the early return on investment.

There is also additional return on investment, in terms of corporate social responsibility. Anybody who's a director of an organisation these days, is held to account in terms of corporate social responsibility, staff wellbeing and mental health of employees. Driving towards the additional benefit of a competitive advantage. If we're managing change effectively, we're building the capacity of our organisation.

Finally, in the Board Room we should be arguing that change is a risk reduction strategy. If we forget to manage change, there is the risk that our customers need get forgotten, services don't get delivered and suppliers lose faith in working with us. In this discussion reputational risk is something we I can draw to their attention along with the risk of supply failure.

Attendees joined small breakout rooms to consider their elevator pitches and as a group start to put together the elements of their elevator pitches and this is what they said:

- We engage, prepare, equip and support our colleagues to successfully adopt the changes we make, increasing organisational success.
- We are building resilience in an organisation to be able to sustain the fast pace of change that is becoming a constant. It allows us to be more agile and handle change faster and obtain return on investment as fast as possible.
- *Challenges that we have – turn those on their heads to claim as what we do – the difference that we make – using positive language.*
- Given the baseline measures we can provide people around us with the statistics to show what is being delivered from what has been planned, calling out the differences between the planned and actual outcomes with the reasons for this diversion from the expected results. The group suggested in addition we apply universal measures of how our work is done to assess overall productivity this would include:
 1. timings of processes.
 2. amount of resource expended to achieve a process – elapsed time,
 3. total number of active minutes to do something.
 4. volume stats – how many transactions per hour; how many mistakes per hour.
 5. volume of compliments.
 6. ratings scores.
 7. Effective change increases confidence and reduces anxiety – so don't overlook the measures from sentiment survey.

- We provide a resilient change transformation, the outcome of our work is that we create a change process focused in a seamless internal & external customer experience journey that increases in enthusiasm and participation of the change resulting in business agility, increased brand reputation and innovation.
- Our expression of value must align to the values and interests and objectives of the organisation – so talk their language that immediately appeals to them, and not use change language. So, if they want to be more innovative, more efficient, most customer focused, great place to work – use this language so it connects.
- Avoid change words? Resilience; stakeholders; agility – they are relevant to our profession but do they connect to the business – do not use change, use business enablement – think about the maturity of the organisation with regards to change, is “change” a recognisable language – if so, maybe use some of it – not dumbing down, making people feel comfortable with the language – use ChatGPT to simplify your words.
- Service proposition – team sport – we/our team – do not use I – we are not a singular force.
- Differentiating the language, we use and describing the roles we do – some job titles cause confusion because others have change in their title but it might not be behaviour change, and more tangible.
- Change management is the difference between installation/delivery and implementation/adoption – we bridge that gap.