



## Professional Article on the subject Change Management

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:: The article has been published in:  
ifb (Hrsg.: Betriebliche Bündnisse, Kongressdokumentation, Seehausen am  
Staffelsee 2006

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:: Celle, October 2006

### Conjoint pushing for Change

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## Conjoint pushing for Change

### 1 – Introduction

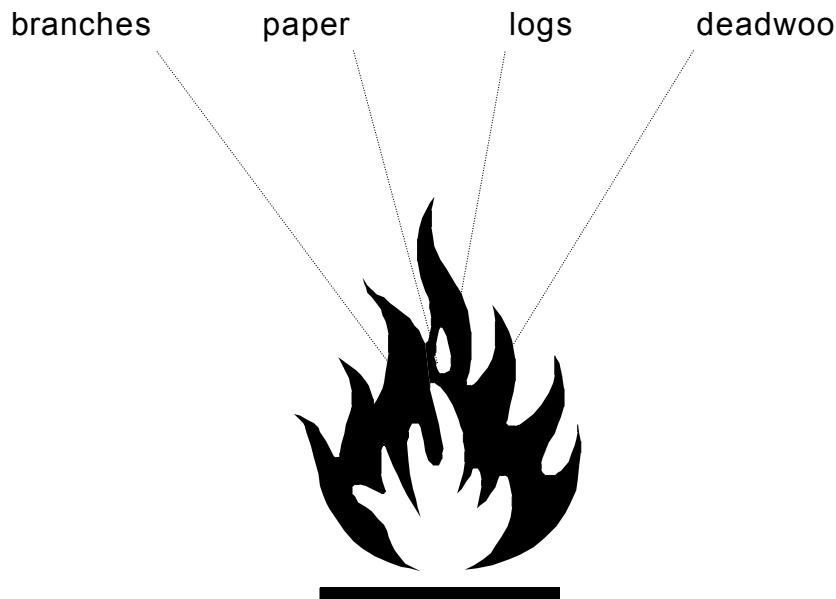
Flexible working hours, enhancement of efficiency on the production lines or customer service processes, implementation of group-work including reduction of hierarchy, shortening of exceptional payment tariffs, overtime without compensatory wage payment, ... the list of subjects on which organizational alliances are concluded is a long one. And the struggle to find an agreement on one of these subjects is hard. Leaving scars on both sides, everyone is glad to have the subject off the table once the organizational alliance is brought to a conclusion.

However, the conclusion of an agreement, it is only the underwriting of a piece of paper. The resistance against flexible working hours, the effort of enhancing efficiency, the implementation of group-work ... still lie before both contractual parties. Only by implementing the agreed changes does an organizational agreement become reality and can unfold its expected effect.

Most deliberations on organizational agreements look at not only the legal, but also the rudiments and development of such agreements. This article however casts a light purely on the time after the settling of an organizational agreement. Behavior patterns, concrete steps and stumbling blocks on the way to conjointly pushing for change will be shown.

### 2 – How to start a fire

It is cold - and you would like to warm yourself at a fire. You have branches, paper, logs and deadwood to light the fire with. You have a lighter. If now, you would like to have the fire to produce heat for the longest possible time, in which order should you use these four things?



*Graph 1: Setting fire*

In this case the sequence should be clear: first the paper, which is easiest to light, then immediately after that, the deadwood in order to light a slightly more durable fire, then the branches and lastly the logs.

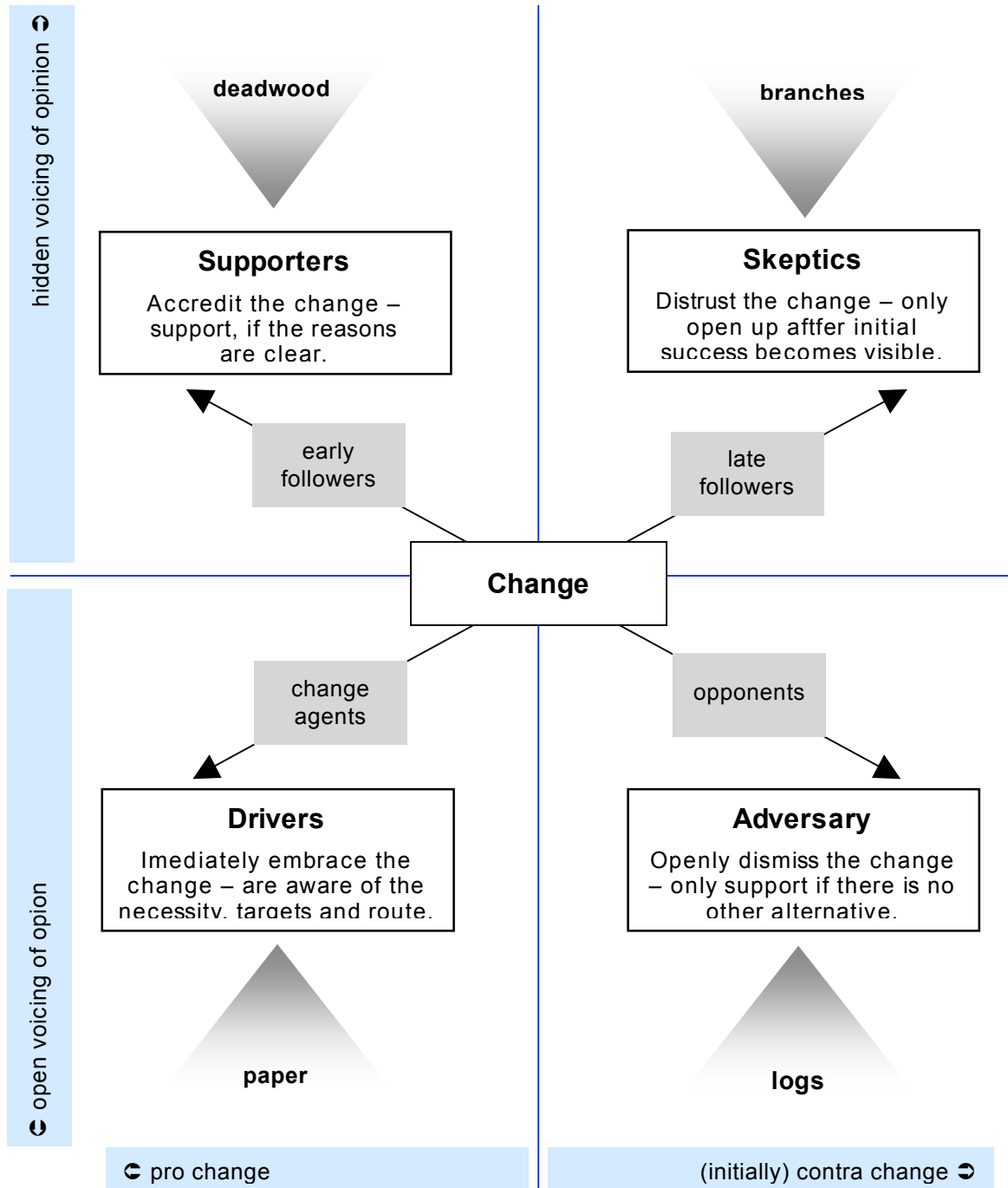
Basically it is the same with change: firstly those fall into line, that were enthusiastic about the change in the first place – a little later, the reluctant ones, the ones that want to know what it is all about or want to see the first successes ... and lastly when the change has become inevitable even the last ones join in. But as it is with fire, so it is with change: It is possible that one or the other does not “catch fire” at all.

## 2.1 – Fire and Change

The following model transfers the “lighting of a fire” to change. It offers an explanation for which attitudes come to light when pushing for change.<sup>1</sup> These attitudes are always connected to concrete persons, that are naturally able to adapt their role from change situation to change situation.

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<sup>1</sup> For in depth information as “Force-Field-Analysis” see a.o. Trebesch or Doppler/Lauterburg, 105f.



Graph 2: Change actors<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Despite encompassing research I have not been able to find the source of this model. To the author / the authors of this model I beg your pardon; F.W.



The Drivers make up that (initially) small group, which actively follows, genuinely wants the change. For *conjoint* pushing it is vital, that persons from the front lines such as works council or employer are present – ideally the head of works council and a significant board member.

If the idea of this change is not from within the company, but perhaps an order from within the organizational home office, it is questionable if the persons that must (!) represent the change are actually real Drivers. They are more liable to be Supporters, if not Skeptics. Hence, these persons are probably inappropriate to act as public relations representative.<sup>3</sup>

The Drivers frequently make the mistake of arguing their point especially with their opponents. This is quite plausible, as the opponents are those, who openly voice their opinion. However, this arguing often leads to hardened fronts and to a premature miscarriage of the change, as only the pro and contra are debated, not the “how”. The most interesting contacts for the Drivers are the Supporters – these are easiest to convince as they are already agreeably inclined toward the change. Equally the Supporters are quickly turned into Drivers with a few constructive suggestions.

## 2.2 – The seven phases of Change<sup>4</sup>

When you eventually manage to make a phone call to an old friend, the first thing you will do is find out how each other is doing, before going on to make plans about what you could do together. It is the same with conjoint change: You – within the Driver group – initiate the change process with an analysis of the organizational situation. Many might find this tiresome; however the joint answering of the following questions are the indispensable basis for conjoint pushing for change:

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<sup>3</sup> additional information on this aspect under the description of the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of change.

<sup>4</sup> according to Kostka/Mönch, 21-28



*1. Wherein do the current strengths of the organization lie, where the weaknesses? – What chances present themselves to the organization, medium- and long-term, where are the risks?*

By answering these questions you do not only assert the potentials of the organization, before you prematurely define measures and ideas, most of all you create a joint **awareness** of the change prerequisites. With the implementation of appropriate tools – such as the SWOT-Analysis<sup>5</sup> or the Self-Assessment according to the EFQM-Mode<sup>6</sup> - you systematically assess worth while change areas for the organization. Thereafter it is all about choosing and developing those possibilities that are most suitable for your organizations goals:

*2. What is the destination of the “Change-Journey”?*

Try to describe the **goal** as specific as possible; only then do the route and the reason for the change become clear enough to serve as orientation throughout the change process. Not until these two points have been conjointly worked through do you “venture out”. A prominent member of the employer and the employee side should be the ones to **present** the compiled **information**.

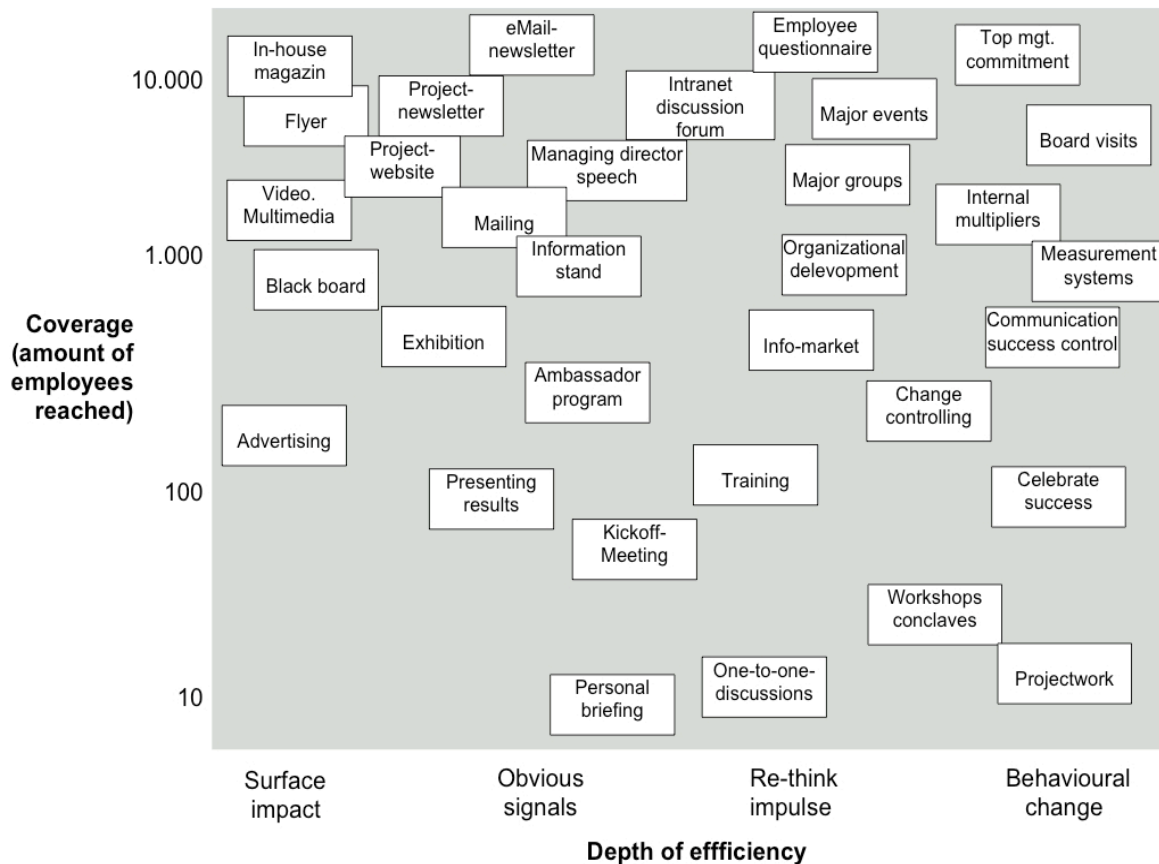
*3. How can we convey the information to the people – especially the supporters?*

For this there are a variety of communication methods with different scopes of penetration and impact:

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<sup>5</sup> in-depth reading: Müller-Stewens/Lechner, 158-233.

<sup>6</sup> in-depth reading: Zink, 67-288.



Graph 3: Methods of Communication<sup>7</sup>

Later on, it will be necessary to define who is going to be the “Face of the campaign”. The change will come to be associated with this person and this personalizing is an important winning factor of successful change. After all, the employees are not able to submit the individual figures, criterions and side-effects to a detailed audit. They “depend on delegating trust”<sup>8</sup>. Therefore this person must imply trust and be completely committed to the upcoming change.

The next step is to plan the successive steps toward upcoming change. Here the classical planning instruments and communication concept come to play: Resource planning and Communication concept.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> [www.umsetzungsberatung.de/methoden/methoden.php](http://www.umsetzungsberatung.de/methoden/methoden.php) (Zugriff 2005-11-22); also compare the article written by Henning Schulz in ifb: Betriebliche Bündnisse, 2006

<sup>8</sup> Rohrbach, SZ 219 (21.09.2002): 15.

<sup>9</sup> compare the article by Susanne Amrehn in ifb: Betriebliche Bündnisse, 2006.



*4. How do we plan appointments, personnel and budget? Who does what with whom and to what deadline – and informs who of what?*

Now it is about transforming the first success in order to convince the first Skeptics – and to continue to commit the Supporters. This success may appear to be insignificant to the Drivers – outwardly though they are an important signal for the existence of change.

*5. What might possibly be the first success – and on what do we base it?*

During the next step the change becomes institutionalized – that means the renewal becomes integrated into the current processes and structures. This step is often underestimated: The Drivers and their meanwhile increased community of previous Supporters and Skeptics becomes too sure of the change – but since Sepp Herberger (former manager of the German national Football team, known for short phrases) we know, that a game is not 90 minutes long, a game continues until the referee blows the whistle. During the final minutes, the Opponent will try to prevent the change becoming the new normality. For this reason, it is important that in this phase of **institutionalizing**, a great deal of attention is paid and support is provided by top management.

*6. Into which current processes and structures is the change to be integrated?*

Change becomes a matter of course. Some criticism leads to amendments that do not however challenge the change. The change has arrived within the organization – as professionals would say, it is **cultivated**.

*7. How do we make change become routine?*

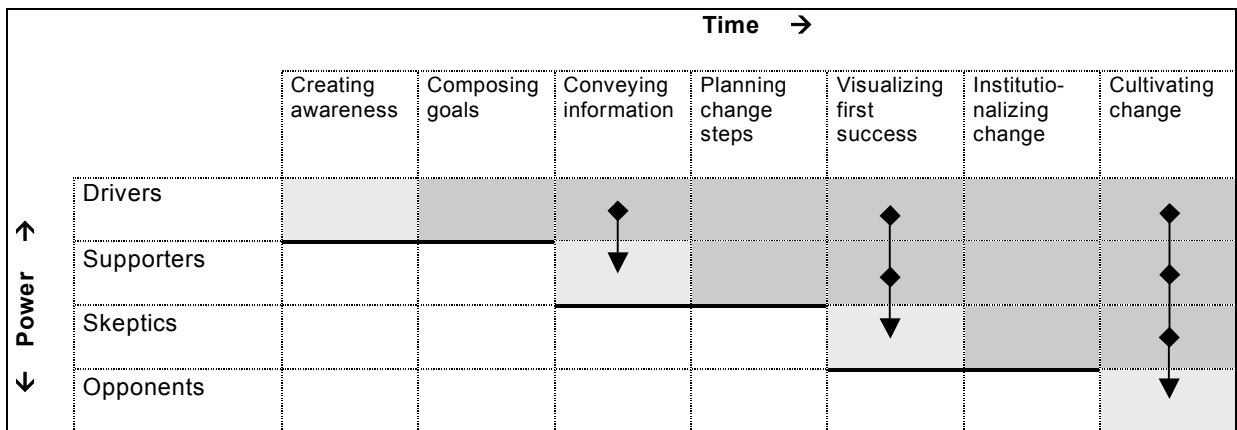
Several actors are described in the seven phases – the basis for change broadens bit for bit. The two most important factors for change therefore are called “Time” and “Power”:



**Time:** Being on time is a vital criteria; Speed is (nearly) the be all and end all: [...]: Distrust costs too much time. <sup>10</sup> Not only since Michael Gorbatschow do we know that he who is late will be penalized.

**Power:** This is not only about being able to influence others, but also that the implementation of change is one of many strategies to gain power<sup>11</sup> and the change takes effect in current power structures.

The orchestrated play of Time and Power in the succession of the seven phases lies the secret success of conjoint change.



- Constitution
- Stabilization
- Demarcation towards other actors
- Broadening from ... to

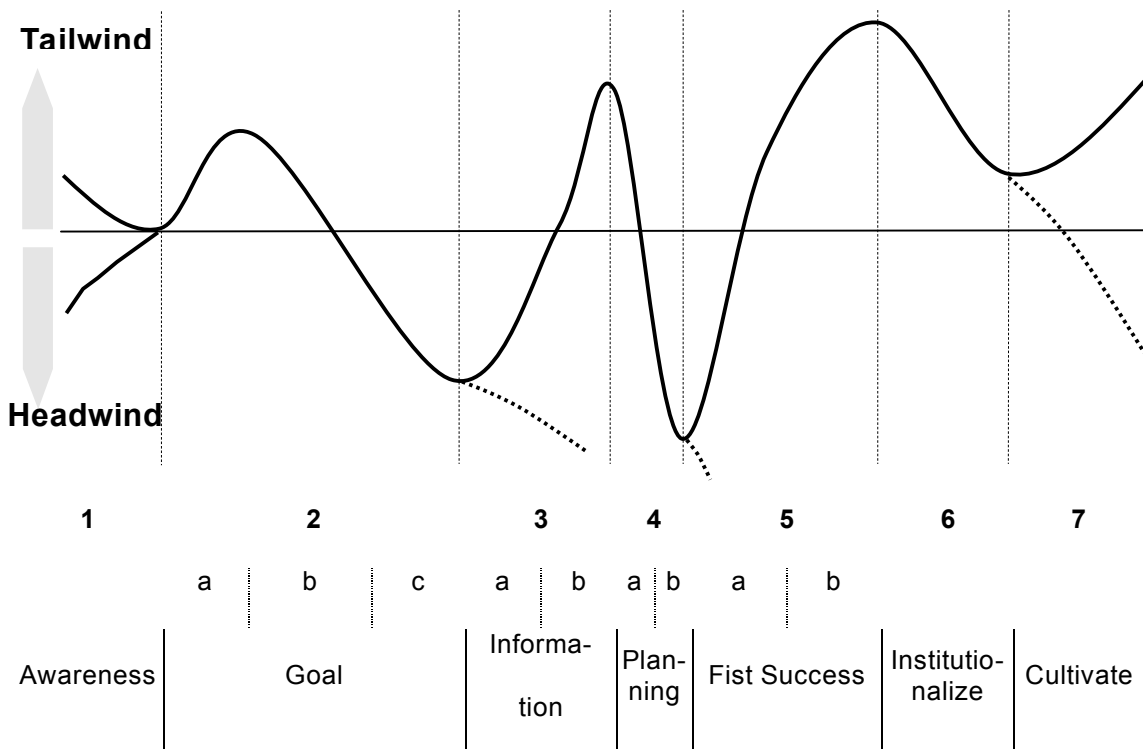
Abb. 4: Seven phases of change

<sup>10</sup> „New Economy – Principals of Leadership and Organization“ *Organisationsentwicklung* 4/2001, 81.

<sup>11</sup> compare Staehle, 398-409, especially 408.



These seven phases do not run according to a stable mood level. There are states of euphoria as well as catastrophe. It is remarkable however, that the respective moods appear more frequently in certain phases than in others. When structured, these result in a "Mood curve of Change processes".





These Phases can be described as follows:

	Name of the Phase	Phase Characteristic	Phase Actions	Result
1	<i>Phase of Standstill</i>	Discord about the situation prevails. <i>The change is in hibernation.</i>	Jointly recognizing and evaluating the terms and conditions of the organization	Change awareness is created.
2a	<i>Phase of Preparation</i>	The uncertain future scares most people – feelings rollercoaster between hope and fiasco. <i>Change awakens.</i>	Work up an appetite for change in the supporters	The goal of the change becomes apparent.
2b			Close in on the change with like-minded people.	
2c			Clearly define the goal of the change.	
3a	<i>Phases of implementation</i>	<i>The change project currently rests on only a few shoulders.</i> <i>Change starts to emerge from its hiding place.</i>	Dive in and deepen involvement.	Information about the change is provided.
3b			Create networks	
4a			Show leadership	
4b		Planning becomes tangible and it's consequences apparent to all. <i>Change takes centre stage.</i>	Prevail	Change is planned.
5a	<i>Phases of determination</i>	<i>Implementation begins, first results emerge.</i> <i>Change presides in the lobby.</i>	Assert hard facts about the organization and its future.	First success is made visible.
5b			Expand on new ways of thinking and taking action.	
6		<i>Most skeptics are convinced.</i> <i>Change is finding more and more acceptance.</i>	Make clear the necessity for perseverance.	Change begins to become established.
7	<i>Phase of realization</i>	Nearly everybody has recognized and accepted the change – it is no longer perceived as new. For the meantime change becomes quiet.	Support the good, continuously promote development	Change becomes a matter of course.

Graph 5: Emotional curve during a change project<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> According to Duck



## 2.3 – Ten tips on how to defeat Change

(I) *Firstly the kind of change is defined and consequently followed through based on this analysis.*

→ Ask some of the colleagues in your organization to rate the following eight typical change projects on a scale that ranges from “threatening” to “desirable” or from “requires a high level of acclimatization on my part” to “no acclimatization required”: Quality management, workforce downsizing, target agreement, group work, flexible working hours, computer system, fusion, outsourcing. The result will be very different with the exception of the workforce downsizing topic, as the individuals will rate the threat potential on their personal situation and convenience. Where for one person the implementation of a computer system may be a welcome change, the same project may bear a definite threat for another. Every form of categorizing dims vision and is in the first instance a testimony to the author’s emotion – as a result the conclusions made from it are not helpful for the day-to-day business, except for when the categorization has taken place on the back of an employee survey on the change subject.<sup>13</sup>

(II) *Who voices a problem must present a suitable solution.*

→ This is a prominent piece of advice that in most cases leads to the change group discussing the viability of the solution instead of the relevance of the problem. This form of solution-orientated thinking leads to – not only in the kick-off phase of change – a more or less automatic communicative back paddling of the problem investigators and therefore to inattentiveness toward the problem. The analysis of problems therefore should be clearly separated from the search for solutions. It is vital to initially pursue the search with those who agree with the problem analysis. Anything else only leads to “yes, but” sentences.

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<sup>13</sup> comparable i.e. to Lieberum/Reuter



(III) *As many people as possible must be included right from the beginning*

→ Not at all, as this would mean that opponents would equally be included from the beginning – this would mean legitimated espionage with built-in democracy. The only ones integrated right from the beginning should only be those that really want change. Everyone else will be informed and included in good time – compare graph 4, the stronger lines highlight up to which point which actors stay apart.

(IV) *Do not rush into anything: Detailed planning is important and takes time.*

→ No - change has to happen quickly. This removes the opportunity for the initially outnumbering skeptics and opponents to turn the sentiments toward their means and take control of the topic. Offensive and clear information on the change project leads to your being in control. Reactive communication is always a disadvantage and must be avoided. You must rule the grapevine – or whatever you call your rumor-factory. That means *you* must (be able to) immediately announce reason, goal and plan. This requires it to have been pre-defined. The first four phases need to be followed through rapidly. If not: your opponents will have their concept ready – i.e. current state of affairs. This is why change projects are fairly quick projects, a middle distance race – the spurt starts right after the starting line and the end is still a long way off.

(V) *Change is an internal issue of top management – including the works council. We decide what is to be changed.*

→ “Companies are in constant communication with the outside world.<sup>14</sup>” So they’re not really that internal. There are a number of groups, which are interested in the organization: proprietors, employees, customers, suppliers and the corporation generally are some of those<sup>15</sup> who primarily influence the route of the organization. It is their interests, which need to be elevated in the first three phases of

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<sup>14</sup> Müller-Stewens/Lechner, 25.

<sup>15</sup> Compare Rüegg-Stürm, 65-141.



change. The instruments named in graphs 3 serve this purpose in so far as that they are not simply one-way but realistic means of two-way-communication. Sincere listening is an essential prerequisite. It does not only make way for a wider perspective of the organization, but also multiple collaborators for the change process.

(VI) *Disturbances are a priority: Always respond to concerns so as not to slight anyone.*

→ The French literature Nobel Prize winner André Gide once said "Every new idea that one submits, has to face resistance. Incidentally, resistance does not prove that the idea is correct."<sup>16</sup> Concern and resistance are indicators for real change. So honestly consider, evaluate, assess and review whether or not and how you are going to react. In doing so, consequences and likelihood of recurrence are the most important factors. Resistance, in the first instance, is not the prime concern.<sup>17</sup>

(VII) *Change is a rational process that is based on figures, data and facts.*

→ If this were the case, there would be less fear of change, less uncertainty due to a non-calculable effort of re-thinking and re-education – there would also not be “forces that incite or inhibit restructuring and change”.<sup>18</sup> Change is a cooperative matter of head and gut feeling, mind and heart etc. Hence subjective intuition as well as (presumably) objective facts must be admitted. Both – intuition and figures – must be explained to make them disputable for others. If this is not done, the impression might arise that trickery is at work. “What cannot be spoken about, one must remain silent about.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> [www.daszitat.de](http://www.daszitat.de) (Zugriff 2005-11-22)

<sup>17</sup> compare Doppler/Lauterburg, 293-304.

<sup>18</sup> The subtitle of Duck's book

<sup>19</sup> Wittgenstein, 115.



(VIII) *Change is only about the decided objective - what else?*

- ➔ In most phases it is about acceptance. Not until starting point, goal, first success and the imbedding into the current organization are accepted by those concerned, can the objective be achieved. “Reform consists of (exaggerated)  $\frac{1}{10}$  of factual issues and  $\frac{9}{10}$  problems of attitude modification, conviction and enforcement.”<sup>20</sup> And that is about how others feel and whether or not they feel their concerns to be in safe hands. Ignoring this will mean you losing important alliance and reference persons.

(IX) *Change must be a “big-time-shot” - mistakes must be prevented at all costs.*

- ➔ If by “mistakes” the question of obvious fault finding is understood, then this sentence is correct. If however it is supposed to mean an opportunity to learn and improve, then mistakes are more than welcome as long as they don’t destroy the complete project. A “mistake-friendly” environment requires a reliable early warning system in order to recognize deviances and enable these to be corrected. Such an early-warning-system is the strategically positioned Balanced Scorecard with which several levels of key factors of previously positioned cause-effect-hypothesis can be monitored.<sup>21</sup> Regarding the “big-time-shot” – in most cases these were retrospectively constructed on successful changes.<sup>22</sup>

(X) *Even small successes must be celebrated unconditionally – this lets the change appear in a positive light.*

- ➔ Celebrating success is appropriate and important. However one must not create the impression of being satisfied to the degree of being allowed to lean back on the back of a merely small success. Especially the Drivers of change have the constant challenge not to lose sight of

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<sup>20</sup> Schwarz, 605.

<sup>21</sup> This – and not a behavior-control-system – is the feature of the BSC – compare also Kaplan/Norton, 14, 24.

<sup>22</sup> Compare Weick, 33f., 340f.



the long-term-goal. They must master the balancing act of commending small successes and at the same time pursue the reminding of the larger goal without de-motivating.

## 2.4 – Where did the conjoint pushing go?

The conjoint-ness in pushing of change lies in the willpower of the employer and employee. It is not necessary that the particular goals are the same on both sides, it is however essential that both “partners in a collective structure share space, time and energy with each other.”<sup>23</sup>

If there is not sufficient motive on either side to decide on a conjoint change, or if one side does not see a prime purpose for itself in the projected change it leaves the remaining party with two options. Either they try to carry out the change alone or they try to win over the other side through actions, which are outside of competitive interests – having the right and the power are common patterns.<sup>24</sup> In both cases there is no *credible* basis for conjoint work. A mighty - due to being closed - leadership-coalition is amiss and with that an important Driver for change.

The conviction that the opposite sides want to push for the change conjointly is prerequisite and a durable sideline stipulation – it is not an objective of the change itself.

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<sup>23</sup> Weick, 132f.

<sup>24</sup> compare Fisher/Ury/Patton – and the article by Klaus Watzin in ifb: Betriebliche Bündnisse, 2006.



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