Managing Change

Patrick Lambe
Sept 17, 2021
Agenda

1. Change and the Pandemic
2. A short biography of change management
3. Change management in theory and in practice
4. Change management and KM: observations from the field
5. Discussion
### Poll: Which statement resonates MOST?

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I commented that I agreed the most with the statements that were least favoured in the poll: i.e. statements 8 (specifically referring to change management theory, not change practice) and 2 – there is a lot of “theatre” about change management, we have to look like we are doing it, even if it’s not especially effective. I also commented in relation to statement 4 that separating change management as a line item neutralises its effectiveness – I made the point that all management is change management (cf. statement 3). Brett Patron remarked that he thought the use of a noun as change management as if it is a thing has a similar effect, and it should really be referenced as a verb – i.e. doing actions to support change.
Change and the Pandemic

Early Reports
• Digitalisation has jumped between 3 and 7 years ahead of expectations (McKinsey Oct 5 2020)
• We adapted rapidly by using existing social capital reserves – how do we replenish them? (Sloan Management Review July 1 2021)

Anecdotes
• Planned KM programmes accelerated/decelerated/dropped, new ones added
• Onboarding support has become a major issue in KM (not just in KM)
• “Change management” in KM has gotten better (how change is supported)
• We have had to become more deliberate about meetings – why did it take a virus to do what KM and Change Management couldn’t? Can we sustain this improvement?

Puzzles from KM Exchange 2021
• Strategic change vs. Tactical change? (Securities Commission Malaysia)
• Change as a Phase vs. Change as “New Normal”? (Nick Milton)
• Logic Model vs. Theory of Change vs. Stuff Happens (Asian Development Bank)

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https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/figuring-out-social-capital-is-critical-for-the-future-of-hybrid-work/?use_credit=28b5c16e94780f8c5c1b9431a8a4a164
https://www.mykmroundtable.org/2021-edition.html (review discussion notes for each of the individual sessions)
Models like this are “thin” and full of hard to argue with motherhood statements, but they are abstracted from the real, messy contexts of organisational change.
Mental Models

1. Propaganda – persuasion (Corporate Communications)
2. Changing mindsets – understanding culture (Organisation Development/ Leadership)
3. Control – alignment (Corporate Planning)
4. Power – disruption/reorganisation (Organisation Design/ CEO+ Consultants)
5. Design – systems thinking/ later complexity (Design Thinking)
6. Agile – adaptive (Project Management)

- Participation – acceptance in principle, but poses challenges to the other mental models and centres of authority
Mental Models

- Propaganda
- Changing Mindsets
- Leadership
- Participation
- Control
- Power
- Design
- Agile

Key Terms:
- Psychology, Group Dynamics
- Systems Thinking, Complexity
- Disguised as influence
- Adaptation, loss of big picture view
- Disruption
- Alignment

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Ladder of Participation

- Worked on urban planning and policy at a time of major activism and social change in the US
- Her “Ladder of Participation” exposes the power dynamics in the design of change
- Caution: employees are not citizens!

Reflection Question: Where is your KM programme? Where should it be?
‘The law of chaos is the law of ideas
Of improvisations, and seasons of belief’

Wallace Stevens
Extracts from Addresses to the Academy of Fine Ideas
1942
This book is very good on the attempt to move strategic planning to a participatory model.
This is an example of how power was exercised to manage change through structural and strategy changes at Boeing that deliberately weakened the engineering culture at Boeing – as well as inadvertently damaging the engineering capabilities that emerged from that culture.
These are examples from Karl Weick’s work about how plans and “maps” do not have to be infallible in order to be able to work – in complex situations the map or change management plan is sometimes more of a crutch to give confidence than a persistent and reliable programme of action.
Who is in charge of the change?

A KM CHANGE STORY
This is an example of how ADB moved from a centrally planned KM initiative to a more participatory method.

https://www.mykmroundtable.org/2021_5_moscow_airport_adb.html
Different change strategies are needed for different kinds of situations.
Reflection Questions

1. How has traditional change management helped our organisations adapt to the pandemic?

2. What use is a structured change management program in KM when we can’t anticipate all the unintended consequences of our actions?

3. “Theory of Change is messy”. How do we avoid the deadly attractions of the tangible in KM?
Statements and Questions

1. Change management is a structured set of activities designed to help an organisation change its way of operating.
2. Change management is a way of convincing management we are doing change management.
3. Change management is management.
4. Change management is a necessary activity line item on a KM project plan.
5. Change management is mainly about persuading people to change and helping them to do so.
6. Preconditions for change management in KM are: a thorough analysis of the org. environment and culture, and consultation with key stakeholders.
7. Change management for IT platform rollouts is different from “soft” KM rollouts.
8. The more I read about change management theory the less I know (or care) what I should do about it.

1. How has traditional Change Management helped our organisations adapt to the pandemic?
2. What use is a structured change management program in KM when we can’t anticipate all the unintended consequences of our actions?
3. “Theory of Change is messy”. How do we avoid the deadly attractions of the tangible in KM?
4. Where is our KM programme on the Ladder of Participation? Where should it be?
Discussion and Questions

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