

Making Change Stick



A while ago we undertook a study of 120 companies who had been through a 'Change Programme' of different types on behalf of a public body and what we discovered was that over 87% of the programmes had 'failed', meaning the programme had not been adopted by the organisation and it had not managed to realise the financial and operational benefits of the change.

In analysing the organisations who had been successful, combined with our on-going work with manufacturers, the armed forces, the NHS and service sector businesses over the last 18 months, we found that the key to success could be summed up as:

- The selection of the right 'tools'
- Applied in an effective manner
- By motivated people

In testing this we then found that every organisation who had failed to achieve sustainable change had failed because they had not addressed one of the issues detailed above. The most common mistakes made by organisations being:

- Choosing a change philosophy that did not suit the organisation, for example choosing to adopt Six Sigma (highly analytical) when the organisation suited a more intuitive change style or philosophy.
- Failing to 'move to action' by spending lots of money on training, coaching, planning and discussing, but then failing to act, resulting in all the preparatory work being in vain.
- Imposing change without engaging the staff - either by using outside consultants who designed and then implemented the change (often in the face of resistance from the staff) or where the managers told or led the team to the solution.

In understanding why 87% of organisations fail to achieve sustainable change, we also have to consider the concept of 2nd Order Change.

1st Order Change is about changing processes, whilst 2nd Order Change is about changing behaviours. As an example, when the compulsory wearing of seatbelts was first introduced into the UK there were constant reminders on TV and the Police spent a lot of time reminding car drivers because people kept forgetting - what had happened was that we had achieved 1st Order Change by changing the process. Through constant focus and on-going training and support/encouragement, coupled with the fact that occasionally the press reported

someone being prosecuted for not wearing a seatbelt, most people now don't even think about putting the seatbelt on - that is because their behaviours have changed.

Most organisations change the processes (1st Order Change) and think that behaviours will change without any further action or management focus, but people don't change overnight and the successful achievement of change that is sustainable in the longer term relies on the combination of 'Inspiration, Transformation and Synchronisation.'

- **Inspiration** is concerned with leaders creating the right environment for change to work and typically includes such things as strategic planning, leadership development and personal mentoring.

- **Transformation** is about implementing the change (and therefore making the change programme pay for itself) and should include a range of tools drawn from Lean, Six Sigma, Kaizen, Continuous Improvement as well as Creative Thinking and Problem Solving tools, based on the needs of the organisation.

- **Synchronisation** is concerned with aligning employees to the objectives of the organisation and also gaining their commitment to the change process, which we achieve through cultural mapping, surveys and team/group work.

In terms of sustainable change it is important to remember:

- Without **Inspiration** there is no direction
- Without **Transformation** there is no improvement
- Without **Synchronisation** there is no sustainability

We have tested these concepts with a wide range of organisations from the NHS, Armed Forces, Manufacturing and the Service Sector and have been able to achieve impressive 2nd Order results, all achieved by focusing on:

- The selection of the right 'tools'
- Applied in an effective manner
- By motivated people

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