

25th anniversary
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Change Agency for Systems Engineers

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SE Skills Supporting Change Agency



- Understanding of the “big picture”
 - “why” “what” and “how”
- Knowledge of many different aspects
 - technology and business
- Keen insights into stakeholders and into potential consequences of changes
- Understanding of the need to communicate and collaborate better as the technical system comes together
- Ability to do root cause analysis
- Insight into costs, failures, rework, and customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction

Windows of Opportunity

Windows of opportunity for change occur:

1. When a new start is being made, such as:
 - Opening a new line of business
 - Beginning development of a new product
 - In preparation for a new competition
2. When a dire problem is encountered:
 - If the problem has potentially serious business consequences AND
 - If the change will reduce the negative consequences

Avoid Likely Failure: Face Reality



- Don't pressure the team to get only the results you want, sacrificing other business goals
- Don't deny problems because you think admitting them will taint the image of your change effort
- Don't try to rewrite history by updating the past plan to equal actuals
- Remember peoples' different roles and responsibilities



Good Change Agents...

- Use multiple communication modes
 - Rather than “Death by PowerPoint”
- Work with and through others, rather than being “the hero”
- Embrace lifelong learning
- Look for ways to leverage unexpected changes to improve chances of success



Seeing the Broader View

- Understand that the context is crucial: culture, economics, social issues
- Examine consequences of various alternatives
- See politics as the way people try to influence outcomes

When Pushing Change...

- Use systems thinking
 - Identify root causes underlying symptoms
 - Base decisions on data, not opinion
- Help targets resolve:
 - Conflicting priorities
 - Cost and schedule pressures
- Don't expect programs to change without changing budgets, schedules, or overhead



Successfully Involve Others

- Celebrate milestone achievements and completion
- Find allies and share the work
- Listen

Possible Change Origins -1



Top Down



Middle Out

Bottom Up

Possible Change Origins -2



Top Down



Possible Change Origins -3



Middle
Out



Possible Change Origins -4



StartSmall

Bottom Up

- ✓ Stakeholders are uninformed
- ✓ Stakeholders are not included in the decisions
- ✓ The timing is inappropriate
- ✓ The change is not understood or misinterpreted
- ✓ There is lack of confidence that the change will be successful
- ✓ There are fears of unintended consequences that have not been addressed
- ✓ There are too many changes occurring at once

Symptoms of Shortfalls



When There Is an Absence of	A Change Agent Will Likely See
Shared Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Divergent, inconsistent efforts
Engaged Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resistance
Actionable First/Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inaction• False starts
Capacity for Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anxiety• Frustration

Optimal Targets for Change Success -1



Organization's Primary Success Criterion	Best Change Origination	Targets for Change
Changing to keep up with the times (agile organization)	Most effective and quickest: bottom-up change; middle-out change can also work in concert or separately	Both product and process changes are needed, but they may not need to be simultaneous
Judicious risk-taking	Most effective middle-out and bottoms-up change	Carefully targeted changes in product and process can work

Optimal Targets for Change Success -2



Organization's Primary Success Criterion	Best Change Origination	Targets for Change
Maintenance of organizational harmony	Most effective if from outside the organization (e.g., major customer); top-down change can also work	Changes in product more acceptable than changes in processes



Optimal Targets for Change Success -3



Organization's Primary Success Criterion	Best Change Origination	Targets for Change
Improvement of organizational results	Most effective top-down change; middle-out change can also work	Changes may need to address product and process simultaneously



Optimal Targets for Change Success -4



Organization's Primary Success Criterion	Best Change Origination	Targets for Change
The logo for TRENDSCO, featuring a stylized windmill or fan-like structure with a star above it, and the word "TRENDSCO" in bold, black, sans-serif capital letters below it.		
Changing to keep up with the times (agile)	Most effective and quickest: bottom-up change; middle-out change can also work in concert	Both product and process changes are needed -- may not need

Optimal Targets for Change Success -5



Organization's Primary Success Criterion	Best Change Origination	Targets for Change
The logo for "disrupt inc" is centered in a large white box. The text "disrupt inc" is in a bold, black, sans-serif font, with "disrupt" and "inc" separated by a wide space. The background of the box has a subtle purple-to-white gradient.		
Judicious risk-taking	Most effective middle-out and bottoms-up change	Carefully targeted changes in product and process

When NOT to Change

- When the potential payoff is not high
- When you cannot devote enough time and energy to the change
 - Expect it to take 2 – 10 times more than you initially planned!
- If you don't yet have enough credibility

Improving Relationships



Dr. David Fraser's suggestions for focus

- Attention to yourself – clarify your change target and your priorities
- Attention to others – listening effectively
- Attitude – taking responsibility
- Self-control – to deal with challenging moments constructively
- Wavelength – “tuning in” to others Filters and focus – discerning yours and others’
- Connection – establish and strengthen connections with others
- Values – understanding what matters most to others
- Language – understanding people’s language Self-awareness – understanding how others see you
- Balance – understanding your own conflicting desires
- Care – the emotional dimension

Conclusion



Next time a change is needed:

- Give all stakeholders the opportunity to help shape and drive the change
- Choose your change targets carefully, and watch for windows of opportunity
- Paper also includes:
 - 2 true change agent stories
 - Career implications
 - Skills self-assessment



**Thank You
for your attention!**

QUESTIONS?