

Change Happens... Embrace It!

by Jill Gilbert

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With global markets, 24/7 business, and information technology (IT) changing at light speed, there's a lot of change to absorb. Furthermore, many organizations undergo significant business and technology changes when they upgrade or implement new environment, health, and safety (EH&S) software. To make these changes work, organizations need to clearly define the expected benefits of the change, ensure people within the organization know what to expect, and then efficiently and effectively deliver the changes.

Change is unsettling. In *Who Moved My Cheese*,¹ Spencer Johnson relates a tale of mice and minuscule humans in search of cheese in a maze as a metaphor for change. When the cheese is not in the expected location, one mouse sniffs out the situation and gets an early picture of change, while the other scurries immediately into action. The humans react differently. Fear of the unknown, anger, and denial enter the

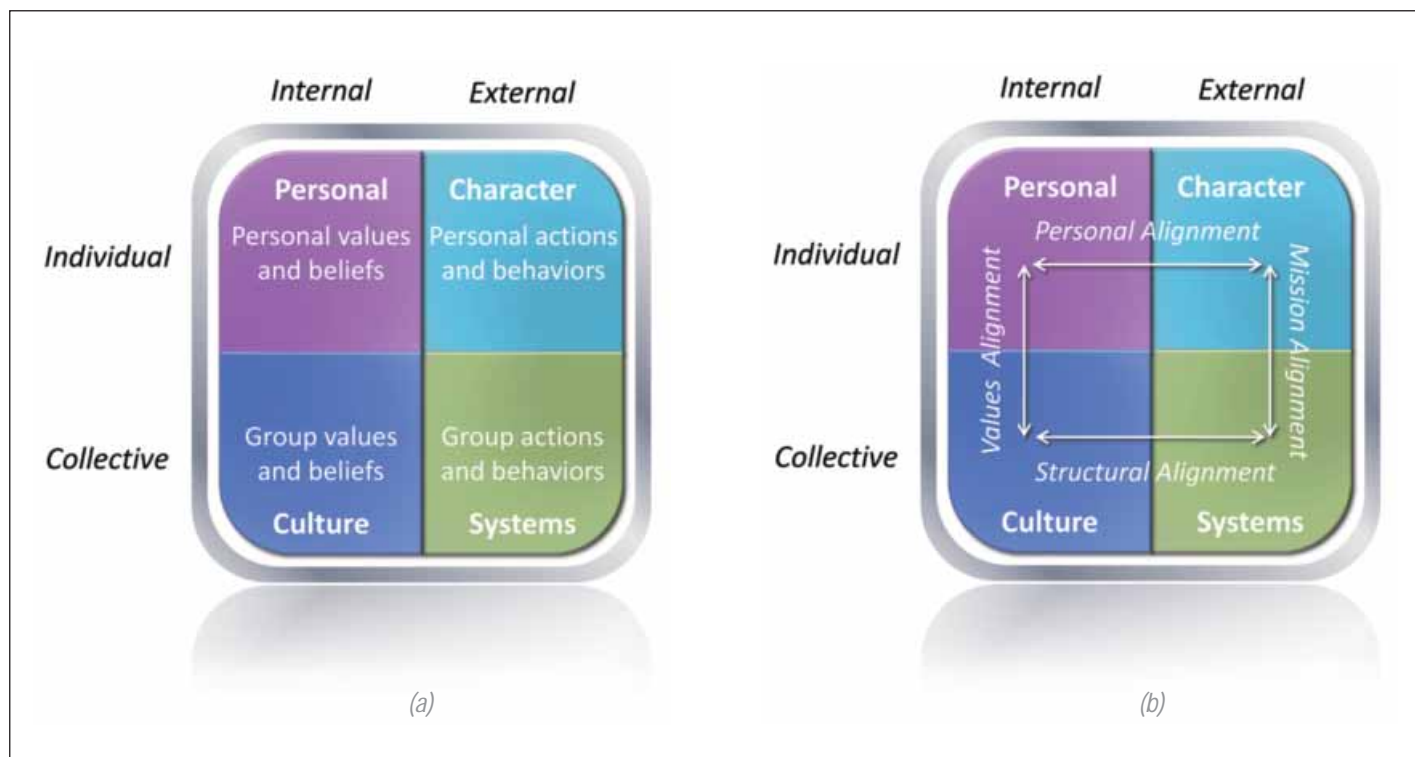
picture when things don't happen as expected. Beliefs and emotions take over. One human isolates himself in his comfort zone and gets left behind. The other human embraces change and adapts to the situation, noting, "If you do not change, you can become extinct."

Organizations should expect some resistance to change; people's past experiences and emotions affect the way that they perceive change. People fear change. How you handle the change and prepare your people can make or break your IT initiative.

Change Management

Change management—not to be confused with the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration Management of Change regulations, or with the process of managing software scope changes—is a "people" issue, often overlooked or not given adequate attention when undertaking an enterprise software initiative.





Simply put, change management is a structured approach to shifting/transiting individuals, teams, and organizations from a current state to a desired future state. It is an organizational process aimed at helping employees to accept and embrace changes in their current business environment.²

The change management process is the sequence of steps or activities that a change management team or project leader follows to apply change management to a project or change. Most change management processes contain three phases:³

- **Phase 1** – Preparing for change (preparation, assessment, and strategy development)
- **Phase 2** – Managing change (detailed planning and change management implementation)
- **Phase 3** – Reinforcing change (data gathering, corrective action, and recognition)

Four Facets of Change

According to the Integral or Four Quadrants Model, organizations must manage four facets of change, each equally important.^{4,5} The model asserts that individual change is important to achieve enterprise change, and that change requires four types of alignment (see Figure 1).

Management experts McManus and Cacioppe

build upon the Four Quadrants Model and identify eight elements necessary for change:⁶

- ① Pressure for change
- ② Clear, shared vision and goal
- ③ Capacity for change
- ④ Actionable steps and targets
- ⑤ Aligned structure and systems
- ⑥ Model the way
- ⑦ Reinforce the change
- ⑧ Evaluate and improve

They also identify three catalysts for cultural change:

- ① Leadership change team
- ② Positive mind-shift and driving values
- ③ Involvement and communication

Tips for Managing Change

Understand Your Environment

Define the business problem up front—what are you trying to accomplish (with the new software)? Assess cultural and organizational readiness for change. If the IT initiative spans several cultures and/or several sets of requirements, then be prepared to address these “localization” issues. Understand “as is” versus “to be” states, including both manual and automated work processes and systems.

Figure 1. Four Quadrants Model: (a) four quadrants of change; (b) four types of alignment required for change to occur.

Source: Adapted from Wilber⁴ and Barrett.⁵



Do not
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Involve Key Stakeholders

Identify and involve key stakeholders to help ease the change. Involve change agents, people within the organization that are open to change and who can influence and mentor others. Consider whether or not vendors and customers, as well as employees, are stakeholders.

Solicit both formal and informal input. Provide multiple exposures to the new system through participation in planning, requirements workshops, design and configuration, rollout, and so forth. Get global representation, including key geographies and business units. Consider local requirements and needs, and how the proposed system will address them.

Have a Plan

Develop a change management plan during software implementation planning. Identify change management activities to occur at each stage of the project management life cycle. Recognize that training is an integral part of organizational change management, but not the only component.

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

Develop a plan to communicate how and when change will occur. Intersperse communications throughout the project management life cycle. Avoid waiting to announce a new system by inviting end users to training the week before the new system goes live!

Communicate software initiative goals and objectives, and report periodically on progress. Tailor communications to various audiences, from end users to executives. Communicate how the new system will affect stakeholders, what users should expect in the new system, how their jobs will change, and the benefits of the new system.

Train... and Train Again

Train key stakeholders and change agents early, during software implementation planning. Train all software users, including key stakeholders, at least once before the system "go live" date and provide new hire and refresher training.

Keys to an effective training program include:⁷

- ① Focus on business processes, not system transactions
- ② Relate new business processes to the existing environment
- ③ Leverage a multitude of tools for training
- ④ Train the trainer
- ⑤ Allocate plenty of time for implementation training
- ⑥ Reinforce training with more comprehensive organizational change management activities

Own and Manage the Change

Do not become a victim of change... own it! This can lead to ownership and pride in the new software system. Employ a set of global key performance indicators (KPIs) to track and report on progress.

Change happens, so make the most of it! Spend adequate effort to define the desired change, assess the differences between the existing and desired states, and develop and implement a thoughtful change management plan. **em**

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