



# HISTORIC EVOLUTION OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT

## KEYWORDS

Change Management; Resistance to Change; Need for Change

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## ABSTRACT

*The Gandhian ideology of be the change you want to see in the world quite succinctly states the sum and substance of the current research paper. Every nation aspires to be dignifiedly self-reliant while being progressive and technologically advanced. The source of all this augmentation stems from the classical tripods of an economy i.e., primary, secondary, and tertiary. While agriculture played a definitive role in the advancement of a country until the turn of eighteenth century, the invention of engine – and the resultant industrial revolution – changed the course of economic history. Thereafter, the ICT revolution led and is leading the world forward. Human Resource (HR) is the most important of all the organisational inputs which needs to be systematically and periodically intervened to drive home the learning. The present study focuses exclusively on the perspectives and perceptions of change and its management seen from the dimension of an organisation's HR.*

## Introduction:

As an idea, change management is that everyone is familiar with on a subconscious level. Considering that the words “change” and “management” are key elements in the daily lives of people, this is fairly logical. Change is “to make different in some particular manner; to make radically different” (Merriam-Webster). Though difficult, it is a concept that is natural, both culturally and biologically, to people. Change is considered a basic aspect of people and is even an aspect of societal progress.

Management is “...the conducting or supervising of something...” Like change, the idea of management is also heavily present in our lives. For example: home, school, and work environments all require proper management to function correctly and efficiently. All the same, the term *change management* is primarily used in business environments and is as:

“Managing the process of implementing major changes in information technology, business processes, organisational structures and job assignments to reduce the risks and costs of change and optimise its benefits.” (Murthy, 2007)

Change management's key idea is to improve the processes required to implement change within a particular setting. This makes the concept very useful for areas where change is constant or naturally difficult, such as steel industry or development projects.

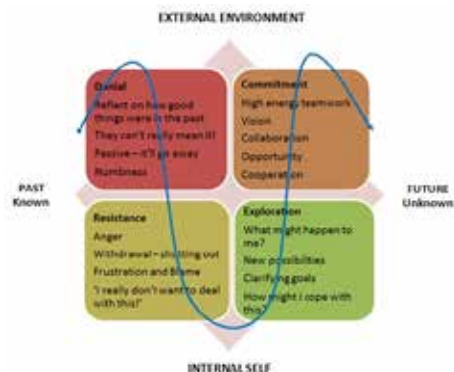
## History and Background:

Change management, a relatively new concept, first started being openly discussed in the 1980s and became much more prominent within industry as time passed. Ju lien Phillips pioneered the concept in 1983 by producing a model for it. However, the idea did not immediately take off (Phillips, 1983). At the time, creating and implementing change(s) was done from a top-down approach. Leaders of prominent businesses had become unhappy about the failure of this approach, and were open to a new idea (Anderson and Anderson, 2007). Some companies like GE, Ford, and AT&T started adopting change management ideas in the 1980s, but the idea was very limited in its understanding at the time. Only a few consulting firms, textbooks, and online resources were available. With the changes in communication technology during the 1990s, the concept received a great amount of exposure and many businesses started to embrace it for their projects.

During the millennium, change management became the standard for handling change in the business environment. The frequency that this methodology was applied also increased heavily over the decade. In 2003, 34% of businesses stated that change management was actively applied. By 2011, this number had increased to 72%. The number of firms offering change management services also saw a marked increase during this period. By 2011, 320 firms had been identified as offering this type of service (Prosci, 2015). The end of the twentieth-century saw the creation of the Association of Change Management Professionals (ACMP), an organisation that tried to further advance change management as a discipline. The creation of ACMP, and the ever-increasing acceptance of the concept and its application for improving changes in the business setting, points to a further improvement and strengthening of the field. Change management is an idea that is here to stay, since changes will always be a part of society. Many fields, particularly the ancient steel industry has benefitted and will continue to do so.

## Need for Change Management – The Why:

Despite of the multiple ever-changing aspects in and around our lives, change is often questioned and resisted because often change requires that people do something they have not done before. People are often unsure as to how to approach change. A common cycle for change is shown in the Figure-1 below.



[Source: <http://www.graftonhymes.co.uk>]

Galileo Galilei has been through the dungeons of the *inquisition* because he had dared to support something unheard of: the Earth moves around the Sun and not the other way round. Resistance to change is "any behaviour that attempts to maintain the *status quo* when confronted with pressures that try to modify it" (Leigh, 1988). For the reasons discussed above, change requires proper management and organisation. There are similarities in the approach of change, regardless of the reason that it is required or the type of change being dealt with. While some argue that change is inevitable. Conversely, learning how to manage it effectively could result in benefitting from the change. There are many possible approaches to change management. One important component of all approaches is to dedicate a team to be responsible for conducting change properly, effectively, and according to plan. For the organisation implementing change, this ideal team would consist of representatives from every department. Following that, a proper plan must be executed with the appropriate tasks and deadlines. This forms the core concept of change management.

Successful implementation of system change is essential in the provision of safe, quality care to consumers. Implementation of improvement projects and sustaining the resulting change could be a difficult process. It has been stated all too often that quality improvement projects fail on a regular basis. The individual or the teams introducing change have a challenging task. For change to be effectively implemented, motivation, communication, guiding principles, evaluation, resistance, and a pilot are essential and inevitable.

#### **Need for Change Management – The When:**

An important facet of managing change is being able to acknowledge *when* change is required. The initial stage is to be able to recognise the signs that a company needs change management followed by knowing when the change is going to be more efficient and less discomforting for the people involved than any alternatives. It is necessary to be aware of all the psychological factors that may affect the company's employees when change(s) occur(s) (Johnson, 2008). It is certainly mandatory to make this change as smooth as possible and to be aware that this smoothness is only going to be the case when there is willingness and flexibility in the company. This means that a company should always be proactively seeking change in order to adapt to different scenarios, and they should have an organisational schema that allows them to quickly adapt and improve their organisation. Nevertheless, one should not assume that the company culture will welcome change anytime.

Of late, businesses are expanding and growing at rapid rates. Thus, it is normal that a particular structure/model will not continue to work as efficiently as before. A company may need to hire more employees, or change the way things are being done in order to stay competitive. Sometimes the changes must be done in order to expand and have more opportunities, and sometimes a manager may want to change things in order to have a better working environment. Some changes may be planned or not, but either way the company must watch out for some of the forces that seem to oblige a company to change. These forces comprise: demographic, technological, social, political, (external) and internal forces. These forces are a strong indicator that the need for change exists. When a company is faced with any of these, it should embrace change

and work towards a new desired organisational or personal state. Managers should take these events as a signal of the need for change.

The ascent of a country from poverty to prosperity, from tradition to modernity, is a great and fascinating enterprise. India has recently emerged as a vibrant free-market democracy after the economic reforms in 1991, and it has begun to flex its muscles in the global information economy (Das, 2012). To stay on top companies have to be techno-suave as it helps them operate more efficiently, thus making them more competitive. Technological capabilities give an organisation an enormous capacity to change itself in order to exploit market opportunities. Technology will certainly aid a company to develop products more quickly and to increase their quality. When technological advances occur, it is important that the company is able to embrace them, and that their employees feel comfortable with these changes. Other external factors include the demographic characteristics of the workforce. When a company has a diverse force, it can use this to their advantage because it can produce many different perspectives from their employees. However, it is not easy to manage diversity, and companies need to ensure that they have a corporate culture that can handle this diversity.

The key to successful change is to have a leader who is not reluctant to change; a leader propagating and encouraging the need for it. Leaders need to proactively support change because people will simply follow what the leader says and does. Introducing change management will help leaders to learn how to influence others to support the change, as well as what actions they have to take in order to be more effective. Moreover, an expert in change management will help to communicate successfully with all the employees.

Internal forces that drive change are interpersonal conflicts between managers and subordinates, as well as attrition rates. These are clear indicators that the working environment is not positive for all of the employees. These observations could help a manager understand the employees' perspective towards the company.

#### **Conclusion:**

Human resource are an organisation's most important asset. Ultimately, an organisation's distinctive competencies lie in the skills and abilities of its employees. For this reason it is crucial to reinforce new behaviours. With positive reinforcement, one can make the desirable change to not be transitional, and thus, avoiding people to go back to old habits or behaviours in the workplace.

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