



# INSIGHTS NO 1 CHANGE MANAGEMENT

By Stephen Dantier

## CHANGE MANAGEMENT MANIFESTO 6 KEY TIPS FOR SUCCESS

### 1. Newton's Law of Motion

Every object in a state of uniform motion tends to remain in that state of motion unless an external force is applied to it.

### 2. The devil is in the detail

Gain a detailed understanding of the impacts to the organisational culture, technology, processes and structures.

### 3. Get your A-Team together

Put together a team of influential change agents who can spread the word amongst the people. They are your leadership team and will need to be trusted.

### 4. We don't like change when done to us. We like it when done by us.

Involve people in the process as much as possible.

### 5. Build a path to follow and don't forget to shut the gate behind

Determine what help people will need to transition from old to new and give it to them - properly. Then remove the old way.

### 6. Learning to walk

When people are transitioning from entrenched ways, understand it takes time to learn to walk again.

*"Every object in a state of uniform motion tends to remain in that state of motion, unless an external force is applied to it."*

### *Newton's Law of Motion*

Who would have thought that Sir Isaac Newton was talking about change management when he stated his first law of motion? For years, I thought I was only learning physics and didn't realise that this law also crossed into **p s y c h o l o g y**.

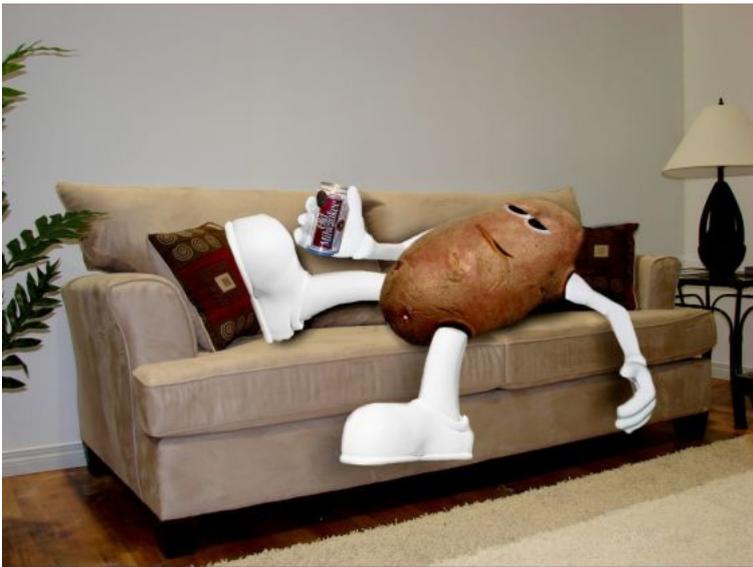
More recently, we've had the famous change management guru John Kotter, convey this scientific message in clearer change management terms through the first of his eight steps around leading change: "Create a sense of urgency," says Kotter. And for those who know Prosci's ADKAR® model, the A stands for awareness as the first step. Kurt Lewin talked about "unfreezing" at the start of the process. It seems that all three are recognising the need at the start of any change management effort, to shake a subject that is the target of change, out of its uniform motion. Or in change management terms, create an external force to raise awareness and a sense of urgency around the need for change to start the buy-in process. So **how do you start to create awareness and urgency?**

First, ask yourself "how is the current situation untenable?". If you can't answer

that question clearly and convincingly, then hold off on the fanfare of the new initiative because this is what some people will be thinking: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!" I'm sure you've heard that one, so before you introduce inconvenience (or chaos for some), you must be able to explain the compelling reasons for change.

I remember once getting a new boss – the head of the business. When he arrived he began telling people that things had to change. There needed to be tightening of spending and realigning of roles. I remember thinking – why?

As far as I was aware our costs were under control. Roles were fine. In fact, I ignored the messages coming out of the new boss' mouth regarding change until I got a satisfactory answer. That came one day in a team meeting, when the same message was repeated and I asked – **why?** Of course, not everyone will ask - some will prefer to 'lay low' and 'keep under the radar'. Maybe it will just fizzle out as some do...lots of huffing and puffing from a new boss trying to make his mark but if I passively resist then he'll lose energy and I can continue in my comfortable existence.



...People will only act if they feel  
**compelled** to do so...

So don't wait for someone to ask why! You need to **give this information right from the start**. My new boss then realised that he hadn't explained the driving forces for change. At the next meeting, he brought financial figures on the business. It took some work to compile and wasn't a pretty story. In fact, if we had not been part of a larger organisation, we would have been out of business already. Equating to no job. That did it! No more explanation needed.

In some cases, particularly at the senior level, the changes may have been discussed for some time, so when change finally gets the green light, leaders jump straight to the next step, forgetting that for everyone else it is a new concept and they need time to make the mental adjustment. The external force then lacks substance and is just an instruction, lacking credibility or validity and ends up without the buy-in.

Apart from omitting it altogether, the other major reason this step fails is due to **poor execution**. In my previous example, my boss delivered the financial information that explained the catalyst for change.

It worked, however why did it work? In addition, why does it sometimes not work? Well first, it worked because it hit me right in the job security hip pocket. Straight to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. What that really means is it connected. Not just logically but emotionally. It answered the all-important **WIIFM (What's In It For Me?)**.

Let me give you another example. I once worked for a company where every quarter we got dragged along to an 'all staff' meeting. At this meeting, we would hear the financial performance of the company. The senior managers, partners and board members (also invited) occasionally took delight in hearing that numbers for some areas had exceeded sales and profit targets. They showed great furrowed brows of concern and lower tones when some areas weren't at the level expected espousing words of wisdom like "you need to increase sales for the next quarter". I remember, either way it didn't concern me much, because **they were just numbers on a spreadsheet**. I was lower down the chain and not directly measured on those numbers. Quarter after quarter, same old spreadsheet babble that interested number crunchers but didn't connect with the vast majority of employees. I understood it but it didn't impact me (not yet anyway) and it didn't resonate with me. What was missing? Emotion and WIIFM. It didn't connect at an individual level.

This teaches the valuable lesson that when you are executing on Newton's law, you must ensure your messages around the force of change are both logical and connect with emotion at an individual level. Remember, it's all proportional to the nature and size of your change but for anything requiring significant effort, people will only act if they feel compelled to do so.

**Emotion** makes us get off that couch and act. Get on the soap box. Attend that rally. Bear arms. Cheer. The right logical and emotional messages will hopefully make people act in the right direction. The wrong logical and emotional messages may make people resist. It all starts here.

So, Newton was on to something when he gave us the first law of motion. You need to explain the reasoning behind the change and connect with people. People don't necessarily have to like it, but they have to **understand** it and **relate** to it. In this way, it will create the awareness, the sense of urgency, the force to get people out of their comfort zones and open to exploring the new ways.

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