Perspectives

Marc Sokol, Editor

We tend to think of organizational change as occurring in great sweeps of activity, followed by periods of stability. Reality is different; many of us don't fully see the real changes around us until they have already become the norm. Yet those who aspire to lead organizational change must find the balance of change and stability, deftly navigate tidal waves of action amidst undercurrents of resistance, and help others find life rafts or learn to swim in new waters.

Social architecture, the subject of this Lead Perspective, sets the stage for how companies can effectively navigate large-scale systems transformation. Luc Galoppin, an organizational change agent who also manages a 40,000-member social network, describes how digital technologies are reshaping the shipping lanes of enterprise-wide systems change, and how virtual communities can become the speedboats of success.

To expand on Luc's perspective, we invited commentary from change agents around the world. American Daryl Conner, whose writing has shaped the thinking of consultants and leaders globally, builds on the Lead Perspective, noting the significance of this point in time. Jennifer Frahm weighs in from Australia, reminding us we still have a long way to go, while Holger Nauheimer, from Germany, places social architecture in the broader context of history, technical change and leadership. Finally, Peter Vermeulen, from Johnson & Johnson, shares with us a view from inside a large global corporation.

If you ever felt it takes too long and is too complex to design and implement new information systems, this issue of Perspectives is for you. If you ever wondered how to better engage your workforce in the midst of change, then this issue of Perspectives is also for you. After reading about the defining impact of social architecture, you can share your own views with any of the authors, or contact me directly at **marc.sokol@sagehrd.com**.

Advice to Change Agents: Skate to Where the Puck Is Going, Not Where It Has Been

By Luc Galoppin

The title of this Lead Perspective plays off hockey great Wayne Gretsky's explanation of his tremendous success. When one looks at how the digital economy is shifting the world of work, it becomes apparent that successful organizations must discover the new balance between hierarchy and community that is called Social Architecture. Organization change practitioners must also update their own methods and tools to capitalize on these trends, tapping into the new potential for collaboration and social media.

What Is Going On?

On May 5, 1835, the first train was riding through Belgium. At that time, nobody could predict that this train would trigger a whole new era of the Industrial Revolution. Today, we see that the Internet has leveraged our economy in the same way the train fueled the Industrial Revolution.

All large companies depend on information systems to enable business processes. Effective systems upgrades can be transformative, while failure to achieve effectiveness can cripple the enterprise. However, the way we run these projects is for the most part still governed by command-and-control, top-down logic. In reality, there is a tension between the authority dynamic of traditional hierarchy on the one hand, and the influence dynamic of collaboration that is becoming the norm in our society since the rise of social media.

As the world changes, many of the rules that brought us here become obsolete. Just as social media has enabled consumers to influence and even define a company's brand, it is increasingly setting the stage for inclusion of the target audience into the design and deployment of new systems. Leadership and workplace dynamics are no longer simply hierarchical, as tribal dynamics of communities now trump top-down management.

Successful projects are those that strike a healthy balance between the compliance imposed by hierarchy, and the co-creation brought about by the communities that connect people. Hierarchy alone can no longer accomplish change.

Gradually everyone is getting acquainted to liking, sharing and crowdsourcing, and a lack of social media sophistication is no longer an excuse for not collaborating. The Internet and social media have radically raised our expectations for inclusion, voice and collaboration. We are in the middle of a paradigm shift. If you were on that train in Belgium in 1835, would you have seen how far it could go?

Here We Are; Now What?

There is a tremendous opportunity to tap into the new literacy of collaboration and to balance it with the existing organization. This is called Social Architecture, balancing authority and influence.

Winning organizations of the future will find a good balance between controlling the outcomes of stable processes with reaching outside of the boundaries of the organization chart in order to connect with customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders. Ultimately, there is no outside.

In practice, this comes down to empowering interconnected layers of communities, projects, task forces and tribes. We do this by assigning roles as opposed to permanent hierarchical positions. Next, people connect based on those roles, using social media as desired. For instance, imagine the community of warehouse managers created during the global rollout of an ERP package. Warehouse managers from different production sites all over the world are given a warehouse manager "badge" as a project role; they use this designation to find each other, to recognize each other as members of the same "tribe," and assume trust in each other that might have otherwise taken years to foster. This illustrates the productivity advantage of collaboration over compliance.

What's in It for Organizational Change Practitioners?

The rise of social media is changing our organizational DNA, and it takes the lens of social architecture to see how the toolbox of organizational change practitioners needs to be upgraded. For instance, the traditional view of a change leader as a problem-solving expert is under pressure. Now our job as organizational change practitioners is to build platforms for communities to connect, to recognize ambassadors who emerge within and across communities, and to balance their influence with the authority of the surrounding organization. The benefits of leveraging social architecture to help drive systems change include:

- Early prototyping, feedback and error detection that can be accelerated through communication platforms.

- Using platforms to engage stakeholders with each other in meaningful conversations around problems and solutions, and even the overall vision of the desired end state of change.

- Evolving project communication plans to include shared stories that emerge from real user experiences.

Change leaders of the future must display the courage to decrease their level of top-down control and trust the wisdom of virtual communities. As organizations discover that emergent social communities are not a threat to hierarchy, they too will benefit from the balance of influence and authority. This is exactly where the competitive advantage of the next generation of organizations resides.

Luc Galoppin, a Belgium-based organizational change practitioner, founded the LinkedIn group Organizational Change Practitioners, which has more than 40,000 members. He is the co-author of Managing Organizational Change During SAP Implementations. luc.galoppin@reply-mc.com

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Social Architecture:
A Balanced Call to Action

By Daryl Conner

When reading this Perspective, I was struck with what an inflection point the professional change community is living through. Most disciplines periodically experience bifurcations, where a clear "before and after" point of reference emerges. Something takes place that separates the eras when practitioners did and didn't have access to certain knowledge or technology. The change execution profession is living through one of these historic junctures; it is the demarcation from pre- to post-awareness of the powerful implications of what is referred to here as "social architecture."

Before the great divide, most successful endeavors involved some version of driving change down into organizations from the sponsor's perch. With the emergence of social architecture, change facilitators are able to leverage both the downward directed power of sponsorship and the upward influence of community—capitalizing on leadership's authority as well as the collective impact of collaboration.

"Hierarchy alone can no longer accomplish change" has been declared by those on the bleeding edge for some time, but, until recently, it produced little more than rhetoric and good intentions. Despite all the "engagement"- and "empowerment"-oriented activities, most implementation plans that have led to significant change have been heavily weighted toward a top-down bias. Future generations of practitioners will look back on this period as one where the profession finally evolved enough to recognize that authority and community aren't mutually exclusive—when leadership directives and social media networking began to be seen as equal partners in the transformational process.

Luc epitomizes this shift by refusing to let the professional change community off the hook with self-congratulations for merely waking up to this new reality. His statement is a call to action…a rallying cry to actually incorporate the social architecture mindset into the planning and execution of our craft.

This isn't as simple as command and control approaches and social media influence having their respective places in the process; each must be integrated with and balanced by the other. They should be seen as two interdependent ends of a single continuum, creating a range of intervention options that we can draw upon as needed. Future relevancy in our field requires that we embrace the notion that the zone where hierarchy and community intersect offers the greatest possibility for people and organizations to successfully adapt to changing circumstances. The social media genie is out of the bottle, and life as a professional change agent will never be the same.

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Social Architecture:
Still a Long Way to Go

By Jennifer Frahm

Luc Galoppin has drunk the Kool-Aid, buckets of it. I've been known to sip from the social enterprise cup myself, but I'm more cautious of guzzling from it for a few reasons.

We Are Still Justifying Investments, Rather than Tending to Communities

While moving to a more collaborative hyperconnected organization that eschews command and control may yield benefits with regard to skating where the puck will go, there are ample companies firmly entrenched in command and control, without social architecture, and they are doing just fine. Galoppin says tribal dynamics of communities now trump top-down management, but I can't agree, at least not from what I see in corporate Australia. Yes, there is increasing interest and exploratory activity in social business, but it is far from the norm.

Recent research by Hudson suggests that, while 61% of local businesses report using enterprise social networks, only 10% consider them to be a great success. My experience with companies using enterprise social networks is that community managers spend their time trying to capture the ROI and business case for extending licenses, and proving potential to their C-Suite, rather than actually tending to their communities.

The Change Must Start with Us

Don't get me wrong; I want to believe. I also believe that the success of the social architecture paradigm shift begins with all of us who are practitioners and leaders of organizational change.

Galoppin calls for us to update our own methods and tools, "tapping into the new potential for collaboration and social media." From what I see, our own professional community may be too time poor or just too lazy to keep abreast of the trends. Only a handful of change practitioners regularly use Twitter, or share fresh thinking and content. Active engagement on LinkedIn also remains limited to a small percentage. Far too many change practitioners don't even have a LinkedIn profile, or know how to use Dropbox, or consider how to use aspects of gamification, mobile, or the thinking behind MOOCs within their change practices. How can we champion the use of new tools when we don't use them ourselves?

If you are reading this, I have to believe you are interested in where the puck will be. My advice is to put your skates on, gather your colleagues, and start to be the change we wish to see in the companies we support. ➤

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At the Core, the Revolution Is about Leadership

By Holger Nauheimer

The essence of the Lead Perspective boils down to the question: "Has the world of management changed?" One position could be that actually it hasn't changed significantly. Management is still about achieving results with the available resources—as it has been since the moment when non-family members were appointed to look after the operations of an enterprise. There have been managers for 5,000 years. The construction of the Egyptian pyramids gave rise to a new profession of people who were technology experts but also able to organize and supervise labor. Since then, we have been seeing management models come and go. No wonder that Sun Tzu and Machiavelli are still frequently cited.

We also know that technology has always been a driver of innovation in the management field. There have been periods of disruptive change in the way organizations and people are managed. Frederick Taylor, for example, described the impact of new ways of manufacturing following the invention of the conveyor belt. The safety elevator, introduced 50 years earlier by Elisha Otis, opened the opportunity to create large office spaces in cities, which subsequently helped financial and other service institutions to grow exponentially. It took 100 years until another technological revolution, the World Wide Web, fundamentally changed the way we work, organize and relate to each other.

For me, the real revolution that is happening is about leadership in response to the changes around us. For example, I facilitated a meeting of a dispersed team. The team leader, who had joined the team only six months before, was ambitious to increase performance. I provided my thoughts on how to work over distance, including the idea that exchanging personal and private news is as important in virtual meetings as it is in face-to-face meetings. Following my comment, the team members shared with their boss that she had eliminated this very aspect of their collaboration, which was a routine before she had joined and taken over facilitation of the meetings. While her intention was to increase efficiency, she didn't consider the desire for closeness among the team, which is not satisfied in many virtual teams.

Leaders need to cultivate trust and the spirit of collaboration in the face of change, and for some, this may become even more challenging across new technology. Our conversations should be about *how* we want people to engage, and not just what they should be doing.

Holger Nauheimer, a thought leader on leadership, collaboration and new ways of working, hosts the annual Berlin Change Days, an international conference for change practitioners. hello@hnauheimer.net

The Power of Co-Creation

By Peter Vermeulen

For Johnson & Johnson, a company with operations in more than 50 countries and over 120,000 employees, change is not something taken lightly. A few years ago, we started to fully embrace the power of co-creation when designing and deploying major change initiatives within the Human Resources function. We recently rolled out a new set of Leadership Imperatives (i.e., the way we want our leaders to show up), a new Performance Management System, and we are currently in the process of globally implementing a cloud-based human capital system. We are successfully deploying these initiatives for a variety of reasons, but one important enabler has been co-creation as a way we have chosen to engage with different stakeholders from the very beginning of the project.

Co-creation involves both involvement and decentralization in design, moving it from development by a corporate office to development by a true change lead that understands the power of engaging stakeholders in the process. This methodology not only forced us to think differently about how we engage internal and external stakeholders in design and implementation of processes and systems, it also changed the very nature of engagement between managers, functional experts, partners and employees.

The advantages have been huge. Take the example of the implementation of Leadership Imperatives, our new set of leadership behaviors. The entire creation and deployment of these leadership behaviors was leader-led, not HR-led. It was incredibly powerful to hear leaders around the world sharing their personal stories regarding how and why they need to show up differently as leaders. The buy-in for this project was so much greater compared to similar efforts in the past. The new set of leadership expectations are now fully adopted and have become part of our performance management system.

I support the Lead Perspective: there is terrific power in embracing new ways to engage different stakeholders. It is a critical success factor for leading change in a complex environment. At the same time, I encourage readers to remember that, while social media can be a great enabler, there are other ways to organize co-creation, such as focus groups and think tanks. The change lead should be empowered to use the techniques and tools that best fit the environment.

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