

MONDAY MANNA

9 October 2017

CASTING VISION FOR POSSIBILITIES

By Rudolfs Dainis Smits

“The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.” – Albert Einstein

Putting what Einstein said in perspective, one of the few things we can be certain of in life is change – and change represents uncertainty. Change can be frightening, but it has become the new status quo. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines change in several ways: to make different in some particular way; to make radically different; to give a different position, course, or direction to something or someone. Change varies in magnitude, and affects outcomes in different ways. Being able to change and adapt frequently has become necessary both to live and succeed. Successful change requires vision, information and preparation.

Are adapting to change and the constancy required for project management compatible? We desire stability and consistency to achieve our goals, yet sometimes change is essential for moving a project or product forward. Effective leadership requires skills and tools that can equip and motivate an organisation and its people to change. Individuals need to be properly coached to transform into a team. Introducing new software, systems, procedures, and methods of communication may require change for successfully completing a project.

Change can be envisioned as an enemy if we don't understand why it's necessary. Change, a process evident within all creation, can negatively affect the individual or disengage an entire group. We don't necessarily like change, and change does not come naturally. So, we resist it if not properly managed. Change begins with thinking differently about the very processes we have created. Romans 12:1-2 says we are to be “transformed by the renewing of (our) minds.”

Change requires belief and faith in a cause. Providing information is essential to build loyalty and trust, which underpin motivation and maintain vision. The book of Proverbs states that “where there is no vision, the people perish (due to no restraint)” (Proverbs 29:18). Casting vision provides direction and order, and this requires proper communication, dealing with staff concerns and providing details for implementing change.

Properly managing change is essential for transforming an organisation and successful project delivery. Pat Zigarmi of The Ken Blanchard Companies, early in her career, did studies on leading change and concluded, “Those who plan the battle rarely battle the plan.” People are not as prone to resist change if they are part of the planning process – if they are, usually they will be on board with the change. Change requires leadership, but not by using a top-down approach. Input from the troops is essential to implement change and refinement.

Benjamin Zander, conductor of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, broke all convention for conducting and musical interpretation to obtain the best performance. According to the book, *Tapping into 'The Art of Possibility,'* Zander transformed interpretation and performance into a team effort. His new paradigm of possibility inspired input from every member of the orchestra. The change benefits were not only for the listeners or the conductor, but also to enhance satisfaction and innovation among the contributing musicians.

Successful change often starts with clear communication of vision, helping those involved in the change process to gain an understanding of possibilities that will arise from the changes. Then giving them an opportunity to gain a sense of ownership in the process.

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

Even though God does not change (James 1:17), the Bible says much about transformation and lives changed by Him. God's own work of creation is a series of transformational acts: In the beginning the earth was formless and void. God introduced light, separating day from night; and created the heavens and the earth as we know them today as a creative sequence of changes (Genesis 1: 1-9). **Which essential daily processes in life, science or business can you identify** that require creative change to produce required results?

Do you agree with the statement that before we present people with the benefits of change, they should be properly informed and their concerns should be addressed? **Why** should addressing personal concerns and implementation come before promising change benefits?

"Isn't it funny how day by day nothing changes but when you look back everything is different" – C.S. Lewis. **Change can take us by surprise** and even go unnoticed, like the sudden arrival of spring. Have you ever looked back realising that you were not prepared for the change, or missed an opportunity or possibilities in the midst of change? Benjamin Zander says our assumptions block innovation. What do you think he means by this? **What would you say is the opposite of an assumption?**

The book referenced describes Zander as, "...a different kind of conductor. His job, as he sees it, is to inspire the musicians under his direction and 'remind people why they went into music in the first place' – not to command them." We all desire to contribute with our knowledge, experience, capabilities and imagination. Otherwise, we don't feel useful. Why is individual involvement and corporate empowerment essential for implementing successful change and innovations?

Give an example of how you have (or have not) been given opportunity to) implement change with your employees, or) how your boss has taken steps to introduce and implement change with your participation?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Joshua 1:9

Isaiah 43:19

Jeremiah 29:11

2 Corinthians 3:18

Hebrews 11:8, 12:8

James 1:17