



## MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF CHANGE

*Conversations matter the most!*

*Change is a common requirement for today's enterprises and comes in all shapes and sizes; from discrete initiatives through to major transformations.*

In all cases, our No. 1 priority in the Leadership Culture & Change team is to help executives avoid the complexity trap and focus instead on the multiple conversation challenges involved in change, and the need to manage them well!

### WHAT COMPLEXITY TRAP??

*"Can't see the forest through the trees?"*

Too many change endeavours become overcomplicated, or more complicated than they need to be.

Think of programs that function as bureaucratic, desktop exercises that look to prescribe, control, and direct activities. If in doubt, look for evidence of significant paper trails of sub-plans and reports that capture the minutiae of each and every element of the change process and yet don't really guide strategic decisions or actions.

These are more common than you think because people worry about the 70%+ reported failures in delivering successful change and they intuitively believe that adding rigour to thinking and planning is going to improve their execution. Sadly, the experience more often than not is one of heightened frustration and the realisation that their expert-driven, top-down approach simply won't assist their organisation to adapt and evolve.

### WHY CONVERSATIONS MATTER?

To understand the importance of conversation, we need to first recognise three important fundamentals:

1. our workplaces are living systems where change of various sorts is occurring naturally anyhow. Individual experiences differ, and pockets of behavioural shift will already be evident in those with the personal motivation and commitment to do change.
2. corporate-sponsored change initiatives impact these live environments and their performance will ultimately come down to three (3) things - how well the environment accepts the 'new element', how well that new element operates with other elements, and how well the organisation continues to learn and improve from having the new element within its environment; and
3. change processes that succeed genuinely connect with broad sections of people. They go beyond information sharing and deliver meaningful engagement and motivation through leaders who act as sponsors through inviting people to contribute to specific design elements; and through role modelling desired behaviours from the commencement of the initiative; and through encouraging an iterative process of interpretation, application, and refinement.

These fundamentals quickly remind us that change is inherently a matter of interpretation, experience and re-interpretation that can only be achieved through meaningful dialogue. Change management in turn is the task to orchestrate the settings where that dialogue is done together as a collective, and in a co-ordinated way.

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### *Conversations matter the most!*

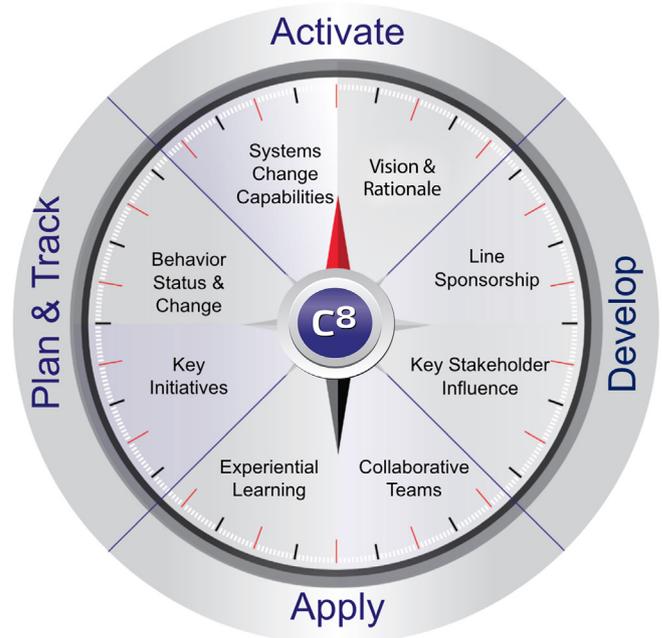
In practical terms, change also calls for a particular type of conversation that we call high calibre collaborations. High calibre for they require a purposeful-focus, a place at the strategic and operational levels, and a genuine quality in how people investigate matters at hand, respect experiences and perspectives, and remain assertive in dealing with points of tension and conflict.

#### NAVIGATING THE CONVERSATION CHALLENGES

Presenting the conversation alternative is an important insight but only raises further questions around practicalities of doing so. It is here that our Leadership Culture & Change team can assist through our ADAPT framework.

ADAPT is all about the practicalities and helps executives organise the eight core conversation priorities into four domains, each of which serves a distinct role or contribution to the effective transition (shown below):

- Activate engagements promote the 'things' that help explain and co-ordinate the reform
- Develop engagements make the environment more receptive to change
- Apply engagements connect people to the detailed design of key initiatives
- Plan & Track engagements support the deployment of initiatives and realisation of benefits



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ADAPT's Compass signals the reality each priority may require attention at any point throughout the transition process. ADAPT's decision-support for each of the eight (8) priorities comprises:

- Target Areas – key questions that require strategic management focus and attention
- Standards – key performance indicators & measures for each Target Area
- Actions – detailed "how to" actions to support management decision-making
- Templates – pro-forma templates to support management actions

#### CONTACT US

We would love to hear about your change experiences or talk to you if you're looking for a common sense solution to navigating your next change agenda!

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