

Maximizing Results Through People
A CEO to CEO Quarterly Newsletter
2-15-04
Waiting For Change

Dear Fellow CEO:

Twice in the last two weeks, consultants came back from different client visits telling the same story. They told of situations where CEO's had directed major change efforts within a specific area. In both cases:

- The CEO had put people in charge of the specific area that needed to be changed.
- The areas were troubled.
- It wasn't known what was to be done, only that something needed to be changed.
- Performance stunk at the beginning of the effort and continues to stink.
- Whatever change that was supposed to have been incorporated was to have occurred months previously.
- There was no indication the change was going to happen any time soon.

The CEO was still waiting for change to happen.

Unfortunately, these two cases are representative of many more we've seen over the years.

In many cases, waiting for change to occur, even when you've directed it, is the equivalent of waiting for Godot, and as we likely remember, Godot never came. The waiting was for naught. For these waiting CEO's, change isn't going to happen until something changes. And something, whatever it is, isn't going to change on its own.

Don't get me wrong, change *can* happen on its own. Generally, however, this kind of change could better be described as somewhere between attrition and entropy. People are either allowing external influences to exert more force than is their due or allowing variance to take over from conformity. Unfortunately, this kind of change occurs when things are getting worse, not better. And, yes, it can take place on its own.

However, when you want things to change both systemically and for the better, three things have to be in place:

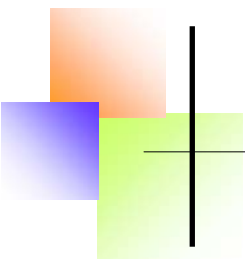
1. Support must exist for the change from management
2. Change agents need be involved in driving the change
3. Administrators need to see that whatever has changed will become a part of the new system

The first building block is exactly what was put in place in the cases above – support and direction from management. Change was asked for, even directed. Yet, that alone obviously wasn't enough.

Once it is determined that change is necessary, it is important that the person charged with leading that change is a Change Agent (a person with a high A as well as lower D and C in their Predictive Index profile); or that someone within the team that is driving that change is a Change Agent. Why? Anyone who does not have this profile is not comfortable with change, let alone the driving of it.

That's not to say Change Agents are always successful drivers of change. They may not have the skill set or intelligence to make the required change happen. But, they at least start with the propensity to change. They just may not be successful.

In both of the examples referred to above, the people charged with driving change were highest D's – people driven to do the right thing. They were both successful managers. They both were excellent administrators. But, they were both failing the task of driving change. They did not know where to begin. In fact, every effort they made to begin was thwarted before it got off the blocks with one simple thought: "What if I fail?"



Highest D's are uncomfortable driving change because they fear doing the wrong thing or making a mistake. It is easier for them to do nothing than it is to make a mistake. Hence, when being asked to drive change, nothing gets done. And, the CEO waits.

On the other hand, people with Change Agent profiles thrive on change. They look at a situation and ask themselves, "How can I make this better?" They're not concerned about making a mistake. If they do, oh well. They'll just try another solution. That's why you want Change Agents driving change. Change demands comfort with mistakes and Change Agents have that. Mistakes prohibit change for highest D's because ***highest D's won't tolerate them!***

In our most recent newsletter, I described the success, or lack thereof, achieved by 6 Sigma Black Belts with different profiles (6 Sigma Black Belts are people who are charged with creating change within an organization and who are measured by the effectiveness of the change they create). The chart below recaps the results.

<i>Black Belt Success Rate: Who Would You Choose?</i>	
<u>Profile Characteristics</u>	<u>Success Rate</u>
Highest A, Lower C, Lower D than A:	100%
High A, Lower C, Higher D than A:	33%
All other profiles in Sample:	0%

Statistics prove and empirical evidence supports that if you want change, you need to have high A's who are also lower C's and D's driving it.

I'm not advocating you fill your organization with Change Agents. There are many places where you likely don't want change. Wherever you have high A's, particularly highest A's, you will have change. Like it or not. Thus, you don't want A's everywhere. You only want them where creation of change or adaptation to it is a necessary part of what it takes to be successful.

In fact, I'm not even advocating that Change Agents be the only people involved in change. High C's and D's (Administrators) should be part of the process and should be around to institute, implement, and document the change after it has been developed. Once Change Agents develop a solution, they like to start to change it again before it is truly standardized. And change really isn't complete until it's been instituted and controlled. For change to be successful, Administrators need to see that it's a part of the new system.

Ultimately, if you don't have Change Agents where you are looking for change to occur, you are likely to be waiting for change to happen long after it's been directed. And if you don't have Administrators locking in the change, the success intended to be achieved won't come to pass.

I'd suggest you look around at those places where you're waiting for change to occur. Ask yourself the following questions, "Have I directed the change to take place?" "Do I have a Change Agent (high A that is higher than both C and D) driving the change?" "Do I have Administrators (high C's and D's) who are assuring that the change will be instituted?" If any of the answers are no, likely you've got some rearranging to do. Or, you should learn to be comfortable waiting.

Waiting is a solution I wouldn't advocate, however.

Thanks for reading, and I hope you found these insights helpful. And, I hope you don't have to wait too much longer.

Bob Wilson, President
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