

## Phase I Study Candidate Company Description

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The goal of the study is to see whether or not there is a relationship between espoused perceptions of resistance to change and empirical outcomes. The methodology of this study is a quasi-experimental approach first conducting a self completed survey amongst the members of the organization along with measuring their performance via the organization's standard review process, then entering into the "treatment" (transformational change) phase. About the mid-point of the change, a second round of the survey is conducted along with a second performance review. After these two surveys and their associated performance reviews are analyzed, selected members of the organization will be asked to participate in an interview. All steps of the study are to be done in total confidentiality protecting the individual identities of each member that chooses to participate. A significant percentage of the organization is needed to participate to produce faithful results.

**A typical candidate organization would be in a size range of 20 to 200 people. The organization should be near the point where some form of transformative change is about to occur (preferably in the February-March timeframe). This change might come from an acquisition or being acquired, merging with another organization, the installation of some major change in process or program in which roles and relationships between the members change, or the direction of the organization is reframed. See the following discussion on transformative change on the next pages. The candidate organization will have or use a quantifiable performance review instrument in which performance attributes have scalar measures. This is to allow a quantitative analysis between espoused self-reported survey (Likert scale) and the performance review.**

The immediate benefits of this first study will be somewhat minimal other than the candidate company and respondents will participate in the final reporting of the results which should give insights into what effects resistance to change have upon that particular organization. This first study leads to a follow-on series of studies investigating moderators to resistance to change in an effort to improve the very bad success rate of transformative change as reported by many researchers.

### **Incremental, developmental, or transitional change**

Incremental change, also termed evolutionary or convergent change, is seen as small-scale and restricted to individual, localized change projects (Breu & Benwell, 1999). Falling within the scope of incremental change, Anderson and Anderson (2008) suggested that developmental and transitional change could be addressed by transactional change management techniques.

### **Continuous change**

Weick and Quinn (1999), in contrasting episodic change with continuous change, made a distinction that episodic change followed Lewin's (1947) unfreeze-transition-refreeze while continuous change would follow a path of freeze-rebalance-unfreeze. The authors characterized episodic change as tending to be infrequent, discontinuous and intentional while continuous change was suggested to be ongoing, evolving and cumulative changes. In their view, an "organization associated with continuous change is built around recurrent interactions... authority tied to tasks rather than positions, shifts in authority as tasks shift... systems that are self organizing rather than fixed..."(p. 375). The authors suggested leaders would be required to make deep changes in themselves for an organization of this type to succeed.

Brown and Eisenhardt (1997) found two salient features of the continuous change organization in their study of the computer industry. They noted successful managers first perfected their moves and then developed a game plan in stark contrast to the sequence of transformative change. Perhaps allowing this strategy, they noted firms created organizational structures that in some terms were structured but in other ways were not. Parallel to the types of change discussed in this section, the authors suggested

that these types of structures lie between the extremes of very rigid and highly chaotic organization. They speculated that the semi-rigidity allowed change to occur yet be managed, but not so rigid as to prevent change altogether. The authors noted a managerial challenge because such structures exhibited a dissipative equilibrium and required constant managerial action to avoid slipping into pure chaos or pure structure.

### **Chaotic, radical, frame breaking, or transitional change**

The organizational model of punctuated equilibrium as developed by a number of scholars posited that major change occurs infrequently, abruptly and metamorphic (Gersick, 1991; Miller & Friesen, 1980); Tushman, Newman, & Romanelli, 1986).

Gersick suggested organizational momentum maintained the system's equilibrium but when that equilibrium was broken, the resulting change would dismantle the organization's deep structure. Romanelli and Tushman (1994) suggested that the large majority of organizational transformations were accomplished via rapid and discontinuous change while a series of small changes did not accumulate to provide any major transformations.

Breu and Benwell (1999) noted numerous terms of radical change, revolutionary, or discontinuous, to imply large-scale, organization-wide transformation, exhibiting a decisive break with the past. They noted radical change had been depicted as "frame-bending", a concept that highlights the organization's complete breakaway from an established orientation and, thus, its transformation. Anderson and Anderson (2008) noted transformative change to be chaotic in nature and required a radical shift in the mindset of the agent and followers requiring an engaged leadership role to help drive the process towards a desired state. Anderson and Anderson argued that the transformative

process was by nature chaotic, and that it could not be managed, suggesting there was an element of risk in how an organization emerges from a chaotic state. Transformative change is characterized by changes to the deep structure and culture of the organization and, due to the magnitude of disruptive effects, is the intervention of interest of this study.

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