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Master of Defence Studies Research Project
A COMMANDING OFFICER'S GUIDE TO CHANGE MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The difficulties encountered by both military and civilian organizations during recent reengineering and continuous improvement efforts were often the result of poor change management techniques. Initiatives were pressured towards pre-defined goals and little consideration was placed on organizational politics and culture. As a result, many change initiatives were short lived and created an atmosphere of mistrust within affected organizations. Regardless, the impetus for change and transformation continues to exist.

Asymmetric warfare, new socio-economic realities and the Revolution of Military Affairs (RMA) are compelling the Canadian Forces to once again learn to embrace change. However, to succeed, barriers to innovation must be well understood and carefully addressed. The most important change barrier being the human factor, leaders must have a very good understanding of organizational culture and individual values and beliefs. By gaining a better understanding of the human factor as a source of change resistance and by focusing transformation effort towards an organization's operational role, the leader will be better prepared to effectively apply change management and enable his unit to embrace change and continuous improvement.

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INTRODUCTION

"It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory."

- J. Edwards Deming, 1967

Improvement management, otherwise known as change management, has, in many cases, not been effectively implemented within the Canadian Forces (CF). This stems from a number of factors including the effect of military culture on change initiatives and either the lack or misunderstanding of change management techniques. Nonetheless, a unit Commanding Officer (CO) has both opportunity and, using transformational leadership, the ability to effectively introduce change initiatives within his organization. By understanding the foundation of change barriers, the politics of organizational culture and the art of change leadership and management, a CO can greatly influence his unit's proclivity to not only embrace change but to also seek out continuous improvement.

OUTLINE

This paper will support the above thesis by first demonstrating how change initiatives, while commonplace during the past decade, were often poorly managed and generally resulted in failure. Specific examples will be used to highlight the fact that major sources of these failures are attributed to a lack of concern for organizational culture and a poor understanding of change management techniques. We will then briefly describe today's realities and transformation opportunities in order to emphasize the fact that a revival of effective change management practices within the Canadian Forces (CF) is crucial to its operational effectiveness. A phased approach to change implementation will then be discussed to demonstrate that, in order to be successful,

change management must first address organizational culture and needs to be implemented using a well led and systematic approach.

SCOPE

While a large number of past reengineering efforts were aimed at higher levels of command (CF Business Planning levels 2 and 3), this paper will concentrate on addressing change initiatives at the CF unit level (Business Planning levels 4 and 5).[1] Furthermore, while change management involves two broad dimensions: processes and the human component, this paper will primarily focus on the latter dimension as it usually presents the greatest barrier to a change initiative.[2]

BACKGROUND

Winds of Change

Change becomes constant.

- Hammer and Champy, Reengineering the Corporation

According to John Kotter, an expert in the area of change management and leadership, "the rate of environmental movement will increase and the pressures on

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[1] Defence Planning & Management, "Business Planning," http://vcds.mil.ca/dgsp/pubs/dp_m/bus-plan/bus-plan_e.asp; DWAN, accessed April 2005. According to the Defence Planning & Management policy, for the purpose of business planning, DND/CF organizations have been divided into five planning levels. Level 1 planning applies for Groups (for example, Chief of the Air Staff or Assistant Deputy Ministerial levels) and receives its input from the Chief of Defence Staff/Deputy Minister through the annual Defence Planning Guidance, Level 2 applies to formations such as 1 Canadian Air Division, Level 3 applies to bases and wings, Level 4 applies to units and Level 5 to sub-unit/sections.

[2] Majed al-Mashari, Zahir Irani and Mohamed Zairi, "Business Process Reengineering: a survey of international experience," *Business Process Management Journal*: 2001. This survey served as an excellent tool at determining the most likely reasons Business Process Reengineering has failed in between 50 and 70 percent of cases. The article points out that the absence of concern for organizational culture was a major source of failure.

organizations to transform themselves will grow over the next few decades."[3] This fact
is self evident given technological and socio-political developments of the past decades.
We have seen both industry and governments struggle to keep pace with ever changing
realities: information technology, global economy, the media effect on individual and
group beliefs and a heightened political accountability just to name a few.   And yet, to
many, change brings a very negative connotation as it invokes a sense of entropy and
insecurity.   According to the author Jennifer James, "change, even if predictable, is
almost always perceived as threatening."[4]

However, even when faced with unrelenting change, winning organizations will
not be surprised at its unanticipated effects as, reflecting Darwinism, they will have
developed the ability to learn from and adapt to change. Change must stimulate an
organization into developing new ideas and opportunities rather than creating feelings of
resistance and threat. Whereas some only perceive change as a threat, survivors adapt
and see change as a positive fact of life, an opportunity to improve a condition or process.

Dealing with change and the management thereof is nothing new to the CF.
However, a number of past change initiatives tended to be very much driven by mandated
cuts in personnel and funding and ended with mixed results.   Implemented under
business banners such as Total Quality Management and Reengineering, a plethora of
change initiatives either ran out of steam or were directed to a pre-conceived solution
never reaching intended and lasting goals.

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[3] John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 30.

[4] Jennifer James, *Thinking in the Future Tense: Leadership Skills for a New Age* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 104.

Nonetheless, following the mixed successes of the last decade, the Chief of Defence Staff's Vision, published in the document "Defence Strategy 2020", clearly articulates a set of key mandates that must be satisfied in the near future to allow the CF to become more responsive to changing world events. Throughout, this document encourages innovation and flexibility and, for example, includes an aggressive objective to greatly improve resource stewardship by "revitalizing the departmental acquisition process with the aim of reducing acquisition time for departmentally approved projects by 30%."[5] Leaders have thus been mobilized to reengage the "beast of change" and enable their organizations to learn to not only adapt but to transform themselves.

Bold initiatives yet scant results

During the hiatus of the nineties' budget cuts, DND and the CF faced a considerable challenge in order to remain operationally relevant. The 1994 White Paper introduced cuts in areas of infrastructure, personnel and funding not seen since the integration of 1968[6]. In order to deal with mandated cuts, the CF's senior staff endorsed the application of contemporary change and improvement practices. The aim of such initiatives was to allow for most of the required savings to be captured without significantly cutting operations. Unfortunately, a large portion of that decade's change initiatives fell well short of their goal to improve business processes. The following provides a synopsis of significant change initiatives that, while addressing the cuts

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[5] Department of National Defence, *Shaping the Future of the Canadian Forces: A Strategy for*

imposed by the 1994 White Paper, did little towards improving efficiencies and creating

a permanent culture that embraces innovation.

Op Excelerate or Op EXCEL was conducted between 1994 and 1995. Its mandate

consisted in simultaneously downsizing and introducing Business Process Reengineering

(BPR) to the Material Group.[7] While a tremendous amount of energy was placed in this

endeavour, the constraints presented by a strict target date and mandated cuts in

personnel and resources overruled any truly reengineered solution. Old practices

generally continued unabated "with a 30% cut in personnel and long promised new

technologies were not introduced early enough in the process."[8] Stuck with the old

bureaucratic way of doing business, the remaining staff generally became overworked

and, in many cases, opted for early retirement under the Force Reduction Plan (FRP).

Consequently, in the years immediately following Op EXCEL, cuts in full-time military

personnel were simply replenished by the extensive use of contracted support negating

much of the savings that had been achieved.[9]

Op GENESIS, also a product of downsizing and budget cuts, was established to

reengineer the Canadian Air Force. Its primary aim was to address the 1994 White

Paper's direction to reduce the fighter aircraft force and supporting elements by at least

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[7] Department of National Defence, "Operation Excelerate – News" Vol. 1, No 3, p 1 (Ottawa: DND Canada, 1994).

[8] Major J.P. Doherty, "OPERATION EXCELERATE: The Risks of Simultaneous Downsizing and Reengineering in the Material Group," (Toronto: Canadian Forces College Command and Staff Course New Horizons Paper, 1995), 18-20.

[9] Lieutenant-Colonel Jim Bates, interview with author, 1 February 2005.

25 per cent. [10] As reported by the project's Steering Group, "GENESIS was aimed to do

so by reducing costs as much as possible by 2001 while minimally affecting operational

capabilities."[11] However, as a solution to rapidly shrinking fiscal and personnel resources,

this initiative was eventually applied across the entire Canadian Air Force in order to

encourage change activity. As was the case with Op EXCEL, Genesis was not a true

reengineering effort but rather a "strategically directed approach" to force Air Force

Wings and units to apply mandated cuts in personnel and budgets. [12] While this initiative

led to a few successes, most involved mixed results having placed greater emphasis on

cutting rather than innovation. In all fairness, this project did include a phased approach

to eventually address organizational cultures. Phase one being cost cutting, phase two of

Op GENESIS was aimed at ensuring "the successful implementation of long-term

cultural change."[13] Unfortunately, once the Air Force had achieved its cost cutting aim,

Op GENESIS was disbanded well before the scheduled start of phase two.

Base DelegAAT was aimed at delegating authority and accountability to improve

the economy and efficiency of base and unit level activities. Under this "change

initiative", base comptrollers were permitted, albeit on a case-by-case basis, "to deviate

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[10] Department of National Defence, *1994 Defence White Paper. . ..,* 48.

[11] Department of National Defence, *Project Genesis Report to Steering Group* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 1996), 1.

[12] Department of National Defence, *Project Genesis Report. . .*This fact is clearly illustrated by the Op GENESIS report to Steering Group which includes the statement: "The change in the reduction target for HQ personnel by 1999 from 33 to 50 per cent was because of a desire to force true change, rather than introduce minor modifications to the status quo." There is no mention of addressing cultural change or any reference to change management practices in this entire report.

[13] Department of National Defence, *Project Genesis Report. . .,* 43.

from national procedures to achieve cost saving targets." [14] While this initiative did engender innovative ways to secure base support services and introduced Alternate Service Delivery (ASD) to the CF, its main purpose was to reduce base support costs by 10% over a five-year period. DelegAAT was never truly aimed at improving processes; hence savings were realized with cutbacks rather than by introducing sound business practices and eliminating inefficiencies. [15]   As was the case with Op GENESIS, once targeted cost savings were achieved, DelegAAT was terminated.

The Military Occupation Classification (MOC) 500 Restructure project involved a review and redesign military occupations responsible for aircraft maintenance within the CF. The aim of this project was to reduce the number of aircraft technician occupations so as to enhance efficiency, embrace changing technology and move the Air Force closer towards the "Total Force" concept. [16] While this initiative eventually introduced a more efficient MOC 500 trade structure, the early nineties' pressures to reduce the strength of the Air Force led to a premature deployment of newly formed occupation structures. While policy was being re-written to reflect a completely new aircraft maintenance doctrine, training had not yet been redesigned to address the new trades. As a result, the very slow pace of training staunched the implementation process of the new trades and undermined the confidence of MOC 500 technicians towards the Canadian Air Force senior leadership.

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[14] Department of National Defence, Revised NDHQ Action D17/90 – *Base Level Delegation of Authority and Accountability Trial* (Base DelegAAT) (NDHQ Ottawa: file 1243-1 (D NDHQ Sec), 17 Nov 93).

[15] Major Terry Wood, "Change Within the Military: Can it be effected?" (Toronto: Canadian Forces College Command and Staff Course New Horizons Paper, 1996), 8-9.

[16] Major Peter J. Davies, "Consolidation of the Aircraft Maintenance Occupations," (Toronto: Canadian Forces College Command and Staff Course New Horizons Paper, 1990).

The 1994 white paper direction to reduce the number and size of headquarters led to the largest change effort of the department, the Management, Command and Control Re-engineering (MCCR) initiative. This project was initiated to re-engineer the DND/CF command, control and resource management structure, with a goal of reducing resources devoted to headquarters functions by at least 33 percent.[17] The mandate of the MCCR initiative was to produce cost savings by "conducting BPR then aligning organizational structures with new processes to achieve improved productivity."[18] However, when, in 1996, it became clear that reaching mandated cuts through re-engineering would involve a significant amount of additional time and effort; reductions were simply imposed by the VCDS. In essence, what was initially aimed at introducing new processes to dramatically improve efficiencies ended with a "shaving of the ice-cube" through imposed personnel and budget cuts. The MCCR initiative achieved its goal of a 33 percent reduction in headquarters, but at the expense of significant losses in experienced personnel. Further, when the MCCR project was transferred from the VCDS' office to Director General Management Renewal Services (DGMRS) in 1997, no plan had been formulated to maintain the momentum in implementing the reengineering initiatives. This, in many cases, led to a retrenchment of attitudes and procedures and discouraged personnel to embrace future change initiatives.[19]

As we can see from the preceding experiences, change initiatives in the DND and the CF have usually been more reactive rather than reflective. As the CF was more

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[17] Department of National Defence, *1994 Defence White Paper. . ..,* 41.

[18] Department of National Defence, *Executive Summary to MCCRT Historical Report* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 1999), 2.

[19] Department of National Defence, *MCCRT Historical Report Forward and Lessons Learned/Way Ahead.* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 1999), 18.

preoccupied with reducing costs and infrastructure, it missed an opportunity to transform its culture into one that would embrace change rather than resist it. Driven by imposed constraints and tight timelines without an appreciation of the underlying principles of change, initiatives not only failed but also consumed valuable resources and, painful as they were, increased resistance to further change.[20] The lacklustre success met by the above measures has fostered a negative view towards improvement initiatives and introduced "change fatigue" a result of which "organization and its people are growing tired of change and showing signs of cynicism and burnout"[21]. In essence, the pendulum of organizational change has, in many cases, swung to the other end where a change culture is not only non-existent but also frowned upon.

The above initiatives were not entirely successful due to a number of factors:

- A misunderstanding of sound change initiative techniques such as Business Process Reengineering (BPR);

- A lack of senior management support; and

- A lack of understanding and consideration for the politics of change and its effect on the human component.

Each of these factors will be briefly discussed.

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[20] Lieutenant-General George Macdonald, "Leadership in an Era of Change and Complexity," in *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral: Perspectives on Canadian Senior Military Leadership*, ed. Bernd Horn and Stephen J. Harris (St. Catharine's: Vanwell Publishing Limited, 2001), 178.

[21] Department of National Defence, *ASD Capacity Check Assessment.* Prepared for the VCDS by KPMG Consulting LP, May 2001. The Vice Chief of Defence Staff's office sponsored an Alternate Service Delivery Capacity Check conducted in the spring of 2001. The check was conducted through interviews of managers at the Director level at National Defence Headquarters and Commanding Officers of units in the Formations. Change Management was one of the areas covered in the report that found "There is a perception that the Department is plagued with change fatigue. Middle managers are most affected by change. This has an impact on productivity, which may actually impede change."

Misunderstood Techniques

In order to gain a better understanding of a successful change initiative, we must return to its basic principles. Change can be implemented using a number of different approaches. One approach, usually coined as "continuous process improvement", brings about change incrementally over time. Continuous improvement techniques include total quality management (TQM) and Six Sigma.[22] While these techniques are necessary to allow organizations to continue with innovation and process improvement, they can prove to be ineffective when dealing with more significant change initiatives. Another approach consists in implementing dramatic vice gradual improvements in process performance. Often referred as Business Process Reengineering (BPR), this change management tool was introduced in the nineties due to the thirst by civilian companies to seek out methods for faster business process improvement. BPR relies on a different school of thought than continuous process improvement. In its pure form, reengineering assumes that the current process is irrelevant and necessitates a totally new approach.[23] Nonetheless, BPR, as a term and as a practice, has a tarnished history. Reengineering became very popular in the early nineties, however, its methodology and approach was not fully understood nor appreciated. Initiatives such as Op EXCEL were routinely labelled as "BPR" but were poorly planned and executed. As a result, as much as two-

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[22] Julian Barling, "Managing Change", *Queens School of Business course MBUS 957*, Spring 2004.

[23] Michael Hammer and James Champy, *Reengineering the Corporation: A manifesto for business revolution* (New York: Harper Business, 1993). In their book, Hammer and Champy define BPR as a fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to bring about dramatic improvements in performance. This "clean slate perspective" allows the reengineering team to disassociate themselves from the current process, and focus on a new and more effective process using new methodologies and technology.

thirds of all BPR initiatives eventually failed.[24] Consequently, the term BPR fell into disrepute as organisations recoiled at the thought of another change experience. Today, while the term BPR is no longer prevalent, change initiatives using BPR methodology are still very much alive.

It is critical to understand the significant difference between downsizing and reengineering. Most of the initiatives mentioned earlier were primarily aimed at downsizing, that is, reaching a pre-defined end state with no true consideration for process improvement or subsequent action. Many initiatives were riddled with constraints such as tight deadlines and inflexible methodology that impeached a sound BPR process. By focusing on cost saving rather than efficiency, a large number of change initiatives introduced very short-lived solutions, leaving unproductive processes in place. Once savings were achieved (usually without dealing with process efficiency), those remaining within the organization ended up being frustrated with increased workload and un-improved bureaucracy and methods often resulting in reduced capacity and capability.[25] Layers of organizations were eliminated with little concern for cultural barriers and "individual elements of an organization embarked on change initiatives that did not contribute to the greater organization's overall objectives."[26] Finally, change initiative were not communicated well and failed to consider adequate incentives for change.

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[24] Michael Hammer and James Champy, *Reengineering the corporation…*, 200.

[25] Michael Hammer and James Champy, *Reengineering the corporation…*, 114.

[26] Lieutenant-General George Macdonald, "Leadership. . ., 177-178.

Senior Management Support

As explained by Lieutenant-General Macdonald in his excellent article on leadership and change, the lack of long-term success of the preceding initiatives was also the result of an absence of senior leadership alignment.[27] Specifically the following problem areas were identified:

- Understanding of the realities was not shared;

- Alignment was at the first order of implications only, no commitment in depth;

- There existed noted greed on the magnitude and scope of change;

- Fundamental differences existed in philosophies and principles – leaders came from different backgrounds and experiences; and

- Failure to confront personal implication and the need for change (in other words, lack of accountability).

DND's and the CF's senior leadership were not all on board with the urgency to promote change, the definition of change requirements and associated visions. This not only led to disparity in methods of applying change within the department but, victims of succession plans, a number of major initiatives were cancelled prematurely.

Change Politics and the Human Component

The third major contributing factor to the lack of success of the earlier mentioned initiatives was the absence of a sound understanding of organizational politics and

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[27] Lieutenant-General George Macdonald, "Leadership. . ., 171.

cultural barriers. As will be explained in detail later, it is human nature to fear and, in some cases, resist change. Employees are likely to consider change "as a violation of their psychological contract with their employer"[28] and may even resort to political tactics to staunch change initiatives.[29] By not addressing organizational culture and introducing change incentives, inefficiencies that were present prior to the improvement initiative often return. As explained by Champy, very large portions of reengineering efforts practiced during the nineties were literally crushed by employee resistance to change.[30] This was the result of companies and organizations failing to gain a better understanding of the politics of change initiatives. Failing in a similar fashion, military leaders applied old autocratic methods to new problems expecting that subordinates would simply adopt resource cuts, snap their heels and deliver the same product. As stated by Lt General MacDonald, such a leadership approach to change (without consideration of the human factor and organizational politics) can no longer be applied.[31]

While each of the above mentioned factors is crucial to the success of any change initiative, having moved through a road littered with failed efforts, companies and experts became very much aware of the primacy of the impact of change on organizational cultures (and vice-versa). According to research conducted by Al-Mashari, Irani and Zairi, "change management that includes cultural change is a core element of BPR

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[28] Mitchell J. Neubert, "What you should know about change," *Baylor Business review* 1(Fall 2004): 9.

[29] Dave Buchanan and Richard Badham, "Politics and organizational change: The lived experience," *Human relations* 52, (May 1999): 609.

[30] David K. Carr and Henry J. Johansson, *Best Practices in Reengineering* (New York: McGraw-Hill Inc., 1995), 34.

[31] Lieutenant-General George Macdonald, "Leadership. . ., 169.

implementation."[32] During the nineties, change initiatives often failed because they concentrated on physical change, such as organizational restructure, the introduction of new technologies or new processes, rather than on teaching leaders the art of changing organizational culture.

There also exists a number of examples of successful change initiatives. We will now examine a few in order to demonstrate the important role organizational culture plays when implementing change.

SUCCESS STORIES

General Electric (GE)

Change means opportunity.

-Jack Welsh, CEO of General Electric (1981 to 2000)

While General Electric (GE) had been an industry flagship of innovation during the sixties and early seventies, its market share eventually started to flounder as the late seventies' recession engulfed North America. It is during this turmoil that long time employee turned manager Jack Welch became GE's new Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Under Welch's bold leadership, GE first sold off large portions of its holdings and became extremely lean and aggressive. Welch eliminated vast amounts of bureaucracy and de-layered a company that had become top heavy and un-focused. Through these restructuring efforts, GE eliminated over 120,000 positions between 1981 and 1988. During this period, annual operating profits rose significantly from $1.6 billion to $2.4

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[32] Majed al-Mashari, Zahir Irani and Mohamed Zairi, "Business Process Reengineering: a survey of international experience," *Business Process Management Journal* Vol. 7, No. 5 (2001): 437.

billion but were mainly the result of downsizing efforts akin to those experienced by the CF during the nineties. However, most importantly, Welch pressed on with more change initiatives. During the nineties, he embarked GE on a very significant transformation effort but not before assessing and addressing organizational culture.

Using outstanding leadership, Jack Welch initiated project "Work Out". This project introduced openness and candour in the workplace by mandating GE managers to meet with their workers in open dialogue in order to secure ideas for improvement in a bottom-up approach. Groups of 40 to 100 employees were assembled to meet with their supervisors and managers and provide their input on how the company should work. This effort also allowed managers to get a sense of organizational barriers. In order to prove to employees that the GE leadership was prepared to embrace change initiatives, managers had to make a yes or no decision right on the spot or, if more information was needed prior to a decision being made, the manager had to provide a clear deadline for a decision. An impressive eighty percent of all proposals received an immediate yes or no decision thereby endorsing the importance of employees' ideas and concerns. Over a three-year period, over 200,000 or two-thirds of GE employees had been consulted in this matter. It's interesting to note that over the same period, productivity growth doubled.[33] Project "Work Out" greatly affected GE's organizational culture by showing to each individual that his or her concerns and suggestions were valued and contributed directly to the company's operations. "Work Out" was an excellent demonstration of employee empowerment.

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[33] Christopher A. Bartlett and Meg Wozny, *GE's Two-Decade Transformation: Jack Welch's Leadership* (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2004), 4-5.

However, Welch did not stop with this initiative. He then embarked on a

means at addressing his management team's culture by challenging them and

encouraging creativity. He did this by introducing personalized goal setting.

Traditionally, the corporation set rises in inventory turns and operating margins.

However, while a basic target remained in place, in introducing the notion of "Stretch",

Welch left it up to managers to set their own production targets by asking themselves

"How good can I be?" While managers were not held to those numbers, if achieved, they

resulted in significant bonuses. As a result of this initiative, "after decades of single-digit

operating margins and inventory turns of 4 or 5, GE did achieve an operating margin of

14.4% and inventory turns of almost 7 in 1995."[34] In order to maintain the momentum of

change, performance expectation and rewards were also completely realigned to reflect

GE's change culture.[35] By the mid nineties, Jack Welch had successfully modified GE's

long-standing culture from bureaucratic and rigid to innovative and aggressive. He was

now able to introduce new and significant change initiatives with much greater ease.

In 1995, a company survey showed that GE employees were concerned about the

lack of quality of their products. To address this crisis, Jack Welch introduced GE to the

Six-Sigma quality system. This quality system involves a significant challenge as it

basically calls for no more than 3.4 product or process defects per million operations. At

the time it was first implemented, GE's error rate was ten thousand times beyond this

limit. Resulting losses were staggering; ranging between $8 billion and $12 billion per

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[34] Christopher A. Bartlett and Meg Wozny, *GE's Two-Decade. . .,* 10.

[35] Roger Gill, "Change Management or Change Leadership?" *Journal of Change Management* 3, (February 2003): 316. Welch completely re-structured profit-sharing methodology. This led to a much enhanced bonus system that was fully aligned with performance.

year.[36] Following an aggressive education and implementation program, Six Sigma

resulted in cost vs. benefit returns of well over $1.5 billion after the second year of

implementation. It is interesting to note that this aggressive and culturally challenging

initiative was not only providing dividends after a very short time-frame (less than two

years), but was initiated due to GE employees' concerns over the quality of their product!

This is a clear indication that GE employees not only embraced but also strived for

improvement.

Welch successfully implemented a number of change initiatives by first

systematically addressing and modifying his organization's culture and values through

empowerment, open communication and reward. He was successful in building a

company that viewed change as an opportunity for improvement. Jack Welch

consistently challenged his leaders and managers, expected much from them, developed

and turned them into visionaries and, if necessary, replaced them. A statement by Jack

Welch clearly illustrates his vision of an effective organizational culture:

> Quality and excellence would create an atmosphere where all our
> employees would feel comfortable stretching beyond their limits, to
> better than we ever thought we could be. This "human element"
> would foster an environment where people would dare to try new
> things, where they would feel assured in knowing that only the limits
> of their creativity and drive would be the ceiling on how far and how
> fast they would move.[37]

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[36] Christopher A. Bartlett and Meg Wozny, *GE's Two-Decade. . .,* 12.

[37] Jack Welch with John A. Byrne, *Jack Straight from the gut* (New York: Warner Business Books, 2003), 106-107.

CF members often state they must deal with a monumental amount of bureaucracy and that the organization is too large to effectively deal with change. Yet when Welch became CEO of GE, he was taking the reins of a company with over 404,000 employees, spread over 10 groups, 46 divisions and 190 departments, laden with over 43 strategic plans. The bureaucratic and cultural inertia were immense. On the other hand, a CF commanding officer will usually lead a unit of less than 500 people, and while there are limits imposed by higher level policy, there always exists rich opportunities for improving his organization's own processes. Moreover, while a CO may not have much opportunity to enrich the pocketbook of his subordinates; he can most definitely enrich their experiences, self-worth and sense of accomplishment. However, in introducing change, the CO must be fully aware of potential change barriers and opportunities as well as the enabling power of organizational politics.

As was the case with GE, concern for organizational culture also became the mainstay of change initiatives conducted by a certain number of military organizations, we will now examine a few such examples

Successes in the Military

Case #1

Recognizing that a large portion of change initiatives failures were the result of a lack of understanding of the human factor, the USAF's Human Effectiveness Directorate commissioned a team to develop a tool that would resolve this problem. The end product, introduced in 1999, is the Readiness Assessment and Planning Tool Research (RAPTR). This computer based, user ready database was designed to collect all change initiative

data with a focus on capturing lessons learned at the cultural and user-readiness levels.

By assessing both regional as well as military culture factors, RAPTR allows managers to

better assess their units' readiness to accept and embrace change initiatives. RAPTR

performs a "cultural assessment" by anticipating learned sources of resistance to change,

and tailors change management strategies and reward systems to that which will produce

the best results for the affected organization.[38]

Case #2

In December 2000, the US Army Materiel Command (AMC) headquarter was

awarded its ISO 9001:2000 certification for continuous change management efforts. It

thus became the first US Army entity to be certified to this prestigious international

standard. This remarkable achievement was the result of the introduction of a change

initiative process that placed its greatest emphasis on the "people" component.[39] The

AMC did this by educating its leaders on the impact organizational culture has on change

initiatives and on the importance of sound "campaign planning" which is AMC's version

of change management.[40]

Case #3

Successful implementation of a change initiative within the CF is also not unheard

of. 1 Air Maintenance Squadron (1 AMS) embarked on a little known yet significant

reengineering effort of its aircraft maintenance practices when it was faced with an

impending 25% cut in personnel and resources and the threat of alternate service delivery

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[38] Cassie B. Barlow, "Issues 2000 Cultural Change in the Organization," *Air Force Journal of Logistics* Vol. 24, Issue 3 (Fall 2000): 1.

[39] Lieutenant Colonel Al Wilson and Lieutenant Colonel Rod Tozzi, "Continuous Change Management," *Army Logistician* (March-April 2002): 13.

[40] Lieutenant Colonel Al Wilson and Lieutenant Colonel Rod Tozzi, "Continuous . . .,13.

(ASD). In order to safeguard its core processes, 1 AMS had to demonstrate it could perform them better than civilian industry. 1 AMS leadership therefore embarked on an ambitious and pre-emptive reengineering effort.

However reengineering efforts did not commence until every unit member thoroughly understood that change was absolutely required to allow 1 AMS to remain operationally viable. This important message was promulgated using numerous training sessions, town halls, by using the unit's newsletter and in the promulgation of a clear CO Strategic Plan. Furthermore, the promise of delegated empowerment created much-needed synergy. Delegated empowerment meant that new process owners would be given more executive freedom as long as well-defined goals were achieved within planned resource envelopes. A change culture had thus germinated and would grow under the selected reengineering methodology. The 1 AMS effort focused on a bottom-up approach using reengineering teams specially constructed to enhance unit "buy in" of solutions. The end result was impressive, by enhancing efficiencies the total number of processes was reduced by 20% and resulting savings in person years was 15%.[41]

The criticality for a change initiative to include concern for the human component and organizational culture cannot be overstated. The above examples clearly demonstrate that this is true for both civilian and military environments. Every leader embarking on a change initiative must first understand his organization's values and must set conditions so as to allow for a change culture to flourish. However, to understand today's military

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[41] Department of National Defence, *Project Genesis report. . .*, 63.

culture, commanding officers must appreciate the social issues currently affecting every soldier within their command.

TODAY'S OPPORTUNITIES

The CF culture has significantly evolved during the past decade. While the late nineties introduced improved pay and benefits, these were counter-weighed with heavier workload resulting from cuts in personnel and an increase in the CF's operational tempo. Between 1991 and 2004, the number of deployed operations consistently increased while, in response to the 1994 White Paper, the CF's strength was reduced from 87,000 to less than 60,000.[42] The chart below illustrates the great increase in operational tempo over the last fifteen years.
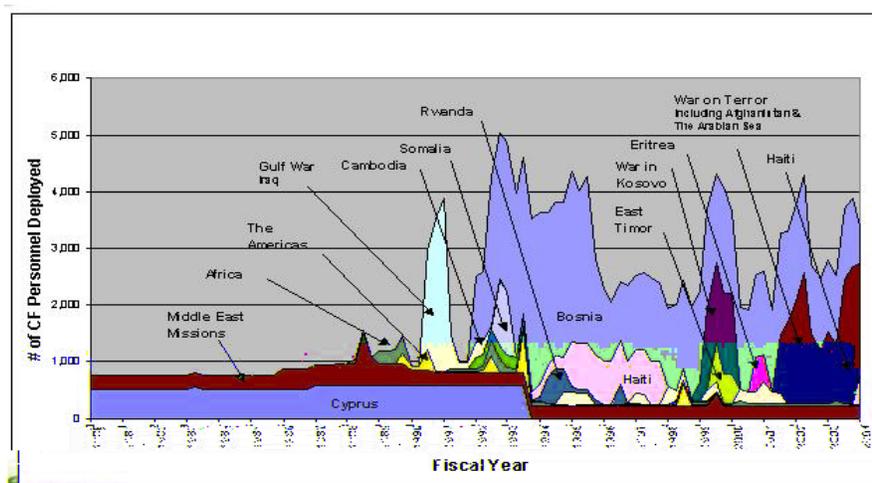

Fig 1: Source – Briefing by Col Strogan, Comd CF JOG, to CFC Students on 2 December 2004.

This sharp rise in tempo has resulted in varying degrees of unit "burn out" and contributed to higher than average attrition rates, which, in turn, increased force

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[42] Department of National Defence, *1994 Defence. . .,*46.

generation requirements.[43] Furthermore, while the aftermath of the Somalia Inquiry

has raised the CF's educational standards, the accelerating technological evolution is also

resulting in a commensurate change in education and training standards.[44] Consequently,

today's average soldier is better educated and may not share the same values as his

predecessors.   Not only does the investment placed in educating and training today's

soldier makes him an increasingly valuable resource but also, through education and self-

awareness, he expects more from his employers.[45] Much effort must be placed at keeping

this person challenged by employing him optimally and with a sense of purpose. This

greater sense of purpose can mainly be satisfied through empowerment and

accountability; factors which greatly affect organizational culture.[46]   In other words, the

importance of organizational politics, which involves the acquisition and transfer of

power, has greatly risen within the military during the past few decades.

It is also important to note that today's soldier views his relationship with the CF

as more transactional than previous generations. Affected by societal values, he has a

generally short-term view of his profession and places greater importance on personal

goals. The leadership of the CF must recognize these individual needs and must ensure

that, in accomplishing the mission, individual needs are also being met.[47] As stated by

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[43] House of Commons, Standing Committee on National Defence and Veteran's Affairs, *MOVING FORWARD: A Strategic Plan for Quality of Life Improvements in the Canadian Forces*, October, 1998: Chapter 1.

[44] Department of National Defence, *Dishonoured legacy : the lessons of the Somalia affair*, Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia. (Ottawa: DND Canada 1997)

[45] James Champy, *Reengineering Management* (New York: HaperCollins, 1995), 162-163.

[46] James Champy, *Reengineering . . .*, 155.

[47] Lieutenant-General George Macdonald, "Leadership in an Era. . .," 179.

the former chairman of Imperial Chemical Industries, Sir John Harvey-Jones: "In the

future, the organizations will have to adapt to the needs of the individual, rather than

expecting the individual to adapt to the needs of the organization."[48] This "me" culture

demands that leaders not only be endowed with a very clear understanding of the mutual

effects of organizational culture vis-à-vis change initiatives but must also understand the

intricacies of organizational politics.   Today's soldier will readily question decisions

unless they clearly fall in line with his beliefs and aspirations; this presents a special

challenge to COs. As stated by Moskos and Burk:

> Military leaders have always carried primary responsibility for
> providing a sense of purpose to members of their units. Primarily,
> they did so by identifying and reinforcing shared values and
> identities, and linking unit goals and tasks to these values and
> identities. In view of the increased cultural and demographic
> diversity of units, and the greater openness of the army to civilian
> considerations, the challenge of framing unit missions with reference
> to shared values and identities become increasingly difficult.[49]

Leaders face a myriad of new challenges; nonetheless, through education, training

and experience, they can become better prepared to deal with change.

TODAY'S CHALLENGE

According to Kotter, a great sense of urgency must be developed within the

organization before change can proceed successfully. He believes that " a majority of

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[48] Roger Gill, *Change Management or. . .,* 310.

[49] Charles C. Moskos and James Burk, *The adaptive military: armed forces in a turbulent world - The Postmodern Military* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 149.

employees, perhaps 75 percent of management overall, and virtually all of the top

executives need to believe that considerable change is absolutely essential."[50] Has the CF

reached this form of crisis? It could be argued that the CF reached this crisis during the

fiscal restraints of the nineties and that it no longer faces a similar urgency. However,

given the asymmetric nature of warfare we now face in the post cold war era, we are

indeed in a state of crisis.[51] Today's army must be able to quickly respond to very

unpredictable situations. Military thinkers see the need for smaller, more mobile and

flexible forces that maximize the use of technology and training as force multipliers.[52]

This new doctrine is engendering what has been called a Revolution of Military Affairs

(RMA). Routinely ascribed by today's military analysts, RMA is:

> A major change in the nature of warfare brought about by the
> innovative application of new technologies which, combined with
> dramatic changes in military doctrine and organizational concepts,
> fundamentally alters the character and conduct of military
> operations.[53]

The effects of RMA will unavoidably lead to change. We may no longer face the

dramatic resource cuts of the nineties, however the gradual yet constant evolution

prompted by RMA will provide much opportunity for change initiatives. In fact, in the

document "Shaping the Future of the Canadian Forces: A Strategy for 2020", DND and

the CF's senior leadership recognizes the changing environment in which defence

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[50] John P. Kotter, *Leading. . .*, 48.

[51] Elinor C. Sloan, *Evolution in Military Affairs* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 109. Sloan explains how an asymmetric threat is one that will not use conventional means to confront its enemy. Rather, "they will look for ways to match their strengths against our weaknesses."

[52] Elinor C. Sloan, *Evolution in . . .*, 11.

[53] Department of National Defence, *Shaping the Future. . .*, 1.

operates and "provides a roadmap on how best to implement Canada's Defence Policy in light of emerging defence challenges."[54] It further articulates eight long-term strategic objectives that underpin DND and the CF's agenda for adopting change. By embracing change initiatives, the CF will be better prepared at introducing RMA driven processes, doctrine and equipment. Rather than simply adjusting our often-inefficient methods to new technology, we will be able to revolutionize our processes by reaping dividends presented by the plethora of new technology and doctrine. As expressed by Edgar Schein, the introduction of new technology discussed under RMA presents an excellent opportunity for leaders to affect their organizational cultures. Schein would likely characterize RMA as a form of "technological seduction which involves the deliberate, managed introduction of specific technologies for the sake of seducing organization members into new behaviors".[55] This, he further opines, makes members question their old values, beliefs and assumptions. For instance, the recent introduction of precision-guided ammunition has greatly affected the course of modern warfare and the application of deadly force. By allowing pin-point destructive accuracy, these new weapons, combined with the effects of global media, have greatly contributed to the belief that even a small degree of collateral damage (the destruction of civilian housing for example) is unacceptable in today's conflicts.

The key to effective combat power is to pre-empt imposed change by developing a culture that will not only be prepared to deal with change but will continually seek the opportunities it presents. Emulating Jack Welch's approach, a unit commanding officer

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[54] Department of National Defence, *Shaping the Future. . .*, 1.

[55] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 2d ed. (New York: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 318.

can develop the tools necessary to affect and shape his organization's culture. The remainder of this paper will focus on how a commanding officer can develop himself and shape his unit so as to prepare it to not only accept change but to continuously seek out continuous improvement.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Change initiative encompasses a two-dimensional process.[56] One dimension is technical and involves the actual reengineering or redesign of a process in order to reap increased effectiveness. The other dimension of a change initiative is behavioral and involves the art of managing the human factor's reaction to change. All too often, change initiatives such as BPR were focused on the technical side; underestimating the cultural impact of process change. As a result, leaders of such initiative were unable to reap the full potential of their change effort.[57] In applying a sound change initiative, it is crucial to remain cognizant of its effect on people; this will significantly reduce change resistance during implementation. An effective leader must accept the fact that it is human nature to resist change. He must therefore address this challenge whenever he embarks on a change initiative. This is best accomplished by using a carefully structure approach to change known in the business world as "change management".[58]

Change management provides the tools and techniques to effectively manage the impact of change initiatives on the human factor. Change management techniques allow

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[56] David K. Carr and Henry J. Johansson, *Best Practices in. . .,* 33.

[57] David K. Carr and Henry J. Johansson, *Best Practices in. . .,*35.

[58] Charles Marsh, "What is the Role of Change Management in the Military Financial Management Community?" *Armed Forces Comptroller,* Fall, 2003: 25.

a leader to proactively deal with potential resistance to change and set the conditions

that will prepare an organization to face change by ensuring its members are able to adapt

to new realities. According to Al-Mashari and Zairi:

> Change management involves all human and social related changes
> and cultural adjustment techniques needed by management to
> facilitate the insertion of newly designed processes and structure into
> working practices and to deal effectively with resistance.[59]

The importance of sound change management cannot be overstated; however,

good change management practices are not sufficient; change initiatives must also be

well led.

Leadership and Change Management

While a change initiative must be well managed (planned, organized and

controlled), its ultimate success rests on how well it is led.[60] All too often, well conceived

change management initiatives have fallen victim to poor leadership and ended in failure.

Organizational change will usually result in power conflicts; leaders want to implement

change and followers will often resist it. The inability of leaders to use their soft "power"

to affect organizational culture has been identified as a major source of failure.[61] In order

to implement successful change initiatives, an organization's leadership must first "build

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[59] Majed Al-Mashari and Mohamed Zairi, "BPR implementation process: an analysis of key success and failure factors," *Business process management Journal* Vol. 5, Issue 1, 1999: 87.

[60] This fact is supported by an American Management Association survey (1994), which identified that the keys to successful change are first and foremost leadership followed closely by corporate values and communication.

[61] Roger Gill, *Change Management or . . .*, 308.

a culture of sustainable shared values that support the vision and strategy for change, and empowering, motivating and inspiring those who are involved or affected."[62]

As leadership is the art of influencing others to do our bidding, it involves influencing the hearts and minds of individuals.[63] Effective leadership does not equate to coercion and threat but rather the use of soft power to motivate and rally others towards a clear goal. Accordingly, a leader is placed in a position where he can have great impact on subordinates' values and beliefs. Hence he can create and influence culture within his organization.[64] However, in order to affect organizational culture, a leader must also stay in touch with the ever-changing human environment and the challenges presented by organizational politics. He can no longer lead from an "ivory tower" expecting followers to blindly do his bidding.

As expressed by Lieutenant-General MacDonald, in order to address our changing environment, we cannot "rest on our military laurels by simply applying the principles of leadership in the traditional way."[65] Transformation leadership, which is the type concerned with developing subordinates by placing emphasis on followers' needs and values, is the most conducive to building an environment that will embrace change.[66] Yet the CF leadership all too often takes a very systematic, autocratic approach when dealing

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[62] *Ibid*., 308.

[63] Peter G. Northhouse, *Leadership Theory and Practice*, 2d ed. (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 2001), 142-146.

[64] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture*. . ., 5.

[65] Lieutenant-General George Macdonald, "Leadership. . ., 168.

[66] Peter G. Northhouse, *Leadership*. . ., 146.

with the human component. As mentioned earlier, today's realities make such an approach ineffective. The modern leader must understand that successful change involves the sharing of power and mutual development between himself and his subordinates.

It is also important for a leader to note that cultural renewal can be staunched if the organization is being overwhelmed with a plethora of change initiatives. Every organization needs some form of stability if it is to foster teamwork and concerted effort. The author Abrahamson advocates a concept that he calls "dynamic stability":

> To change successfully, companies should stop changing all the time. Instead, they should intersperse major change initiatives among carefully paced periods of smaller, organic change, using processes I call tinkering or kludging. By doing so, companies can manage overall change with an approach called dynamic stability.[67]

The role of the leader in every change initiative must be clear.   As stated earlier, he must set the conditions that will catalyze his organization in adopting and prospering in a change environment. This is especially important in the case of an organization like the CF, which has traditionally been conservative and risk avert. It is therefore important for military leaders to first have a sound appreciation of the change barriers and enablers that are specific to their own culture and to advantageously use this knowledge throughout the change management phase.

UNDERSTANDING THE MILITARY DIMENSION: HOW TO PRACTICE CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN THE CF

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[67] Eric Abrahamson, "Change Without Pain," *Harvard Business Review*, July – August 2000: 75.

According to a collection of references, it can be surmised that change usually comprises of three distinct phases.[68]   Phase 1, coined by Champy as the mobilization phase or, according to Schein, the "unfreeze" phase, involves understanding your environment and shaping it so as to be in a position to more readily accept change. [69] The second phase consists in the act of actually implementing change and phase three involves making sure that an organization does not revert to its pre-improvement methods and continuously seeks at enhancing the way it does business.[70]

The following chart depicts the steps of change management that will now be discussed:

Phase 1	Mobilization Phase	• Understand cultural barriers • Build a change culture • Prepare the management team • Communicate and advertise the aim of the change initiative
Phase 2	Implementing Change	• Strategic Planning • Creation of the change initiative coalition • Coaching
Phase 3	Reinforcing Change	• Continuous improvement • Quality system • Celebration and Reward

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[68] While this study highlights findings by Schein and Champy, author, John Kotter, *on What Leaders Really Do*, (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1999),48. also advocates a three-step approach to change management: 1. Analysis of cultural factors and change resistance, 2. Selecting and implementing a change strategy; and 3 Monitoring the implementation process.

[69] James Champy, *Reengineering Management. . .*, 40-56.

[70] David K. Carr and Henry J. Johansson, *Best Practices. . .,* 50.

Phase 1 – Mobilization Phase

Building an Environment Conducive to Change

The uncertainty change brings can un-intentionally and negatively affect those soft variables critical to productivity and performance: pride, motivation, job security, perception of self-worth, organization identification and team cohesion. By ignoring these "soft variables" we create at atmosphere of resistance and fear of change. In order to build an environment that is conducive to change, one must first understand the nature and source of these "soft variables". The art of influencing the human component must therefore become the focus of any change initiative effort.

In the aftermath of failed reengineering efforts of the nineties, civilian industry now places greater effort in "selling" the change initiative to its people.[71] However, this is not always the case in the military environment. While the military is not a democratic institution, implementing change necessarily involves power politics in order to influence the human factor. As explained by Kotter, unlike doctors and other professionals whose performance is directly linked to their own talent, managers and leaders are dependant on the output of subordinates, peers and other leaders.[72] This accentuates the importance of effectively dealing with organizational politics (power sharing), even within the military. Imposing change without gaining the support of at least a portion of a military unit's will can lead to a dysfunctional workplace and loss of respect and confidence in its leadership.

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[71] Majed al-Mashari, Zahir Irani and Mohamed Zairi, "Business Process Reengineering. . . ", 452. In a multinational survey involving over sixty companies, it was clearly illustrated that significant resources are placed on first preparing organizational culture before embarking on a change initiative.

[72] John Kotter, *on What Leaders Really Do*, (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1999), 97.

COs must employ transformational leadership, which aims at creating interdependence and trust between the leader and subordinates, by encouraging creativity and should manage, as opposed to control, change initiatives.[73] They must recognize that while a more directive leadership approach works well during a crisis, this is not necessarily the case for more routine situations.[74] To mobilize a unit at embracing change, "the leader must learn the needs of its people, articulate them, and, in the deepest sense of the word, respond to them."[75] The leader must use reward and empowerment to "win" the hearts and minds of his subordinates. The CF's Judge Advocate General eloquently expressed how leaders should approach change:

> What leaders need to do is to ensure the acceptance of change by subordinates. The acceptance of change is best attained by the demonstration of a personal commitment to the change by the leaders . . .The existence of change should be primarily seen as a leadership challenge, rather than a threat.[76]

However, in order to ensure members of a unit accept change, the leader must first understand how cultural barriers are formed and affected. As pointed out by Edgar

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[73] Bernard M. Bass, *Transformational Leadership, Industry, Military and Educational Impact* (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 1998), 65-66. According to Bass, there exists two broad leadership methods: Transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership creates a culture which functions using explicit or implicit contracts. In this environment, the subordinate is more concerned with being rewarded in exchange for his efforts. On the other hand, transformational leadership creates a culture whereby there is mutual support between employers and subordinates. "Leaders and followers go beyond their self-interests or expected rewards for the good of the team and of the organization."

[74] Lieutenant-General George Macdonald, "Leadership. . ., 178.

[75] James Champy, *Reengineering Management. . .*, 46.

[76] Department of National Defence, Office of the Judge Advocate General, *Military Justice at the Summary trial Level* (8 July 1999).

Schein "organizational learning, development, and planned change cannot be understood without considering culture as a primary source of resistance to change."[77]

Understanding the military culture

Be it in the civilian or military world, resistance to change can overcome almost any form of innovation if change management practices are unsound. Regardless of the environment, leaders must remain cognizant of the possible barriers, and enablers, they face when implementing change initiatives. Through clear communication and the formulation of an un-restricted yet clear strategic plan, leaders must reach every individual within their organization in order to have an impact on the organizational culture. Given the nature of a military environment, this can present a special challenge. Military values most inspired at the individual levels, such as duty, loyalty and selflessness, tend to create a submissive mentality as opposed to a critical and innovative one. As stated by Dr. Allan English, "The Canadian military culture displays some characteristics of non-adaptive culture, and, therefore may be difficult to change in the future."[78] The question is, how to affect change in what appears to be a non-adaptive culture?

There obviously exists a fairly significant "culture gap" between military and civilians. This difference mainly stems from "the differing values, philosophies and tradition, which are fundamental to its [the military's] functional war fighting

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[77] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture. . .,* xiv.

[78] Dr. Allan English, *Understanding Military Culture: A Canadian Perspective*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 4.

imperatives."[79] The military culture is ingrained in the notion that individual

aspirations must be subordinate to collective effort. Such an autocratic setting usually

translates into a culture that, while sharing a great sense of meaning and stability, does

not promote innovation and change.[80] As observed by Janowitz, the bureaucratic nature

of the military can also stifle initiative and innovation: two important preconditions to

embracing change.[81] He further opines "Resistance to innovation is centred in the middle

management layer where "ceremonialism" and "organizational rigidity" caused by the

"prerogatives of rank" inhibit creative problem solving."[82] According to Schein, another

factor contributing to the military's non-adaptive culture is its success. He explains how

continued success of a mature organization leads to a strongly held culture.[83] This is

especially true given the fact that most western armed forces have, in effect, "won" the

cold war and are now meeting unbridled success while conducting peacekeeping and

humanitarian operations.

Compounding this problem is the fact that the inherent hazard of military duty

makes the military establishment more risk averse than civilian industry. The hazards of

dealing with deadly and/or destructive force have naturally introduced very strict policies

and inflexible procedures. Personnel in occupations such as ammunition technician,

whose role directs them to deal with weapons on a day-to-day basis, will tend to never

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[79] Charles B. Breslin, *Organizational culture and the military* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 2000), 1.

[80] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture. . .,*140.

[81] Morris Janowitz, *Sociology and the Military Establishment* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1965), 46.

[82] Morris Janowitz, *Sociology and the. . .,* 86.

[83] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture. . .,* 321.

question policy and are much less open to innovation and risk management. For those

and other reasons, military leaders are more comfortable with following and

promulgating direction than in finding new ways of doing business.[84] In the end, the

resulting inertia "diverts true change initiatives into near status quo with a different

wrapper."[85]

While the preceding resistance factors date back to the origins of the military

establishment, a number of recent socio-political events have also contributed to the CF's

resistance to change. For instance, the recent evolution of the CF's human resource

management framework has led to an aversion towards change for fear that it may impact

newly introduced individual rights. The implementation of the CF's Redress System and

introduction of a military ombudsman have greatly affected how leaders deal with their

subordinates. Individual rights and aspirations must now remain at the forefront of

decision making; a factor that was not as prevalent just fifteen years ago. While this new

reality may, on the surface, appear restrictive, it is actually more conducive to sound

change management practice. By placing more consideration on individual rights within

the CF, leaders must now focus on organizational culture and politics when implementing

change; factors that were often ignored during past change initiatives. Today's leaders

must understand that their powers may be constrained by "the countervailing power on

the part of the subordinates to withdraw their cooperation"[86] Consequently, leaders find

themselves having to share a portion of their power and status with subordinates in order

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[84] Elinor C. Sloan, *Evolution in Military. . .,* 27.

[85] *Ibid*., 54.

[86] Diana C, Pheysey, *Organizational Cultures* (London; New York: Routhledge, 1993), 148.

to motivate organizations; for the ultimate outcome of a change initiative will be a negotiated one.[87]

Another factor affecting CF culture stems from the inherent accountability it must hold to all Canadians. As a public organization, the military must be transparent and must also reflect Canadian values. Events such as the Somalia Inquiry have brought considerable public focus upon CF's operations and have resulted in a plethora of new policies and procedures that eventually led to a review of long ingrained organizational values and beliefs.

Leaders must also appreciate that the recent regime of budget cutting has had a profound negative affect on military culture. Downsize culture coupled with an increase in operational tempo mentioned earlier have undermined service members' commitment as they become more frustrated with a perceived lack of support from senior leadership.[88] This, in turn, makes them more cynical towards and less responsive to change initiatives as they view these as precursors to further cuts.

Finally, the length of time necessary to modify a unit's culture is also an obstacle to implementing change. On average, successful change of an organization's culture takes in excess of six years.[89] During such a time frame, the posting of key change proponents, including the CO, can stall the transformation process. Thus critical

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[87] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture. . .,* 83.

[88] Charles B. Breslin, *Organizational culture. . .,* 24.

[89] Jac Fitz-enz, *The 8 Practices of Exceptional Companies: How Great Organizations Make the Most of Their Human Assets* (New York: Amacom, 1997), 81.

momentum can be lost and regression may follow if an organization lets up before the change practices have been driven into the culture.[90] Although this barrier may appear to be immovable given the realities of posting cycles, as long as a leader has successfully anchored the process of cultural change within his unit, the new message has an excellent chance in naturally permeating itself onto newcomers.

The leader must remember at all times that organizational culture cannot be proclaimed or easily manipulated, but rather it can only be modified by affecting its composition, individual by individual, with a thorough understanding of his organization's value system, effective communication, power sharing, mentoring and leading by example. While introducing change in an organization with a strong culture can present a challenge, according to Schein, this deep culture can actually be used to fuel change initiatives.[91] For instance, a unit's rigid tie to its operational role can rally its members to embrace change if it will ensure the survival of this core function.

The key to leading change is to hold a deep understanding of motivational forces; leaders can use this extremely powerful tool to rally subordinates in accomplishing what was seemingly the impossible. As explained by political scientist James MacGregor Burns however, leaders are all too often devoid of this deep understanding of motivational forces.[92] In order to appreciate what motivates people to change, leaders need to also understand how change barriers are formed.

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[90] John P. Kotter, *Leading Change. . .*, 133.

[91] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture. . .,* 358.

[92] James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 27.

Understanding change barriers

Change is about people, cultural barriers and power. While an organization (or individual) fully understands its past accomplishments, change creates uncertainty for the future hence can challenge its identity. The organization may not understand or embrace the CO's intent or vision and, perceiving that the proposed change conflicts with its culture and value system, may erect change barriers.[93] As Champy puts it, the leader's power is limited not by the precepts of change initiatives but by the nature of a culture.[94] Fortunately, a commanding officer can have a significant influence on the culture and values of his organization. To be truly effective, a CO must be prepared to address change barriers by first securing a good understanding of organizational culture and politics.

In understanding the natural resistance to change, we can look at the "20-70-10 Principle".[95] Under this principle:

- 20% of staff will be "true believers" in the change process;
- 70% of staff will be "fence sitters" (resisting for good reason); and
- 10% of staff will be "saboteurs" who will, under any circumstance, defy the process.

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[93] Lieutenant-General George Macdonald, "Leadership. . ., 182-183.

[94] James Champy, *Reengineering Management. . .*, 35.

[95] Julian Barling, "Managing Change", *Queens School of Business course MBUS 957*, Spring 2004.

A leadership challenge is to identify the "true believers" and engage this group to assist the leader in converting the "fence sitters". In doing so, the latter group need not be brought into the "true believer" realm but rather their healthy scepticism can be used in a constructive manner. Fence sitters can be influenced if their values and beliefs are competently addressed (a matter that will be discussed later). As for the "saboteurs", this group must also be clearly identified and, if it cannot be swayed, may have to be summarily dealt with. This, however, must be done in a progressive manner so as to not turn the "saboteurs" into "martyrs". Leaders must first use soft means such as discussions, the provision of numerous opportunities to engage, and training. If unsuccessful in amending this situation, there must be low tolerance for those who simply will not help the process but any dismissal must be done with care of the person's dignity. In every case, the challenge of organizational change will never be insurmountable as long as the leaders have a clear understanding of their subordinates' culture. Leaders "need to work hard at being interpersonally and inter-culturally competent."[96]

In a work entitled "Understanding Military Culture: A Canadian Perspective" Dr. Allan English explains how culture is the set of "values, attitudes and beliefs which provide people with a common way of interpreting events."[97] He also notes how attitudes "have both a cognitive (the opinions, beliefs, knowledge or information a person possesses), and an emotional (or affective [values]) component usually involving the like

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[96] Lieutenant-General George Macdonald, "Leadership. . .,174.

[97] Dr. Allan English, *Understanding Military. . .*, 11.

or dislike of something…"[98]. Furthermore, Dr English opines that attitudes will greatly influence behaviour. Therefore, the relationship between values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour can be expresses as follows:

VALUES + BELIEFS → ATTITUDES → BEHAVIOUR[99]

Sets of beliefs and values can greatly assist in building a sense of community or "esprit de corps" within sub-cultures such as the military. However, given their stabilizing and perpetuating effect, values and beliefs are major sources of resistance to change.[100] Any tendency to affect individual beliefs and values, perhaps while introducing a change initiative, naturally results in resistance and a sense of threat. Individuals who feel threatened may often revert to organizational politics in order to regain the perceived loss of control.[101]   In such cases, individuals will use their personal power to stall or even sabotage the change initiative. Nonetheless, individual beliefs and values can be affected without the perception of threat if a CO uses the right approach; the means of which will be discussed later.

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[98] Dr. Allan English, *Understanding Military*. . ., 8.

[99] Dr. Allan English, *Understanding Military*. . ., 8.

[100] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture*. . .,12. According to Schein, organizational culture perpetuates itself through peering. He defines culture as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integrations, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems."

[101] Dave Buchanan and Richard Badham, "Politics and organizational change: The lived experience," *Human relations* Vol. 52 (May 1999): 610.

Finally, imposing change usually involves power struggles (organizational politics). COs embarking on a change initiative must understand that a major source of fear of change originates from the subordinates' perceived threat of losing control and power.[102] While political behaviour in the workplace is typically viewed as negative, its existence cannot be overlooked. It is important to note that political behaviour can, in many instances, energize organizational change.[103] Leaders must use their position of authority to influence those whom they depend upon to meet unit objectives. This can be achieved by clearly illustrating the leader's willingness to share power and control over change initiatives. Organizational politics can also be used to create "change coalitions" who will help the leader implement his vision.[104]

Understanding the organization

Strategies take on value only as committed people infuse them with energy.

- Philip Selznick.

The aggregation of individual beliefs and values leads to an organizational culture. While a strong culture enhances an organization's ability to deal with challenges, it also makes it less susceptible to change.[105] That is because change often means transforming the fundamental aspects of an organization's values and beliefs; a

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[102] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture. . .*, 80.

[103] Cynthia Hardy, "Understanding power: bringing about strategic change," *British Journal of Management*, Issue 7 (March 1996): 3.

[104] Dave Buchanan and Richard Badham, "Politics and organizational change: The lived experience," *Human relations*, Vol. 52 (May 1999): 611.

[105] Jac Fitz-enz, *The 8 Practices of Exceptional Companies. . .,* 73.

difficult challenge unless it is effectively and systematically addressed. Organizational culture is therefore a determining factor in successful change initiative efforts.[106] In order to change its culture, a leader must have a thorough understanding of the organization to which he belongs and, most importantly, its readiness to change. This can be accomplished in a varying way; Carr and Johansson advocate the use of formal and informal surveys [107] while Schein is a strong proponent of consultation.[108] By employing a structured approach, leaders not only gain a better understanding of the readiness of a unit to withstand change but can also identify any cultural gap that may exist as well as the extent to which a unit is ready for change without getting into a "change fatigue" state.

Organizational change can be implemented in a number of ways but every method must consider its potential effect on individual beliefs and values. For instance, the effective use of a reward system has profound effect on influencing individual and organizational value systems.[109] However, the CF's reward system was aimed at recognizing the risk adverse rather than visionaries and risk takers. In other words, mistakes, which are crucial in the development of innovators, usually led to career hindrances rather than a development opportunity. As Champy clearly expresses in Reengineering Management, we have "fostered a culture of bureaucracy – that is, a moral environment that focuses on "activity, not results."[110] Unfortunately, this organizational

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[106] Majed Al-Mashari and Mohamed Zairi, "BPR implementation process. . ., 89.

[107] David K. Carr and Henry J. Johansson, *Best Practices. . .*, 49.

[108] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture. . .*, 168.

[109] Dr. Allan English, *Understanding Military. . .*, 15.

[110] James Champy, *Reengineering Management. . .*, 20.

culture flourished because "group members tend to behave in ways that teach these practices to new members, rewarding those who fit in and sanctioning those who do not."[111] In order to embrace and respond to change, the CF must start recognizing innovation and must also accept more risk in allowing their members to be bold. Leaders embarking on change initiatives must break down this reward system induced barrier. They must encourage a value system whereby innovative thinking, risk taking and, in some cases, failure (for trying) are rewarded if they are to build an organizational culture willing to embrace change.

It is important to note that resistance to cultural change is so great that it is usually embarked upon only when the very survival of an organization might be at stake.[112] Therefore, while the very survival of a unit may not necessarily be at stake, COs embarking on a change initiative must clearly state the impact change (or lack thereof) will bring to the unit's operational role. It is crucial for organizations to see change as a means of not only improving efficiencies but also enhancing (and preserving) the entire unit's operational output. As will be discussed in more detail later, the CO's message must be consistent and crystal clear: that the final product of the change initiative must directly support, and not change, the unit's core operational role. By focusing on a common and shared value, the leader greatly increases his chance of motivating unit members; change that is compatible with the organization's culture is naturally more

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[111] John P. Kotter, *Leading Change. . .*, 148.

[112] James O'Toole, *Leading Change - Overcoming the Ideology of Comfort and the Tyranny of Custom*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing, 1995), 72-73.

readily accepted. [113]   As expressed by Fitz-enz, the key to successfully implementing

the culture change was to carry the word that, while processes might change, the

company's core values would not.[114]

The Leader's Role

According to Fitz-enz, "the single most powerful factor behind successful cultural

change is competent leadership".[115] A CO has a great amount of influence over his unit's

values in the way he leads it. For instance, as explained by James Champy in his book

Reengineering Management, numerous companies have created very negative cultures by

encouraging leadership practices that placed an overt amount of emphasis on internal

competition. The resulting negative values included lack of trust; a belief that employees

were simply overhead, not assets, the notion that internal rivalries were good and that

excellent performance was not a core value. However, following a team building and

management re-education process, the company's leadership approach was modified and

organizational values were successfully changed. [116]

As eloquently expressed by Conger, Speitzer and Lawler:

> The essential characteristics of leadership include the ability to
> challenge the status quo, engage in creative visioning for the future
> of the organization, and bring about appropriate changes in

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[113] Rune Lines, "Influence of participation in Strategic Change," *Journal of Change management*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (September 2004): 199.

[114] Jac Fitz-enz, *The 8 Practices. . .*, 100.

[115] Ibid.,79.

[116] James Champy, *Reengineering Management. . .*, 81-82.

followers' values, attitudes and behaviours through inspiration and empowerment.[117]

The above statement supports the argument that while there are numerous ways leaders can affect change, in order to achieve the desired results, the subordinate's values and beliefs must be addressed. As Dr. English summarizes, "leaders model the ethical norms that help to regulate [subordinate] behaviour, and this also has a profound effect on an organizational culture."[118] Methods to affect values and beliefs include leading by example, the effective use of recognition, sound communication and goal setting.

In leading by example, leaders must not only communicate their philosophy about change management but must "walk the talk". Better still, leaders must drive change, as expressed by James Champy, by "teaching it, doing it and living it."[119] The use of "quick hits", which will be discussed later, is a very effective means at "walking the talk". Leaders must not just communicate but act in a way that supports their vision and encouraging others to do the same. As explained by Champy, "don't expect people to change how they behave unless you change what they do…".[120]

By understanding the origins of organizational culture, one can better comprehend how a leader's actions enter into the culture forming equation.

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[117] Jay A. Conger, Gretchen M. Speitzer and Edward E. Lawler, *The Leader's Change Handbook: The Essential Guide to Setting Direction and Taking Action* (San Francisco: Josey-Bass Publishers, 1999), 354.

[118] Dr. Allan English, *Understanding Military Culture. . .*, 15.

[119] James Champy, *Reengineering Management. . .*, 90.

[120] *Ibid.*, 110.

According to Edgar Schein, cultures originate from three sources:

- The beliefs, values and assumptions of founders of organizations;

- The learning experiences of group members as their organization evolves; and

- New beliefs, values and assumptions brought in by new members and leaders.

Schein further opines that while each of the above mechanisms is critical to cultural evolution, the most influential factors are the founders and future leaders.[121] Also according to Schein, leaders can influence their organization's culture and willingness to change by using the following "Primary Embedding Mechanisms":

- What leaders pay attention to, measure and control;

- How leaders react to critical incidents and organizational crisis;

- Observed criteria by which leaders allocate scarce resources;

- Deliberate role modeling, teaching and coaching;

- Observed criteria by which leaders allocate rewards and status; and

- Observed criteria by which leaders recruit, select and promote organizational members.[122]

For instance, leaders have complete power over how they deal with matters such as performance excellence. If they tolerate poor work, they will generate a culture that values less than excellent work. If they tolerate internal squabbles and do not show

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[121] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture. . .*, 211.

[122] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture. . .*, 231.

appreciation for innovation, the feeling of mistrust will permeate and bad values will continue to drive out good ones. If a CO tolerates negative or unproductive behaviour, if he does not cultivate a positive culture, it will be nearly impossible for him to encourage and develop positive change.[123]   It is very important however for leaders to employ the above "embedding mechanism" in an un-conflicted way. For if there exists conflict or ambiguity, these inconsistencies will also be communicated and become a part of the organizational culture.[124]

James MacGregor Burns defines effective leadership as ". . . leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations - the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations - of both leaders and followers."[125] Hence leaders must learn how to align organizational goals with individual needs, beliefs, values, interests and aspirations.[126]   As mentioned earlier and professed by Burns, this can best be achieved by taking a transformational leadership approach. Leaders must seek out what is important to both the organization and those they lead and focus organizational efforts towards shared goals.

Military leaders must also understand that an outright overhaul of an organizational culture is not usually necessary to affect change. Rather, a gradual evolution through modelling, teaching, empowering, coaching or mentoring, will allow

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[123] James Champy, *Reengineering Management. . .*, 84.

[124] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture. . .*,252.

[125] James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership. . .*,19.

[126] Roger Gill, "Change Management or Change Leadership?". .,316.

leaders to effectively transmit their beliefs and values to at least a good portion of subordinates whom look up to their leaders for reinforcement. In doing so, the leader will create a cultural flow that, over time, will propagate itself throughout the entire organization.

Leaders must learn to communicate effectively and use every means possible to influence their unit's beliefs. Fear of change creates misinformation, COs must break down this barrier by listening to subordinates and, using a candid and motivating approach, communicate their vision and values at every opportunity. Leaders must not labour towards keeping information to themselves; rather than seeking control and feeling a need to have all the answers, the leader must learn to share information.

As presented earlier, what the leader consistently pays attention to very effectively communicates his values to subordinates. This explains why it is important for leaders to focus their attention on only a few critical matters. If a leader pays attention to too may things, "subordinates will use other signals or their own experience to decide what is really important."[127]

Leaders must also create an atmosphere prone to critical thinking by encouraging and rewarding "productive conflict". However, within the military organization where teamwork is at the forefront of effective combat power, internal conflict, while not unusual, is very much frowned upon. Yet, according to a study by Sockalingam and Doswell, conflict at the workplace is essential to an effective change process as long as

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[127] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture. . .*, 237.

leaders manage it well. [128] This is because change processes inherently thrive on the "clash of different viewpoints and ideas for creativity, superior decision quality, unity, true empowerment and motivation."[129] Hence leaders must learn how to challenge traditional military culture or else, as expressed by Schein, this culture will manage them.[130] The unit's leadership and management must learn to properly "funnel" conflict so as to keep it productive. The best way to ensure that conflict does not automatically lead to havoc is by creating an organizational atmosphere where information, communication and fair decision-making processes are vital.[131]

While a good understanding and use of organizational politics enables the leader to more effectively implement change, this dimension can also engender negative behaviour. In extreme cases, organizational politics can lead to questionable tactics at the expense of other employees and can greatly undermine a unit's cohesion. Such a situation is created when there exists a lack of clearly defined goals throughout the organization.[132] It is therefore crucial for leaders to embrace goal setting and to effectively communicate their vision.

Preparing the Leader and his Management Team

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[128] Siva Sockalingam and Andrew Doswell, "Conflict in BPR," *Knowledge and Process Management*, Volume 6, Number 3, (September 1999): 146-153.

[129] Siva Sockalingam and Andrew Doswell, "Conflict. . ., 151.

[130] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture*. . ., 15.

[131] Siva Sockalingam and Andrew Doswell, "Conflict. . ., 151.

[132] Biagio W Sciacca, "Don't turn your back on: Organizational Politics," *Pennsylvania CPA Journal*, Vol. 75, Issue 3, (Fall 2004): 32.

Before leaders can embark on a change initiative, they must first change themselves.[133] They must start "thinking reengineering" as Champy puts it. This means leading the way to critical thinking and relentless betterment. Thinking reengineering is best explained by a simple statement made by the former CEO of Coca-Cola Co, Douglas Daft, "At the end of every day of every year, two things remain unshakable, our constancy of purpose and our continuous discontent with the present."

Author Jennifer James advocates that a leader's ability to learn to be flexible is key to successfully implementing change.[134] James further states that leaders should try to incorporate change into a daily routine and to take special notice of ones' emotional and cognitive response. By recognizing how flexible and open to change he or she may be, the leader is better prepared to lead by example. In order to effectively implement change, leaders must also understand their own limitations in areas of change management. This will permit a leader to either secure the necessary training or to seek out the right "champion" who will be able to complement the leader's weaknesses.

Leaders who want to turn their units into one that embraces change must also learn to make difficult and bold decisions. Change can be traumatic, leaders must expect this fact and be able to deal with it by opening themselves to the possibility of being wrong. A leader must not worry so much about losing control but rather must concentrate his efforts at fostering a cooperative and innovative environment.

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[133] James Champy, *Reengineering Management. . .*, 35.

[134] Jennifer James, Thinking in the Future Sense (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 108.

All too often, managers will sit on their "rank status" to get things done. While this method can lead to success in a crisis or straightforward operation, it will rarely result in sustained excellence. It is therefore important for a unit CO to clearly understand the make up of a truly gifted leader with consideration for modern realities. While there will always be a requirement for a strong hierarchical rank in the military, leadership styles must evolve. Leaders must foster a more open approach to leadership, one that does not create the feeling of threat when dealing with modern culture and that will encourage open communication, innovation and fairness without being overly concerned with hierarchical matters.[135]

The political nature of change management naturally involves power sharing between a leader and his management team. However, as explained by Kotter, there is a significant difference between the leadership and manager roles. Managers are more focused on organizing people and tasks in achieving an objective whereas leaders motivate and align them by satisfying basic human needs.[136] These complementary roles are key to successful change management. A leader cannot affect change alone; once he has gained a sound understanding of change management, he must foster the all important leader-manager synergy by developing and engaging his management team.

Unlike civilian industry, COs generally have limited influence in selecting their managers. The CF posting system simply cannot allow the full control of this process to rest in the hands of COs. There will always be a percentage of low performers or under

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[135] Lieutenant-General George Macdonald, "Leadership. . ., 185.

[136] John P. Kotter, *On What Leaders Really Do* (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 1999), 60.

achievers making their way to a unit. In the end, COs must accept what may be perceived as a roadblock and turn it into an opportunity. For instance, it is a proven fact that leaders will generally choose subordinates they consider to be similar to themselves.[137] By not having full control over selecting subordinates, there is a greater chance that new members will not necessarily share the same opinions as the leader. This could prove to be more of an opportunity than a hindrance as it may catalyze creativity within a unit. COs must use transformational leadership to develop a synergistic bond with their newly posted managers. Gradually, using open dialogue and mutual support, this relationship will become highly productive and beneficial to the unit.

A unit's management team is usually comprised of its officers as well as its senior Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs). Herein lies the challenge that is not as prevalent in civilian industry. While the management team in civilian industry tends to be a highly educated group, this is rarely the case for the military. Whereas the officer corps is usually university educated, NCOs are not. Furthermore, while junior officers occupy key management positions, they are not usually endowed with the same level of experience as that held by NCOs. This dichotomy of effect can lead to a very difficult management atmosphere, one that may create confrontation rather than construction unless the CO is able to bridge what could be characterized as a chasm. This chasm can be significantly reduced in size if the CO provides a common "foe" to his entire management team. However, to be effective, this "foe" must be related to the unit's core activities (those which support its operational role). The CO can then employ this "united yet disparate front" by capitalizing on the differing strength and addressing

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[137] James Champy, *Reengineering Management. . .*, 172-174.

weaknesses. As discussed earlier, while conflict between these groups may still develop, it can be funnelled to create innovation.

It is important for leaders to recognize the fact that management is typically focused on maintaining the status quo.[138] Thus, it is critical for the leader to develop his management team to enable them to effectively nurture and support change efforts. The CO must promote innovation through formal and informal training, by teambuilding exercises and, most importantly, by rewarding creative thinking rather than conformity. This can be achieved, in part, through the proper use of the Personnel Evaluation Review (PER) process to highlight areas for growth and to identify learning opportunities be it through formal training or a change of responsibilities. Through transformational leadership, a unit CO must encourage his entire management team to constructively question the unit's purpose and methods of operation. This will both encourage initiative and demonstrate leadership commitment to improvement. While most of the management team will likely not form part of the Change Coalition (discussed later on), they must be completely involved with any change initiative. A leader must prevent change "aftershock" by sharing with his management team the purpose for change and agreeing with risks involved. This will enhance buy in and build trust within the organization.

Communicate the Aim

Before a unit can successfully pursue change initiatives, the unit commander must establish the "winning conditions" for change. As discussed earlier, the first task any CO

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[138] Anthony Landale, "Being a leader of change," *The British Journal of Administration Management* (December 2004): 18.

must undertake in creating winning conditions is to gain a better understanding of his

organizational culture and change barriers. The second task consisted in making sure he

and his management team were prepared to manage change and the third task consists in

clearly articulating what crisis is negatively affecting the unit's operational effectiveness.

While communication is critical at every stage of a change initiative, it is

especially so when building an organizational culture that is open to innovation.

Effective communication is considered to be a major key to successful change initiative

efforts. [139] Communication breaks down certain barriers, as it is the most effective means

at modifying individual's beliefs and reducing fear. Leaders must use every opportunity

to communicate their values but must also create an environment that will listen to and

understand the message. The leader must clearly express where he wants to lead the unit

and formulate the message to optimize "buy-in"; otherwise even the most eloquent of

messages will flounder. While Lt Gen Macdonald emphasises the fact that message must

"get everyone pulling his or her oar in the same direction," [140] Champy opines that, often,

all you need is to convince a few key personnel who can then champion your cause. [141]

Reminding people of what is critically important to the organization is usually the

best approach to opening communication streams. COs should not focus on national or

high level aims rather they must speak in terms that will be best understood by the lowest

rank in their organization. Junior members do not think in terms of strategic but rather at

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[139] Majed Al-Mashari and Mohamed Zairi, "BPR implementation process. . ., 88.

[140] Lieutenant-General George Macdonald, "Leadership. . ., 180.

[141] James Champy, *Reengineering Management*. . ., 95.

the tactical level. They seek what is important to them; matters directly affecting their sense of purpose and pride.

Both Kotter and Champy place emphasis on clearly identifying an impending disaster or sense of urgency for change. However, unless a military unit faces significant cuts in personnel, this rarely happens in the CF. Nonetheless, in his message, a unit CO should very clearly identify how resource constraints and challenges are preventing the unit from carrying out its basic operational mission. In order to be meaningful, the requirement for change must be linked to the unit's operational goals. As mentioned earlier, it must be clear to every member of the unit that by not embracing innovation, the unit's operational capabilities will be severely degraded. It is surprising how much support can be garnered when members see a threat to their organization's operational role; it affects their pride and self-worth. As expressed by Schein, organizations that rally around their core values are better prepared and motivated to embrace change that are beneficial to those values.[142] In essence, by focusing on a unit's core values (its operational role), a leader "guides" his organization to willingly accept change. Moreover, given the importance of a unit's core values, successful change initiatives will often lead to new values and beliefs hence a modified organizational culture.

Everyone must be "in the know, for everyone not in the know will see nothing in your efforts but a conspiracy."[143] Today's devolving network communication offers great opportunities to better communicate throughout large organizations. While routine

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[142] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture. . .*,142.

[143] James Champy, *Reengineering Management. . .*, 47.

face-to-face communication is likely to be the most effective, it may not be the most practical means available in large organizations. The use of electronic newsletters and bulletin boards or unit wide emails offer the CO the possibility to directly communicate with each member of his unit on a routine basis. However, a CO must be mindful so as to not undermine his management team's role and status in the organization when communicating his message to the unit. Prior to issuing any unit wide communication, the CO should involve his senior management during its formulation. While the CO must remain in charge, he must also share the challenge of building a change culture. This will enhance unit "buy in" and will greatly assist in the promulgation of the message.

How the message or language is framed has a great impact on its motivational value. All messages must link the organizational benefits with individual benefits, must move from the "I" statements to "we" statements and must express confidence in people's ability to achieve.[144] In order to truly convince the mass, especially at the senior management level, a CO should be armed with data. Rhetorical statements and empty visions will not motivate people to change the way they do business. This is where the use of metrics (discussed later on) can be a decisive factor. A leader must not simply communicate by word but, most importantly, by deed. Walking the talk so to speak clearly demonstrates leadership commitment and fosters cultural change.[145] This can be achieved through the CO's approach in dealing with unacceptable behaviour, the use of rewards and by implementing "quick hits" (simple, immediate yet effective improvements within the unit). Quick hits, as explained by Kotter, give the change

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[144] Roger Gill, "Change Management or Change Leadership?" . . ., 316.

[145] James Champy, *Reengineering Management*. . ., 92.

initiative "credibility and disempowers the cynics".[146]   For example, the removal of obvious organizational barriers, unnecessary bureaucracy and dysfunction (i.e. signing authority, un-productive recurring meetings, inefficient policy…) provides clear signs of leadership support for improvement initiatives. Leaders must show that they mean business and are prepared to take risks.

Finally, in order to reassure subordinates that he is not withholding information, a leader's message must be believable and should be as candid as possible. In today's armed forces, media and education have gone a long way into raising awareness; it is impossible to keep potentially bad news secret. If a unit is facing cuts or a significant change in mandate, subordinates must hear it from their CO, not from *The Globe and Mail*.

By applying sound change management practices which, as discussed earlier, includes concern for the human component, self and staff development and the application of clear, candid and motivational communication, a leader has excellent chances in successfully creating an environment that embraces change and continuous improvement. The next step consists in taking a structured approach to implementing change. This is done by first clearly identifying the leadership's intentions through Strategic Planning.

Phase 2: Implementing Change

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[146] John P. Kotter, *On What Leaders. . .*, 7.

Strategic Planning

As explained by Roger Gill, change requires good management, but above all it requires effective leadership.[147] The method by which a leader announces his vision and goals is crucial to the development of a robust change initiative; this is achieved by formulating a concise Unit Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan allows the CO to anticipate change and, most importantly, initiate and drive change, not simply act upon it. A Strategic Plan provides a roadmap to the unit's vision by identifying:

- A unit's **purpose** as opposed to it **mission**, "because it [the purpose] suggests a more fundamental examination of the business."[148]

- A unit's vision and objectives;

- Major stakeholders;

- Key performance indicators which can be used in the formulation of metrics;

- A review of main challenges; and

- Areas that must be reviewed for possible change initiatives in order to address challenges.

It is critical for the Strategic Plan to:

- Clearly articulate and recognize the "compelling" need to change vis-à-vis the unit's operational roles;

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[147] Roger Gill, "Change Management or Change Leadership?". . ., 317.

[148] James Champy, *Reengineering Management*. . ., 41.

- Identify the need to limit the number of simultaneous change initiatives;

- Clearly articulate management support and shared understanding of the need for change; and

- Identify the organization's "readiness" to change.

The main purpose of the Strategic Plan is to mobilize one's organization into accepting that change is necessary.[149] And, according to Champy, the best way to mobilize personnel is to ensure that they know that their ideas will be heard and, if practical, be acted upon.[150] Hence, a Unit Strategic Plan must not only state the CO's vision but must highlight the fact that there will be opportunity for everyone in the unit to contribute towards the unit's operational goals and vision. A shared vision is crucial to successful change.[151]

Given that the concept of visioning is all too often misunderstood, let us take a moment to ponder this important matter. Visioning became a mantra during the change initiative and business planning turmoil of the nineties. However, the process of visioning was often misunderstood leading to rhetorical statements that were so un-realistic, unclear and un-motivating that they often led to cynicism.[152] A unit's vision needs to be inspiring, focused and desirable and must be realistic so as to successfully affect its member's beliefs.[153] It must embrace a matter that is understood and important

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[149] David K. Carr and Henry J. Johansson, *Best Practices. . .*, 51.

[150] James Champy, *Reengineering Management. . .*, 133.

[151] Roger Gill, "Change Management or Change Leadership?". . ., 313.

[152] Michael Hammer and James Champy, *Reengineering the Corporation. . .*, 154-155.

[153] John P. Kotter, *The leadership Factor* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 18-20.

to all and should provide a compelling image of what a unit wants to be within a foreseeable future. As is the case with any form of change management related communication, the vision must directly support the unit's operational (core) role. However, it but must also not be so immovable that it becomes a hindrance when circumstances change.[154] Rather, a unit's vision must give a clear sense of purpose without being so distant that it will be practically unachievable in the short to medium term. Given the short duration of military tours, this is especially important. A unit's vision statement must "win" the member's will by giving people "a rope to grab onto as they let go of the traditional lifeline of the status quo."[155] Furthermore, if a vision is to become a true unit goal, hence substantive, it must not only be achievable but measurable.[156] An example of such a vision could be:

> "This unit shall be in a measure to reach and maintain a minimum
> mission success rate of 80% within twelve months."

Finally, Kotter opines that "under communicating" a vision is a leading cause of failure of transformation initiatives.[157] Hence, senior leadership must promote the vision throughout the organization; top-down communication of the vision is a necessary prerequisite to achieving employee buy-in.[158]

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[154] James Champy, *Reengineering Management*. . ., 54.

[155] Lieutenant-General George Macdonald, "Leadership. . ., 183.

[156] James Champy, *Reengineering Management*. . ., 55.

[157] John P. Kotter, *On What Leaders*. . ., 82.

[158] Conger, Jay A., Speitzer, Gretchen M., and Lawler, Edward E., *The Leader's. . .,* 347.

In formulating a Strategic Plan, it is important for the leader to recognize the need to limit the number of change initiatives within a unit so as to ensure that selected initiatives are adequately resourced and to prevent change fatigue. Furthermore, change initiatives must be completed in a reasonable amount of time in order to maintain momentum and they must involve a focused attention.[159] While the Strategic Plan must map out the CO's (and his unit's) long-term goal, it should also address immediate concerns and encourage "quick hits". This will greatly assist in unit wide "buy in", especially at the lower rank level.

Once a leaders' Strategic Plan has been formulated it must be promulgated and, most importantly, used in selecting and defining improvement initiatives. This may be done in a varying way, but will likely involve a unit's management team. In identifying areas for change initiative, we must ask ourselves the following questions:

- Where do we have to dramatically improve our level of performance?
- Where do we have to significantly re-focus resources away from or towards?
- What must we stop doing?
- What must we do in two to three years that we cannot do today? And,
- How much risk are we willing to take?

Sound Strategic Planning will greatly increase the chance of successfully implementing change by focusing the unit's efforts into selected, well-defined long and short-term initiatives. In a military establishment, it is especially critical for the Strategic

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[159] David K. Carr and Henry J. Johansson, *Best Practices. . .,* 78.

Plan to continuously refer to a unit's operational roles and objectives. In defining the unit's "raison d'être", the CO also sets realistic and measurable objectives. Furthermore, in order to further secure buy in, the Strategic Plan should identify resulting dividends and how they will be applied to enhance the unit's operational role.

An important aspect to implementing a Strategic Plan is to build a coalition that will see the unit's vision and goals through. This means putting together a team that will use its diverse skill sets and synergy to effectively work together during change initiatives.

Building your Change Coalition

An important success factor of transformation is to create momentum prior and during a change initiative so as to not let it drag.[160] Once a change initiative is underway, sufficient resources must be assigned to ensure a steady momentum from project inception to the implementation of change. Otherwise, unit members will believe that the change effort is half-hearted and that it is doomed to slowly but surely disappear without accomplishing desired results. The best approach in creating and sustaining this momentum is for a leader to invest a reasonable amount of time and effort in first selecting a "champion" then forming and developing his change initiative coalition.

Prior to identifying the makeup of change initiative coalitions, the CO should select one of the "true believers" to become a "champion" for a specific initiative. This

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[160] Michael Hammer and James Champy, *Reengineering the Corporation. . .*, 212-213.

person's role is to help educate and mobilize the change initiative team. Referred to

as the Reengineering Czar by Hammer and Champy, this person plays a key role in

managing and propelling the change initiative.[161] The "champion" must be endowed

with strong communication and interpersonal skills to enable him or her to facilitate the

change initiative. Once a change initiative "champion" has been selected, the CO then

focuses on the makeup of the change initiative coalition.

The change initiative coalition's role is to implement change processes

by adopting methods such as reengineering or TQM and to ensure that resulting

initiatives support the leadership's Strategic Plan. In building change initiative

coalitions, a unit CO must carefully select a very good cross section of members.

The make up of the coalition "is possibly more important than finding the right

solution."[162] If a CO has assembled a solid change coalition, he can not only rest

assured that they will develop a sound improvement plan but, most importantly,

that the coalition will enhance organizational "buy-in" of the solution.[163] Change

coalition members should include:

- Some members who are completely un-familiar with the affected process;
- Some members that are experts of the process;
- Some process customers (internal or external); and

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[161] *Ibid.*, 115.

[162] David K. Carr and Henry J. Johansson, *Best Practices. . .,*73.

[163] *Ibid.*, 73.

- One or two technology gurus who can introduce new office automation techniques and tools to the selected solution.

Change initiative coalitions should be integral to the affected process owner's chain of command and should include the process owner. While it is very important to select the brightest and most passionate members of a unit to take part of change teams, a healthy balance between visionaries and pragmatists must be secured. This will ensure that the newly proposed ideas are also evaluated for practicality, ease of implementation and propensity for wide acceptance by the rest of the organization. Once selected, coalition members should be trained on business process reengineering techniques as well as communication, teambuilding and the use of creativity tools such as Memory Jogger.[164] Finally, the change coalition must be empowered to take measured risks and explore the full range of ideas and initiatives.   Empowering the coalition will not only expedite the change process but will provide further proof of the leadership's commitment towards the initiative.

There must be a direct link between change teams and the unit's senior leadership. The use of a Steering Committee, which allows for prompt approval or refusal of change proposals (thereby keeping change momentum), is the usual practice. The Steering Committee, comprising of the unit CO and senior management, must be prepared to make prompt decisions and, most importantly, must insist on tight implementation or follow-up timelines.[165] The timely approval of "quick hits" or pilot projects by the

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[164] Ritter, Diane and Michael Brassard, *The Creativity Tools Memory Jogger* (Salem, New Hampshire: GOAL/QPC, 1998)

[165] David K. Carr and Henry J. Johansson, *Best Practices. . .,* 70.

Steering Committee creates momentum within the overall process and catalyzes change coalitions. The Steering Committee can also be used to deal with conflict and clarify the roles and contributions expected from managers and change coalition members.

Once change initiatives are underway, the CO must keep abreast of progress without impeding upon the momentum. He must not only be available to deal with unexpected problems or positive outcomes but also actively and continuously coach the champion and change coalition during their endeavour.

Coaching

Successful change management requires the continued involvement of leaders as champions, role models, and overseers.[166] During the change initiative, the unit CO ensures that progress is well disseminated throughout the unit and, very importantly, engages all managers in the effort. The CO must oversee that change initiatives are well resourced and supported throughout the unit and that they remain focused and aligned with the unit's objectives and its vision; in doing so, the leader effectively "coaches" the effort.

Coaching also means letting the change coalition do their job with as little interruption as possible. The change coalition must therefore be adequately empowered and must not be micromanaged. One of the most difficult aspects of any change initiative is for leaders to become willing to lose some control over the effort and be willing to

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[166] *Ibid*., 65.

share power.[167] To do otherwise would lead to a solution that is not viewed as being in line with the organization's goals but rather one that reflects the CO's personal agenda. The free flow of ideas originating from a change coalition that reflects the makeup of the unit provides the core strength to the change process.   It takes a leap of faith to delegate authority and control, however, the message such a move transmits to subordinates is priceless in an effort to encourage innovation and continuous improvement. The change initiative coalition as well as all unit members must be completely assured that their views will be taken into consideration. As stated earlier, this has a profound effect on individual values and beliefs and can effectively forestall negative organizational politics.

During the change implementation phase, unit CO's should consider making use of consultants and outside facilitators. This can introduce a structured outside view of a unit's processes and services. Indeed, according to Carr and Johansson, over 75% of companies surveyed considered the role of consultants during BPR efforts to be effective.[168]

Once a change initiative has taken its course, COs must ensure that the unit does not fall back into old methods and that it continually seeks betterment. As Kotter puts it, "anchoring" changes in the organization's culture is key to encouraging future initiatives.[169] This can be achieved by encouraging continuous improvement through the use of metrics, a quality standard and an effective recognition system.

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[167] James Champy, *Reengineering Management. . .,* 25.

[168] David K. Carr and Henry J. Johansson, *Best Practices. . .,* 89-90.

[169] John P. Kotter, *On What Leaders. . .,* 90.

Phase 3: Reinforcing Change

In order to encourage continuous improvement, positive changes made to a unit's culture must be maintained. Continuous improvement and feedback prevents entropy from setting into a newly improved processes. The values generated by continuous improvement methods encourage a unit to question the status quo and, through personal accountability, proactively seek out solutions.

Continuous Improvement and Metrics

What gets measured gets done.

- Unknown.

It is only by knowing how well members and processes of a unit are doing in comparison to set goals that true accountability will be born.[170] This can be achieved by enabling an organization to statistically monitor the quality of its products and services; means that are commonly known as the application of metrics.

According to a survey conducted by Carr and Johansson, 88% responded that establishing and using appropriate metrics is key to moving from the reengineering phase to a successful implementation of resulting changes.[171] Setting a long-term set of incremental and measurable targets is a very effective way to encourage continuous improvement and the achievement of a unit's vision. Indeed, the use of metrics has been adopted in a number of military organizations and is encouraged by the CF's senior

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[170] James Champy, *Reengineering Management. . .*, 103.

[171] David K. Carr and Henry J. Johansson, *Best Practices. . .,*144.

leadership. Defence Strategy 2020 calls for the CF to "establish criteria to measure performance."[172]

The introduction of metrics need not involve a complex statistical tool. Every military unit has a clear role and set of mission parameters. Flying units must operate within a certain degree of effectiveness; aircraft availability counts towards this parameter. Infantry units must meet a certain level of training and deployment readiness; again, this involves simple data collection and dissemination. However, leaders must also be mindful of the potentially negative product of metrics. As stated by Diana Pheysey, the introduction of a regime of metrics can lead an organization to adopt an extreme form of "Management by Objective". In such cases, processes become ritualistic and results are often "doctored" by subordinates to meet unit objectives.[173] It is therefore important for leaders to insist that metrics originate from raw, un-processed data and that they are presented in relation to clearly established objectives.

In introducing metrics, a CO must also be aware that cultures usually do not like being measured or even measuring.[174] Furthermore, the lack of agreement across an organization on how to measure success has often been a source of problem during continuous improvement efforts.[175] It is therefore crucial for cultural change efforts to include the notion of the value of metrics and for leaders to seek out an agreement on

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[172] Department of National Defence, *Shaping the Future. . .,* 7.

[173] Diana C. Pheysey, *Organizational Cultures. . .,* 180.

[174] James Champy, *Reengineering Management. . .,* 124.

[175] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture. . .,* 63.

objectives. Leaders must be clear in their message that metrics will not be punitive but rather supportive of continuous improvement by monitoring progress and assisting in identifying the root cause to problem areas. Finally, metrics must be easy to measure, captured and analysed through the optimized use of information technology and, most importantly, metrics must not be constraining.

Continuous improvement does not only include the means of measuring a unit's output but also tools that will promote initiatives that clearly contribute to the unit's objectives and eliminate those that do not. One such tool is the use of a unit quality system. Although recently introduced in the CF, the use of a structured quality system raises accountability and encourages innovation.

Quality System

Quality programs such as AF9000 (based on the ISO quality management system) can go a long way to creating an atmosphere conducive to change. Quality systems provide a framework for continuous improvement by incorporating self-verification processes within a unit's work routine.[176] Quality systems also introduce a structured documentation process that captures each process including any improvements and modifications. By capturing this information, enhancements become permanent and verifiable. However, the introduction of a unit quality system can also involve a significant cultural change. Just as is the case with any change initiative, the CO must first prepare his unit at embracing the impending quality system. He must do so by

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[176] Department of National Defence, C-05-000/AM-P11 *AF9000+ Quality System* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2000)

clearly identifying the benefits a quality system will bring towards achieving the organization's goals and vision.

Another means at ensuring that continuous improvement remains appealing involves the use of an effective recognition and reward system.

Recognition and Celebration

We lead by being human. We do not lead by being corporate, professional or institutional.

- Paul G. Hawken, founder, Smith and Hawken.

We do not often stop to reflect upon our accomplishments and to recognize the members of the team who have made a contribution.[177] And yet, in order to foster a change culture, it is crucially important to take the time to recognize individual as well as group effort in support of a unit's goals and vision. Leaders must use recognition as a form of feedback to encourage their subordinates in achieving the best. However, even recognition must be done correctly if it is to achieve its full-intended purpose. Recognition should not only take the form of a small ceremony involving a plaque, a dry speech and handshakes; it must be expressive and genuine. According to James Kouzes, when leaders do their best at encouraging their organization, they:

- Set clear standards;

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[177] Lieutenant-General George Macdonald, "Leadership. . ., 182.

- Expect the best;

- Pay attention;

- Personalize recognition;

- Celebrate together; and

- Set the example. [178]

It is also important for COs to remember that recognition must reinforce the culture and values they wish to support. According to Schein, the shared view of a reward and punishment system is one of the most important elements in culture forming.[179] All too often, reward systems tend to appreciate rule-based decisions rather than value based ones. If a CO truly believes in his organization's values, he must consistently encourage subordinates who embrace them. As mentioned earlier, what the leader pays attention to transmits a strong value statement.

Poor performance must not lead to fear tactics but rather opportunities to improve.[180] For example, if the CO supports innovation and wants to foster such a culture, he should recognize those who take a measured amount of risk in the accomplishment of unit objectives. COs must remember that commitment flows from personal values.[181]

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[178] James Kouzes, *Encouraging the Heart – A Leader's Guide to Rewarding and Recognizing Other*s (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 18.

[179] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture. . .*, 86.

[180] David K. Carr and Henry J. Johansson, *Best Practices. . .*, 35.

[181] James Kouzes, *Encouraging the Heart. . .*, 49.

Clearly acknowledging and advertising a unit's improvement efforts is an excellent way to celebrate success. Research has revealed that celebration directly influences performance; groups exposed to more frequent and a wider variety of celebrations performed better that others.[182] COs must therefore ensure that important milestones do not go unnoticed and that the entire unit gets to share in its success. If a change initiative fails, it must not become the object of persecution but rather a learning experience.

Finally, in order to create a change culture, reward systems must be carefully applied so as to create an organization that is no longer extrinsically but intrinsically motivated to embrace change even after certain rewards are no longer present.[183]

CONCLUSION

We have learned from past experiences that change, while ever present and necessary, can lead to initiatives having mixed results. Combinations of poor leadership and management techniques appear to have been at the source of a number of failed initiatives.   On the other hand, we have witnessed how sound, transformation leadership applied by Jack Welch has led to the evolution of an organization now actively seeking improvement. We have also seen cases whereby military units first seeking a better understanding of their organizational culture were successful in implementing significant change.   It is clear that dealing with our ever-changing environment all comes down to

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[182] *Ibid.*, 114.

[183] Dr. Allan English, *Understanding Military Culture. . .*, 16.

leadership. In fact, according to Champy, the greatest change management tool of all is leadership.[184]

While leaders who embarked on change initiatives during the nineties were often challenged by tightly imposed constraints, in the face of RMA and an increasing defence budget, today's COs have an extraordinary opportunity to be proactive in introducing improvement measures. However, in order to be successful, leaders must first gain a clear understanding of the barriers that organizational culture and politics can impose upon change initiatives. COs must acknowledge the fact that the probability for a change initiative to succeed is directly attributed to their organization's culture. They must therefore use their leadership skills to affect their unit's culture hence propensity to accept change.

It is human nature for most of us to resist change and the non-adaptive nature of the military environment further compounds this reality. That which may be perceived by some as a promising new horizon is viewed by others as an unwanted intruder. In order to deal with this resistance, today's military leader must understand the realities of modern culture and its impact on military affairs.   Leaders must appreciate that implementing change involves a gradual realignment of individual beliefs and values. Hence, change cannot be proclaimed but must be slowly and very systematically introduced to a unit. In order to achieve intended results, the modern military leader must use his power not to coerce but to develop and affect his subordinates' values and beliefs. He can no longer simply rely on his rank status to impose change and direction.

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[184] James Champy, *Reengineering Management. . .*, 39.

However, we know that an outright overhaul of an organization's culture is not necessarily required prior to implementing change. By focusing on a unit's core values and effectively using reward and empowerment, a CO can rally his unit to willingly accept change. In essence, the CO learns to use the military's own "inflexible" culture (of achieving its operational role) to foster acceptance of change. By directly contributing to a unit's core operational role, a change initiative becomes the object of focus and inspiration. This is especially true if a clear sense of threat to a unit's core operational role has first been identified and communicated.

Finally, a CO must learn to cooperate with his entire management team and, through transformational leadership, open communication and effective recognition, he must empower them to become contributing members of their unit's vision. In doing so, the CO will successfully build a team that will guide the rest of his unit to willingly accept change and embrace continuous improvement.

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