

<http://www.navitus.biz/navitus-magicians/management-team/kamran-rizvi> Kamran Rizvi, Navitus
February, 2013

Our desire for improvements in efficiency and effectiveness can only be met when we have the fortitude and wisdom to consciously entertain the idea of change.

Creating a momentum and support for engineering significant changes by mobilizing key stakeholders is in essence very much like lobbying. This mostly happens behind the scenes, through phone conversations, one-on-one interactions and small group discussions over coffee, mostly in informal settings. Such an effort is designed to get the main players on the same page about your planned change initiative. By consulting with them ahead of time you gain their buy-in. Once you have sufficient advocates around you, you can move forward with greater confidence by setting realistic goals.

When embarking on any change effort, be prepared for some resistance that you will inevitably encounter. Vested interests and issues of competency can impede the change process. While this is true, the degree of corporate turmoil and personal heartache can be minimized through appropriate levels of preparation and planning.

mce_style="background: none repeat scroll 0% 0% white; text-align: left;">Before thinking about initiating any form of organizational change, it is worth bearing in mind what Frederick Douglass[1] said over a century ago:</p><p> </p><p style="margin-left: 0.5in; background: none repeat scroll 0% 0% white;" mce_style="margin-left: 0.5in; background: none repeat scroll 0% 0% white;"><i style="mso-bidi-font-style:normal" mce_style="mso-bidi-font-style:normal">◆Those who profess to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation are people who want crops without ploughing the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning; they want the ocean without the roar of its many waters. The struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, or it may be both. But it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand; it never has and it never will.◆</i></p><p> </p><p class="MsoNormal" style="">Why invite lightning and thunder, when a light rain and cool winds is all you need to face! One of the ways by which you can reduce the drag and conserve energy in planning and executing change is to enlist supporters to the envisioned change early on.</p><p></p><p class="MsoNormal" style="">Having the blessings of your key stakeholders of the business will ensure swift achievement of desired goals. Building such an alliance is one of your key challenges.</p><p> </p><p class="MsoNormal" style="">>To make change happen successfully demands a high order of interpersonal skills and political savvy; not only in the leader, but also in all those who are part of the change program. You need to mobilize just the right number of people. The question remains exactly who are these people going to be and what would be the right number from whom help is required by you? </p><p></p><p class="MsoNormal" style="">>Your intuitive acuity will play a big part in selecting your allies. A sound understanding of the political dynamics at play will further help

you in making timely interventions with the right people, at the right time and in the right way. To this end, having the balance of power in your favor through allies who are for the change, helps. You will be able to successfully pre-empt and mitigate any resistance you are inevitably going to face in the process.

Therefore, induct people in your alliance who enjoy considerable credibility and exert influence within and outside your organization these are people who have a known following. Look for such people within your company (internal stakeholders), and outside (external stakeholders), particularly in domains that will be affected by the planned change. They could include key decision-makers, functional heads, workers representatives, community leaders, grass-roots activists, government officials, bankers, customers, suppliers, and contractors etc. Also ensure that no one that needs to be included is left out.

The next question is how many of such supporters should you assemble? Apply the Pareto Principle (The 80:20). Select the few who influence the many.

Make sure you create a sound relationship with each member of your alliance by becoming fully acquainted with their specific fears and aspirations. Take these into account as you unfold the change program with their help and involvement (direct or indirect) at every stage.

Having the right number of people on your side will ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the entire process. Of course, it will not be smooth-sailing all the way. There are bound to be resisters, who will need to be dealt with patiently (your EQ

and intelligently (your IQ

).

small;">For executing change effectively, you will need to constantly nurture and engage your individual relationships in this informal network (coalition of key stakeholders) by including them in all relevant communication channels. In a sense, you will be orchestrating a change strategy.

As communication is a two-way process, decide what information about the change program you will share with them and what they need to do with this information to influence others to support the change; and agree with your allies the type, form, and frequency of feedback you will be need from them.

All this simply means that you are, in a way, delegating some tasks to your allies. As such, individual roles, responsibilities and expectations in the change process must be clearly understood and agreed by all concerned.

But the process of managing your coalition must be kept pretty informal. For example, instead of holding formal meetings in the boardroom, it would be better for you to meet casually with your allies regularly, say over dinner or a game of golf, to review progress and gain new insights on what people are feeling and perceiving about the changes underway.

Since your allies are already in the system and loosely connected, they will have their fingers on the pulse of the organization, as they go about their daily business.

By informally observing behavior of relevant people in the corridors and with each other will provide you with valuable clues on the how receptive the climate for change really is, thus helping you adapt your strategy as the process unfolds. Listening to the grapevine is yet another source for practical insights. This requires a high degree of receptivity and alertness to verbal and visual cues, which are normally ignored.

By having a better sense of feelings and perceptions of people on the

ground, navigating your way forward will be easier. It will help you identify and deal with those who are hindering the change process. Rather than taking on all those who resist the planned initiatives, it is better to identify a few critical influencer/s amongst the resisters, and make time to communicate with them in private. Listening to their concerns sincerely and with an open mind will be necessary. You may, at times, have to facilitate a shift in their thinking by offering a face-saving device, so that any climb-down by them is not perceived by his/her constituents as a defeat. Instead the compromise or understanding reached should be viewed as a win for all.

People have pride, and this must be recognized. When people play games with each other, one always loses. Managing change is not a game, but a business imperative, which is driven by negotiations and dialogues in which fairness and transparency play a crucial role.

Face-to-face interactions are by far the best way to resolve conflicts. Such an approach, often, if not always, builds trust and in the end serves to neutralize resistance, or even gets commitment to change.

For executing change effectively, certain conditions need to be met. Make sure:

- There is a general dissatisfaction amongst all employees and other key stakeholders with status quo. The case for change needs to be sufficiently strong and clearly understood by all constituents.
- A vision for what the change will achieve must be appealing to all concerned, and
- A transparent, simple and comprehensive process is in place to manage the change

If people are not unhappy with the current state and see no clear rationale for change, they will not support it wholeheartedly; If there is sufficient dissatisfaction with the current state,

and the process to manage the change is in place, but vision and direction are missing, then confusion and anxiety will ensue; If conditions 1) and 2) above are met, but a clear process is missing, expect plenty of frustration and resistance!

Change need not be a dramatic struggle after all! What helps in making change happen is to mobilize people for change through open and timely communication; cross-functional participation; town hall meetings; e-conferences on change issues; benchmarking studies; balanced score cards; tracking and monitoring; and appropriate reward and recognition mechanisms to celebrate individual and team successes as each milestone is achieved along the way.

People don't resist change; they abhor being involved in any activity in which they cannot see themselves winning.

[1]

Frederick Douglass

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_14 [February 14](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_14), [1818](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1818) [1818](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1818) [February 20](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_20) [February 20](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_20), [1895](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1895) [1895](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1895)) was an [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) [American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) [Abolitionism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abolitionism)

none;">abolitionist, editor, orator, author, statesman and reformer. Called "The Sage of Anacostia" and "The Lion of Anacostia," Douglass was one of the most prominent figures in African American history and a formidable public presence. (Source: Wikipedia)</p> </div> <div style="mso-element:footnote" mce_style="mso-element:footnote" id="ftn2"> <p class="MsoFootnoteText">[2] EQ = Emotional Quotient</p> </div> <div style="mso-element:footnote" mce_style="mso-element:footnote" id="ftn3"> <p class="MsoFootnoteText">[3] IQ = Intelligence Quotient</p> </div> </div><p> </p><p style="text-align: center;" mce_style="text-align: center;">-----</p> <p><span

style="font-size: small;" mce_style="font-size: small;"> </p><p></p><div class="mceltemVisualAid" style="position: absolute; left: -10000px; top: 0px; width: 1px; height: 1px; overflow: hidden;" id="_mcePaste"> Normal 0 false false false EN-US X-NONE X-NONE MicrosoftInternetExplorer4

 <i style="mso-bidi-font-style:normal" mce_style="mso-bidi-font-style:normal">No matter how big your organization gets, continue to empower your people at every level to deliver. Only this way will size lead to advantage.</i><i style="mso-bidi-font-style:normal" mce_style="mso-bidi-font-style:normal"> </i> <p class="MsoNormal" style="mso-pagination:widow-orphan" mce_style="mso-pagination:widow-orphan">It is always useful to explore the history of any company to understand how they got to being what they are today. Corporate success usually follows some combination of visionary entrepreneurship and luck. When companies acquire early successes and achieve a dominant position in some market or markets they become profitable and usually follow a steep growth trajectory in their early years. </p> <p class="MsoNormal" style="mso-pagination:widow-orphan" mce_style="mso-pagination:widow-orphan"> </p> <p class="MsoNormal" style="mso-pagination:widow-orphan" mce_style="mso-pagination:widow-orphan">With the passage of time, however, pressures on managers come mostly from inside the firm. Building and staffing a bureaucracy that can cope with growth is the biggest challenge. External constituencies are neglected. The firm needs, hires, and promotes managers, not leaders, to cope with the growing bureaucracy. Top managers allow these people, not leaders, to become executives. Sometimes top management actively prevents leaders from becoming senior executives. Managers begin to believe that they are the best and that idiosyncratic traditions are superior. They tend to become increasingly arrogant and aloof. The problem is compounded when top management does nothing to stop this trend and often ends up exacerbating it. </p> <p>

class="MsoNormal" style="mso-pagination:widow-orphan" mce_style="mso-pagination:widow-orphan">> </p><p class="MsoNormal" style="mso-pagination:widow-orphan" mce_style="mso-pagination:widow-orphan">A strong, insular and conceited culture develops. Managers fail to acknowledge the value of customers and other key stakeholders. They behave in an inward-looking, sometimes political fashion and fail to acknowledge the value of leadership and the talent available at all levels that can provide it. They tend to stifle initiative and innovation. They behave in centralized and authoritative ways.</p><p class="MsoNormal"> </p>Consequently, as organizations grow, whether in terms of sales, number of employees, range of products and services, market share, or whatever, they start to lose the advantage they once had. According to John Naisbitt in the book <i style="mso-bidi-font-style:normal" mce_style="mso-bidi-font-style:normal">Rethinking the Future</i> ♦it is the small companies who are creating the global economy, not the Fortune 500. And these days a small company can be as small as one person.♦ In his book, <i style="mso-bidi-font-style:normal" mce_style="mso-bidi-font-style:normal">Megatrends 2000</i> he gave the example of his neighbors Linde and Lito who have a publishing company called Western Eye Press. He continues, ♦It♦s just two people and they publish wonderful photographic and guide books. They create them on Macintosh computers in their basement in Telluride. They printout the camera-ready pages on their own high resolution laser printer. Then they FedEx♦ed these pages to Seoul, South Korea, and the printer there manufactures their books and ships them to distributors all over the world. Western Eye Press is a key player in the global economy and its just two people on this little mountain perch in Colorado.♦ Large corporations and global conglomerates, if not careful, end up becoming highly bureaucratic, over-managed, rule-driven and inflexible by virtue of their size. In this day and age of cyberspace and nanotechnology, fetish with size of a business can become an impediment. This is particularly true for organizations that have grown significantly in scale in terms of revenues and market share. Organizations like Citibank have lost touch with their core constituents. It may be a major player with a strong brand image, but customers interacting with its frontline employees are often disappointed by their state of helplessness in resolving routine problems. This could be on account of slavish adherence to archaic procedures. Often, individual contributors in big companies don♦t take the initiative needed to listen and understand customer requirements with the intent to ultimately delighting them. There is a lot to be said for systems and processes, but if they are not customer oriented and responsive, the game is as good as lost. Quality can now be

replicated anywhere in the world. China is leading the way in this respect. With the falling of trade barriers and dropping of quotas, the Chinese have taken their global market share in textiles from 16% to over 50% in less than a decade. In recent years, the Pakistan market has been flooded with Chinese products (mostly electronic, light engineering) that are low priced and in much demand.

We no longer live in a world of big mainframes. We live in a world where the real power is large networks ♦ a lot of individuals connected together ♦ Facebook & Twitter are pointing the way. A network does not have any headquarters. Chinese excel in this field and have spread their global business through this means. Naisbitt cites Asea Brown Boveri (ABB) as a great example of a huge company that thrives and grows through networking. He quotes Percy Barnevik (Former CEO at ABB) as having said, ♦We grow all the time, but we also shrink all the time. ♦ As the network gets larger, the nodes get smaller.

So, no matter how big your company gets, continue to excel by empowering your people at every level to deliver. Building agility and responsiveness is the key.