

The Change Agent Lyle E. Schaller

Chapter 2 The Nature of Change

Characteristics found in creative organization that is open to innovation are:

1. The primary orientation of the organization and of the persons in the organization is to the contemporary social scene.
2. There is a profound awareness that problems do exist.
3. The primary focus is on people's needs rather than on the product or service. Emphasis on people's needs enables the creative organization to include the clientele as part of the decision-making team.
4. The emphasis is on problem-solving, and especially on solving social problems, rather than on institutional maintenance.
5. Aware of the importance, relevance, and availability of knowledge from a variety of disciplines. The creative organization displays an unusual capability or flair for utilizing and applying the knowledge, wisdom, and insights of other disciplines. Likewise, there is an awareness that the beliefs, values, and attitudes of people determine the limitations on the mobilization and utilization of knowledge.
6. There is a continuing effort to monitor the pace of change that can be accommodated before the benefits of change are outweighed by the costs of disruption.
7. There is a built-in self-evaluation process in the creative organization, which is designed to test the present operation against the definition of purpose.
8. Frequently the organization will be attempting to reach a goal which will be changing during the period of the effort to reach it.
9. The primary emphasis is on expenditures, costs, output, and program rather than on receipts, revenues, and input.
10. The personnel administration of the creative organization reflects an attempt to maximize the problem-solving capability of the

organization rather than simply an effort to manage the time, compensation, and control of a labor force.

11. When new ideas are proposed, the leaders within the organization know the most potentially fruitful points of intervention into the ongoing life and operation of the organization.
12. In the creative organization every person is, to at least a limited extent, a generalist, and to an outsider the organization appears to resemble a series of interlocking small groups with individuals moving from one position to another, both within and between groups. The creative organization enables each person to see the organization, its goals, and its problems from the perspective of other members of the organization. Creativity and innovation tend to be fostered as people are able to look at the operation of the organization from a variety of perspectives.

Make changes which will tend to nurture these characteristics. Ask questions about creativity in the reporting process.

If the annual report to the denomination was limited to a score of questions, three of which were these:

1. What new approach to ministry did this congregation undertake during the past year?
2. What program component was dropped or eliminated as functionally obsolete or as no longer appropriate for this congregation?
3. What component of the total program was changed because of the identification of new or different needs among the people?

In service training programs for the emergence of items 5 and 6 on list.

Persistent effort to define and emphasize the definition of purpose in every effort at evaluation will tend to strengthen the seventh point of this list. The use of program budgeting will reinforce characteristics numbered seven through eleven.

For growth of the broader perspective called for in item twelve, ask each person to spend two to four hours at another's task each month.

Often most important dimensions of a change agent's job may be to foster creativity by asking questions rather than by suggesting answers.

During the period of a perceived crisis, the pace of change can be speeded up tremendously.

A second method for hastening the pace of planned change is to deliberately encourage an increase in the level of discontent with the status quo.

A third approach is to increase the attractiveness of the proposed goal.

Fourth method is to increase the number and frequency of discussions, both formal and informal, about the proposed course of action.

Another related means of stepping up the pace of change is to focus attention, not on the proposed change, but on building up the level of trust.

A sixth method of speeding up the pace of change is to minimize precedent, tradition, and custom and to start "fresh" with as few of the encumbrances of the past as possible. Zero budgeting, in which zeroes replace all the numbers in last year's budget.

It is possible to increase the pace of change by giving high priority to the early enlargement of the supporting group of persons who favor the proposal and who have some form of personal interest in seeing the change adopted.

Expectations and Change

There is a tendency to internalize the expectations. Success breeds self-confidence and pushes out the individual's limits.

A change agent's effectiveness will be determined, in part at least, by his expectations.

Responses of People to Change

Reaction to a call for change normally will be as a function of its regular procedures.

Be able to anticipate the probable response to a proposal for change and to be prepared to deal with that response.

With advance warning you may be able to respond in a manner which will not reinforce these negative feelings.

Since many people initially interpret any proposal for change as bad news, it is not surprising that they tend to express hostile feelings not only toward

the proposal, but also toward the person who is responsible for introducing the proposal. Again it can be helpful if the change agent sees this as normal human behavior. It can be very helpful to the change agent if he is aware that he is dealing with a crisis situation.

The Influence of a Crisis

Not infrequently there is a lag between the time when the period of crisis actually begins and when it is perceived. Until it is perceived, the behavioral responses will tend to follow the normal patterns. It also is important to note that often people perceive a crisis long before they are prepared to admit its existence. This means that one of the first responsibilities of an agent of change is to help people articulate the existence of a crisis which they have perceived but have not been ready to openly recognize.

The cost of inaction is greater than the cost of action. Responsibility of agent of change is to help people come to that realization sooner.

During a disaster, an organization often very quickly gains control over the allocation of resources it previously did not control. New priorities are developed and accepted for the allocation of these resources.

A crisis also tends to pen up the channels of communication, to accelerate the speed of communications, to facilitate the opportunities for two-way communication, to substantially alter the behavior of individuals, to allow decisions to be made at a lower level than is normally acceptable, to provide opportunities for the reduction of conflicts among groups or organizations, and to reduce the chances the victim will be blamed for his situation.

Chapter 3 The Process of Planned Change

There is far more acceptance for efforts directed at change that are channeled through the established avenues for protest.

You have to push from the bottom and persuade at the top.

The Importance of Discontent

It is almost impossible to overstate the importance of discontent. Without discontent with the present situation there can be no planned, internally motivated and directed intentional change.

Rub raw the sores of discontent.

An approach to this subject of discontent as the initial step in the change process is to turn to four of the basic sources of discontent.

1. The response to a bad decision, or at least what is perceived as a bad decision.
2. To deliberately cause a malfunction in one of the accepted means of social control.
3. A third approach to raising the level of discontent is sometimes referred to as the “vision and model” concept. In this a person is enabled to see both a vision of what could be and also a working model of how that vision or dream could be turned into reality.
4. This is discovery by an individual for himself of the difference between the ideal and reality. – The Self-Identified Discrepancy

The Self-Identified Discrepancy

Either we remain Lutheran and deny our Christian evangelist responses or we act as a Christian congregation and lose our Lutheran heritage.

The self-identified discrepancy breeds discontent in the businessman who compares this year’s profits with higher figures for each of the past five years.

The self-identified discrepancy is a part of the response to what is perceived as a “bad” decision.

The Initiating Group

During the first stage, the problem is identified by an increasing number of persons.

During the second stage, the problem is defined more sharply, the forces that are causing or perpetuating the problem are identified, a strategy is devised to change the situation.

Should the strategy be to increase the pressure on one side of the present balance of forces or to reduce the pressure on the other side? Or both?

One of the most useful characteristics of the force field analysis is that it builds into the process of analysis the expectation that there are at least two solutions to every problem.

Every proposal for a change from the status quo has a price tag on it. This price tag normally is the sum of two costs. The first, and most obvious, is the cost in resources (time, energy, loyalties, money, skills,

etc.) The second, and a frequently neglected cost, is the consequences of any change from the status quo.

The change agent should examine his own motives. The greater his self-awareness of his own goals, motives, values, and needs, the more likely it is that he will be able to be helpful to the persons he is working with throughout the change process.

An item of the checklist is the need and method for stabilizing the changes once they have been accomplished.

Unless the re-entry problem is recognized, there is the ever-present danger that the initiating group may become a cadre of people who are alienated from the rest of the members of the organization.

There are several ways of reducing the stalemate that occurs when an initiating group becomes identified as an elite outgroup by the other members of the organization. One way is to keep enlarging the initiating group with new participants from the rest of the larger group. Another is for the initiating group to see itself as seeking change to solve a problem rather than as the originators of the single, perfect rigid, and only applicable solution to the problem or source of discontent. A third is to avoid the tactics, including language, that may foster hostility and rejection from the larger group. A fourth is to understand the process of introducing a new idea into an organization and the rejection that normally greets the appearance of a new idea.

It usually is wise not to spend too much time on the formation and work of the initiating group.

The most common efforts to legitimize an issue are the use of well-known and prestigious names.

A third essential element in the building of a supporting group is loyalty.

An essential ingredient in an effective supporting group is skill or expertise, and especially the combination of dedication and skill.

A skill, which is extremely important both in the total change process and in the building of a support group, is competence in communication. Repetition increases credibility.

Another essential element of an effective supporting group is expressed in the concept of a coalition. Interest groups and coalitions of interest groups have dominated the decision-making process in American society in this century. Coalitions are rarely possible without compromise.

The most essential element in an effective supporting group is the capability of the members of the supporting group to take an idea or a proposal for change that is a response to discontent and that has been developed by the smaller initiating group and to revise or modify it and to adopt it as “ours”.

The change-oriented individual may want to ask himself several questions as he reflects on the concept of the supporting group in the process of intentional change. First, is he, primarily interested in making a public witness to dramatize the issue and to increase the degree of discontent, or is he primarily interested in change?

Second, is he primarily committed to seeing that his ideas for change are adopted or in helping to achieve change? Third, is he willing and able to submerge his own role? The vast majority of effective organizers of influential supporting groups tend to be drawn from the ranks of the low-visibility change agents. The low-visibility enabling types tend to produce the results.

Implementation

In most efforts at implementing change four resources are necessary. The first is a skill in the implementation of ideas.

A second resource is personnel -the persons who are able to turn the power generated by an effort at change into the channels that cause things to happen.

A third essential resource is goodwill. Even the most righteous and relevant efforts at planned social change have little chance of success if they are attempted in an atmosphere filled with distrust, hostility, and enmity.

The fourth resource that is essential to the implementation stage is loyalty. This includes both the continued loyalty of the members of the supporting group and the loyalty of the recently identified allies who may have come into this implementation stage from a different point of entry or for different reason. If the loyalty is to the organization, to the previous leaders, to the past, to tradition, or to “the old ways of doing things,” it becomes a barrier to change.

Chapter 4 Questions for the Change Agent

Three styles open to the contemporary change agent.

1. Focus public attention on what one identifies as the evils of the day.

2. Work from outside the system using the procedures and methods on which the system has been built.
3. Community development approach

The Death of Big Daddy

Big Daddy = the person who used a large portion of his time and energy to taking care of his peoples needs.

Big Daddy is dead. Announcement of Big Daddy's death came in 1960 with publication of *The Human Side Enterprise*, by Douglas McGregor. McGregor proposal stated that the conventional approach to leadership and management was based on a series of propositions that presupposed people were passive, perhaps even lazy, and had to be motivated by a system of rewards and punishments. This he called "Theory X."

McGregor proposed that a more appropriate approach to leadership and management should be based on what he called "Theory Y." This presumes that "people can achieve their own goals best by directing their own efforts toward organizational objectives."

The trend is largely in the direction of a participatory style of leadership for the effective agent of change.

The Change Agent's Baggage

1. An outsider cannot solve an organization's problems, but frequently he can help increase the organization's capability to solve its own problems.
2. Every problem has more than one possible solution.
3. The cost-benefit theory is always at work. Every goal and every change from the status quo has a price tag on it.
4. The consultant should have a generalization behind every specific comment, suggestion, or recommendation, and a particular or specific point to illustrate every generalization.
5. His previous experience in similar situations. This may be a great asset. If viewed as offering the same answer to every problem, it can be a major liability.
6. The easiest, the most tempting, and the least creative response to conflict within an organization is to pretend it does not exist.
7. As an organization becomes more sensitive to the needs of people, its operation increases in complexity and the intuitive response tends to be counterproductive.
8. Every organization is governed by a series of unwritten policy statements, usually referred to as customs, traditions, or "this is the way we have always done it." Often a part of the change agent's

- task is to help the client identify, evaluate, and revise the unwritten policy statements.
9. The older or the larger the organization, the more powerful is precedent.
 10. The institutional or organizational framework in which an individual functions limits the degree of change that can be accomplished by changes in the individual. This ceiling can be raised only by changes in the values, attitudes, orientation, traditions, and customs of the organization and of the people in it.
 11. Every organization, but especially nonprofit organizations which do not have easy-to-read evaluations of the fulfillment of purpose, tend to move survival and institutional maintenance to the top of the priority list.
 12. Education is alienating, and every effort by the advocate of change to educate or train individuals in an organization will tend to alienate those individuals from other persons in the organization.
 13. "Unless you know where you're going, any road will take you there."
 14. Humor is a social lubricant that helps us get over some of the bad spots...Humor is a humanizing agent."

Chapter 5

The Use of Power and Social Change

A precondition of lasting power is the combination of an idea, system, or philosophy and an institutional structure for the utilization of power.

Power exists only in relationships; it can never be exercised in a vacuum, and its existence depends upon the values and attitudes of the recipient in the relationship.

Power frequently is exercised by inaction, by keeping issues from reaching the decision-making point, and by neutralizing potential conflicts.

It is relatively easy to acquire the power necessary to veto a proposed course of action, but comparatively difficult to put together the coalition that can rally the power necessary to implement a proposed course of action.

Chapter 6

Anticipating and Managing Conflict

Preventing Polarization

Church leaders have used the following ten rules in their efforts to prevent the polarization that paralyzes:

1. Keep the channels of communication open. The best illustration of this is the process of writing a treaty between two conflicting parties.
2. Depersonalize dissent. One of the most frequent causes of the termination of communication is that the argument used to criticize an individual's proposal, program, or position is regarded by him as a personal attack.
3. Try to look inside the other person's frame of reference.
4. Open the door to creative and meaningful participation by every person.
5. Keep opening new opportunities for people to invest themselves in service and ministry. Common rule- no one can hold the same office in the local church for more than three or four years or the same office in the denomination for more than eight years.
6. Seek agreement on short-term or intermediate goals.
7. Recognition of the diversity of ministries is an essential element in effectively overcoming the paralysis of polarization.
8. Build a sense of mutual trust with the organization.
9. Formally establish a grievance committee which will hold hearing on a regularly scheduled basis throughout the judicatory.
10. Recognize the events and factors that produce a paralyzing effect.

Chapter 7

Organizational Change

Most of the old-timers and nearly all of the newcomers could unite around a building program since the construction symbolized different values and different dreams to different persons.

Organization development is designed to improve the health of an organization and to increase the capability of the organization to achieve its goals. This means goals rather than roles, collaboration rather than competition, and ideas rather than personalities are emphasized in the decision-making process.

Organization functions around teams rather than individuals.

Other strategies focus on goal setting, on the assumption that an organization functions in the context of goals; on intergroup relations and conflict, on internal communication within an organization; on the "needs" or "satisfactions" of members of the organization of work; or on the internal environment.

Most organizations are part of a system.

The general principle of organization development is that an increase in complexity creates a greater demand for democracy.