

Concurrent Session J
Wednesday 14 September 2016
11:10am – 12:00pm



Session 4
Change Management Vs Cultural Change

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Alex is the Director of Learning Resources at the University of Canterbury where she holds responsibility for construction and property; information technology and the University libraries. Charged with leading the re-energising of learning spaces and digital learning delivery, Alex is in the middle of rebuilding the University as it recovers from the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes.

Her career has spanned a variety of roles in the higher education, public and private sectors.

She has drafted legislation, coordinated political campaigns, managed financial reform, developed and delivered shared corporate services in Universities, designed and implemented business marketing and communication strategies for new businesses, delivered master plans, worked as a business coach and political lobbyist, delivered business improvement initiatives in the public and private sector, designed software products, managed large scale field logistics for an American Presidential primary, advised a Minister and moderated a United Nations Youth Conference.

The context for change management and cultural change in tertiary education is dynamic. Universities demand performance, understanding in detail how we can be the very best we can be is important not just for the organizations we work for, but for the societies and communities that we live in.

What is change management?

Change management is the systematic approach to transforming from one state to a future desired state. While there are a variety of models, at UC, we use the ADKAR model. The ADKAR model was developed by Jeff Hiatt of PROSCI and first published in 2003. The model achieves individual change by focusing on activities to achieve an outcome at each stage. Progress is able to be measured as the activities of each stage are completed.

What is cultural change?

Cultural change is the organisational approach to modifying organisation wide norms and behaviours with the intention of affecting organisational transformation. Cultural change is difficult to affect, not just because culture is difficult to define, but also because starting the cycle of cultural change requires a combination of agile leadership and change champions that must breed success, autonomy and recognition if cultural change is to succeed.

Human Synergistics, OCI/OEI

Human Synergistics uses a Circumplex model developed by psychologist Dr. J. Clayton Lafferty. The purpose of the tool is to break down individual behavior into 12 behavioural styles, for the purpose of identifying and measuring behavior.

The application of this tool is taken further with the Organisational Culture Index & Organisational Effectiveness Inventory, two tools that measure behavior and cultural norms at a department level

and map surveyed behaviors to causal factors, which provide the levers for team development and change.

How UC uses the ADKAR model

The ADKAR model is used in the context of project management. Prior to the earthquakes change management had occurred in a variety of different ways. However with so many initiatives and so much change underway, it was very clear that the “noise” of using multiple models of change would end in the mass confusion of the UC community, so the ADKAR model was selected.

Overview of how ADKAR fits with UC standard construction project management process

Overview of how ADKAR fits with UC standard IT/business project delivery process

Strengths; common language, faster take up of the model, simple; activity based.

Weaknesses; Can sometimes feel trite, given how change may effect individuals and teams.

How LR in UC uses OCI/OEI to affect cultural change

UC has initiated the use of OCI/OEI to support cultural change in the Learning Resources department (LR). The LR department comprises 350 staff employed in construction and property, information technology and library functions. LR initiated cultural change over 12 months ago. Since that time our approach, has challenged the leadership team, and seen teams growing new skills and attitudes that are already challenging convention.

In LR we regularly talk about attitude and behaviour, recognising the criticality of both to successful change. Throughout all levels of the department we are constructively engaged in planning for and initiating change. Teams initiatives address the causal factors that score highly and are pervasive for them. Initiatives are of interest to and tailored to the particular needs of each team.

Strengths; common language, creates a future preferred vision (what success looks like), rapid take up amongst teams, autonomy that supports innovation, progress is able to be measured, clear identification of barriers to success. In university context rigorous academic and psychometric testing standards are helpfully persuasive.

Weaknesses; Initiation stages takes time which can be at odds with a more impatient organizational culture; confronting for individuals; takes time to successfully achieve.

Complimentarity of change management and cultural change

Projects are by their very nature, temporary efforts to achieve specific outcomes. The focus here is on method and work practices, the specific performance of individuals in achieving benefits beyond the end of the project, while addressed does not resonate beyond the end of each particular project. Cultural change in comparison is far more personal and can be quite pervasive in its consequences. Because it is behaviour and attitude based, it is potentially extremely confronting for individuals, but because if acted upon it has the ability to unlock repressed capabilities, it is critical to building high-performing teams.

The UC experience would indicate that there is little need to consider an either or response to change management and cultural change. In fact both methods have their usefulness and place in a wider organisation strategy.