

Evolution and themes in change management

'Change Management 2.0'

by Ira Blake



Over the past 14 years, I have experienced the emergence of change management as a discipline in it's own right and the ongoing professionalisation¹ of change management – i.e. the establishment of standards, methodologies, frameworks and the ubiquitous toolkit. Where this is often perceived as the pinnacle of achievement and as a badge of quality assurance for practicing Change Managers, a fundamental change is on our doorstep and Change Managers must move quickly to embrace it.

CMI's 2015 conference refers to this shift as 'Change in the Age of Disruption'. Disruption in this context, refers to building successful change efforts by making them open, participatory, and experimental; approaching change as a platform, and not a program; mobilising for emergent change, people-powered change and change socialisation. Change Disruptors evangelise about the power of enterprise media platforms and the associated 'hackathons' that engage and co-create change through dispersed organisational networks and not SME's such as the current Change Manager role and functions.

Disruption is an essential ingredient for changing the way we think about change management...

Disruption may be an essential ingredient in changing the way change practitioners and leaders think about change management and I believe it is one of many contributing factors creating a 'perfect storm' that is driving us towards an inflection point – a fundamental change in direction and velocity – within change management.

¹ Change Management Institute

A shift is occurring in other business disciplines too: Management 2.0 and the integration of neuroscience research, workplace/environment psychology and concepts like mindfulness are re-shaping the way people work, organisation culture, and systems in a way that redefines productivity and performance. In her book, Vlatka Hlupic succinctly represents this concept as an equation:

$$\begin{aligned} & \textit{People + Purpose = Profit (private sector) or} \\ & \textit{People + Purpose = Pride in Service (public sector)} \end{aligned}$$

and provided the inspiration for my working title for this new phase - that is, Change Management 2.0.

A seismic shift in the landscape

The change management landscape in 2016+ is being shaped by a combination of environmental and organisation drivers:

Environmental drivers - The way organisations do business is under intensifying scrutiny and increased pressure from government, consumers and campaigners to be more accountable. In the wake of multiple scandals from unethical banking practices, misrepresentation of profits and tax evasion to a rising expectation of ecological sustainability and conscience, an unprecedented and sustained period of great change, innovation and commercial challenge exists. In highly competitive and fluid environments, organic growth is extremely difficult and many analysts believe that in this landscape all new growth comes from projects and programmes – i.e. step changes, not incremental improvements.

Organisation drivers - New cost and funding paradigms and the optimisation of RoI (Return on Investment) for all portfolios and programmes. Leadership is being redefined creating a shift in focus from simply managing the numbers, closing gaps and performance management systems designed for the 'unsatisfactory' few to building workplaces that people want to work in, feel they can contribute to and are appreciated and that fosters innovation and values the uniqueness of individuals. New generation 'millenials', embracing increased connectivism and digital connectivity, demand a shift from subordinate to associate. They will own their portfolio-style careers and make judgements on who will get to benefit from their talent and who/where they want to work that we only dream about.

To be successful in this new landscape will require an immense change in the way organisations think and behave, what they value and look for in their talent and how talent is utilised (NB. not 'managed'). If this wasn't hard enough, the rate at which this change needs to happen is exponential to how we have responded to change up to now. This is the inflection point I mentioned earlier. This is the gateway to Change Management 2.0.

*Change management qualifications are required to get you
to the starting line...*

One thing remains as true in Change Management 2.0 as it is now; that commercial, organisation and initiatives' success depends on the adoption of and commitment to change by the people in an organisation. The requirement for change management capability is increasing as is emphasis on and recognition of professional qualifications in change management. However, achieving these will no longer entitle Change Managers to stand on the winner's podium. In Change Management 2.0 this just qualifies you to stand on the starting line.

What does this mean for change managers

Just think for a moment... how hard it is to change our own, individual behaviour no matter how keen we are to do so - all those broken diets, short-lived exercise programs and failed attempts to give up smoking. Getting hundreds or thousands of employees to change their behaviour in the way we want is a difficult business and what is effectively the business of change management.

Change managers need to relinquish some control & place greater emphasis on expertise over methodology & toolkits...

In the past decade, Change Managers have established and gained recognition for their profession. Ironically, having established the methodologies and approaches, Change Managers are now facing a future that will require an unprecedented, game-changing shift in the way we think about and deliver change in organisations.

So let's take a look at what is changing in terms of change management themes:

Change Management 1.0	Change Management 2.0
Change maturity & capability	Change velocity & density
Leadership & sponsorship	Disruption
Adaptability	Co-creation & collaboration
Agility	Trust

Figure 1: Comparison of themes in the evolution of change management

I'm not suggesting we throw away Change Management 1.0; these themes and the competencies that underpin effective change management are still relevant - but focusing only on those will not bring success in the 2016+ landscape.

For leaders, this shift means re-thinking what you think you know about change management and adapting how you work with and leverage change management in your organisations. For change practitioners, we need to start thinking beyond the boundaries of our operating sphere and step bravely out of our comfort zone and away from our familiar models and frameworks to stay engaged and relevant to the changes happening in our organisations.

As change managers, this will require relinquishing some control and releasing the activity and responsibility of change delivery to the organisation's employees. Our role will migrate from manager to guide and our purpose shift from delivery to navigating an adaptive change environment. Inevitably we will need to re-evaluate our competencies, and place greater value on our experience and expertise rather than rely on process, methodology and toolkits.

Emerging themes

If we take the analogy of a track athlete, at 'Change Management 1.0' you've done all your preparations, training, time-trials and have proved you have what it takes to get the job done. Now for Change Management 2.0 we have to activate our race strategy – figuring out what individually we need to do, how and when. Several themes are emerging, and I have selected the 4 that I believe will be the most significant determinants of change management and organisation success. Let's explore these themes in a bit more detail...

Theme 1: Change Velocity & Density

Velocity is about the capability within an organisation and limitations due to available expertise, bandwidth and workload. External environmental and economic pressure, coupled with organisational dynamics, competing priorities and the servitisation of industries means that periods of stability between organisational changes have evaporated. The complexity and unrelenting pace of change means that change can no longer be managed by a few 'experts' and this will have a direct impact on the development and deployment of change capability in an organisation.

Density is about the ability to absorb change – it's resilience, capacity and response to organisational and environmental stress. In an environment of increasing ambiguity, greater regulation and risk mitigation, how will businesses create the space to transform? How will change management need to adapt to deliver within these new dimensions of control and what impact will this have on an organisation's ability to innovate or solve complex problems?

Think again of the track athlete analogy... outright luck aside, a successful race outcome is governed by 3 elements: Competency, Environment and Levers. By relating velocity and density to those elements, a picture emerges of the range of conditions that need to be in place or enabled for change to be deployed and accepted:

How fast can I go? VELOCITY		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PB/track record • Technique • Game plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditions • Resistance • Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation • Competition • Support
Competency	Environment	Levers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endurance • Energy/effort • Recovery time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity • Location • Timing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals • Technology • Life balance
How many/much can I do? DENSITY		

Figure 2: Criteria governing the rate and adoption of organisation change

Theme 2: Disruption

Disruption is commonly used to describe any situation in which:

- an industry is shaken up
- a breakthrough occurs that changes an industry's competitive patterns
- previously successful incumbents struggle

Change management like any product, service or innovation is not a static discipline. Just a few years ago Change Managers embraced, and adapted to reflect, a new methodology and become more agile. However this was still characterised by the same manifestation of change management e.g. programmes, toolkits, standards, good practice, expert-led etc.

Today, new workplace paradigms and drivers require change managers to make a fundamental shift to the way that we work. What this shift is also telling us is that we need to disrupt our way of thinking about change and that different types of innovation require different approaches and levers.

This trajectory is being mirrored in studies of management, HR & OD, consultancy and many other business disciplines. Neuroscience research highlights that our brains are not designed for 21st Century corporate life and our cognitive mechanisms and natural ability to learn (neuroplasticity) are being stifled and overridden. By disrupting what we think we know about how people work best in organisations, we create the opportunity to design in individual and organisation factors for success. These factors include: experimentation, positive reinforcement and recognition and frequent practice.

Studies into Human Behaviour at Work² suggest that our problem-solving brains operate most effectively when we are:

- given a clear picture
- allowed time and space to understand
- able to construct our own vision
- engage with and focus on vision (and not waiting on the organisation)
- able to recognise our progress

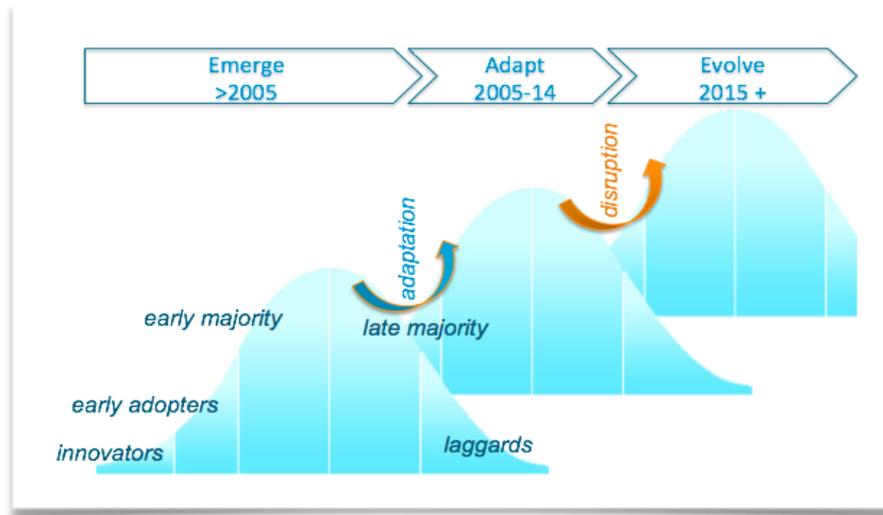


Figure 3: Change management

There is also a school of thought that we need to change the language we use to describe change management and Change Managers. New terms are emerging including Change Disrupter, Change Architect, Change Maker, Change Conductor etc. Regardless of what we call ourselves, the essential difference the terminology is attempting to highlight is the move from doing or delivering change to creating the environment, opportunities and space for change.

It is worth reiterating here something I mentioned in the introduction i.e. that the term 'Change Disruption' is used widely to describe change that is enabled by specific technology platforms. Self-styled Change Disruptors advocate the power of enterprise media platforms and the associated 'hackathons' that engage and co-create change through dispersed organisational networks. My concern with this approach is the very real danger of disenfranchising large populations within an organisation whose voices and contributions will be lost because the technology creates a barrier to participation. Enterprise media platforms have a role to play, but are not the panacea they are sometimes represented to be.

² CIPD, 2015

Theme 3: Co-creation & Collaboration

Fundamental social and technological shifts, such as social and enterprise networking, virtual organisations and blurring of the line between work and life are changing the way people live, work and collaborate. This will require Change Managers to rethink their basic assumptions of communication, structure, location, roles and culture upon which today's organisations are designed.

New workplace models and ways to engage employees are needed and Change Managers will require the skills to leverage new opportunities and design new approaches, for example:

- Communities of Interest (online & offline)
- Cheerleader CEO
- Change Radicals
- Organisations as complex, adaptive systems
- Cathedrals vs. bazaars
- Spirit of the volunteer (Kotter)
- Hackathons
- Purpose Index
- Randomised Coffee Trials

As I've mentioned earlier in this document, I believe this all points to a realisation, which is: organisations that build the 'Human Dimension' into strategy and organisation development will be rewarded by their peoples' energies, knowledge and creativity.

So what do I mean by the 'Human Dimension'? It's about:

- recognising and valuing every person's unique contribution
- putting relationships at the heart and enabling mutual responsibility
- creating an environment for people to be their most creative and productive selves
- being vulnerable, admitting mistakes and removing unnecessary pain

Theme 4: Trust

CIPD³ research tells us that: In times of uncertainty, trust becomes more important. In the workplace, one distinct advantage of trust is its link to innovation. With innovation, comes risk and no one is going to take a risk unless they trust, and are trusted by, their immediate and senior managers. Workplaces with high levels of trust find it much easier to embrace organisational change – they can adapt faster and achieve better levels of employee engagement at all levels.

The dictionary definition of trust is: 'reliance on and confidence in the truth, worth, reliability, etc. of a person or thing; faith'. In the context of organisations and change management, I've defined trust as a set of barriers and conditions:

³ Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development

Barriers to trust

- **Silence** – creates an atmosphere of secrecy and suspicion
- **Collusion** – lack of accountability and non-inclusion (helplessness)
- **Fear** – of losing security, status, job or relationships; compromising own values and priorities; of the unknown
- **Control** – losing autonomy, increased measures and targets; greater stress

Conditions for Trust*

- **Ability** – demonstrable competence
- **Benevolence** – concern for others beyond own needs and having benign motives
- **Integrity** – adherence to shared principles encompassing fairness & honesty
- **Predictability** – consistency of behaviour over time

*CIPD Research 2012-14

Figure 4: Trust in organisations defined by barriers & conditions

Although this may look neat and tidy, make no mistake building trust is messy, emotive and sometimes painful work. A new psychological contract is required between managers and employees characterised by diminishing hierarchical power, a culture of permission and individual courage

Change Management 2.0 will see success defined through our creativity and ability to influence the acceleration of the 'human dimension'

Summary

The model shown in fig.3 shows the adoption pathway, and the different stages of development within change management. The relative maturity phases of change management as a discipline is also shown as a series of arrows above the adoption pathway.

Developing this model further, fig.5 (below) pulls together the evolution and themes in change management contained in this document to provide a view of the future I believe change practitioners are heading towards as defined by Change management 2.0.

Although the themes of velocity & density and disruption are explicit in the model diagram, the theme of collaboration and co-creation is implicit in the orange-framed boxes and are the 'how' behind the 'what' shown. The theme of trust is rather more elusive and is really more of a pre-requisite or culture organisations need to develop as it will be an essential condition for successful change.

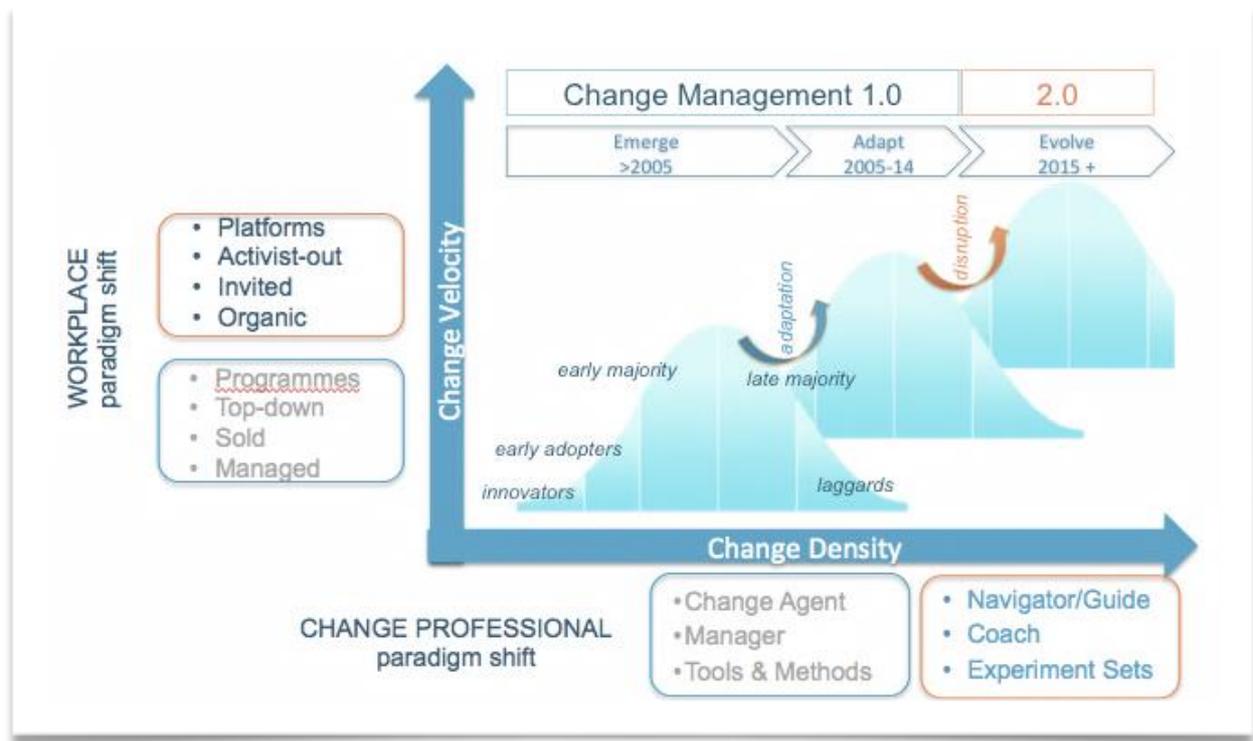


Figure 5 – Change Management 2.0

Closing remarks

The evolutionary path and themes I've outlined in this document are not absolute, comprehensive and/or inevitable. There are multiple potential futures for change management and this is just one. However, every Change Manager / practitioner / disruptor I've spoken to agrees that change management is fundamentally changing. To operate effectively and support organisations to embrace and adopt changes to their very core beliefs, values and systems requires a fundamental change to our discipline and ways of thinking and working.

In 2016, I believe we need to challenge our constructs, frameworks and assumptions about change management. We have to reinvent our change models, update competencies and develop new strategies for disseminating organisation change. The capabilities, standards and toolkits we invested so much in, pave the way and equip us for Change Management 2.0. but the deciding criteria for successful change practitioners will be their experiences, creativity and their ability to influence the acceleration of the 'Human Dimension' in organisations.

References and further reading

CMI Conference 2015: Change in the Age of Disruption - UK speakers:

- Zanini, Michele - *Management Lab*
- D'Souza, David - *CIPD*
- Timms, Perry - *People & Transformational HR*
at: www.change-management-institute.com

Hlupic, Vlatka: *'The Management Shift – How to Harness the Power of People and Transform Your Organization for Sustainable Success'* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)

CIPD Research papers:

- Hope-Hailey et al (March 2012) – Where has all the trust gone?
- Hope-Hailey et al (April 2014) – Cultivating Trustworthy Leaders

CIPD Conference: Science of Human Behaviour at Work 2015 - conference speakers:

- Luffman, Gary - *Think.Change*
- Dror, Dr. Itiel - *University College London*
- Scarlett, Hilary - *Scarlett Associates*

Roberts, Hywel (May 2014): HR [magazine.com](http://www.hrmagazine.com) <http://www.hrmagazine.co.uk/article-details/line-between-work-and-home-life-increasingly-blurred>

Hope-Hailey et al (CIPD Research Sept 2014): Landing Transformational Change

Hope-Hailey et al (CIPD Research Sept 2015): Landing Transformational Change - closing the gap between theory & practice

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Ira's expertise in change management has been developed through working with clients in pharmaceuticals, travel, local & central government, transport, not-for-profit, media, retail, retail banking, fleet automotive and professional services sectors during the past 15 years. She advises and shares her extensive change management expertise with a portfolio of clients and is an experienced consultant, mentor, speaker and writer on change management.

Ira is one of only two Global Assessors for the Change Management Institute's ACMM (Accredited Change Manager - Master) and was one of the first ACMMs in the UK. From 2012-15, Ira was joint Co-Lead for CMI UK with Deborah Feakins of Marlowe Consulting. Their collaboration has continued professionally and they often work together on complex, strategic and transformational change projects with a focus on building change leadership and change management capability in organisations.

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