

Lead and Manage Change



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Topics:

- Are you ready for change?
- If it ain't broke don't fix it!
- The power of why
- Hang your hat on this
- If the hat fits, wear it
- Don't blame us. We weren't asked
- The same old same old
- Nothing stays up without support
- Is the glass half full or half empty?

The Hat Fits, Wear It

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Are you ready for change?

Most organisations are in a constant state of change. Over the last 20 - 25 years, improved technology, globalisation, ecological and social considerations and a push for better profits have forced commerce and industry to make some of the largest changes since the industrial revolution. Most organisations are in a continuous change process.

Here is a typical process.

1. The vision is set.
2. The goals and objectives defined.
3. The plan developed.
4. The plan and strategy communicated.
5. The plan is implemented.

Unfortunately, it is not quite that simple. At the management level we can enthusiastically and competently work our way through the first four stages. However, when we get to stage five, there are often several blockages to overcome.

A high percentage of these blockages rest with the people who will be involved with or will be affected by the changes.

How can we measure the 'health' of the organisation and the receptivity of its people for change? There are several critical factors to have in place before we go to stage five. In a sense it is about setting the scene, preparing the groundwork, sowing the seed and establishing acceptance for what it is we are going to do.

Use this rating scale (Insert your rating in the R* column).



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TOTAL

49 - 60 You're as ready as you'll ever be. Good luck.

37 - 48 Tread carefully. You will have to manage the odd hijack along the way.

25 - 36 You have a bit to do. Look for the things that have rated low and address them before embarking.

12 - 24 Start now and the change process will be a constant uphill battle. There could be many casualties along the way, including you.

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If it ain't broke don't fix it!

"If it ain't broke don't fix it!" I'm sure we've all heard the cynics amongst us utter these familiar words. However change through continuous improvement is not just about fixing things.

It is about:

- Meeting the changing needs of the market place, society and the environment.
- Maintaining a competitive advantage.
- Utilising resources in a more efficient way.
- Being more productive.
- Reducing waste.
- Generating increased profits.
- Reducing the risk.
- Creating a safer workplace.
- Improving quality.
- Improving customer satisfaction.
- Improving employee satisfaction.
- Sustaining outcomes and performance.

Continuous improvement may be described as the on-going process by which we actively seek change (improvements) in the ways we do things which in turn will generate more from the same or less effort.

This 'more' may be measured in terms of profits, productivity, product quality, customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction and the like.

The culture of 'continuous improvement' is pivotal to having a constant and continuous focus on making changes (improvements) to the quality of product or service that the organisation provides.

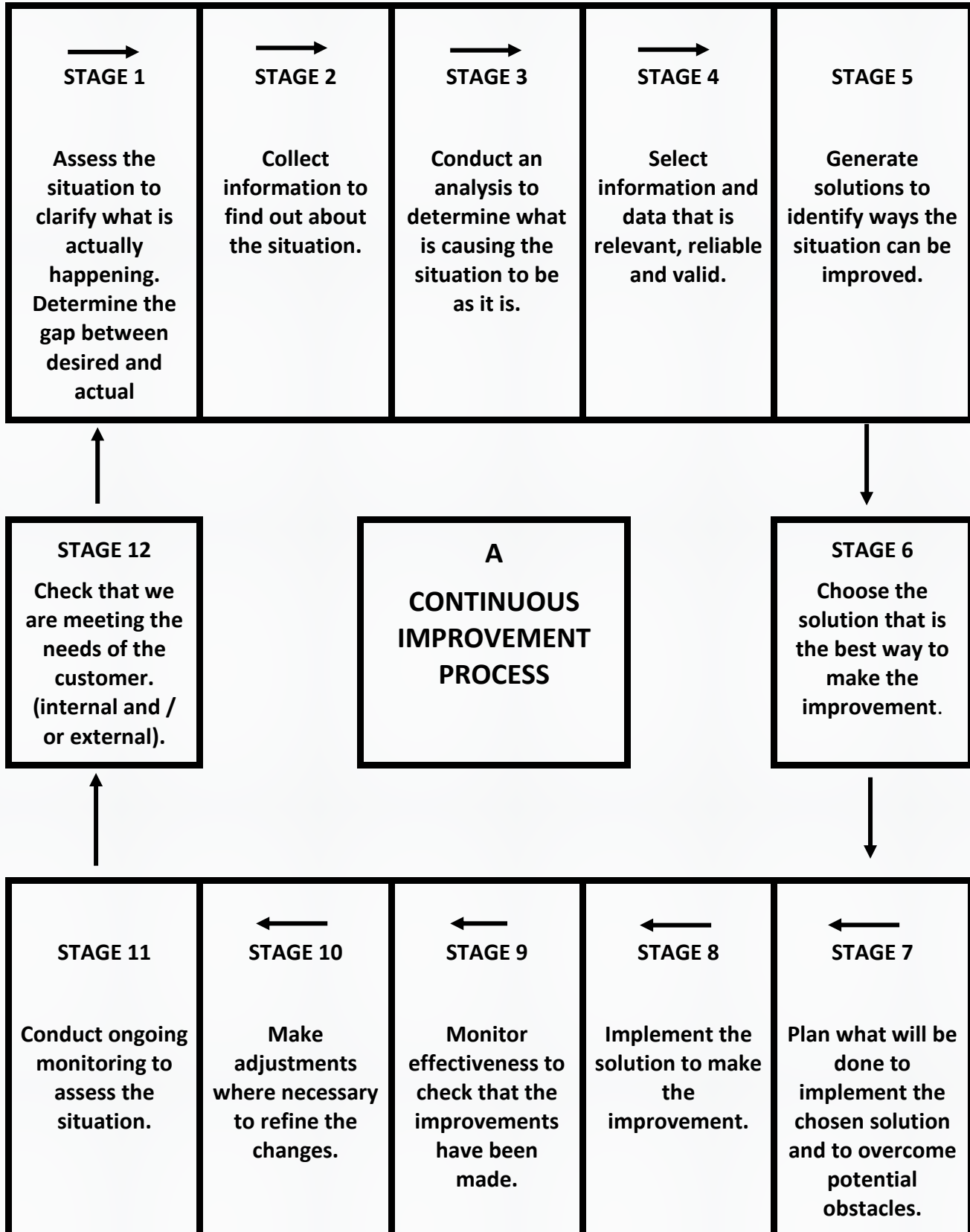
Change needs to be about developing and nurturing an organisational culture that strives to 'do it' a better way and respond to the unrelenting changes which affect our field of operation. It is directly and indirectly linked to solving problems and making decisions that affect the productivity, profitability, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of organisations.

Continuous improvement comes from the notion that nothing is perfect - that there is always a better way. Remember though that excellence is attainable, perfection is impossible.

Here is a simple model that can serve as a framework by which to implement continuous improvement. It is cyclical in format as it is an ongoing process.



12 STAGES TO CHANGE and CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



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The power of why

Why is this happening? Why are they doing this? Why are we doing this? What's their rationale? What's their motive? What's their reason? These questions are often asked by staff about management policies, initiatives and actions.

Never underestimate the power of *why*. It will pay managers well to spend time and effort in giving people the context for change. The context – which can incorporate the big picture, the background, the rationale, the reasons, the broader view, the motives, the purpose, the changing circumstances, the needs, the contributing factors, the underlying forces, the connections between the parts, new threats and new opportunities, etc. – gives meaning to things.

Whether it be a new project, a new initiative, a change to systems and procedures, a directive, a new task, a new policy, a shift in focus, a change in plan, a new work practise – giving people the context is a powerful management action.

Some people say that staff aren't interested, they don't want to know, they don't care. That's true – for some. But the majority of staff do appreciate it when they are given the context for change. And there is another important reason to do this. You can bet your sweet object for sitting on that the very staff who say they don't care will be the first to whinge and berate management when it doesn't happen. So do it anyway. For those who say they don't care, nothing changes – you don't lose, you break even. For those who do care – the majority of thinking people – you win.

To give people the context for change, discuss and provide people with information and/or perspectives about these things, where relevant:

(Be truthful – the truth may hurt, but it does less damage than lies and deceit. And anyway, staff always speculate and form their own suspicions in the absence of truthful information.)

- What things are happening external to the organisation which are creating this need for the change?
- How have circumstances changed which necessitate this new policy or initiative?
- What are the less than obvious issues at play here?
- What will happen if we don't make this change?
- What are the underlying forces that are driving this situation or change?
- How does the new project or task fit into the bigger picture?
- What is the rationale behind this decision?
- How are other parts of the organisation affected if we don't do this?
- What new information has come to light or what different perspectives relate to this change or decision?
- Why is this important?
- What is the reasoning and/or research behind this policy change?
- What are the perceived opportunities or threats that we are responding to?
- What are the wider ramifications on all stakeholders if we do or don't do this?

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- What things have happened in the past that have lead us to this place?
- How does this new way of doing things impact directly and indirectly on other people in the organisation?
- What needs and/or wants will this new action meet?
- Where has the push for this change come from?
- Why is it important to do things differently?
- What are the operating beliefs and meanings here (for all parties)?
- What could be other beliefs and meanings that could serve us all better?

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Hang your hat on this

My definition of a leader... is a man who can persuade people to do what they don't want to do, or do what they're too lazy to do, and like it.'

Harry S. Truman, 1884-1972, Thirty-third President of the United States, Mr Citizen.

The superior leader gets things done with very little motion. He imparts instruction not through many words but through a few deeds. He keeps informed about everything but hardly interferes at all. He is a catalyst, and though things would not get done as well if he weren't there, when they succeed he takes no credit. And because he takes no credit, credit never leaves him.

Lao-Tzu, 604-531B.C., Chinese philosopher and founder of Taoism, Tao TeChing

Change (which should always be explained and perceived as progress or improvement) always works better when there is a framework and a structure for people to follow. Change initiatives that have a poor framework or no or little structure usually go nowhere and achieve little.

DIRECTION AND CONTEXT FOR CHANGE

This is the visible exercise of leadership through setting context with simplicity, clarity and precision. It inspires and enrolls all the stakeholders to execute their business with confidence and creativity. It gives broader meaning to the performance of their jobs. It provides the links and connections to things outside the dimensions of their jobs.

SPACE FOR CHANGE

This is the freedom to act with confidence without fear of reprisals or repercussions. It is created through the track record of both parties and the building or restoring of trust between the leader and the workgroup. It motivates and promotes outstanding performance and opportunities for growth. It is the foundation of learning through the best teacher – experience. It allows people to exercise their untapped potential.

BOUNDARIES OF CHANGE

These are necessary, restrictive and there to be challenged in the light of changing circumstances and enhanced perspectives. Properly designed, and explicitly communicated, they serve to define accountabilities, the risk envelope and to protect reputations. Explained, understood and accepted, they support business delivery. Boundaries describe the ethics, standards and principles of the enterprise.

SUPPORT FOR CHANGE

This is a key contribution of leaders to delivery. It underwrites the quality, development and confidence of the workgroup. It is the base from which their performance springs. It is challenging. It acknowledges and rewards both effort and results. It provides a mechanism for coaching, learning and overcoming setbacks. Support is the foundation of for driving change.

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If the hat fits, wear it

We follow, close order behind you,
Where you have pointed the way.

'The Corps' Traditional song of Westpoint.

Before you implement the leadership framework or if you want to evaluate how well you currently use this framework when initiating change of any sort, it will pay you well to consider these questions.

DIRECTION AND CONTEXT

- Do I understand what the workgroup wants from this and why?
- Am I clear about the purpose?
- Have I challenged the purpose?
- Have I exploited enough options?
- Does my workgroup understand and accept what we are trying to do and why?
- Have I recognised that setting up creative processes may be much more important than creative products – and that one creative idea taken through to fruition will set the climate for others to flourish?
- Will a competitive element help or hinder?
- Have I ensured an incentive for those involved?
- Do I know what the key driver is? (eg making money, improving reputation, meeting client needs)

SPACE

- Am I giving enough space to my workgroup?
- Do I allow them to take risks, experiment, create and innovate?
- Do I let them get on with the job without perceived interference from me?
- Is the workgroup's mindset to try new things fixed or open?
- Am I too directive, too supportive?

BOUNDARIES

- Do I understand the boundaries?
- Have I challenged them?
- Have I set the boundaries for my workgroup?
- Does my workgroup understand and accept the boundaries?
- Do we both have the same perception of the boundaries?

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SUPPORT

- Do I have the support that I need?
- How do I gain more?
- How does my workgroup feel about the level of support I give them?
- How effective am I as a coach?
- Do I nurture ideas?
- How effectively do I listen to them?
- How do I support failure?
- Will breakthrough require some setting up and support?
- How will people react to my reaction to their ideas?

ME

- Do I feel sufficiently confident and committed to try?
- Will it be enough to see the idea through to delivery?
- What will increase my confidence and commitment?
- Am I frightened to spoil something which is already good?
- Am I fearful of not performing well?
- Have I thought through how to get others to feel the same conviction and commitment?
- Have I assessed any underlying blockages operating within the group?

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Don't blame us. We weren't asked.

Once you decide to make a change in a particular area, it often means a change in people, and that's most often where things bog down.

Q.T. Wiles, Turnaround Operations consultant, *Inc. Magazine*, February, 1988

The purpose of consultation is twofold. One: to seek ideas to remove obstacles to change and to assist with implementation. Two: to keep people 'on side'.

If you are planning to introduce a new project or to make a significant change to the way we do things, a consultative process may help.

Some managers hold the view that consultation is not necessary. Intelligent logic suggests that it makes good sense to incorporate into the planning process for change the perceptions of the people who will have to implement the new initiative or change. The act of consultation is nearly as important as the value of the views expressed. Be warned however. If you don't show how the information obtained through consultation has been used, then be sure to explain the reasons why.

Part of the explanations about why you have not incorporated their views may require you to change inaccurate perceptions by giving people more context, more information, different perspectives and different interpretations.

Human beings at every level in the organisation like to feel worthwhile, that they matter, that their work life has some significance. Taking the time to ask a person for his or her opinion or perception is a simple but powerful act that enhances the self-worth of people. Importantly, it enhances cooperation and engagement in implementation.

You will get some mischief makers who will use consultation as an opportunity to shout their vested interests. But most people will respond reasonably and usefully.

A checklist for consultation:

- Discuss the purpose and benefits of consultation during the planning and decision making stages of the planned change.
- Identify staff expectations and perceptions about consultation.
- Provide a context around which consultation will take place.
- Agree the amount of consultation that will take place.
- Discuss what is meant by consultation.
- Identify the stakeholders to be consulted.
- Discuss and agree outcomes, key result areas, major activities and the priorities for what we are aiming to achieve through this change.
- Identify what information is vital for consultative planning and decision making.
- Explain to those people with whom you consulted the reasons for not implementing the suggestions they put forward.

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- Agree the roles of stakeholders in the consultation process.
- Inform staff of what these roles are.
- Check that our sources of information are informed.
- Check that the people with whom consultation will take place have the best interests of the planned change at heart.
- Agree the sorts of information that will be required from stakeholders.
- Identify the areas where most value will be obtained during the consultation process.
- Provide a clear statement of what the intended outcomes for the planned change are before embarking on the consultation process.
- Discuss the time frame for implementation of plans.
- Review, regularly, the progress of the implementation of the plan.
- Agree the sequence of activities for the implementation of the plan.
- Explain to those stakeholders not involved in the consultation process, the reasons why they are not to be consulted.
- Check that people involved in implementation are consulted in the planning phase.
- Explain how information and data gathered will be used during implementation.
- Acknowledge and recognise those people involved in the consultation process when their involvement has been above and beyond the call of duty.

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The same old same old

Every man of genius sees the world at a different angle from his fellows.

Havelock Ellis, 1859-1939, English scientist and author, *The Dance of Life*

If you do not expect the unexpected, you will not find it.

Heraclitus, 535?-475? B.C., Greek philosopher, Fragments

How do you transform an organisation or a department or a section or a work group? How do you create a culture that is empowered, future orientated, challenges current assumptions and beliefs about how to be better at what we do, adaptive, creative, innovative, faster to respond to changing circumstances, moving with or ahead of the times? Bugged if I know actually. No, just joshing.

What is a good starting place for change/transformation? People's perceptions. Why? Because change / transformation requires people to adopt new or better behaviours - it requires a change in current behaviour. And, as we have pointed out many times, people's perceptions are a huge influence on their behaviour. So if you want to change your people, change their perceptions.

If you accept our premise that values/beliefs underlie perceptions and perceptions are based on context, information/knowledge, perspectives and interpretations, then you have a framework for change / transformation.

Here is a process that managers can use in leading their work groups. As an example let's say that you want to develop a more creative and innovative culture within your work group. Ask each person to write responses to all or any of the questions below. Bring the group together as a whole or in two halves to discuss their responses.

Values/Beliefs

- What is it about being more creative and innovative that you would value?
- Why is it important that we apply more creativity and innovation as a work group?
- What do you believe about creativity and innovation in our workplace?
- Why is it important to you?
- How would we benefit? How would others benefit?

Context

- What's the 'big picture' here? The background? The rationale? The motives? The purpose? The changing circumstances? The needs? The contributing factors? The underlying forces? The new threats and opportunities?
- What are the connections between creativity and innovation and productivity and the quality of our work life?
- What blockages would need to be overcome? What currently works against creativity and innovation? What training would we need? What support would we need - internally and externally?
- How would we have to think and act differently? What are the ramifications for us and others of being creative and innovative?

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Information / Knowledge

- What information or knowledge can you present to the group about creativity and innovation?
- What information / knowledge do we need to be more creative and innovative?
- In what areas and in what ways could we be more innovative / creative?
- What are the things that we do that would improve if we were to adopt a more creative and innovative approach?

Perspectives

- What are your current perspectives about the issue of creativity and innovation?
- What are the possible negative perspectives that people might hold?
- What are the possible positive perspectives that people might hold?
- What perspectives might need to be changed?
- What are the perspectives we need to take?

Interpretations

- What is your interpretation of creativity and innovation as applied to our work group?
- What interpretations are holding us back?
- What interpretations do we need to take?

Once this discussion has been held and everybody has contributed, meet again to agree actions we will now take to become more creative and innovative.

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Nothing stays up without support

When the lion fawns upon the lamb, the lamb will never cease to follow him

William Shakespeare, King Henry VI



One of the key functions of managers is to make work-life easier for their staff. You don't agree? We're not talking about doing their work for them, but creating an environment which will be supportive of what they are trying to achieve - identifying and removing impediments to their performance. Think through some of the benefits to you. Less interruptions, people knowing what to do, increased job satisfaction, less waste of time, better morale, higher productivity, more profit and so on.

The demands of work are changing all the time and there are requirements of staff that they too make changes to the way they do things. When change is being initiated in the workplace, a 'structure' that will support these changes must be provided. You as the manager need to be looking for new, different and better ways of doing things to facilitate this change.

Give some thought to these:

- For each new change, list the support requirements staff are likely to need. Consider things like training, time to adjust to and implement the change, resources required, communication requirements.
- Identify the types of support you believe staff may need during the planning stage of any new project or initiative and ask staff to identify the support they think they will need.
- Conduct a training needs analysis relevant to the change or initiative and then develop and implement a training plan that will address the requirements of staff.
- Provide emotional support when a need exists particularly where staff appear to be stressed or suffering from problems at home. Do this by giving them the opportunity to talk to you about their problems. Just talking is sometimes all they need.

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- Budget for the things that have been identified as important.
- Offer support in areas you believe staff may need assistance. They may not want it but the offer is still made.
- Seek assistance from external sources when appropriate and prepare submissions to apply for this support.
- Make yourself available to support staff and colleagues. Consider this to be part of your role as manager and not something extra which is taking you away from your 'real' work.
- Seek professional development for yourself to enable you to provide the support to staff that they may require.
- Take into consideration that each individual has different needs for support. Evaluate their individual abilities - their strengths and weaknesses - and then plan accordingly.
- Meet to discuss staff support requirements whenever there is change or you identify a problem.
- Consider the confidentiality and sensitive nature of some support requirements staff may have. Sometimes there are issues which others need not know about or may be embarrassing to the staff member concerned.
- Ask other managers about situations where support might be needed.
- Ask staff to describe what they would like you to do more of or less of to support them.

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Is the glass half full or half empty?

AS has been established many times in these tools, peoples' perceptions dictate their behaviour and fear is one of the strongest forces within the organisation working against change or improvement or creativity or innovation. The process below can be used by a manager and the team to improve problem solving, make better decisions, implement required change or as an analytical tool.

To achieve these things, a manager needs to create an environment where people will willingly and honestly express their perceptions.

Ground-rules

1. All views are acceptable.
2. All views are treated as important to the person expressing them.
3. All people are encouraged to express perceptions.
4. Contradictory opinions are encouraged.
5. Radical opinions are encouraged based on sound rationale.
6. Conservative opinions are encouraged based on sound rationale.
7. No ridicule of other peoples' perceptions.
8. No repercussions for expressing perceptions.
9. Facts are to be separated from assumptions and opinions.
10. People can respond to any questions or ask the question itself of the group.
11. Each of the four categories must be used.

The questions are used in relation to the proposition under consideration, the planned change, or the decision to be made.

Perceived Negatives

- What things doesn't it appear to take into account?
- Why won't people like it?
- What message does it convey to our people?
- What message does it convey to our customers?
- What are you uncomfortable with?
- Why it might it not work?
- What are the things working against it?
- What are your concerns about what we are doing?
- What might be the risks involved?
- Where do we disagree?

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- What do you fear?
- What do others fear?
- What are the obstacles?
- What are the constraints?
- What is your gut reaction to it?

Perceived Unknowns

- What are the assumptions we are making?
- What are the things we need to know more about?
- What are the unknowns?
- What are the 'what if...' scenarios?
- What is the likely impact on all stakeholders?
- What are the opportunities?
- How would we overcome identified obstacles or constraints?
- What is likely to change in the future which will affect this?
- What are the hidden or underlying issues which could block this

Perceived Positives

- What do you like about it?
- What would our people would like about it?
- What would our customers would like about it?
- What values does it demonstrate?
- What is the message it conveys to people?
- What is innovative or creative about it?
- What has worked well before about it?
- Why could it work?
- What are the known facts?
- What is your gut reaction to it?
- What things do we agree?
- What are the opportunities?

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What needs to Happen?

- What are the conditions necessary to make it work?
- How does it need to be sold?
- What would have to happen for you to commit to it?
- What would have to happen for other people to commit to it?
- What would need to happen to enable this to occur?
- To overcome the perceived negatives, what would you have to do?
- To answer the perceived unknowns, what would you have to do?