Change Leaders:
The transformers of organizational culture

Whitepaper

CHANGE
LEADERS

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About the Author

Lynne Cazaly is a speaker, author and mentor. She is the author of two books:

- *Create Change: How to apply innovation in an era of uncertainty,* and
- *Visual Mojo: How to capture thinking, convey information and collaborate using visuals.*

She works with leaders and teams on major change and transformation projects. She helps people distil their thinking, apply ideas and innovation and boost the engagement and collaboration effectiveness of teams. Lynne assists organizations with creative and engaging facilitated workshops, skills development in creative and innovative thinking and she works with people to help them unlock the 'entrepreneur inside'.

Lynne is a global speaker, facilitator and trainer and is a mentor on the Thought Leaders Business School faculty.

You can find out more about Lynne Cazaly at www.lynnecazaly.com email her at **info@lynnecazaly.com** or find her on **Twitter at @lynnecazaly**

'If you don't like change, you are going to like irrelevant even less.'

- Eric Shinseki

Change and transformation is a constant in organisations, and the reality is that leaders need to lead it. And get used to leading it.

While the team might enact the change, it's the leader who needs to engage and execute on the change. And it's through change that organizational culture is created.

Your capability as a leader is often measured by how well you lead change and transformation, and how well you've helped a team or organization shift from 'here'…. to 'there.'.

Over time, it can be challenging to keep on leading change and transformation projects - particularly if the team is feeling a little change weary!

Some team members resist and pushback on the change initiatives you're leading. This type of resistance and response can build and next thing you know, you have a groundswell of support against a change, not for it.

Leading change is a daily part of being a contemporary leader. And leaders need to feel comfortable with the discomfort that can come from their efforts of leading change. Even when the going is tough.

We're living in a VUCA world (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) and to lead change in this environment takes a mix of know-how, mindset and action that positions leaders as the true transformers of organizational culture.

The Challenges of Change

How do you help people **understand why** this change is just as, or more important than the last one you led? There's only so much 'urgency' you can create as a reason to change, or to push or engage people to change.

And sometimes it's a challenge to **get strong buy-in** from across the whole team. There might be pockets of support, pockets of dissent and a bunch of people just sitting in the middle, waiting to see which side of the change fence they might sit on.

Sustaining **high levels of engagement** throughout a change program is a challenge. Questions can come from all quarters. You might want to answer every question that people have but sometimes that's not possible. It may feel like you have little time or you may feel there's a sense that the questions would never end, and that you would get the same questions over and over and over….

How do you **handle the resistance**, the comments, questions and frustrations of team members… without letting it get on top of you, disrupting the rest of the team, or putting a stop to the transformation that's underway?]

Leading change isn't something that's often taught – there's plenty about leadership and management and time management and performance management. But where you do you learn the critical elements to 'lead change'?

Much is learned from the leaders who lead us. And much of that can be flawed …there's only so much that a PowerPoint slide with the Elizabeth Kubler-Ross model of grief can do to help you lead change! As highly regarded as the model is, it's about death and dying. Enough with linking change to death. How uninspiring!

We've got to move on from the 'death' model of change to a more contemporary approach, of change being constant, living, dynamic and a necessity.

Change and transformation needs to be led … every day. And leaders need to do that in an inspiring way.

There is a real risk or fear that **the change program you're leading could fail**. Some of them do. And if you're judged on performance or capability to lead a team through a rapidly changing environment, this can impact credibility, marketability, success and career path.

Leaders need to design, engage and execute change in a human, authentic way, yet still maintain a strong sphere of leadership influence among peers and beyond. It's a fine balance between leading the team, leading the change and leading your own career.

The Tipping Point to Transformation
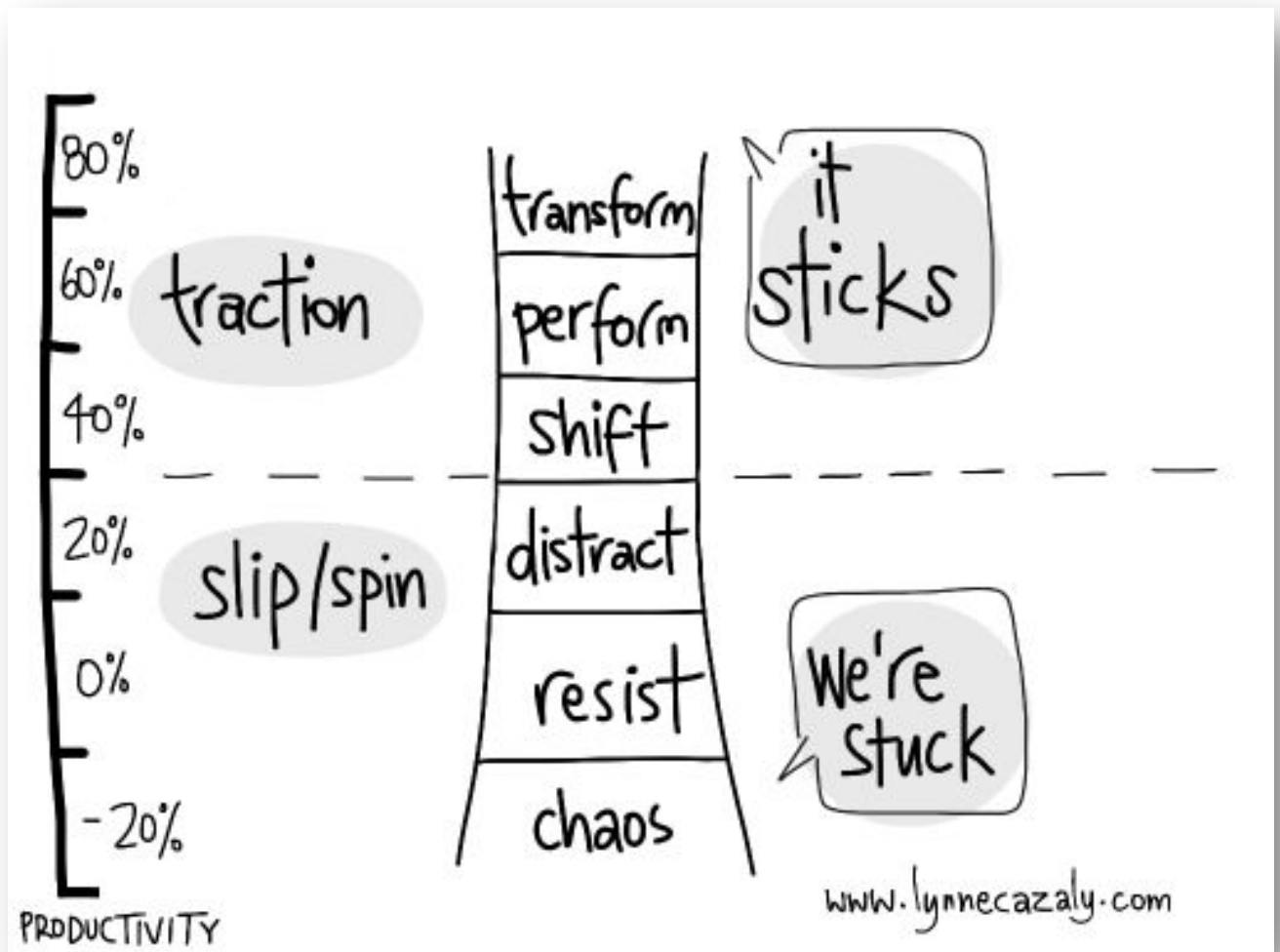
The path or ladder to true transformation can be treacherous… and time wasting.

At the bottom of the ladder are organizations and teams in **chaos**; they're losing ground and on the decline. They are resistant to change, fearful and frightened of change and don't know where to begin. They're moving in reverse. These are the businesses that go 'belly up', that become insolvent and are wound up. Too soon and they're gone.

There are plenty of businesses close to chaos but they're attempting change and transformation. They're stuck. When teams and organizations **resist** change – which often happens in the early stages of a change or transformation - there is a sense of being in neutral; poor levels of productivity and a feeling of not getting anywhere. Going in circles, simple changes not being adopted and it's all too easy to continue the old ways of working. Why change?

Progressing up the ladder or path of change are organizations and teams that are intent on change and transformation but they're… **distracted**. They're too busy looking at competitors and not responding, or they're focused on internal changes that deliver little impact (or are unnecessary in the first place), or their attention is taken off the positive process of change by other troubles : industrial, legal, financial or media crises. They're busy all right, but productivity suffers because they're focusing on distracting things.

If you think of an organization as aiming to make forward progress through change and transformation, each of these stages of the change path or ladder see the business slipping, with wheels spinning; engine revving loudly – just not getting anywhere!

And that's where we get to a tipping point…

Up over this point in change and transformation is where productivity changes, focus is shifted and positive friction is achieved, traction is gained.

At the **shift** stage, organizations and teams are making changes and transformation. They're bringing new processes and ways of working to the business … but it's still a hard slog. Change is not the norm; the dynamic of progressive change isn't being leveraged and change takes significant effort to get traction and to stick.

Once the team gets to **perform**, productivity goes up, change initiatives begin to 'stick' in a positive way and the path to being able to transform culture is paved. Positive change initiatives build on previous changes made and the culture is a high performing one. There is acceptance of change as the norm; 'this is what we do. We change. We keep changing because that's how we do things around here.'

Ultimately, organizations and teams that reach **transform**, do so because they are agile and adaptive; they make change stick, and then reinvent, experiment and review to make change an ongoing part of how they work.

Leading change that transforms culture

Leaders lead change.

Leaders influence culture.

And culture can be transformed through change.

When leaders lead change, they can change culture. They demonstrate that they are open to change, welcoming of possibility, curious to what might be possible.

Productivity is high. Changes stick and the transformation program delivers. Teams find that they have traction and then massive forward progress is made.

'The way you lead change says everything about your culture. Change brings renewal; if you want to change culture, change how you lead change.'

- Lynne Cazaly

So rather than allowing change to be a burden or challenge, change can be the catalyst to shifting culture.

To change culture, change how you lead change.

As a leader, you need more than just a model of change that shows what happens to people during change; you need a practical model of change that will guide you, inspire you and help you design, communicate and facilitate the change. This includes more creative, responsive, adaptive and agile methods and tools for the dynamic and changing workplace.

Design. Engage. Execute.

There are three phases to a contemporary approach to change:

Design.

Engage.

Execute.

Design.

It's no longer enough for change and transformation initiatives to be rolled-out with a 'fingers crossed' approach to how well they'll be taken up and applied.

With the rise of models and approaches like:
- design thinking,
- lean thinking,
- customer and user experience design,
- business model generation and
- creative thinking

… change and transformation initiatives must also be… by design.

Every change and transformation needs a design approach.

This aspect of change is about **innovation**.

It's about **perspective**.

This is where innovation begins in an organization; how the culture can work, how people work – and how people, innovation and change will work together.

Think:
- How will the 'product' of change work in the organisation?
- How will the 'users' of this change take up the new ways of working and thinking?
- What needs to be done?
- What does it look like?
- How will it work?
- What does it feel like?
- Will people want to use it?
- What is the minimum viable product of this change?
- How will we build it?
- How will change be measured?
- How will we learn?

Engage.

With engagement levels in organisations at some of the lowest levels than ever before, it is up to every individual leader in an organization to be the ones to change this.

Engagement is a change program in itself.

Once a change initiative or program is designed, it's time to fully engage.

Engage is about **communication**.

In change it's about **perception**.

While teams in organizations need to be engaged throughout the change process – and in the design stage – communication is central to engagement.

Change communication in business gets dehumanised. It gets over-engineered and over-edited. Change 'comms' get distilled to buzz words and puff-speak and it becomes…. dull and disengaging and sounds and looks the same as the last change initiative.

Frank and clear commentary gets distilled to coloured boxes, chevrons and arrows in PowerPoint packs and organisational charts. Images are over-engineered and stock photos abound.

Where is the inspiration? Where is the engagement… that will change the culture that will drive the change?

Think:
- Why is the change happening?
- How will I be impacted?
- What will be the same?
- What will be different?
- Who else has done this?
- What's happening next? And then what will happen after that?
- What does the future look like?
- How can I identify with this change?
- Tell me more about…

Execute.

With a change initiative designed and the team engaged in the why and how, change leadership is now about execution.

Execution and implementation is about the **facilitation** of the change.

This is about **people**.

The daily interactions, questions, comments, concerns, challenges and barriers are about the leader carving a path through so that the change can be achieved.

Facilitation skills are no longer the domain of the facilitator, trainer or development worker. They are strong, influential and persuasive skills that leaders of today need to be able to handle the one-to-one and group situations (large and small) where leaders do the leading in change and transformation.

At times leaders need to 'push' communication and information, to tell, to lead, to direct. At other times the leader needs to 'pull', to support, to ask questions and draw out.

The daily leadership role is to travel up and down this continuum; to push, to pull to achieve, implement and execute change. It's all about how well leaders execute the change with the people they lead.

Think:
- How will you answer questions?
- How will you handle comments or criticisms?
- What will you do when you don't know what to do?
- How will you deal with conflict? Or disengagement?
- What style will you adopt for team events, rituals and meetings?
- How will you 'step it up' when things get tough?
- How will you deliver as well as keeping connections with stakeholders, sponsors and colleagues alive and strong?

Another step further:
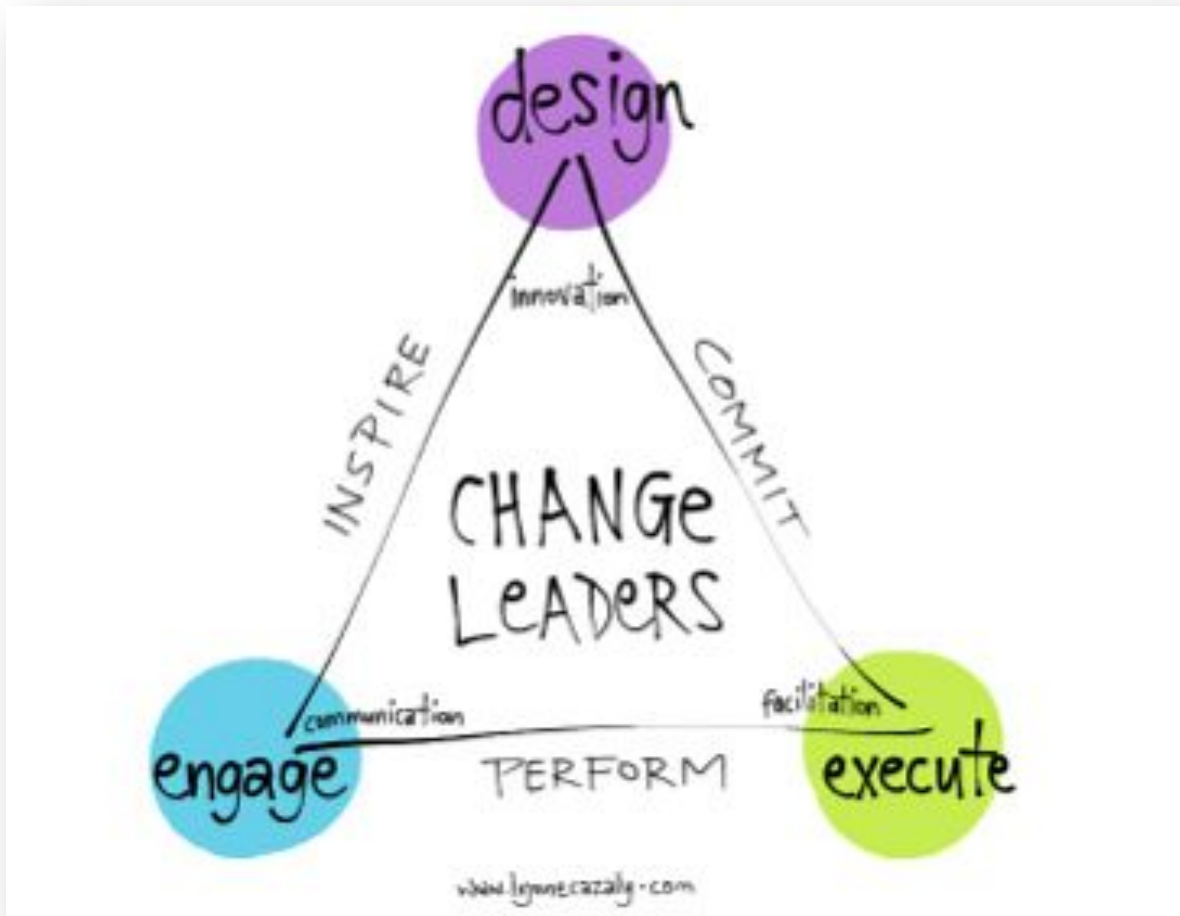
The elements of change outlined in this white paper don't exist alone. The design, engagement and execution of change relies on individual leaders, teams and the people of the organization or business.

To go another step further…

Sitting between Design and Engage – leaders need to **inspire**.

Then between Design and Execute – people need to **commit**.

And finally between Engage and Execute – the team needs to **perform**.

Workshop Programs & Conference Keynotes

To develop leadership capability in leading change, we need to do more than just talk about how people feel during change.

In Lynne Cazaly's Change Leaders Program and Conference Keynote, leaders learn about:

- Change by Design
- Change to Engage, and
- Change to Execute.

Practical 1, 2 and 3 day programs on these topics are available.

Lynne Cazaly is a conference speaker and presenter and can deliver tailored keynote sessions, workshops and break-out labs on the topic of change.

Lynne Cazaly's Books

Create Change: How to apply innovation in an era of uncertainty

To boost competitive advantage, career success and team performance, it's all about how well you can create change.

Create Change is about:
- having a spirit of spontaneity
- experimenting
- co-creating
- and having an intrepid curiosity.

Together the capabilities, techniques and approaches outlined in 'Create Change' will help you lead through change, leverage it and … even like it. Lynne Cazaly gives you the capabilities and thinking to strengthen your ability to respond, adapt and lead teams through change and transformation.
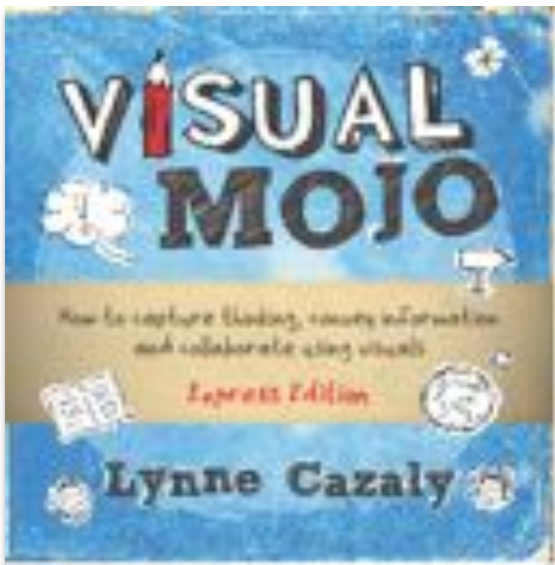
Visual Mojo: How to capture thinking, convey information and collaborate using visuals

This is not a book you sit down and read. This is a book I want you to write and draw in!

Yes you can learn the powerful techniques of sketching, scribing and visualizing to boost your communication and collaboration skills, even if you think your drawing or visual thinking skills aren't the best! We all have the capability – it's time to bring it back to life.

This book is a workshop in your hands, an opportunity for you to better use your brain and get your Visual Mojo back.

This book will enable you to:
- use visuals in your brainstorming and ideation
- capture key points from workshops, meetings and discussions
- map out conversations and thinking
- boost your confidence and get over the 'I can't draw' syndrome
- build your visual dictionary of icons, symbols and visuals.

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