

# Managing Change Profile

## Commentary

Changes are reputedly becoming bigger and happening more rapidly. The old saying “*There is nothing permanent except change*” reminds us that change is a continuous process.

Basically there are two sorts of change, incremental and transformational. Incremental changes are modifications to the present situation. Transformational changes, on the other hand, occur when merely tinkering with an existing situation is no longer judged to be adequate.

Some of the clearest examples of these two types of change are found in nature:

- The changes in the seasons are incremental but earthquakes and erupting volcanoes are transformational.
- The ageing process is incremental but a stroke or heart is transformational.

The process of continuous improvement is an example of an incremental approach to change with its never-ending quest for small modifications. Big changes that completely alter the strategy and direction of an organisation, such as take-overs and mergers, are transformational -with many unpredictable knock-on effects. Clearly smaller, incremental changes are less scary, and cause less upheaval, than bigger transformational changes.

Often these two types of change become intertwined and spill into each other. Transformational changes, for example, in order to become manageable, have to be broken down in to smaller steps on the basis that the future, however uncertain, comes one day at a time. Sometimes changes start incrementally and suddenly flip over into a transformation. The Spinning Jenny, for example invented in 1764, eventually resulted in the Industrial Revolution. The so-called ‘greenhouse effect’ might well be another example of an incremental change, with such tiny increments that some people even doubt if it is happening at all. Eventually, this change could become transformational when deserts expand, ice caps melt, sea levels rise etc. A splendid example of the tendency for change to start out as one type and suddenly flip over into the other is a particular sort of frog that is so good at adjusting to small incremental changes in water temperature that it allows itself to be boiled alive!

Whichever sort of change you are attempting to manage, it always presents challenges. Sometimes changes are initiated by someone else -in which case you have to get

behind them and manage your part of the change. At other times you will be the initiator, and then you are both the champion and manager of the change.

Whatever the circumstances, the questionnaire will help you to assess how well you handle the following aspects which are all important when managing changes:

1. **Visioning and planning**
2. **Communicating the need for change**
3. **Overcoming resistance**
4. **Getting and giving support**

Use the profile overleaf to assess how you manage change.

Here are 32 items exploring things you might do and not do when managing a change that impacts on other people. Mark each box in the following way:

<b>I never do this</b>	<b>I rarely do this</b>	<b>I sometimes do this</b>	<b>I often do this</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>ANSWER (0 to 3)</b>
1. I create a clear, compelling vision of how much better things will be as a result of the change.	
2. I help people see how they will gain from the change/what's in it for them.	
3. I compile a list of everyone who is affected by and should be involved in the change.	
4. I identify the people who can help make the change a reality.	
5. I plan the steps involved in making the change.	
6. I put together a robust case, with specific data, to demonstrate the need for the change.	
7. I consult widely to get ideas to help with the change, making it clear there is no guarantee that every suggestion will be used.	
8. I meet with key players individually to enlist their support for the change.	
9. I set milestones/dates for the chief steps involved in implementing the change.	
10. I make a point of telling people all I know, as soon as I know it, to prevent them first hearing it through the grapevine.	
11. I provide people with ample opportunities to participate in the change process.	
12. I make sure that I have the backing of a 'champion' (a credible senior person) for the change.	
13. I use 'what if' scenarios to anticipate the possible consequences of the change.	
14. I do all I can to help people appreciate the need for the change.	

<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>ANSWER</b> <b>(0 to 3)</b>
15. I encourage people openly to express their anxieties and fears about the change.	
16. I treat the people doing the work which is most affected by the change as the 'experts' who know best.	
17. I demonstrate my enthusiasm and commitment to the change.	
18. I am straightforward when describing the positive and negative implications of the change.	
19. I regularly bring people together to discuss the problems and difficulties they are experiencing with the change.	
20. I avoid 'shooting the messenger' when I'm told about problems.	
21. I am clear what is negotiable and what is non-negotiable and remain resolute in the face of opposition.	
22. I set aside regular blocks of time to discuss people's concerns and deal with their questions.	
23. I treat resistance as a sign that the way the change is being handled requires improvement.	
24. I lean over backwards to support people though the period of transition.	
25. I communicate a sense of excitement about the challenges involved in managing the change.	
26. I make a point of being available and wandering around to talk to people informally about the change.	
27. I help people see that they have an important part to play in bringing about the change.	
28. I make sure people are recognised and appreciated for their suggestions and co-operation.	
29. I plan for lower production rates during the period of transition.	
30. I establish a bulletin board (real or electronic) to keep people up to date about the change.	
31. I involve people in deciding how best to limit other work during the transition from the old and the new.	
32. I make a point of communicating and celebrating the achievement of each milestone.	

## Score key

1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	8	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	11	<input type="checkbox"/>	12	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	<input type="checkbox"/>	14	<input type="checkbox"/>	15	<input type="checkbox"/>	16	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	<input type="checkbox"/>	18	<input type="checkbox"/>	19	<input type="checkbox"/>	20	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	<input type="checkbox"/>	22	<input type="checkbox"/>	23	<input type="checkbox"/>	24	<input type="checkbox"/>
25	<input type="checkbox"/>	26	<input type="checkbox"/>	27	<input type="checkbox"/>	28	<input type="checkbox"/>
29	<input type="checkbox"/>	30	<input type="checkbox"/>	31	<input type="checkbox"/>	32	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Visioning/ Planning Score</b>		<b>Communication Score</b>		<b>Overcoming Resistance Score</b>		<b>Support Score</b>	

## Interpretation

The lowest possible score for each aspect is 0, i.e. you never do any of the 32 items asked, and the highest 24, i.e. you often do all the items in the questionnaire. Your scores are likely to fall somewhere in between these two extremes!

As a rough guide, any scores below 16 indicate that there are plenty of things you could do more frequently than you are at present. Even scores over 16, assuming you haven't got the 'perfect' score of 32, may reveal some individual items where you could step up your efforts by making some incremental adjustments to your behaviour .

<b>Score Band</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
<b>0-8</b>	A low score indicating that there are masses of things you could do far more often that you seem to be at present.
<b>9-16</b>	A moderate score indicating that there are plenty of things to do more often.
<b>17-24</b>	A high score. Search out individual items where you scored yourself with something less than 2 or 3 and see what you could do to increase them.