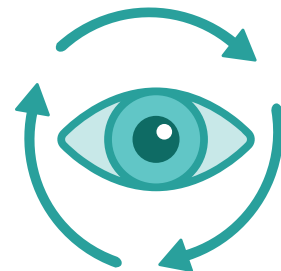
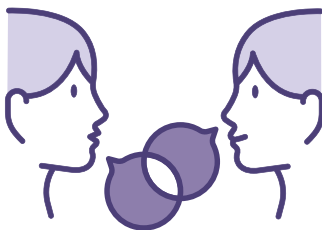
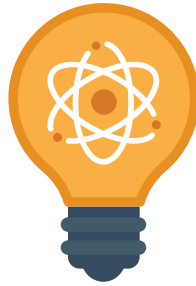


Real[®] CHANGE



9 ENABLERS OF SUCCESSFUL ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Developed by
Peter Cheng Ph.D. & Lily Cheng Ph.D

INTRODUCTION

Despite being unfounded on empirical evidence, a staggering amount of statistics on high failure rates of organisational change initiatives continue to be regarded as hard facts by many. This is not surprising given our natural biases towards failure—we tend to attribute successful outcomes to chance and take negative ones as proof of impossibility.

Unfortunately, this propensity towards negativity could be the very thing hindering the success of organisational change initiatives: a widely-held “change is hard” attitude within the organisation fuels a negative self-fulfilling prophecy.

In today's disruptive business landscape, change-capability—the ability to successfully implement planned change—has become an imperative to survival.

In today's disruptive business landscape, change-capability—the ability to successfully implement planned change—has become an imperative to survival. It is time organisations change the way they think and talk about change, acknowledging that successful implementation of change initiatives can be achieved with deliberate planning and effort.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Adopting a qualitative method, Dr. Lily Cheng conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with participants from three multi-national corporations in the pharmaceutical, chemical and electronics industries.

Each organisation was represented by a pair of one change agent (who had implemented organisational change) and one change recipient (who had been affected by organisational change). Through a two-hour, one-to-one interview with each of the six participants, Dr. Lily Cheng gained insights into the participants' experience with organisational change through the following questions:

1 What is your general experience in organisational change interventions?

2 What were your experiences in working with the different types of change, small, middle and large scale?

3 How do you define successful implementation in organisational change?

4 What are contributions of each enabling aspect that influences success of organisational change?

5 Which of these enabling aspects is the most important to enhance the success of organisational change?

6 To what extent can the change agents have control over these identified enablers?

With the consent from all participants, their verbatim was recorded during the interviews. The qualitative data collected was later transcribed and analysed using open coding technique.

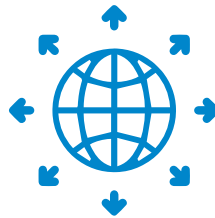
NINE ENABLERS WERE IDENTIFIED ACROSS THREE DIMENSIONS

In their integrated theoretical framework, Armenakis and Bedeian suggested three factor dimensions of organisational change:



Content

(the type or substance of the change)



Context

(forces or conditions in an organisation's external and internal environments)



Process

(the implementation of the organisational change)

Supportive of this view, the findings from the study reveal nine enablers across these three dimensions.



Content Enablers

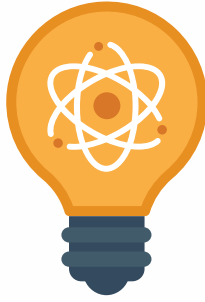


Perceived Gap

refers to the realisation and acknowledgement of either an existing weakness or existing deficiency within the organisation.

Providing a sound reason for change, this identification of existing gaps is consistent with the *Unfreezing* stage of Kurt Lewin's Three-Stage Model of Change as well as the first two steps in John Kotter's Eight Steps to Successful Change.





Desired State

refers to the articulation of an ideal and ennobling future state. This helps people envision exciting future possibilities and broaden their perspectives on the purpose and benefits of the change.





Consistency of Change Message

refers to maintaining a consistent message throughout the change process. This means ensuring that the change team speaks with “one voice” and use the “same language” as well as establishing an unchanging core that people can hold on to for psychological safety during the process.





Context Enablers



Addressing Emotional Responses

involves acknowledging and respecting individuals' emotional responses to change by allowing them time to disengage from and grieve the loss of the present state. Given that we naturally tend to dwell more on negative emotional responses rather than positive ones, it is critical to mitigate negative feelings and instil a sense of positivity throughout the process.





Building Trust and Credibility

involves establishing credibility by practising what is being preached and cultivating an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. For change teams, this means role modelling behaviours and communicating honestly and consistently.





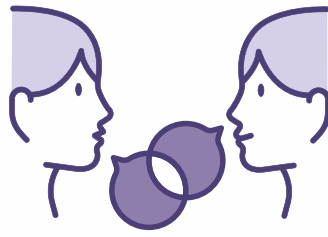
Transformational Change Agent

refers to earning the commitment and support from senior management to the change as well as cultivating passionate advocates who understand and drive the change.





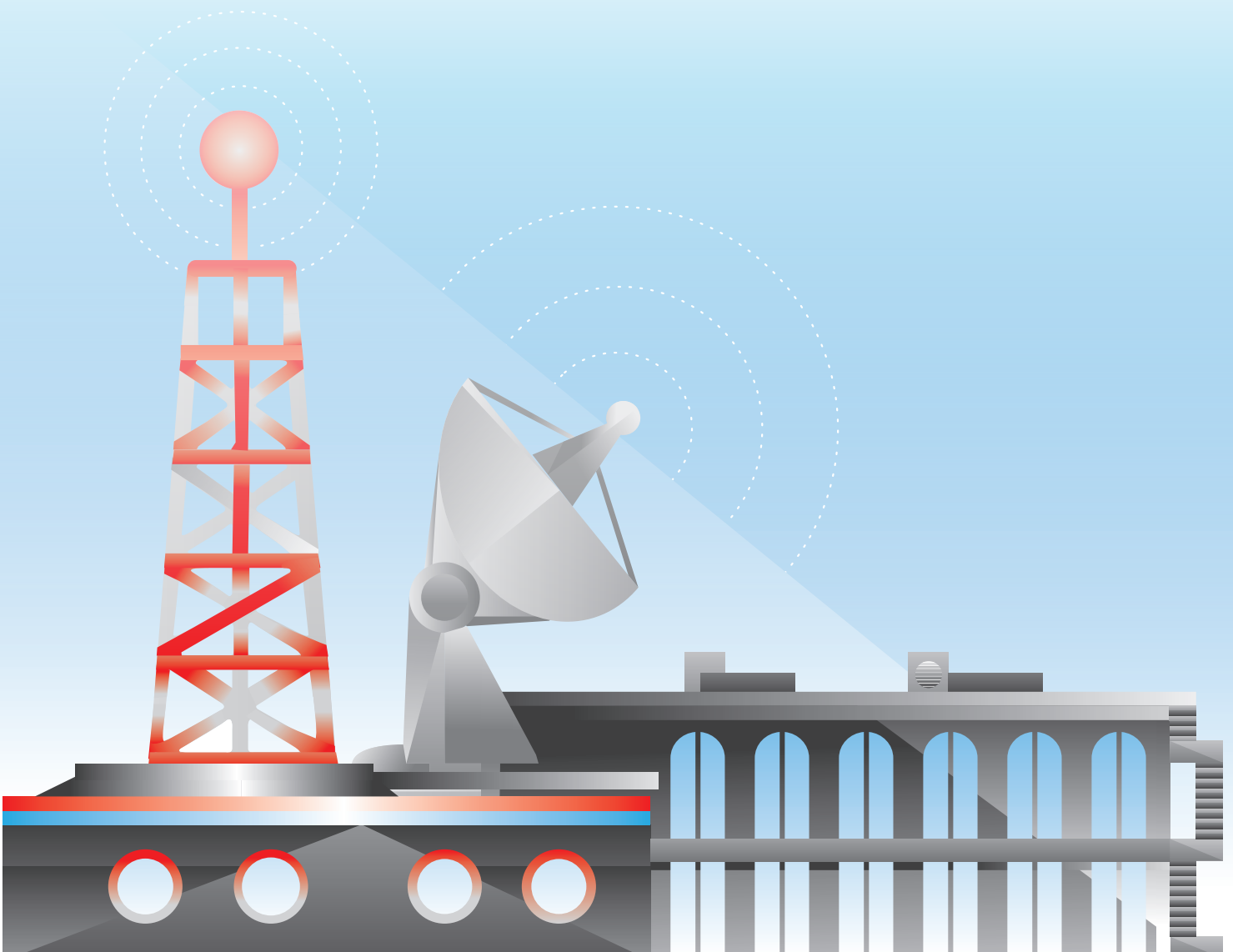
Process Enablers



Communicating Change with Your Team

involves honestly communicating both what will and what will not change as well as clarifying expectations of the change.

An open, two-way communication channel should also be available throughout the process for individuals to share ideas and learn from the successes of others.

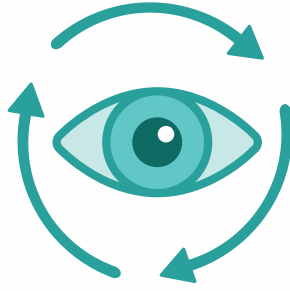




Involving and Engaging Your Team

refers to identifying change recipients and involving them throughout the change process. This also means encouraging good participation from an early stage.





Monitor Change Initiatives

involves actively seeking to move the change project forward. This includes establishing key milestones as well as providing regular feedback and updates regarding progress. This continuous monitoring can help maintain the momentum of change.



THE NINE ENABLERS ARE INTERDEPENDENT

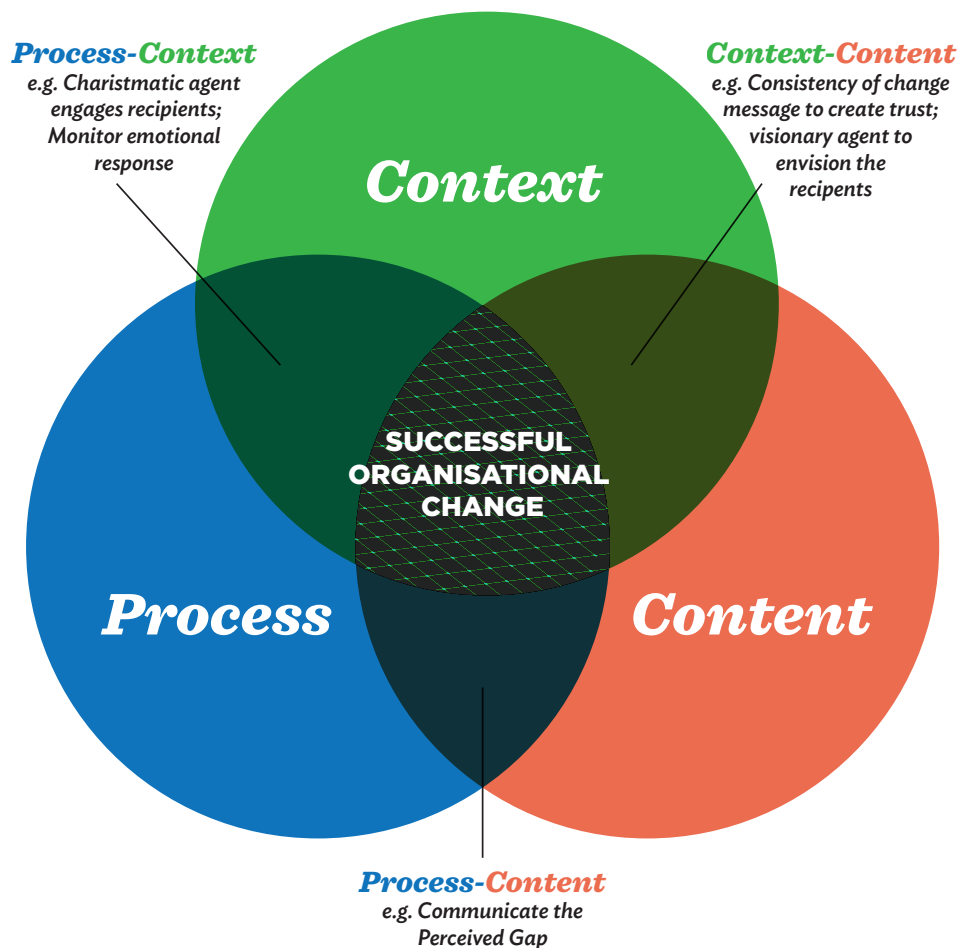
Building on the nine enablers identified, further analyses reveal interesting interdependencies between them, such that the presence of an individual enabler enhances other enablers. For example, communication of change was found to increase trust and reduce negative emotional responses, suggesting that the Process enabler Communicating Change with Your Team has an enhancing effect on the Context enablers Building Trust and Credibility and Addressing Emotional Responses. Interdependent relationships like these were found throughout the study and summarised below:

ENHANCEE ENHANCER	Perceived Gap	Desired State	Consistency of Change Message	Involving & Engaging your Team	Communicating Change with your Team	Monitoring Change Initiatives	Trust and Credibility	Addressing Emotional Responses	Transformational Change Agent
Perceived Gap							✓		
Desired State								✓	
Consistency of Change Message							✓		
Involving & Engaging your Team								✓	
Communicating Change with your Team	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓
Monitoring Change Initiatives									
Trust and Credibility								✓	
Addressing Emotional Responses	✓								
Transformational Change Agent	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	

Table 1.

Given that interdependencies were found across enablers from different dimensions, this study introduces the cross-dimensional concept to Armenakis and Bedeian's framework. As suggested in Figure 1 below, the enablers in each dimension come together to create cross-dimension enablers that holistically enable organisational change.

Figure 1.



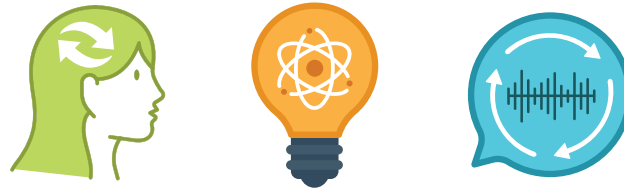
THE TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE AGENT PLAYS A VITAL ROLE IN THE CHANGE PROCESS

Participants unanimously agreed that the presence of a strong and capable change agent is of utmost importance during the change process. In their definition, a capable change agent possesses characteristics that closely resemble the four elements of transformational leadership: Intellectual Stimulation (challenging followers to be innovative and creative), Inspirational Motivation (being able to inspire and motivate followers), Individualised Consideration (demonstrating genuine concern for the needs and feelings of followers), and Idealised Influence (being a positive role model).

This finding is also consistent with the interdependencies discussed above, whereby the Context enabler Transformational Change Agent enhances every other enabler except the Process enabler Monitoring Change Initiatives.

CONCLUSION

This study built upon Armenakis and Bedeian's integrated framework for organisational change and identified nine enablers that positively influence the success of organisational change:



Content Enablers

include *Perceived Gap, Desired State and Consistency of Change Message*



Context Enablers

include *Addressing Emotional Responses, Building Trust and Credibility and Transformational Change Agent*



Process Enablers

include *Communicating Change with Your Team, Involving and Engaging Your Team and Monitoring Change Initiatives*

The study also found interdependencies among these enablers and introduced a cross-dimensional concept to Armenakis and Bedeian's framework before discussing the vital role of a present and active change agent.

Together, these findings provide a holistic framework for OD practitioners to systematically assess organisations for missing dimensions or enablers and prepare them for change.

Interested to know how you can leverage our findings to develop your organisation's change-capability? Contact us today at connect@pace-od.com for more information.

ABOUT PACE O.D. CONSULTING

PACE O.D. Consulting is committed to help organisations perform above challenging business environments. As pioneers in the Organisation Development (OD) domain, we partner like-minded individuals and organisations to attain and sustain organisational effectiveness. We serve our learning partners with OD solutions in Leadership Development, Values-Based Culture Development, People Excellence, Performance Management and Strategy Development & Implementation. With key strengths in diagnosis, development and delivery of innovative, world-class OD solutions, PACE is privileged to associate and partner with internationally-renowned thought leaders and meet the needs of multinational clientele.