

Leading and managing change at the University of East Anglia



change *noun*

1. An act or process through which something becomes different.
2. A transformation or transition from one state, condition, or phase to another.

Change is an ever-present and essential part of life, and the University a constantly evolving organisation. While this can make it a dynamic and vibrant place to work, change can present challenges for individuals and groups, and needs to be expertly managed if we are to realise the benefits of making changes at any scale.

This guidance document presents a recommended approach to leading and managing change. The University would expect anyone leading a change initiative to consider all the stages within this guidance, wherever possible, whatever the scale of change. The same considerations apply for big, structural changes and for smaller adjustments in the pursuit of continual improvement; people will still experience change, and will need help to experience it positively.

This guidance has been developed from work undertaken at Bath University by Simon Inger, Head of Staff Development.

Where change is likely to impact on the employment, contracts and/or general terms and conditions of staff, there is a legal requirement to consult formally with the recognised Trade Unions and the staff involved. If there is any question of a possible change affecting the employment, contracts and/or terms and conditions of staff, you must consult immediately with your HR Manager who will advise you on the process to be followed.

Planning and Managing Change

Two key principles underpin effective change management:

1. People will be responsible for success or failure. Engaging stakeholders, involving staff in planning and decision making, and communicating effectively are vital throughout the process.
2. Learning and providing opportunities for feedback will allow a dynamic, emergent approach that is likely to be more successful than one which is rigidly planned and implemented without flexibility.



A word of caution

Change is usually messy, non-linear and has unintended as well as planned consequences. Be prepared to revisit any of these stages and learn from experience or new information, to modify and adapt your approach and plans.

Change is also constant, and a necessary part of a continually improving organisation. It is therefore a bit false always to think of change as an event, or even a project, but the concerns and processes set out in these guidelines will still need to be taken into account.

Successful change management involves these stages:

1. Determining the need for change, triggered by on-going business analysis, changes to external conditions, identification of new opportunities etc.
2. Developing a case for change, including options, risks and resource implications.
3. Communicating the vision for change, presenting a compelling narrative that sets out how the new situation will be better.
4. Developing a strategy and plan for change, having clear project management procedures, clear accountability, objectives and timelines.
5. Managing the change process, seeking tangible benefits and embedding new systems, processes and cultures into every day activity.



Why Change?

Key factors

- There is no point in bringing in change for change's sake; however it is also critical that we take action when there is a clear need for change.
- Many factors may signal a need for change; changes to the funding environment, the University's strategic priorities, enhancement or obsolescence of technology, and so on.
- Some changes will be small scale and just part of the everyday business of continual improvement.
- This is not the time to produce the final, perfected solution, in fact it is damaging and highly risky to do so without the involvement of the people who will be most affected (colleagues, staff, students, other stakeholders).
- Involve people; change will be easier to implement and better solutions will be found.

So you think you need change, ask:

- Why are you thinking of change – what are the reasons for it?
- What would you like to achieve by changing?
- What will happen if we don't change?
- If this change is imposed from above, do I understand and accept the reasoning behind it?

Seek to understand:

The impacts on staff, risks, costs, opportunities and benefits.

If there is any possibility of the changes you are considering affecting the employment, contracts and/or terms and conditions of staff, you must speak directly and immediately with your HR Manager who will advise you on the process to be followed right from the very beginning. This will allow these essential requirements to be built into your overall change management approach. Formal

consultation (between employer and staff) is a legal requirement in these cases but will typically happen later.

Don't seek to have all the data at this stage but enough to start going to people to gain more intelligence, test commitment and build a powerful guiding coalition of influential people (change agents) who will be key to your success.

In other words: **Start discussing now.**

Talking and listening to people:

- saves you from your own potential wrong assumptions;
- protects you from the things you don't know;
- does not mean that you incorporate all their suggestions;
- encourages trust which you will need when the going gets tough.

“But I don't want to start lots of rumours, and it's too early to tell people if we don't have a firm plan of action.”

There is a balance to be struck between telling everybody everything straight away, and planning change behind a veil of secrecy because you are afraid to set unrealistic expectations or cause panic. But people appreciate honesty, and having their voice heard. It is possible to have conversations with a wide spectrum of people which, if handled carefully, give you and them a chance to understand the implications and feasibility of what you think needs doing. Consulting with people, and helping them to see things from both sides generally throws up some very good ideas for doing things better than you could have thought of by yourself. It may also give you a better chance of locating change agents that you can recruit to the planning, communication and management of the change.

Change agents

Change agents are people who encourage and promote change in an organisation, by their impact on processes and people. They may have formal change management roles, or may be part of project teams or the wider workforce. Ideally good change agents:

- Believe change is possible and live in the future, not the past, with a focus on goals and outcomes.
- Are motivated and resilient when things go badly or slowly, and prepared to take calculated risks.
- Communicate well with a wide variety of people.
- Are empathetic, and able to see things from others' perspectives.
- Are flexible and creative, prepared to try new things and think of different options.

Among your stakeholders, who displays these some of these characteristics, and how can you get them involved?

Specialists

In many change programmes you will need the help of specialists, for example human resources (HR), health, safety & environment, information technologists, communications, finance etc. Get them involved early in the process, to avoid planning something that proves problematic for legal or technical reasons later, and to have the benefit of their expertise and experience.

2

Reasons and Stakeholders

“Leaders can only successfully encourage change if they can convincingly say: We can’t go on like this, and here’s why.”

Key factors

- People will not align with bad aims, nor engage with a plan based on obviously flawed or unethical reasoning.
- This is the time to set out where we are, where we need to be, and why. How the change will happen comes later.
- By involving people, commitment and understanding builds and they tell you the things you didn’t know.

Incorporating specialist advice

Make sure that you build in the specialist advice that you have received in stage 1 so that all key requirements are considered and met right from the beginning.

Connect with the collective intelligence

Tapping the collective intelligence of the organisation is a key part of modern change management. You may not be connected to the front line activity; talk to people who are, and who are likely to be most affected by the change you are considering.

Choosing a path requires detailed consideration of various options, including doing nothing. Various tools exist to help formulate and think through different options, but the aim here is to present a compelling rationale or business case to your stakeholders. To do this you need to understand who your stakeholders are, and what their perspectives are on the potential change.

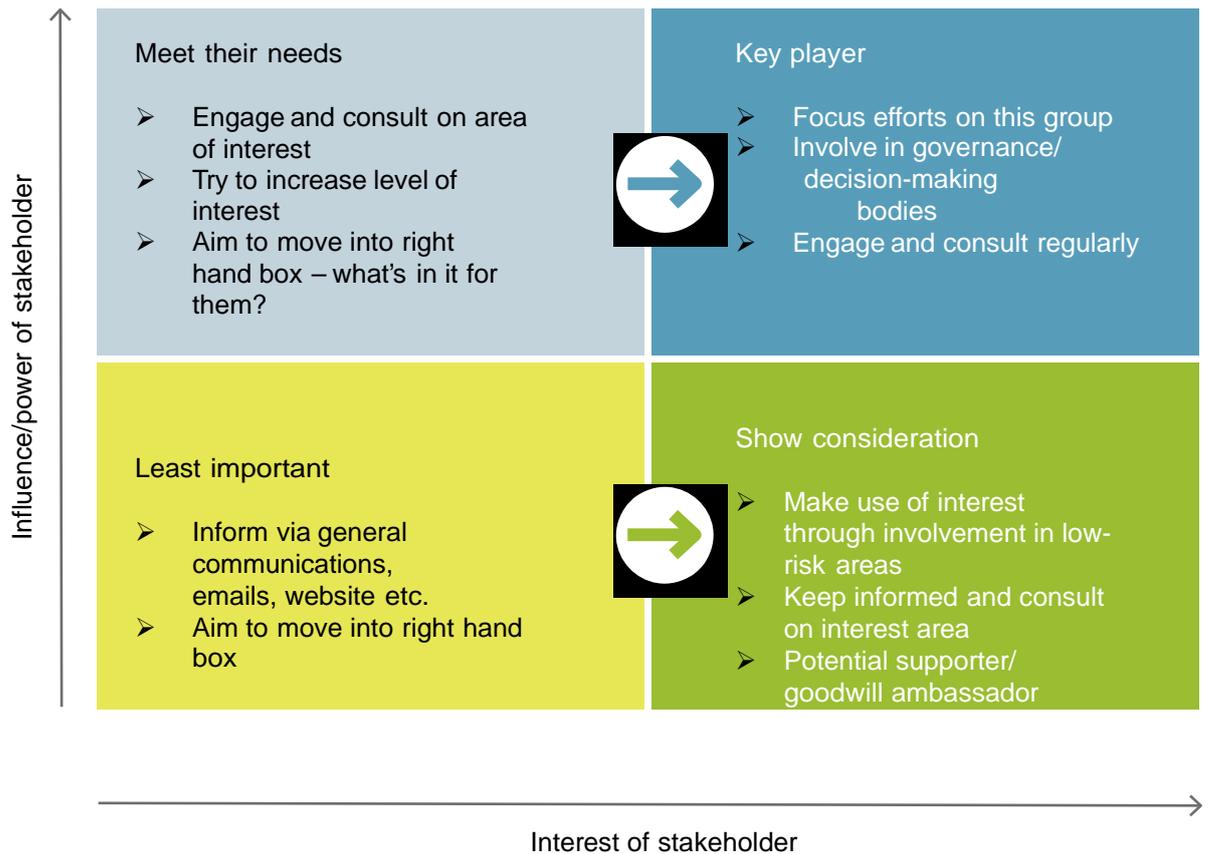
Stakeholders

A stakeholder is anyone with a legitimate interest in your activity, whether they be students, staff, management, funders, the local community or anyone else. Stakeholders have different roles, and have different degrees of influence, in your change process. It can be helpful to analyse which stakeholders are particularly influential as enablers or blockers of change, and be particularly careful about how you involve them.

Stakeholder analysis

- List everyone who has an interest in what you’re proposing to change
- For each one, assess their level of interest in your proposed change (i.e. how likely are they to be affected or have an opinion about it)
- Assess how influential they are; do they have the power to enable or prevent the change?
- If you don’t know, make a plan to find out: who do you need to talk to?

Position the stakeholders on the following grid. Generally you should seek to move stakeholders into the right hand boxes as shown. Which stakeholders are your priorities, and how will you approach them?



Use your analysis to select stakeholders for involvement in the planning process, including scenario planning for various possible futures.

Considerable judgement is involved in deciding how to involve particular individuals. For some, a quiet word or a meeting over coffee will be enough to start the process, for others making a presentation to a department meeting or calling together a group will be better.

Template for rationale/business case

Your aim in this stage is to collaboratively construct a case for change that is understood and accepted by key stakeholders.

Use this template to focus your discussions around the key factors of:

Reasons • Options • Benefits expected • Risks • Costs • Timescale • Outcome/goal

If people affected by the change have been involved in constructing this business case, they are more likely to understand the reasoning and to act as champions or at least not act as obstacles to the change process.

Change imposed from above or outside

How can you ask people to support a change you don't believe in yourself? As a leader, it is important that you remain positive and act as an advocate for the change, while acknowledging and recognising the concerns of the people affected. You should not convey your personal negativity, but take your concerns to more senior managers privately. This may be difficult but is an important organisational learning loop.

3 Vision and Communication

“Where are we going, and why?”

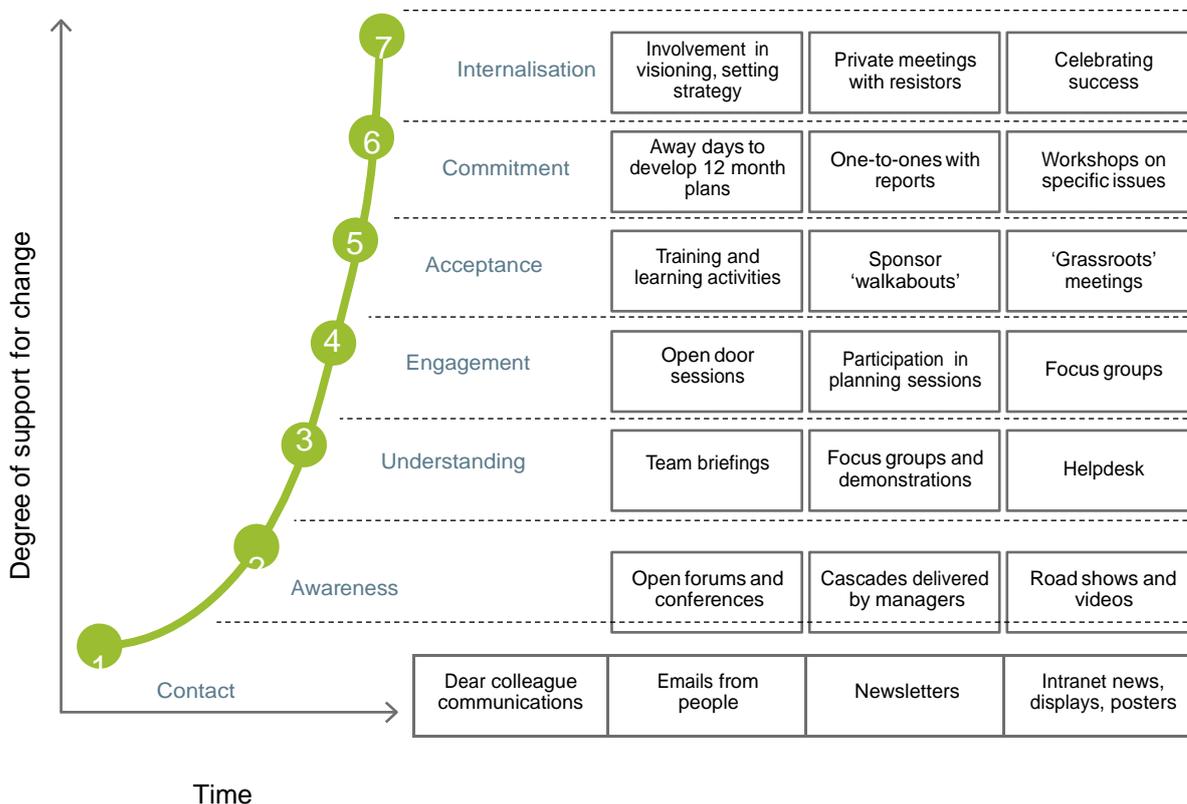
Key factors

- Being able to set out a compelling vision of the future is crucial, but equally important is the ability to listen respectfully to feedback, and if necessary modify the vision. Communication is continual, and not one-way.
- The single most complained-about aspect of change management is communication, and much of that unhappiness is in response to change that is imposed through impersonal communication channels, rather than developed collaboratively.

Communicating for commitment

Faced with a change, people’s commitment changes over time as their understanding and acceptance develops. Communications have a key role in building commitment (or preventing it). The ultimate stage is internalisation (acceptance of the change without conscious thinking) through involvement, which does require substantial investment of managers’ time and effort.

Try the following ascending scale of communications to build commitment with key stakeholders:



You may not have the resources or need to do all of these, but note that “Dear colleague” emails don’t get you anywhere near engagement with most people, and that true internalisation only comes with involvement in the change process.

The Elevator Pitch

You and all members of your change team will need to be able to get across to stakeholders the rationale and purpose of your change in a succinct, compelling way. Prepare a one-minute “elevator pitch” that can express:

- Here’s what our change initiative is about...
- It’s important to do because....
- Here’s what success will look like, especially for you.
- Here’s what we need from you.
- Here’s what you can count on from me/us

Key factors

- Forced, imposed or inflexible change plans are less likely to succeed.
- Have clear ultimate goals, accountabilities and responsibility, but build in opportunities to review, reflect and modify your aims and plans.

Strategy

Change leaders are faced with a choice of approaches, often determined by the complexity and scale of the change being proposed. These range from the directive (“do as I say”) to the emergent (“the destination is over there, let’s work out the route as we go.”) There is substantial evidence that in most circumstances, emergent strategies are more successful long-term than any other. However, people need certainty and goals, and organisations need to control costs and evaluate results, so it is necessary to have a structure in which to manage a change initiative, most often as a project or programme of projects.

There will always be a judgement to be made about appropriate timescales; seek to balance the need for speed against the need to recruit and convince change agents and stakeholders, and to work with them to plan and execute the change. Consider the risks and benefits of different approaches.

Having a clear vision of the desired end state is crucial to all change; be prepared to communicate around this vision at all times, and to revisit, review and modify the overall goal of the change process in the light of new information.

Plan

As a change leader, you are responsible for assembling the team that co-ordinates and drives the change. A complex organisation-wide change involving many parts of the system might require a number of projects drawn together as a programme. In this case it is likely to need specialist expertise and extra resources (for example a professional project manager and a team seconded from other duties). How can the necessary resources be pulled together? Consider the need for back-filling when team members are removed from all or part of their regular job.

Establish key accountabilities and working arrangements according to the context. Some suggested roles are:

- 1 Sponsor: Who is the most senior person or group responsible for approving actions and providing support and resources.
- 2 Project manager: Who is responsible for checking progress and keeping an overview of resources and activities?
- 3 Key user/stakeholder representative(s): Who is responsible for certifying that the changes have been successful?
- 4 Communications lead: Who is responsible for ensuring that communications with all relevant stakeholders are maintained, for example by organising focus groups and linking together the various work groups within a project or programme.
- 5 Specialist(s): e.g. HR Manager: Responsible for advising on legal and other requirements created by the change and that need to be covered within the plan for the change. Ensures that these requirements are met.

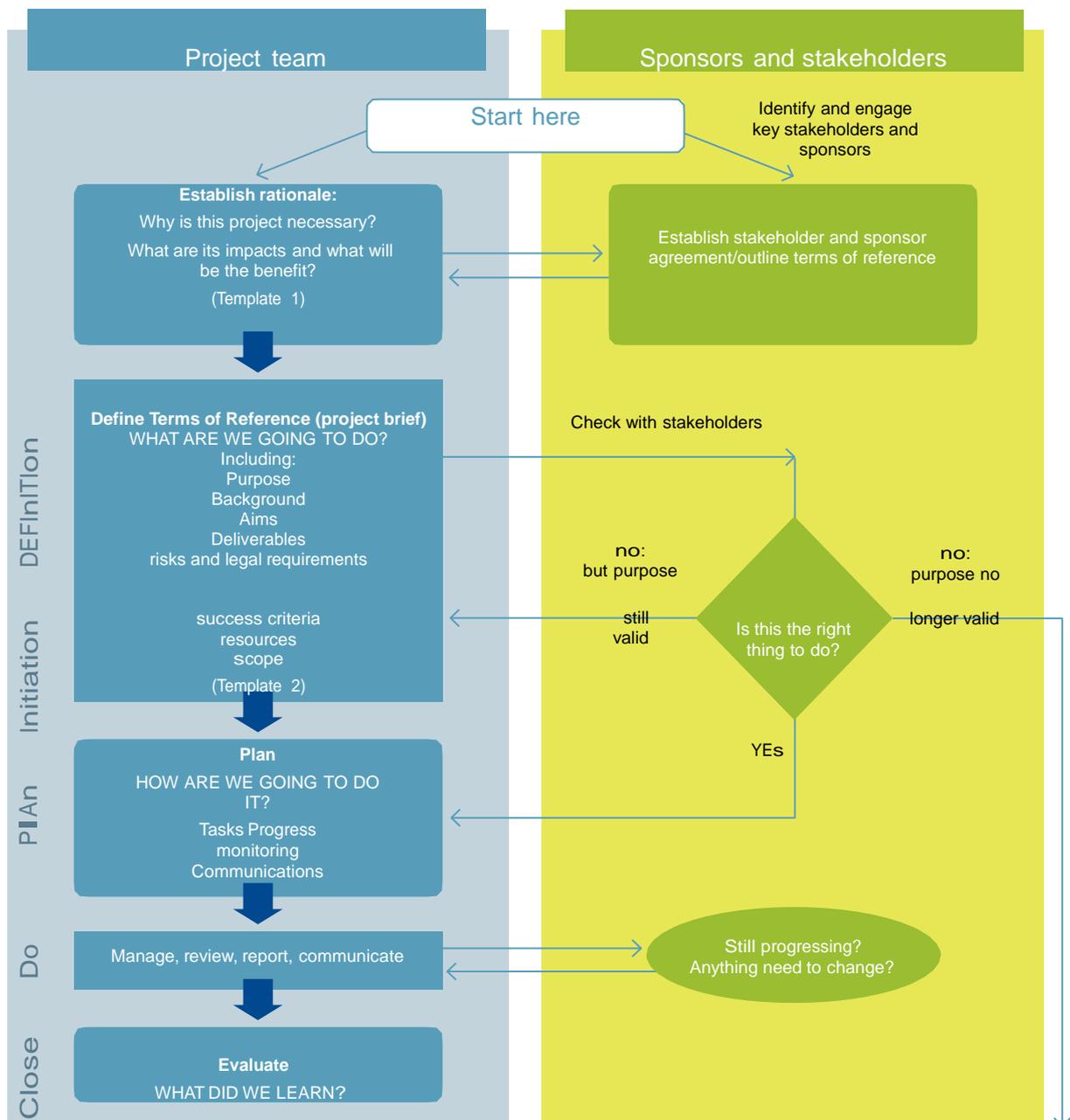
Managing the change project(s)

Key factors

- How are people feeling, and how will that affect progress?
- Break the change down into manageable, measurable stages, set up as properly planned and managed projects where appropriate.
- Identify and celebrate successes, and successful individuals.
- Build in opportunities for feedback and revisit the plan frequently.
- How are people feeling now?

Project management

There is a wealth of advice, techniques and training available for managing projects, however simple or complex they are. Below we outline the essential characteristics of a project and a typical timeline for setting up and managing projects. Pay particular attention to clearly communicated timescales, clearly understood deliverables, and a working process which regularly brings people together to review progress and make commitments for the next stage.



5 How People Experience Change

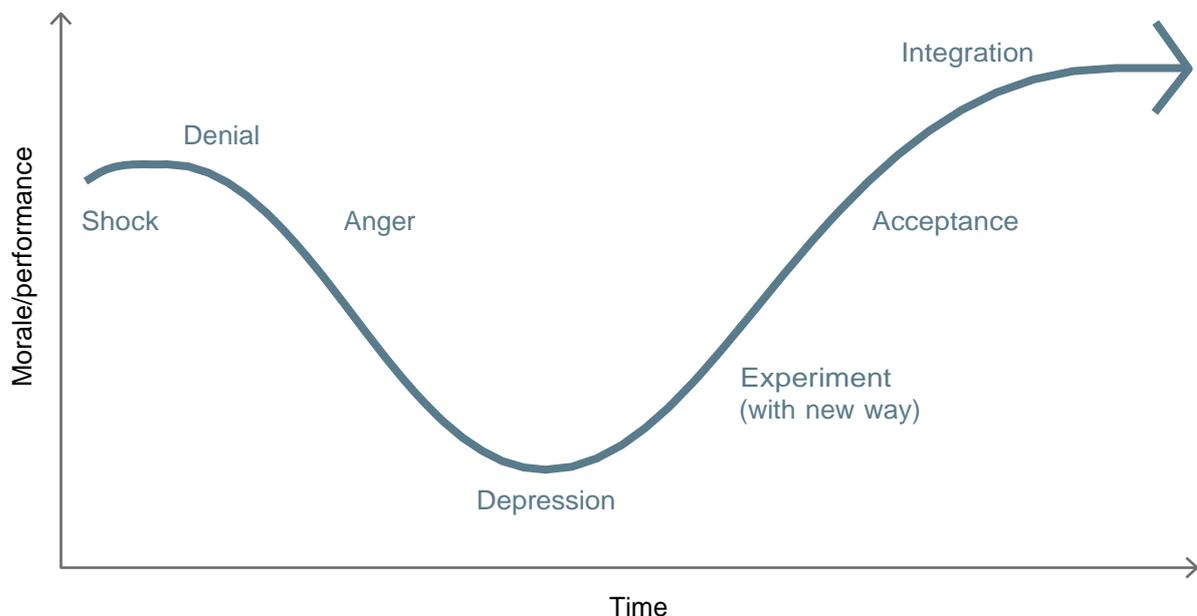
Hopefully this won't be the first time in the process that you consider the people involved, and how they are experiencing change. This section expands upon all the foregoing and sets out some of the major human challenges facing change leaders.

Individuals have varying degrees of enthusiasm for change, and experience it in different ways and at different rates. It is important to realise that:

- 1 Other people's change journeys are not the same as yours.
- 2 Effective change leaders make time to understand and support others who are experiencing change.

The "Change Curve"

Originally developed by psychiatrist Elisabeth Kubler-Ross in her work on the grieving process, and much abused and misrepresented over the years, this curve has nevertheless proved valuable in understanding and helping people who are experiencing change.

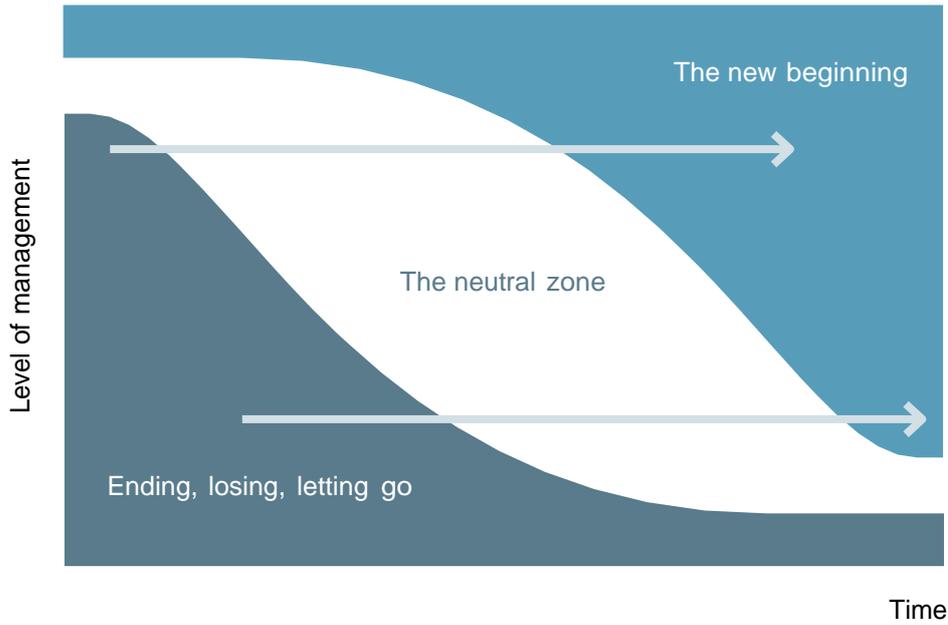


As a leader of change, your role is to identify where people are on their journey through change, and help them move on. Bear in mind that they will be at different stages from you, and from each other. Even when a change has been planned, and the processes, systems and infrastructure have moved into the new state, people need to make a transition to a new psychological orientation.

William Bridges identified three necessary stages of transition (below):

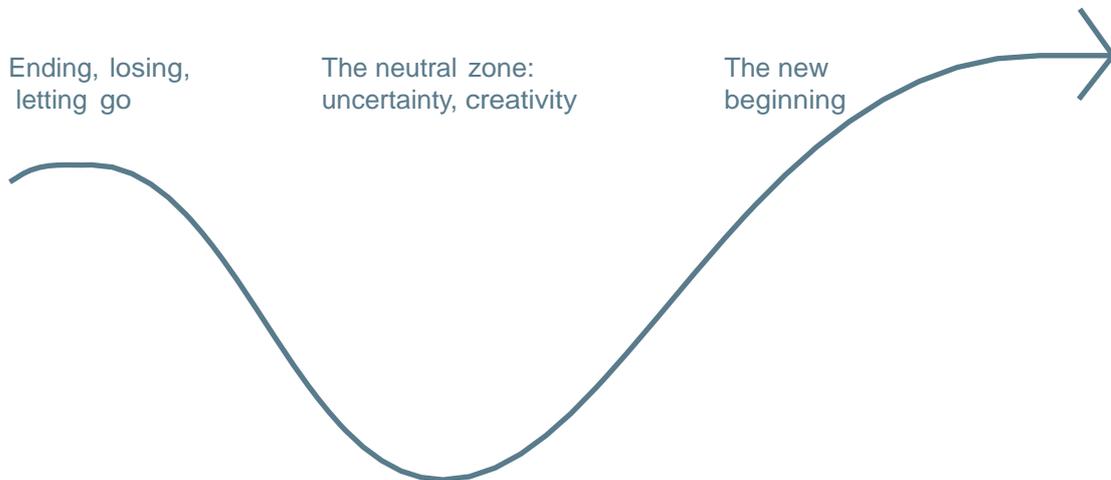
- Endings: saying goodbye and letting go of the old way.
- Exploration: the "neutral zone" of uncertainty, where people experiment with and find ways of working in the new situation.
- Moving forward (new beginnings): accepting the new ways and values and being comfortable with those.

Bridges points out that people move through this transition at different rates, and in particular the more senior the leader, the clearer the sight to the end purpose, the quicker a person is likely to make the transition. Of course, people are all different and this doesn't always work!



The Bridges model can be mapped onto the change curve to give leaders insights into how they can most effectively engage and support people experiencing change and therefore making a transition:

Your aims	Prepare people for the reality of change	Minimise danger of bad reactions, resistance and fear	Start people on the path to acceptance and commitment to the change	Encourage commitment to the new way
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Your actions	Communicate often, applaud the past but gain closure, focus on rationale for new beginning, be clear about what is ending and what is not	Watch and listen: everyone will be reacting differently, provide relevant support, communicate next steps	Allow people to test new ideas, provide training and facilitation to develop new ways of working, set short-term goals, allow others to take responsibility and be accountable	Celebrate successes, communicate widely and individually about what has gone well, how the new world is working, embed into everyday work
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