Leading sustainable change

**Wisdom from textbooks and trenches
in post-quake Canterbury**

Grow
Waitaha

Authors

× **Ben Rosenfield**

× **Dr Gabrielle Wall**

× **Dr Chris Jansen**

Contents

Quick Guide

10 tips for leading sustainable change

1 Develop and share the vision for change: Ensure the 'what,' 'how' and, most importantly, 'why', for the change are universally understood.

2 Foster a sense of urgency: Necessity ignites people to acceptance and action.

3 Broaden the circle of leadership: Empowering moreindividuals reduces the burden on senior leadership, and deepens buy-in and accountability across stakeholders.

4 Prioritise buy-in throughout the change process: Ongoing dialogue with stakeholders (students, teachers, parents and community) builds ownership and ensures a wide range of innovative ideas are considered. It also reduces friction during implementation and sets a solid foundation for sustaining the change.

5 Be flexible, and know your plan will (and should) change: Rigidity and deterministic planning is an inefficient use of time and impairs the effectiveness of leadership.

6 Prototype, and allow space for failures: Experimentation allows for validation and improvement of new approaches, and builds a culture of innovation and ownership.

7 Encourage broader collaboration, including interschool: Collaboration helps stakeholders frame the change initiative in the larger context and allows for innovation while reducing redundancy and reinvention.

8 Maintain an active model: Consciously apply a model of continuous improvement that will keep people invested in the change, discourage complacency and allow for sustained change.

9 Measure the change: Use data and evidence to monitor change outcomes. When data are positive it will increase buy-in and build momentum, and when negative it will allow for understanding and improvement.

10 Entrench changes within culture: By anchoring values of community, ownership and improvement within school culture, staff become more invested in the success and maintenance of the change.

Introduction

Leading enduring organisational change
is extremely difficult.

Research across a range of industries has found that
organisational change initiatives fail 60-70% of the time
to create sustained implementation (Ashkenas, 2013).
Particularly in post-quake Canterbury, schools are
experiencing their most significant period of change ever
(Osborne, 2014). Many of these changes, such as
demographic shifts, school co-locations and the opportunity
to explore more flexible learning environments, are
unprecedented in the rapidity of their introduction—
or even in their introduction at all—and are devoid of
existing roadmaps for implementation.

While extensive literature exists about organisational change management, little focuses specifically on the education system, and even less on New Zealand's landscape. So how should school leaders facilitate change initiatives that are likely to endure?

To this end, the authors of this study sought to learn from leaders of greater Christchurch schools who have successfully led change initiatives. The authors interviewed 17 school leaders, mainly principals, and complemented these lessons with research from expert literature about change management.

The result is this case study, which uses primary and secondary research to explain important considerations, best practices, and potential pitfalls for leading change efforts and sustaining those changes, particularly in the context of educational institutions.

GRIT

Grit is a state of mind that we use at Lemonwood Grove to achieve our goals. Grit empowers our learners to persevere, demonstrate resilience and learn from our mistakes. Grit requires passion, persistence and determination.
"People with Grit don't Quit!

CHILD SPEAK:

Grit helps us bounce back when we get stuck. Grit is about knowing that learning can be hard

GRIT = Passion + Persistence + Determination

HOW?

Principles
How is this going to happen?

RESPONSIBILITY

Our Beliefs about RESPONSIBILITY:

We believe it is important that everyone recognises their responsibility to collaborate and contribute to a better society.

Responsibility is taking ownership/being accountable for your actions, behaviour, choices.

Individual Responsibility leads to collective responsibility which nurtures, cultivates, strengthens positive culture.

CHILD SPEAK:

RESPONSIBILITY = Awareness + Ownership +Citizenship

WHY?

Core Values and Beliefs
What do we believe?

Our Belief Statement

We believe that by providing a landscape of possibilities, people will **connect** and ideas will flow in **challenging**, **collaborative** and **creative** ways.

We ensure **assessment** is **authentic & purposeful**

- Assessment practices reflect a full range of learning experiences - including knowledge, capabilities
- Assessment should inform the learning
- Monitoring of student learning is continuous and embedded
- Assessment criteria is explicit and visible - shared understanding including the why
- Feedback designed to support further learning
- Students given agency around their assessment
- Rich assessment tasks
- Include attitudes, perceptions and dispositions
- Variety of assessment methods used (UDL)
- Feedback from a variety of audiences (self, peer, adults)
- Engaging whānau with assessment
- Active involvement in authentic contexts

We encourage (empower) learners to **make connections**

- Make connections between past, current and future experiences and settings
- Link learning from school to home, community, national global setting
- Engage with rich tasks that link to aspects of real life
- Equip learner with skills for self extended learning
- Connecting with parent community of the school through incursions and excursions
- Making connections between learning areas
- Connecting with "self"
- Real, authentic, purposeful experience
- Connecting concepts
- Transferable skills, knowledge and understandings
- Social connections
- Use of ICT to make connections

We place **learners** at the centre

- Knowing the learner
- Quality relationships (learning relationships)
- Agency (voice and choice) vs. Compliance
- Value and respect Culture
- Students construct their learning and making decisions
- Promote and develop "the self regulated learner"
- Responsibility for own learning
- Mix of pedagogies
- Stage rather than age
- Links to Clarity in the Classroom
- Learning centres on cognition and growth
- Expecting compliance weakens student agency
- Applections and value diversity include needs, backgrounds, culture, languages, perspectives and interests
- Prior knowledge - acknowledging and valuing what the learner brings
- Multiple options to learn. Multiple levels to allow learners to go deep UDL Model
- Multiple time, locations options for learners
- Range of teaching strategies that support different ways of thinking

We recognise that **emotions** are **integral** to learning

- Emotion, motivation and cognition are intertwined
- Paying attention to motivation
- Reference to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- Promoting positive self beliefs as a learner
- Engaged and motivated results in less behaviour issues
- Learning results in an absence of punishment, embarrassment and competition
- Limbic system responsible for emotions and learning
- Being emotionally connected to the learning leads to ubiquity

---

THINKING

Our Beliefs about THINKING:

Thinking allows us to make sense of, interpret, represent or model the world we experience.

Through a variety of deep thinking skills learners will be empowered to make connections and take actions, innovate, create, find & solve (complex) problems.

CHILD SPEAK:

THINKING = Relate + Innovate + Communicate

Our Vision

The best of you, as you

We provide **cooperative & collaborative** learning opportunities

- Learning through social interaction
- Co-operative group work well planned and structured
- Modeling the competencies and capabilities required to work well with others
- Provide opportunities for learners to participate as an individual as well as with collaborative activities
- Collaborate on meaningful learning
- Teaching how to collaborate - structures and roles
- Look for opportunities to collaborate with a range of groups within school and community

We encourage **curiosity** & **challenge** students to be **creative**

- Challenging learners to reach above their existing level and capacity
- Students learning from each other - tuakana teina
- Creative and divergent thinking (Ken Robinson ref)
- Allowing sufficient time to "go deep" and encourage discussion
- Embrace the teachable moment
- Provide stimulating materials and resources that challenge students and awaken curiosity
- Encourage learners to challenge each other
- Teacher questions are open ended designed to promote depth and breadth
- Engage in deep learning through exploration, discovery and creation
- Provide structures and strategies to support the development of thinking skills
- Open ended tasks - no right or wrong and task with a number of solutions
- Learning is richer rather than "fun activities"

INTEGRITY

Our Beliefs about INTEGRITY:
We believe in being honest with others, true to yourself and grateful

CHILD SPEAK:
"Integrity is doing the right thing even when no one is looking" C.S. Lewis

INTEGRITY = Honesty +True-To-Yourself +Gratefulness

Before implementing change

This section discusses practices that lay the groundwork for leading successful change. While these considerations are of primary importance prior to change occurring, they remain significant throughout implementing and maintaining change.
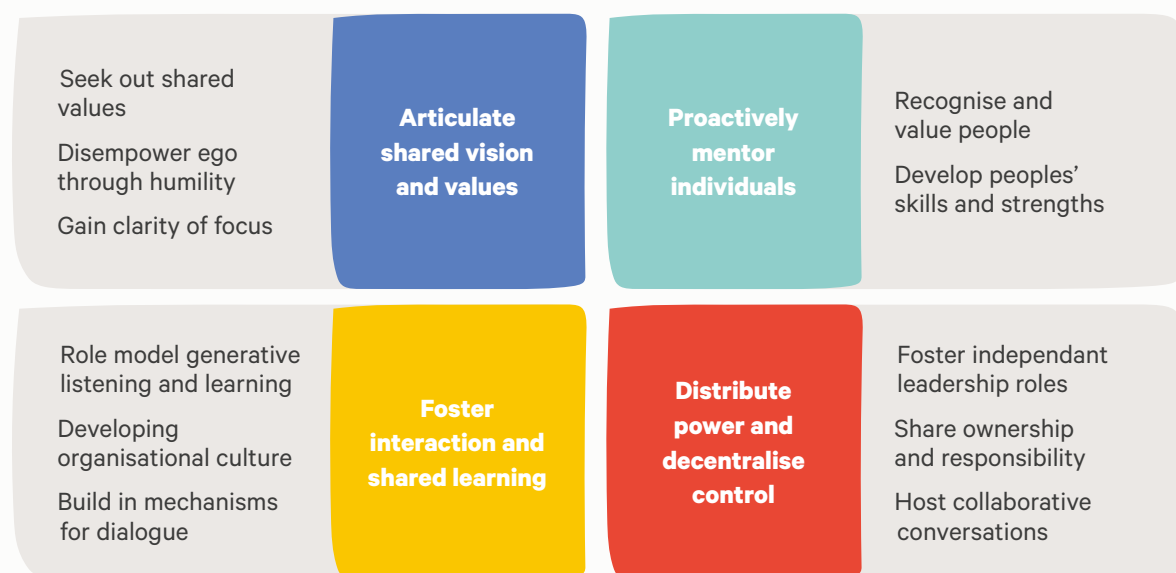
Understand the scope of the change

Guiding all other considerations is what type of change the organisation seeks. Broadly speaking, there are two categories of change: first-order and second-order. As one author explains, "First-order change involves minor adjustments and improvements in one or a few dimensions of the organisation; it does not change the organisation's core" (Kezar, 2001, p. 16). A first-order change, for instance, could be implementing a new teaching and learning medium, like BYOD (Bring your own device).

Second-order change, by contrast, is transformational, causing fundamental shifts to an organisation and its stakeholders. Often, the same author elaborates, "Second-order change is associated with a crisis that precipitates the change… [such changes] tend to be multi-dimensional… multi-level… [and can] seem irrational because the change is based on an unfamiliar logic or worldview." (Kezar, 2001, p. 16). Nearly all the leaders interviewed for this study were leading second-order changes, usually involving transformation of teaching and learning pedagogies. For some leaders, this change was aligned to a rebuild or redevelopment of the school buildings.

Overview of leadership actions that facilitate self-organisation

Figure 1

Seek out shared values	**Articulate shared vision and values**	**Proactively mentor individuals**	Recognise and value people
Disempower ego through humility			Develop peoples' skills and strengths
Gain clarity of focus			
Role model generative listening and learning	**Foster interaction and shared learning**	**Distribute power and decentralise control**	Foster independant leadership roles
Developing organisational culture			Share ownership and responsibility
Build in mechanisms for dialogue			Host collaborative conversations

Source: Jansen, 2014.

Second order changes present tremendous opportunity, but can also receive greater resistance by their very nature of affecting a wider range of stakeholders and an organisation's underlying values. These changes are more complex and require more maintenance to ensure successful implementation and endurance. Given their increased difficulty, and the abundance of New Zealand schools undergoing second-order changes, this study will focus on approaches for implementing and sustaining these higher-order changes (although most are still applicable, albeit perhaps more than necessary, for first-order changes).

Responsive leadership

Facilitating successful change starts with, though goes well beyond, an organisation's executive leader. Leaders who have spent their career within the industry in which they are leading change often receive an extra level of credibility from stakeholders. School principals, having generally ascended to this leadership role from a teaching background, are therefore well-positioned to lead change efforts. Far more important than a leader's background, however, is the leadership style they employ.

Be a transformational leader

Instrumental to achieving second-order change is a transformational leader at the organisation's helm. A transformational leader is characterised as understanding the need for distributed leadership (as opposed to top-down) and intrinsic motivation (as opposed to transactional or extrinsic motivation), and gently but relentlessly guides stakeholders throughout the school community to expand their aspirations (Hallinger, 2003). A recent research project conducted across several Canterbury secondary schools supported the importance of transformational leadership. In this project, teachers from schools were asked to report the qualities consistently found in the most effective leaders, and the results described the definitional makeup of transformational leadership (Moir, Hattie & Jansen, 2015).

The majority of participants in this study fell into this category, and actively understood and articulated the need to practice transformational leadership, especially in growing the base of leaders. "A leader has to grow leaders," one participant acknowledged. "You can't achieve [change] on your own. Senior leaders and team leaders—these people really drive the change." Another participant added the believe that: "The teachers need to be leading the
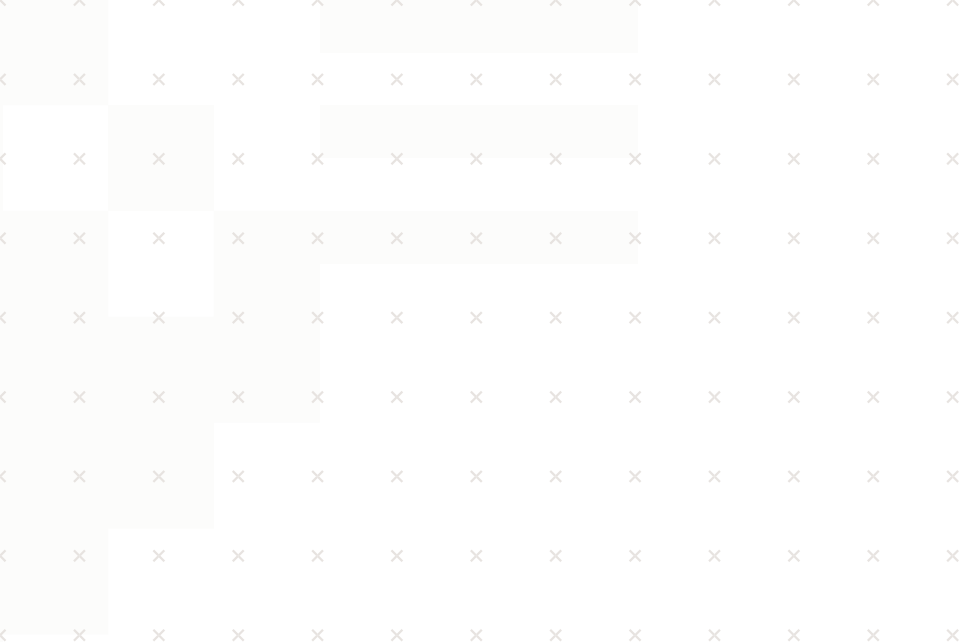
change and the leadership team need to act as the support." Many components of transformational leadership will be discussed in ensuing sections of this study, though one figure summarises the high-level actions a transformational leader should take to implement and sustain a second-order change is outlined to the left.

Do your homework

Before leading any change, leaders must 'do their homework'. Interview participants spent ample time reading relevant literature and taking courses. They spent even more time understanding the nuanced dynamics of their organisations, especially through meetings with internal stakeholders, which helped them: "gauge how up for change and opportunity people [are]."

Also important is gaining outside perspectives, which are inherently less biased. This practice, one participant noted, allowed for: "a clear context of what the school was like... what its strengths and weaknesses were."

Another preliminary consideration for transformational leaders is to learn the power dynamics within their community (Hardy, 1996). One participant spent significant effort to: "...understand the [school's] stakeholders, find out where the power is and where the power sits (whether that be kids, staff, board). [This helped me] form relationships with those in power."

By "looking, watching, observing, and creating relationships [with staff]... before discussing any changes outwardly," participants gained insightful information about their employees' strengths and personalities, as well as any necessary skillsets lacking within the school. Unsurprisingly, relationship building is an imperative component of driving change, and will be a theme throughout most subsequent topics.

"...the culture of an organisation and how people respond to change and innovation is shaped substantially by the behaviours of the leader."
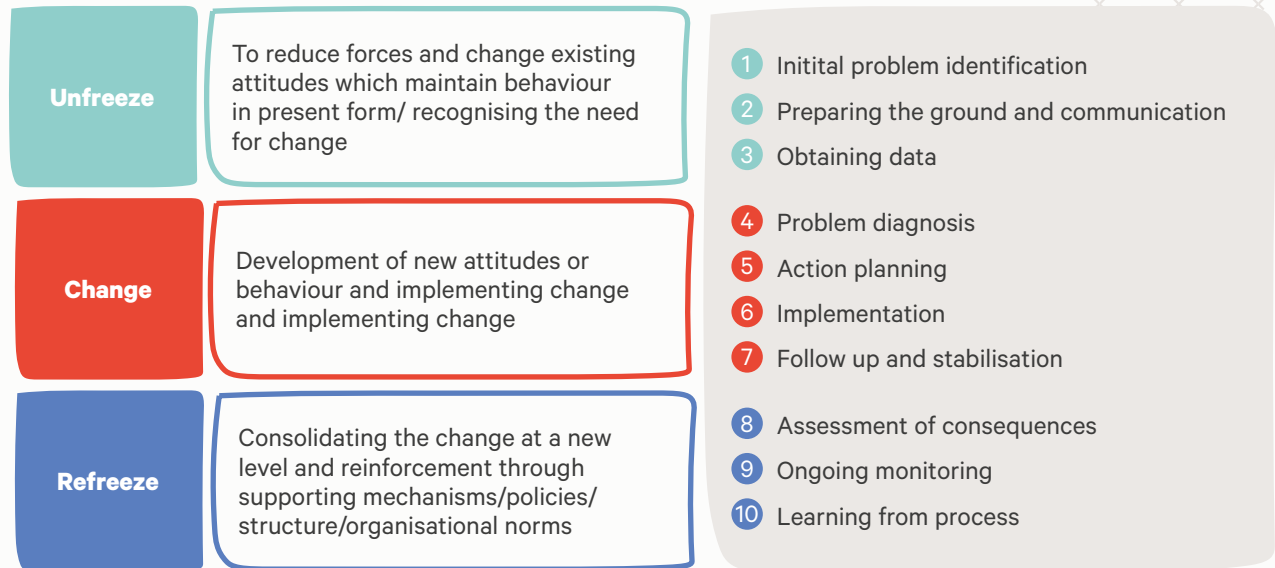
– Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006, p. S82

Look at the 'why'. If there is no reason for change, then it is really hard to get buy-in from people. Look at the change from different perspectives and research."

– Interview participant

Lewin's Framework for Change

Figure 2

Unfreeze	To reduce forces and change existing attitudes which maintain behaviour in present form/ recognising the need for change	1 Initital problem identification 2 Preparing the ground and communication 3 Obtaining data
Change	Development of new attitudes or behaviour and implementing change and implementing change	4 Problem diagnosis 5 Action planning 6 Implementation 7 Follow up and stabilisation
Refreeze	Consolidating the change at a new level and reinforcement through supporting mechanisms/policies/ structure/organisational norms	8 Assessment of consequences 9 Ongoing monitoring 10 Learning from process

Source: Jansen, 2014.

Consider using a formal framework to guide change initiatives

Many change management models have created general frameworks and structures to guide change efforts. Most models share overarching approaches, but diverge in their nuances. While individuals leading organisational change should remain flexible in their approach, they may gain confidence and grounding by having a framework to reference at different phases of implementation.

One framework that broadly aligns with the recommendations of this study was developed by the social scientist, Kurt Lewin. This framework (shown above) suggests a period of pre-actions before implementing a change, and a period of 're-freezing' after implementation, where the gains from the change are explicitly embedded and 'locked in', before repeating the cycle as appropriate. In reading this study, readers may find it useful to keep Lewin's framework in mind.

Build unity, gain buy-in

No leader can lead change alone. Therefore, it is vital for leaders to gain buy-in from their organisation's stakeholders before any implementation occurs. The main stakeholders of schools tend to be students, staff, board members, parents, and the wider community. The benefits from buy-in are vast, including: creating a larger ring of support, which allows for positive momentum; empowering stakeholders and creating a larger network of leaders (critical for second-order changes); and unifying the vision and strategy around the change (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008).

Taking the time to gain buy-in prior to implementation allows for something critical: giving stakeholders time to absorb the reality of the situation. Most people, even those who become enthusiastic supporters of change, innately prefer the status quo (Kim & Kankanhalli, 2009). "First reactions are always defensive due to a lack of confidence in change," one participant explained.

Participants reported that what helped staff and teachers accept their new realities was advanced warning. "What [staff] wanted was time…," one participant shared. "Plenty
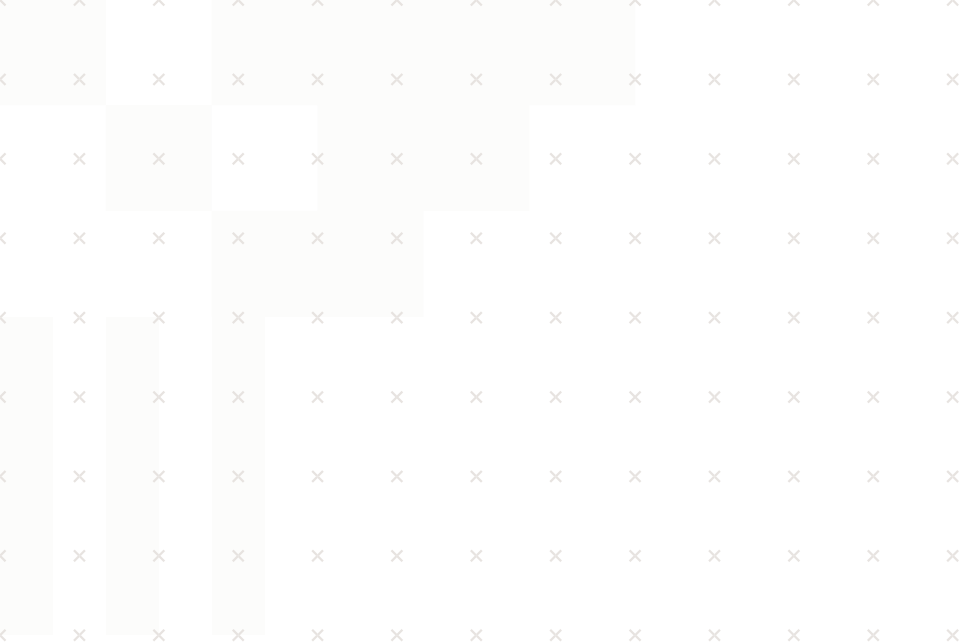
of lead time [helped] teachers digest and implement the changes over time, rather than be caught out when the time comes." Of course, time has not been a luxury frequently afforded to Canterbury schools in recent years. But even short lead-times, participants noted, when combined with transparency and honest communication, encouraged adoption of change.

There are many vital tools to help gain unity and buy-in from stakeholders, the most important of which are discussed on the next page.

Develop the organisation's vision and strategy

A compelling vision outlining the 'what,' 'how' and, most importantly, 'why' of the change plan is an important way to gain broad support and momentum towards a change initiative. "If people buy into the vision, if you are clear enough about why you are doing what you are doing, and if your rationale is right, most employees will understand even if they are surprised at first" (Kotter & Cohen, 2002, p. 302). Most interview participants found it smoother to develop the vision for change with stakeholders in waves, starting with more central parties, like senior leadership, before expanding to external stakeholders.

Change visions consisted of several common key elements. First, they were embedded within the established mission and values of the school, which brought continuity to the changes. Second, they focused on the students' futures when describing the 'why' for the changes, which resonated with their stakeholders. Third, they used data to support the proposed changes. Finally, they used language that elevated stakeholders to see beyond their personal vantage point, to that of the entire school (or in some cases, the broader education system). "Growing a teacher's understanding that it's not 'my class,

my kids' but that it's 'the entire school'", as one participant put it, compelled staff to voluntarily opt into the changes, and become invested in the success of the change.

One other component of visioning that participants found crucial to creating buy-in and ownership is including stakeholders in the creation process. Such a practice inherently allows for a better outcome, as more thought and perspectives are incorporated. But even greater, when stakeholders are involved in the process, they naturally feel more invested in the initiative, and are more likely to sustain the changes moving forward, even in the face of challenges (Kotter, 2012).

In addition to creating a formal vision, it is beneficial for a leader to craft powerful, informal narratives about their views for the school's future. Research of business leaders who successfully drove second-order changes concludes that storytelling, and customising this story for different stakeholders, is an effective way to gain support for the change (Anthony & Schwartz, 2017). Good leadership during change, according to one principal, is "'the act of painting a picture of the future that is better than the current reality'" (Osborne, 2014, p. 5). This is more effective when the leader can paint the picture from multiple vantage points.
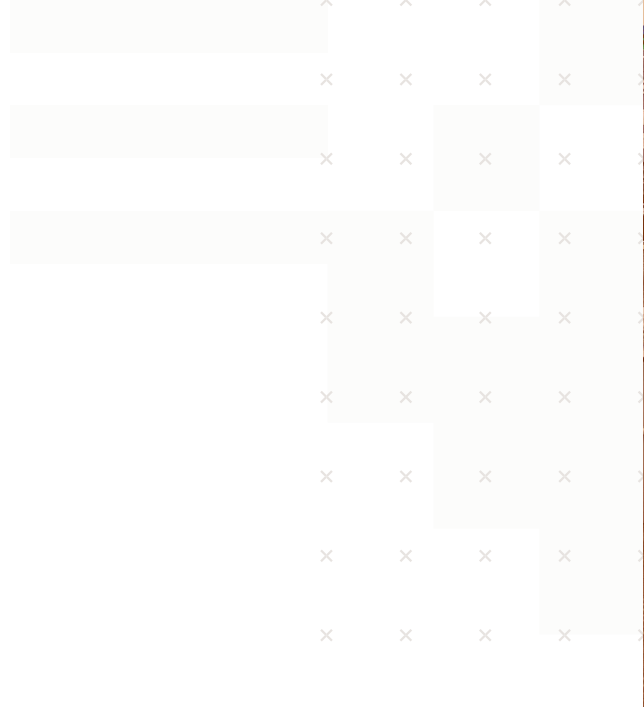
"The right vision is feasible and easy to communicate. It is emotionally appealing as well as strategically smart. And it gives the [core stakeholders] a picture of success and enough information and direction to make consequential decisions on the fly, without having to seek permission at every turn."

– Kotter, 2012, p. 52

"Teachers need to be leading the change and the leadership team need to act as the support."

– Interview participant

Express a sense of urgency

Urgency is one of the most powerful tools in encouraging buy-in. "In successful change efforts," one author on change writes, "the first step is making sure sufficient people act with sufficient urgency—with on-your-toes behaviour that looks for opportunities and problems, that energises colleagues, that beams a sense of 'let's go'" (Anthony & Schwartz, 2017, p. 43). Not only will urgency compel stakeholders into action: it paves the path for sustaining the change. As another author explains: "It's this setting out of a compelling and motivating vision that something is not only desirable, but vital for a school's continued success, that gives urgency to a change" (Osborne, 2014, p. 5). Employing such 'leadership change' also lays the groundwork for ingraining the change within a new culture of innovation and forward-thinking in the organisation. This essential practice of embedding change within the culture will be discussed in a later section.

Emphasising the immediate need for change is especially practical for many New Zealand schools, given the reality of their situations. One participant recalled the impact of expressing urgency: "Teachers of one school were quite resistant to the news of a co-location, until the principal stressed: 'this school will close if we don't make a change.'" This painfully honest statement helped staff to understand the situation, and work to avoid this outcome.

Expressing urgency implies another powerful tool: stressing the 'why' for the change initiative over the 'how' or 'what.' "People don't buy 'what' you do, they buy 'why' you do it," one author asserts (Sinek, 2009). The 'why,' he says, is the component many leaders neglect, instead only harping on the 'what' and the 'how'. Emphasising the 'why', particularly when it presents the urgent necessity of the change, will increase acceptance and action.

Express a sense of urgency

Vital to implementing second-order changes is broadening the number of stakeholders in leadership positions. Participants employed an array of strategies to expand the leadership base before implementing any changes, from vision groups comprising staff from mixed levels, to focus groups with staff, students and parents.

Broadening the leadership base also helps spread acceptance more quickly among different groups of stakeholders (Armenakis & Harris, 2009). Since different stakeholders have different interconnectedness and influence, creating a more diverse pool of individuals to communicate and advocate for changes increases the influence the senior leadership team might have alone.

This was exemplified at one school, where senior leadership was facing some scepticism from the community about the proposed rebuild. The school's principal chose to contract a parent to write the formal brief for the rebuild. This parent went into the community to understand its concerns and desires for the rebuild, and unearthed several key factors, such as including professional development opportunities. The parent wrote these considerations into the brief, and gained broader buy-in from the community, which now felt heard and supported.

Don't just tell: Show

Even the most compelling words and facts can fail in convincing individuals to adopt new systems or processes. Second only to providing lead-time, participants found showing stakeholders examples of institutions that have implemented similar changes was the most effective way of gaining buy-in.

At one school where classroom design was to change drastically, for instance, the principal explained how teachers "...kinda get it in theory but [they] haven't seen it." It was only when "teachers went and had a look at some schools [for themselves]" that they fully grasped and accepted the new configuration. Other groups of stakeholders, especially parents, felt more comfortable with the proposed changes once they saw them first-hand. This will be discussed further in the context of prototyping or piloting change.

It's also important for the leader to show stakeholders their commitment to, and belief in, the proposed changes. How to do this is less prescriptive, but even physically being present helps. One participant noted: "It's just really important that in that whole sustaining change you need to be highly visible in it and you have to walk the talk. People need to see that you are riding the journey too." Context will dictate how leaders should best model the change, but of universal importance is the consistency with which leaders exemplify the behaviours and practices they want all stakeholders to adopt. Consistency of action and messaging across senior leadership is what stakeholders want to see before truly embracing the transformation themselves (Osborne, 2014).

Listen, listen, listen

Embedded in nearly all topics of this study is this one: listen, listen, and then listen some more. Not only is this a way for all involved to feel heard and valued: it is a way to improve upon the leader's vision and strategy. This is a simple, obvious tool, but its criticality is sometimes overlooked. Putting in the time to listen and build relationships with all parties before initiating changes will pay dividends both when implementing changes and working to sustain them.
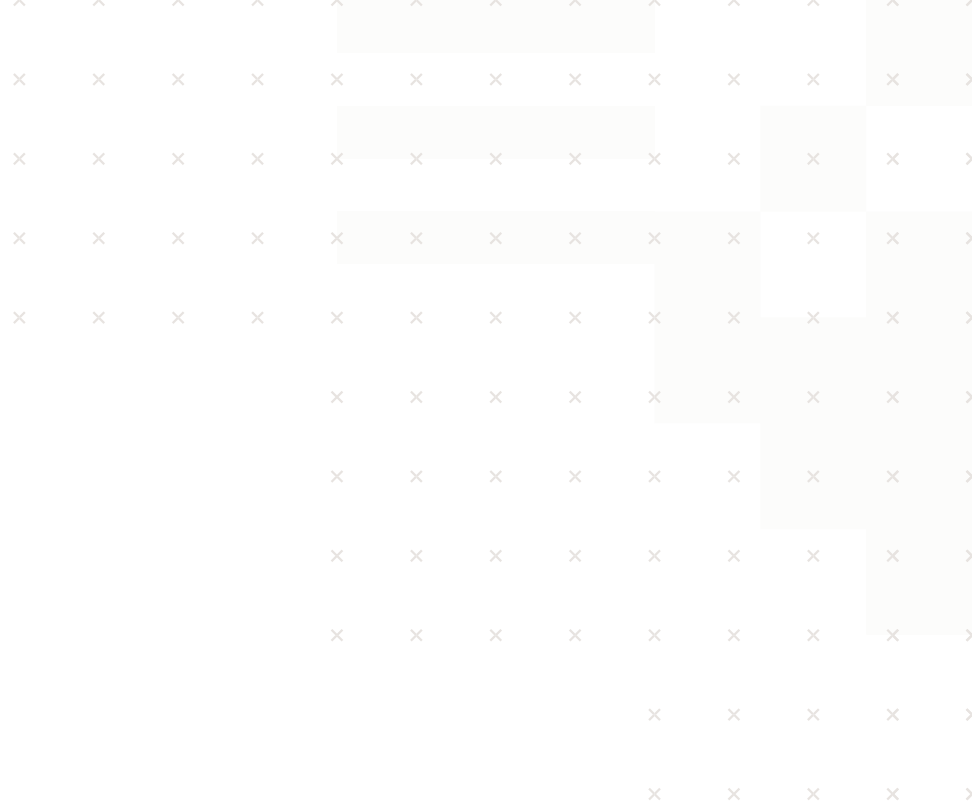
One way in which this up-front time investment will help sustain change is by allowing leaders to identify talents and see potential in a broader circle of staff. Even if there is no present need, at some point during or after implementation, circumstances will undoubtedly arise—such as turnover, additional initiatives, or scaling—that require new (or more) expertise and leadership. By identifying the areas of skill in which staff are keen to develop, it can support an organisation to respond to challenges without losing momentum. Additionally, rather than relying on the usual set of staff in such situations, as organisational leaders often do, leaders will widen the pool of empowered staff, growing the breath of ownership and buy-in within the organisation (Gastil, 1994).

Ultimately, spending time listening to stakeholders helps create an organisational culture consistent with the values necessary for the new processes or structure to endure, including: community, respect, and diffused ownership. As will be discussed in a later section, entrenching the change and associated values within the culture is a critical element in sustaining the change.

Evolving an organisation's values is a natural process that takes time, but is achievable through repetition and continuous reinforcement. Embodying these values early through the act of excessive listening is a terrific way to encourage other stakeholders to follow suit, which will improve the implementation and endurance of the change initiative (Kotter & Cohen, 2002).

"Whether at the top of a large private enterprise or in small groups at the bottom of a non-profit, those who are most successful at significant change begin their work by creating a sense of urgency among relevant people."

– Kotter, 2002, p. 23

"An absence of trust down the line is what causes problems and people are less likely to try new things in the fear of making mistakes."

– Interview participant

Address resistance

While resistance to change is human nature, not all who initially resist are in fact resistors.

As one participant put it: "Some people just don't like change and some are afraid of it... those who are afraid of change can be very useful so long as you can alleviate that fear through enhancing their understanding."

Most of the topics in the previous section help overcome scepticism towards change, but the approaches outlined below are intended to help when opposition remains after the initial period. These practices are beneficial throughout all phases of implementation.

Common reasons for resistance

There are many reasons why individuals resist change, but three of the most common and relevant are: believing the change is occurring too quickly; feeling devalued or unheard, and disagreeing with the vision (even if it is well articulated). In short, the most proven method to counter these resistances is to listen, understand, and counter opponents' arguments (Blount & Carroll, 2017). The following paragraphs explore each type of resistance and ways to combat them.

Feeling change is occurring too quickly

Resistance from the speed of change is particularly strong in long-tenured stakeholders, those who have previously held leadership positions, and older individuals (Oreg, 2006). As discussed previously, advanced warning and urgency are effective in appeasing many with this objection. For those who are still concerned, participants employed several successful approaches.

One approach was to frequently emphasise the reality of the short timeframe, which: "acted as deadline, so people had to accept that the[y] had to change too." In initiatives involving new physical spaces, many of the participants eased anxiety by: "letting [employees] see the [new] environments, giving them time to plan." Ultimately, the timeframe for implementation is often outside of leadership's control, so empathy and transparency are two of the best means of gaining acceptance from this type of resistance.

Feeling devalued or unheard

Second-order changes can cause stakeholders, especially those closest to the changes, to feel devalued or unheard. Often such feelings are caused by miscommunications about what one party says, and what another party, often listening through a self-interested lens, infers.

For instance, when one principal made plans to change curricula, some teachers inferred this to mean they were

bad teachers and could not properly teach the curriculum. Important to addressing such breakdowns in messaging, several participants stated, is to: "get everything on the table... and encourage the vent."

Several participants also stated variations of another important approach: "Reassure them that they are great teachers and that they are here for the right reasons." Research shows how often simply addressing the miscommunication, thereby instilling confidence and gaining trust, can resolve this issue (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008).

Disagreeing with the vision

Confronting those who disagree with the vision for change is perhaps the most challenging resistance to overcome. It is important here to understand the opposing viewpoint through difficult, honest conversations, which address the ideas rather than the person.

Returning to the 'why' of the change at hand, improving children's futures, often helps to placate, if not persuade in such tough conversations (Moran & Brightman, 2000). One participant described how to approach such conversations: "we are going to be really honest here, we are going to talk about some things that make you feel uncomfortable, that make me feel uncomfortable. But you can't hurt me [that is, don't worry about offending me], we are staff and professional colleagues, here to talk about improving learning."

It is also worth noting that in such discussions, a leader should not rule out the possibility of changing the plan; often stakeholders have good reasons for their opposition, and flexibility by one party tends to lead to reciprocation of that flexibility by the other party.

Ultimately, lots of resistance boils down to lack of communication, in addition to miscommunication. Such breakdowns are particularly dangerous because of the potential spiralling of misinformation between
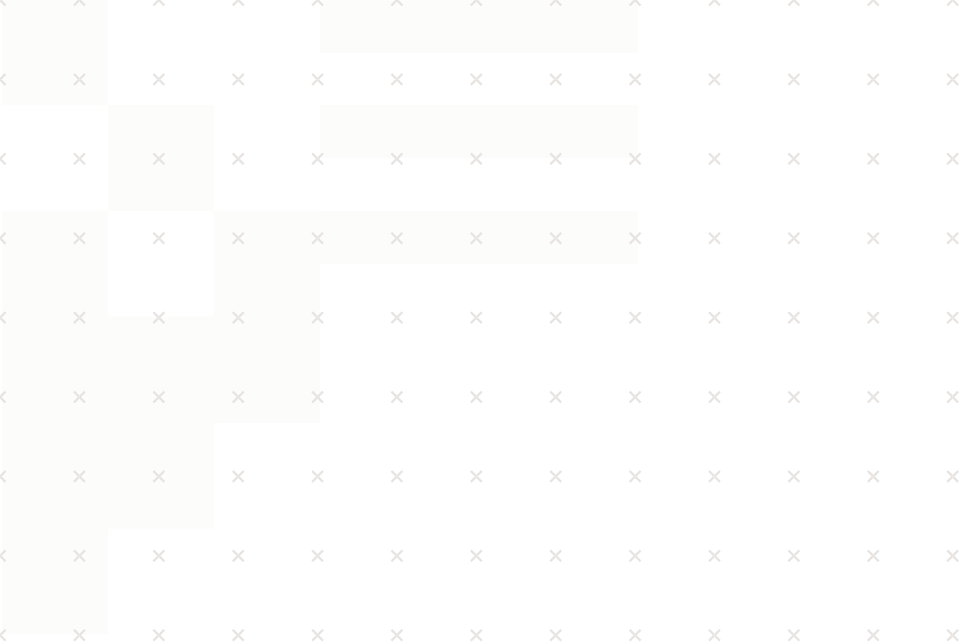
parties, which can exacerbate rifts and resistance. One participant explained the need to over communicate, "being proactive that you don't assume people know what you're doing or saying."

It is also important for those leading change to be aware of concerns that may not be vocalised to them. "Cynics aren't always openly cynical," one participant shared, "so you have to make sure to talk with them, not just to convince, but to understand what they think and may not be saying."

Different levels of schools tended to have differing susceptibilities to communication breakdowns. In secondary schools, for instance, where parents are much less present, miscommunications with parents can occur more frequently than in primary schools, requiring additional safeguards.

Empower supporters to influence the fringe

To gain broad adoption of a change, it may not be necessary to 'convert' the minority of staunch resistors: rather, it is the people wavering on the fringe who are most important. To illustrate this point, it is helpful to consider Rogers' Diffusions of Innovations model, as shown overleaf. While created to explain consumers' adoption of a new technology, the model is based on inclination towards change, and remains universal in explaining how humans adopt changes.

People on the fringe equate generally to a portion of the 'late majority', while staunch resistors equate to 'laggards'. Converting those on the fringe produces enough momentum for the adoption to reach critical mass (Rogers, 1995), and isolates resistors of change. It is helpful to consider Rogers' Diffusions of Innovations model, as shown overleaf.

The key to converting the fringe is empowering strong supporters ('innovators,' and 'early adopters') to showcase the effectiveness of the new system. This strategy, observed by several participants, is especially effective when the changes are being introduced in stages. In addition,

"Cognitive conflict and critical reflection are key tools."

– Interview participant

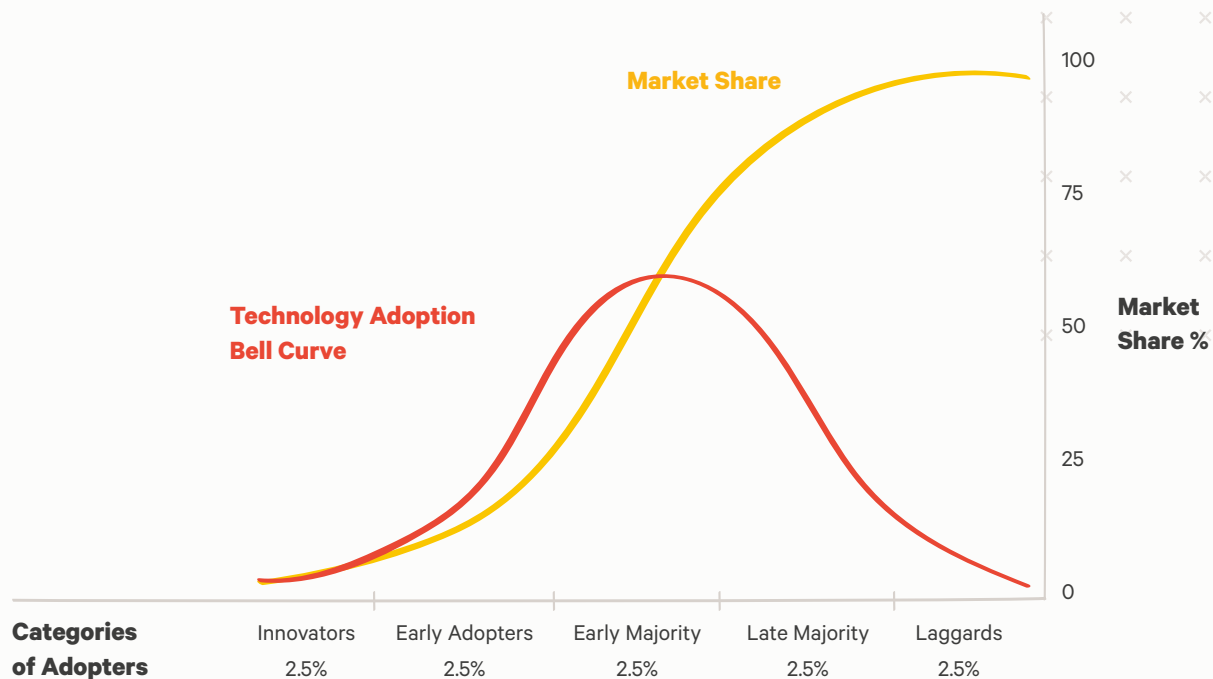**"Making [the vision] student-focused created buy in from teachers."**

– Interview participant

"You need not convert the biggest resistors. Don't need them to be your supporters, but can't have them tank you."

– Interview participant

Market Share

**Technology Adoption
Bell Curve**

**Market
Share %**

100

75

50

25

0

**Categories
of Adopters**

| Innovators 2.5% | Early Adopters 2.5% | Early Majority 2.5% | Late Majority 2.5% | Laggards 2.5% |

supporters help reduce resistance by showcasing their contagious enthusiasm for the new system. As one participant put it, "Enthusiasm spills over onto other people."

Empowering supporters not only reduces resistance to the change: it helps sustain change by instilling a greater sense of ownership within these supporters. Participants understood how having supporters volunteer to lead pilots, rather than asking them or telling them to do so, would improve the amount of self-efficacy the supporters gained from the experience. One participants explained: "[A] voluntary approach is important. [It] gives people a sense of choice and ownership in their decision making." Empowering supporters to help sustain change initiatives is crucial, and will be discussed further in later sections.

Allow for people to choose other pathways

Ultimately, not everyone will accept the organisational changes, and it is important to realise that this is both acceptable and inevitable. Despite their efforts, all participants faced at least one steadfast resistor, even after the organisation overwhelmingly accepted the plan. At such a juncture, it is essential to push forward with the plan, while providing a clear exit for anyone who prefers that route. It is also important that this exit is amicable and non-judgemental.

Many participants used the analogy of a school bus in this situation, with one explaining: "Everybody is going to be a part of this change whether you like it or not. [So] you get on the bus, [and] let people off the bus when they don't like where they are going… [but] they won't be pushed off the bus."

Implementing change

The following topics address several best practices for implementing change.

As will be evident, some of these challenges bear similaritiesto those in the preliminary stages of change, though often require additional tools and considerations in addressing them. Additionally, while these tools should be utilised during the implementation phase, their continued employment is vital for sustaining the change too.

Pool risk by sharing responsibility

The more drastic and uncharted a change initiative, the larger the change's associated risk. Here, risk refers not to financial risks, but to the risk of accountability for failure. When such risk of failure lies with one leader, it can stifle risk-taking, reduce a leader's effectiveness, and ultimately undermining the organisation's attempt to maintain a change (March, 1981).

The most effective way to reduce this risk is by spreading it across more individuals (March, 1981). For example, the risk of stakeholder resistance discussed previously was reduced by shifting certain responsibilities from senior leadership to mid-level leadership. Not only can spreading risk help sustain change initiatives by empowering more stakeholders and increasing buy-in; it also helps by reducing burnout rates, particularly in senior leadership.

One participant noted how there was a "huge burnout factor in the leadership faction because people need the resilience, energy, courage, strength to be able to sustain change in a large organisation. For a leader to maintain that momentum, you need a shared leadership model." Many of the following topics, while presented as their own tools, contain elements of risk pooling.

Control the speed of change

Change should only be introduced as quickly as an organisation can manage. What an organisation can manage varies with the organisation's systems and culture, the scope of the change, and the risk of failure. As Lewin's framework demonstrates, it is important to 'freeze' change efforts before the organisation becomes overwhelmed and unable to assess and internalise them.

If people in the organisation do become overwhelmed, leadership must be aware and respond. One participant heeded the importance of: "Looking out for people and looking out for when they are under pressure from change and helping them manage that and help them... knowing your team and looking after them means that they are more likely to take in the change." After all, the same participant finished, "[You] can't burn people you need to bring with you."

Participants faced difficulties at times "knowing when to pause or pull the reins back on change." Overloading staff was one of the most common errors participants believed they made during implementation. "I learned the hard way that you don't have multiple changes at once," one shared.

Mistakes will happen, of course, but what is vital is to understand when to slow down and lock in gains, when to incrementally improve an existing element, and when to push forward with a new initiative. Often, participants found leaving sufficient time for periods of incremental change not only resulted in a smoother embedding process, but also provided the infrastructure and capacity for their organisations to sustain the improvements.

Empower stakeholders, especially staff

Empowering more stakeholders to help lead the change process is one of the most important tools in successfully implementing and sustaining organisational change. Beyond the benefit of reducing opposition (as discussed previously), empowering staff increases their level of autonomy and commitment to the change and the organisation (Blundson & Reed, 2003).

Even more, broadened leadership provides opportunities for staff to leave their silos and interact with stakeholders across the organisation, resulting in greater organisational collaboration and performance (Morgan & Zeffane, 2003). This practice also leverages collective intelligence, as it increases the number of individuals contributing ideas, time and effort towards strategy and innovation.

To this end, many participants created committees to lead components of the change, author documents, and present progress reports to other stakeholders such as board members. As mentioned earlier, however, it is important that staff can volunteer to participate, rather than be told or asked to do so, as the act of choice promotes ownership and sustained interest.

This can be difficult at times for leaders, who want to proactively create diverse teams to ensure all relevant perspectives are incorporated. But as many participants reflected, creating structures and allowing staff to opt in (and to choose with whom they worked) resulted in high-quality work as well as high morale.

This balance between allowing for choice and ensuring diversity is delicate, and how much (if any) involvement leadership should have in asking specific staff to participate ultimately depends on context. But in any situation, many participants agreed, "acknowledgment and praise [of staff] are really important" in reinforcing stakeholders' increased involvement. In particular, celebrating short-term wins is a great way to build and maintain momentum (Kotter, 2012).

> **"Leadership has to be really strong to help narrow the focus for the staff to help them from being overwhelmed."**
>
> **– Interview participant**

> **"It is an illusion to expect that an executive team on its own will find the best way into the future. So you must use leadership to generate more leadership deep in the organization."**
>
> **– Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009, p. 67**
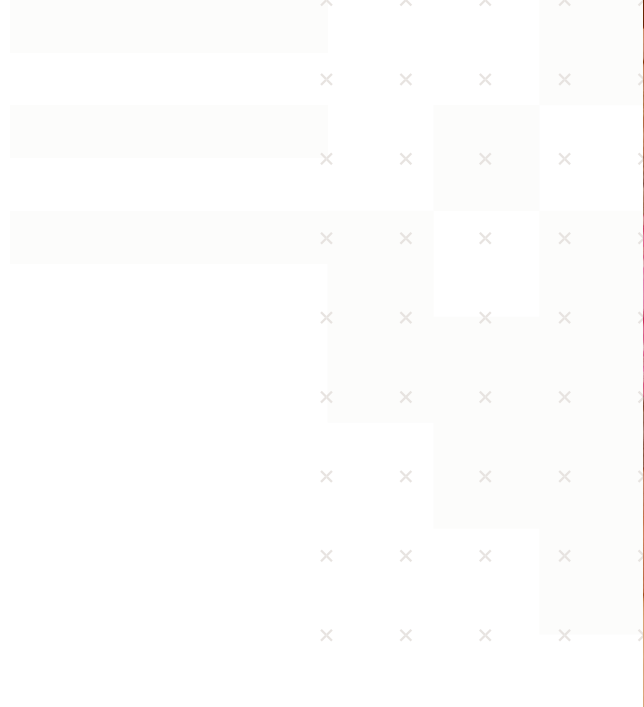
Allow space for trial and error

Many participants mentioned the importance of allowing time and space for staff to make mistakes, which is echoed in literature: "Organisations need to maintain a balance between explicitly sensible processes of change… and certain elements of foolishness that are difficult to justify but are important to the broader system" (March, 1981, p. 572). By foolishness, this author means the characteristics that make people human, such as playfulness, slipups and changing opinions, as well as the qualities that make people accept the human condition, such as compassion and altruism.

Simply relying on a rational approach will create a tense, rigid environment that is transactional and unrealistic to sustain. Fostering an environment of understanding, risk-taking, and altruism, on the other hand, is a proven recipe for sustaining change. The following two topics address forms of 'playfulness' that should be incorporated to implement, maintain and improve upon change.

Be flexible

As discussed, sustaining an organisational change is more likely when there is broader buy-in and distribution of leadership. But including additional people in leadership positions means that the actual result will differ from the preconceived plan, no matter how many possible scenarios are anticipated.

"It is an illusion to expect that an executive team on its own will find the best way into the future. So you must use leadership to generate more leadership deep in the organization."

– Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009, p. 67

"It was really beneficial for me to have people that I could talk to, who were going through similar experiences of change and receive feedback from it… a lot of professional dialogue. This helped me with confidence [about the new changes]."

– Interview participant

Encourage broader collaboration

Integrate the change across the entire school

When a change initiative is integrated across an entire organisation (as opposed to individual departments), it is more likely to achieve a successful and enduring outcome (Bryson, 2011). One recent report analysing efforts by multiple New Zealand schools to improve outcomes for Māori students through the Te Kotahitanga programme reflected the same conclusion; the institutions that integrated the changes throughout the school had the best results (Bishop, Berryman, Wearmouth, Peter & Clapham, 2011).

Full integration has three key benefits: it increases collaboration between staff of different departments; instils more ownership in staff by providing them with a higher-order understanding of the change; and improves outcomes by increasing innovation and reducing redundancy. One participants shared how, by fully integrating the proposed changes and encouraging new peer-collaboration, "Teachers get [time] to wander through the other learning environments which helps ensure they don't just replicate each other. And our team leaders have the opportunity to discuss what their plans are for next week or the big picture. We want to be heading in the right direction as a school, but not so much so that we have robots all doing the same thing."

Network between schools

Just as fully integrating changes allows for staff empowerment and interdepartmental communication, building collaboration across schools produces these benefits at a larger scale. "Networks are super important," explained one principal who often spoke and collaborated with colleagues across schools, "I'm glad that I'm able to pick up on bits and pieces from other schools, and now am able to pass on what I've learned about this process."

Unsurprisingly, broader collaboration allows for improved results for both individual schools and the wider education sector. Additionally, staff who interact with more schools gain even greater perspective for the new changes, increasing the likelihood of buy-in and investment in the outcome. A number of participants had found cluster involvement useful for reinforcing and sustaining change: "It's been quite powerful working with the cluster. If something is being done at a cluster level, then it's not easy to opt out of [the new processes], which has been quite useful to embed the change. Every school within our cluster is changing and so the message for teachers is almost universally reinforced within their community."

Another principal explained the importance of school leadership networking and the connectivity of partner schools: "We can't do it in isolation. Students are flowing from one school to the next, so it is important change goes across their journey, to make them better once they reach the next school. There needs to be a flow-on effect in culture and values between the partner schools."

Sustaining change

Sustaining organisational change can be the most difficult phase for many reasons, not the least of which are complacency, turnover, and lack of precedent or roadmaps.

Utilising these final tools addressed below – as well as revisiting the topics discussed previously – will embed change into an organisation's infrastructure, enabling the organisation to sustain and improve upon the new system, even in the face of future challenges.

Maintain an active model of continuous improvement

Maintaining second-order change requires an active model, where many individuals from the organisation are involved and continually seeking to improve the system (Boyce, 2003). This concept of continuous improvement is most known in its Japanese form: kaizen. An example of this in the education sector, professional learning communities work interdependently to actively evolve learning practices to achieve the unified goal of improving educational outcomes (Jansen, Cammock & Conner, 2010). Too frequently, once an organisation achieves any level of success with a change initiative, leadership stops to appreciate the gain, allowing inertia and complacency to stagnate improvement (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). It is, of course, important not to accelerate change faster than the organisation can handle. But that is the very reason tools should be used to ensure active processes that "constantly make sure that the bar doesn't drop" and maintain continuous improvement at the speed manageable to the organisation.

Establish feedback loops

Feedback loops help to drive change by providing constant and diverse feedback, but also help sustain the changes through a culture of open, constructive communication across stakeholders. Participants ensured avenues existed for all groups of stakeholders to provide feedback. Many processes were formal, such as creating customised surveys for community members, parents, children and board members, to understand what was and was not working. While many schools already conducted stakeholder surveys, most had increased the frequency at which they conduct them since beginning implementation. For feedback loops to work, an organisation must maintain a culture of continuous improvement, where stakeholders feel comfortable sharing, even when their feedback is not positive.

"A challenge moving forward is how do we continually challenge supported growth between teachers. [We] can't endorse complacency."

– Interview participant

"I [literally] ask the kids: 'what can I do better as your principal?'"

– Interview participant

Measure the change

Measurement is a key component of models of continuous improvement (Anders, 1997). Participants used multiple approaches to collect quantitative and qualitative data across stakeholders, including: evaluations; parent surveys; databases; and even questionnaires to students measuring their wellbeing and friendships. Measurement and data have different benefits depending on their results, but in any scenario, they allow for increased communication and transparency between stakeholders.

In addition to validating supporters' buy-in to the change initiative, positive measurements sway sceptics to accept the change by providing proof. "Not everyone was on board pre-transition," reflected one participant, whose school recorded positive increases to student empowerment post-change, "but post-transition most people were on board. Parents came to me describing that they thought that it was going to be a complete shambles. However, they have seen their children take control and manage their own learning, which is really cool."

The implications of convincing parents go beyond satisfaction: they can increase retention and enrolment. One primary school participant explained, for example, how part of the cohort always moves to a private school following Year 6. After collecting data demonstrating the improved academic outcomes, the school's retention rate improved: "The year before we moved in we lost about 10. The year after we only lost one."

"Measurement helps not only to validate, but also to correct problems," one participant expressed. When something is not working, data and measurement provide a vehicle to identify the root issue, not just symptoms, and correct it.

Update educational documents and materials

One way to promote continuous learning is to update relevant documents to reflect the new vision, goals and standards of the organisation. Many participants discussed encouraging or requiring teachers to create MATES (Mutually Agreed Team Essentials) and adopt a team approach to teacher inquiries, which they believe has helped promote collaboration and accountability among teachers. Having teams write their own documentation also increases ownership, just as including them in visioning does. One author explained how those involved in crafting such documents: "are far more likely to be emotionally invested in it and committed to ensuring it succeeds" (Osborn, 2014, p. 6).

> "When [the school] had an array of kids that were achieving below expectations, we went into data collection mode. [We] developed a team, looked at data from five years, and brought kids and parents in incrementally. This had an immediate impact on student achievement, and helped us with [developing] a new process... We now have a review process to look at these issues, [including] talking to parents."
>
> – Interview participant

> "Creating culture that is not only empowering, but also a culture of teachers creating community... That's how change stays. People staying, collaborating, being empowered."
>
> – Interview participant

In addition to these benefits, updating documents provides a way to prevent reversion by staff who fall short of embodying the standards to which all have agreed. One participant recounted: "When someone does do something outside of these parameters, then you have a document to explain (or prove) that what they have done is a breach of the values and beliefs of the school and community." Ideally there would not be a need to review documents for punitive reasons, but even the act of crafting and signing such documents greatly encourages buy-in to an active model of improvement.

Finally, updating documentation helps sustain change through its positive effect on new staff, who will see the tenets of the documents as the status quo and quickly begin embracing them. One participant explained how continuously updating team documents also acted to empower new staff, as well as existing staff who transfer teams: "Each team has their own team agreement, each year it is reviewed... [but] everything is reviewed when new personalities come in so that people can take ownership."

Invest in your staff members' success

While returns from investments in staff are hard to quantify, they are crucial to sustaining and improving upon change initiatives. Investing in development has important long-term benefits, such as improved staff innovation, satisfaction and retention (Nadler & Tushman, 1990). Even for short-term success, certain investments are essential. For instance, if the change initiative involves newly designed classrooms, it is important for teachers to receive training about optimal utilisation of the new resources. Teachers are also likely to need professional development when transitioning to newer methodologies for student-focused learning (Mackey, O'Reilly, Jansen & Fletcher, 2017).

One of the biggest regrets shared by many participants was not choosing—or being financially able—to invest more in sending teachers to conferences and other schools to collaborate. Several participants expressed their regrets as cautionary tales, urging other leaders to consider the many ways such investment will reward their schools. But although financial investments are important, there are other impactful ways leadership can invest in staff, such as devoting time to meet with and support staff members. This type of investment should not be undervalued.

Another important investment is in support channels for staff. This investment often involved time and effort more than money. Some of this support is built within the feedback loop mechanisms, but it also comes from actively encouraging teachers to communicate and ask for help when they need it. One teacher participant shared that having the time "to discuss with other teachers about teaching strategies and students was really useful for me."

School leaders need support too, though may not always have the mechanism. Multiple participants expressed their regret of not establishing a support channel for themselves. "It is crucial..." one participant reflected, "...recognising that you yourself need support to lead change that comes from a wide base of leadership teams." Without such mechanisms, principals are more likely to burn out and leave their organisation. As may be expected, schools at which a principal leaf during a major change initiative are significantly less likely to sustain the change (Bishop et al., 2011).

Ideally, a leader's closest supporter will be external to the organisation, in case an internal dispute arises that puts the leader at odds with the person who was his refuge. As one author put it, "The most important criterion is that your confidant [i.e. key supporter] care more about you than about the issues at stake" (Heifetz et al., 2009, p. 69).

"In order to sustain the change, you need to provide time and resources. Part of the resources are designed to support the teachers stress loads so that they can continue with the change without being overwhelmed."

– Interview participant

Entrench changes within the culture

Culture is a powerful tool in ensuring that transformational changes endure. Changing a community's set of shared values and expectations requires a natural evolution, but by employing the tools outlined in this study consistently over time, people will naturally internalise and embody the new set of values, norms and expectations (Kotter & Cohen, 2002).

Of course, changing a deeply entrenched culture is not easy. One participant who was in the earlier stages of change, shared a challenge: "Currently we have a culture of 'just tell us what to do and we'll get on with it,' but we are trying to change that because it's not about us telling you what to do: it's about 'let's try stuff and learn so we are better able to make decisions.'" Many participants observed changes in school culture over time, which helped maintain and even improve upon the organisational changes.

One notable shift in many schools' culture was increased collaboration among stakeholders. One participant shared: "Change created a culture of collaboration with teachers, which spiralled in a good way." Heightened collaboration could also improve the relationships between different sets of stakeholders. One participant expressed how the new culture shifted teachers' relationship with parents: "It changed the idea that you are only going out to see parents when their kids are in trouble."

Another cultural swing that helped sustain changes was shifting staff members' mentality from self-interest to one of collective support and deeper service. "[We] changed [our] culture from teachers' needs over students' to the other way around," remarked one participant. A staff member at another school explained the positive effect the principal's new approach had on the entire community: "The culture changed when [the principal] showed that she cared about the teachers. Once the teachers recognised this support then they could support their kids."

Finally, many participants noticed another underlying cultural shift: a greater sense of community among staff. Greater community not only encourages other benefits like collaboration and empowerment; it also fosters a healthier work environment, which can improve staff satisfaction and retention (Morgan & Zeffane, 2003).

"We built a culture moving away from the way 'I' do things to the way 'we' do things."

– Interview participant

"All agree that change is hard, change takes time. Some think not even to call it change!"

– Interview participant

Conclusion

The process of implementing and embedding second-order change is difficult and time-consuming, but this challenge can be countered by understanding the need for change, whether because of systemic requirement or simply the desire to improve.

In either event, implementing organisational change that will endure involves a blend of art and science, and requires extensive reflection, energy and brutally honest communication. Taking the time up front to lay the groundwork for higher-order change will give an organisation more time to naturally evolve and internalise it, creating sufficient infrastructure to sustain the new system.

Ultimately, sustaining organisational change comes down to empowering, growing and retaining talented people, and ensuring that all stakeholders don't just accept the new system, but believe in the ideas behind it. This requires the creation of a culture where people are intrinsically motivated and are committed to goals that are bigger than themselves. If a transformational leader employs the tools in this study with authenticity and compassion, these less tangible tenets will naturally become embedded into the culture of the institution, and enable organisational change to endure.

References

Anders, B. (1997). Continuous improvement and kaizen: Standardization and organisational designs. Integrated Manufacturing Systems, 8(2), 110-117.

Anthony, S. & Schwartz, E. I. (2017). What the best transformational leaders do. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2017/05/what-the-best-transformational-leaders-do

Armenakis, A. A., & Harris, S. G. (2009). Reflections: Our journey in organisational change research and practice. Journal of Change Management, 9(2), 127-142.

Ashkenas, R. (2013) Change management needs to change. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from https://hbr. org/2013/04/change-management-needs-to-cha.

Bishop, R., Berryman, M., Wearmouth, J., Peter, M., & Clapham, S. (2011). A summary of Te Kotahitanga: Maintaining, replicating and sustaining change in Phase 3 and 4 schools, 2007-2010. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education.

Blount, S. & Carroll, S. (2017). Overcome resistance to change with two conversations. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2017/05/overcome-resistance-to-change-with-two-conversations

Blunsdon, B., & Reed, K. (2003). The effects of technical and social conditions on workplace trust. International Journal of Human Resource Management, 14(1), 12-27.

Boyce, M. E. (2003). Organisational learning is essential to achieving and sustaining change in higher education. Innovative Higher Education, 28(2), 119-136.

Bryson, J. M. (2011). Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organisations (4th ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gastil, J. (1994). A definition and illustration of democratic leadership. Human Relations, 47(8), 953-975.

Hallinger, P. (2003). Leading educational change: Reflections on the practice of instructional and transformational leadership. Cambridge Journal of Education, 33(3), 329-352.

Hardy, C. (1996). Understanding power: Bringing about strategic change. British Journal of Management, 7, S3–S16.

Heifetz, R., Grashow, A., Linsky, M. (2009). Leadership in a (permanent) crisis. Harvard Business Review, 87(7-8), 62-69.

Jansen, C. (2014). Leadership development through appreciative inquiry: complexity thinking in the non-government (NGO) sector. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand.

Jansen, C., Cammock, P. & Conner, L. (2010) Leaders building professional learning communities: Appreciative inquiry in action. Journal of Educational Leadership, Policy and Practice, 25(1), 41-54.

Kavanagh, N. M. & Ashkanasy, M. H. (2006). The impact of leadership and change management strategy on organisational culture and individual acceptance of change during a merger. British Journal of Management, 17(S1), S81-S103.
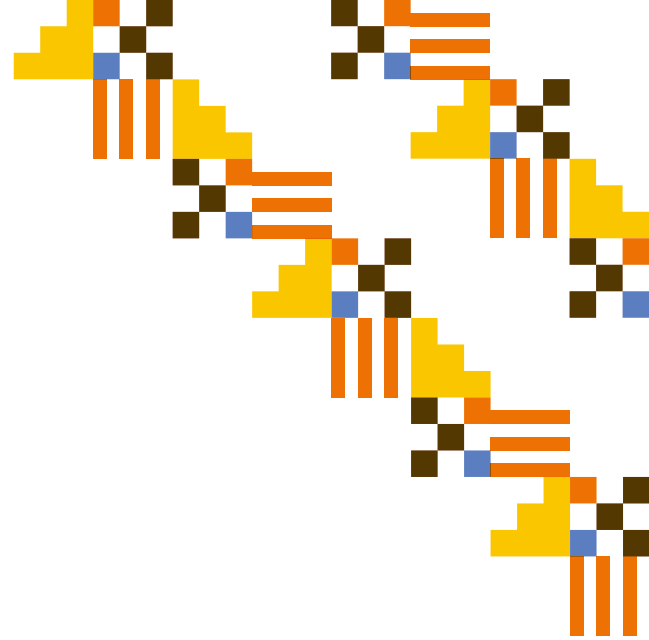
Kezar, A. J. (2001). Understanding and facilitating organisational change in the 21st Century: Recent research and conceptualizations. Higher Education Report, 28(4), 3 - 183.

Kim, H. W., & Kankanhalli, A. (2009). Investigating user resistance to information systems implementation: A status quo bias perspective. MIS Quarterly, 33(3), 567-582.

Kotter, J. P. (2012) Accelerate! Harvard Business Review, 90(11), 45-58.

Kotter, J. P., & Schlesinger, L. A. (2008). Choosing strategies for change. Business Review, 86(7/8), 130-139.

Kotter, J.P. & Cohen, D. S. (2002). The Heart of Change. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.

Mackey, J., O'Reilly, N., Jansen, C., & Fletcher., J. (in press). Leading change to co-teaching in primary schools: A 'Down Under' experience. Journal of Educational Leadership, Policy and Practice.

March, J. G. (1981). Footnotes to organisational change. Administrative Science Quarterly, 26(4), 563-577.

Moir, S., Hattie, J., Jansen, C. (2015). Teacher perspectives of 'effective' leadership in schools. Australian Education Leader, 36(4), 32-36.

Moran, J. M., & Brightman, B. K. (2000). Leading organisational change. Journal of Workplace Learning, 12(2), 66-74.

Morgan, D. E., & Zeffane, R. (2003). Employee involvement, organisational change and trust in management. International Journal of Human Resource Management, 14(1), 55-75.

Nadler, D. A., & Tushman, M. L. (1990). Beyond the charismatic leader: Leadership and organisational change. California Management Review, 32(2), 77-97.

Oreg, S. (2006). Personality, context, and resistance to organisational change. European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology, 15(1), 73-101.

Osborne, M. (2014). Inviting innovation: Leading meaningful change in schools. He Whakaaro Anō, 2, 3-8.

Rogers, E. M. (1995). Diffusion of Innovations (4th ed.). New York: The Free Press.

Sinek, S. (September, 2009). How great leaders inspire action. [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action

Grow
Waitaha