Praise For This Book

“Vukotich has created a comprehensive, easy to follow guide that is sure to influence even the most change adverse by providing the background, tools, and resources necessary to become change ambassadors for their organization.”

ANGELA SIEGFRIED
Director, Sales Delivery – Learning & Performance
Allied Insurance

“While other books preached theory, 10 Steps to Successful Change Management provided me with the practical advice and actionable steps that allowed my most recent change initiative to succeed. This book was like having my own personal mentor guide me through my change initiative, asking the key questions and keeping me focused on my end goal. Don’t just read this book – pull out your pen and work the book!”

SUE WELLER, SPHR
Senior Manager, Training Services
Baxter Healthcare

“In today’s military, change is constant and fast-paced. Dr. Vukotich’s book provides techniques and strategies that are easy to understand and apply, which my commanders and I will be able to use to make change an advantage and not a disadvantage to our organization.”

MICHAEL A. MEYER, COL, IL ANG
Commander, 183FW
Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport

“This change management guide is a must-have for managers new to change management or in the midst of a change management project. Vukotich has peeled away the extraneous and has provided the true essence of what you need to know.”

JOE ALMODOVAR
Senior Director, Global HRIS and Payroll
AT Kearney

“As we have come to expect with the 10 Steps Series books, this book has very usable elements – tables, graphs, bullets, worksheets, and key points. George’s background in consulting, corporate, education, and military all contribute to this resource being designed for readers to walk away with the right stuff to develop an actionable plan.”

RENE MCCLAY
Founder and Learning Consultant
Inspired Learning LLC
Author of 10 Steps to Successful Teams

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If you’re in a bad situation, don’t worry it’ll change. If you’re in a good situation, don’t worry it’ll change.
—John A. Simone Sr.

Change has happened since the beginning of time. We are affected by it every day. Whether we choose to change or are forced to change out of necessity, it happens. Whether in the organizations we work in, the schools we attend, or the neighborhoods we live in, change is all around us. Being aware of how change works and what we can do to make a difference directly affects our lives and the level of success we achieve.

Change may come as a response to outside forces or situations. In this case, we react to change. Reactive change is change we may not want to undertake but feel we must. Change we initiate in anticipation of future opportunities or threats is proactive change. For example, were you one of the first in your field to get a cell phone, or did you wait until you were expected to have one to function? If you fit the first category, you probably looked for ways to leverage the cell phone to be more productive or effective. You took a proactive approach. If you were driven to change by the pressures around you, you experienced reactive change.
The main thing to remember is that change will happen. It can be forced on us or initiated by us, but either way we need to be prepared to deal with the change that is coming. How we respond—by choosing to be proactive or reactive—is key.

Change comes in many forms, be it political, economic, social, technological, environmental, legal, or global. There are even factors that drive change that we may not anticipate. Look at Facebook and YouTube and their impact on individuals and organizations and the way they function. While each form brings unique challenges and opportunities, all change contains similar core elements. Some changes will have a long-term impact; others will only be part of a larger ongoing cycle.

Change often creates a domino effect. One example involves the cell phone. An obvious change is that it provides greater opportunities to communicate; however, secondary changes may include increased car accidents as a result of cell phone use while driving. This leads to another change—the need for hands-free headsets—which consequently leads to more change: laws that prohibit driving and talking on a cell phone without a hands-free device. You can see the domino effect one change can have on other areas. Some changes are proactive and innovative, like the hands-free headset. Others are reactive, like the change in laws regarding cell phone use when driving.

In your role as a change leader, you can take some definite actions to help you successfully manage change. By following the 10 steps identified in this book, you will be more effective in understanding how to approach change, how to work with others, and how to accomplish more in less time.

What Is Change?

While the word change has numerous definitions, we are interested in change that makes something different—the act of transformation. The meaning of change will vary depending on how individuals
view the change that is happening. Some will be excited and see it as an opportunity. Others will be depressed and view it as a threat.

When change happens, there are several things to keep in mind:

- Flexibility is key. A new way of operating will result, but in the process, trial and error may take place until the new way of operating is established. What an organization or individual does will be different from before. Some individuals may feel the need to become more connected as things change. They may look to others and try to figure out their role and how they fit in the new organizational model. The attitude is “we’re in this together.” For team members, this can bring an opportunity to bond by facing the challenges of change together.

- People will look out for themselves. Individuals often see change as a zero-sum game, with winners and losers. They look to position themselves in key areas at the expense of others. They may not know if things will be better or worse, but they want to make sure they get the best they can for themselves. Here the attitude is “I’m going to take care of myself, and I don’t care about others. Only the strong survive.” To overcome this, individuals need to unite as a team to help each other succeed.

- Sharing helps build relationships. The challenge of getting individuals to share a sense of change and what it means can often be difficult. The goal is not to defend or sell the change, but to be open to the risks and rewards of the change. Leaders who do this are the most respected and enjoy the greatest likelihood that others will listen to them. They open up to inform others of all potential results of the change—the positive, the negative, and which of these are most likely to occur.

Organizational change, or change in the workplace, affects all employees and can lead to forcing them to make adjustments in their business and personal lives.
Why do organizations undergo change? Often, new or evolving factors in the external environment force them to change, but some organizations take a proactive approach and try to initiate change to gain a competitive advantage. If they come up with a new discovery, product, or service, it can be in their best interest to change actively. Often, we see large organizations succeed in trying to keep the status quo, but as innovations happen, such as in technology, they eventually need to change, or they will be left behind. Whether the change involves a core component of how they do business or another factor that can affect their business practice, organizations must stay on top of changes in their environment and the potential impacts these changes will bring.

Types of Change

Change is generally looked at as being continuous or discontinuous. In continuous change (also known as continuous process improvement), the goal is to adjust systems and processes continually to fine-tune them and get the most you can out of what you currently have. For example, an auto manufacturer like Honda or Ford might adjust its production line to incorporate new features such as global positioning systems in its vehicles. This adjustment, while making the vehicles different, would not require a major change in the production process and would be relatively easy to incorporate. Individuals generally do not get upset when they have to make this type of change.

Discontinuous change (sometimes also referred to as reengineering) involves a major change in business, processes, and people. Related to the first example, Honda or Ford might come up with a totally different type of vehicle, such as the hybrid or electric car. Here major processes would have to change, as would the way work gets done and the individuals involved in the process, who would likely be required to perform a new function or attend training and learn how to complete new tasks and follow new procedures. This type of change generally creates more emotion. Some individuals will be excited about the opportunity to try something
new and different; others may be frustrated or fearful. As things change, so will individuals’ standards. They may doubt their ability to do the new job as effectively as the old or to learn the new skills required as a result of training, or they may fear the change itself. Continuing with our earlier example, if the hybrid or electric car fails, will individuals be out of work?

This book deals mostly with discontinuous change, where a project team is brought together to make change happen, but certain methods discussed apply to both types of change.

Your Role as a Change Leader

Successful change does not just happen. It takes someone to guide the process, use the tools available, and lead the people involved. You will be looked to for direction and guidance. It is important to know and understand the overall goal of the change initiative. You will need to provide the vision, build and implement the strategy, and motivate others to perform the tasks and carry out the change. Knowing who to go to for help to get things done comes with understanding the environment and people in it.

Change leaders have personal characteristics that help them work with others. They are outgoing and approachable, show a concern for others, and have an interest in going beyond the surface level of an issue. They are willing to ask why, how, and what can make things better. They are proactive and look for ways to innovate to make improvements, whether it is utilizing technology, updating processes, or ending practices that no longer make sense.

The role of the change manager is dynamic and changing. The person needs to be flexible and know that there is not necessarily only one right answer or one right person to get the answer from. Characteristics of successful change leaders include:

◆ Insight—Know today’s competitive environment, and understand that things can change to be more successful and make a difference.
◆ **Vision**—See the potential and the future end results that change can bring.

◆ **Willingness to challenge**—Look at ways to change—and in some cases challenge—existing practices and processes while being respectful and honoring the past, and drive to do what’s necessary to create a successful future.

◆ **Ability to inspire**—Help individuals see the benefit of change, as well as understand the vision and what it means to them, to generate support for the change. It’s essential to show others what success and its accompanying rewards (and the consequences of failure) look like, ideally moving people to want to take action.

◆ **Resourcefulness**—Have the tools and resources in place, a network that can get things done, and the ability to provide others with access to ways and resources to make things happen.

◆ **Ability to lead by example**—Model for others what you want them to be and do. Too often leaders fail by saying one thing and doing another. With the capability of today’s media and technology, there is no way to hide. Live and do in ways you would like others to.

◆ **Effective communication**—Regularly communicate to various stakeholders. This is more complicated in our Web 2.0 world with a variety of media at our disposal. An effective leader feels comfortable communicating through any medium and will constantly encourage others, listen to their feedback, and make changes as needed.

◆ **Rewarding others**—Acknowledge good work. That gets results in the right way, whether in terms of money or praise. Too often leaders withhold praise due to ignorance or fear that individuals will want something more. The point is that if rewards and recognition are withheld, eventually an individual’s efforts will be shifted in another direction. Keep in mind that others are watching. If they see certain behaviors rewarded, they will likely adopt those behaviors as well. A lack of rewards results in
individuals only looking out for themselves and not being willing to go beyond the minimum. No teamwork, collaboration, or innovation will take place. Also remember to address and correct inappropriate work and behaviors. Failure to do so sends a message that these behaviors are acceptable, and this can lead to problems that eventually must be addressed.

Stages of Change

Some changes come quickly and are open and obvious. Others take a long time to develop and occur. The key is to be prepared for how best to confront and take advantage of change when it happens. Being reactive or proactive also plays a large part in preparing for change, and as you will see in more detail in Step 4, prechange, change, and postchange are three stages individuals go through whether they choose to be reactive or proactive in their approach.

Reactive Change

Reactive change is composed of three basic stages (see Figure 1.1). The first has to do with the surprise or shock that change may induce. The second stage involves the human reaction and resistance to change. The third stage occurs when individuals realize that change is going to happen and begin to decide if they will participate in the change effort and, if so, what their roles will be. An important factor to note is that forcing individuals into a number of change scenarios on a repeated basis causes their overall level of acceptance to lessen, further disengaging them and decreasing the energy level behind their actions to initiate change. An attitude of “this too shall pass” often becomes ingrained in the culture of the organization; individuals learn to say the right thing but never actually do anything. Individuals in this environment even use phrases like “keep
your head low,” “make yourself invisible,” and “just say yes,” and then nothing ever happens. Be aware of this possibility and take note of signs that indicate this type of attitude exists.

Proactive Change

When change is proactive, three stages still occur, but each is very different (see Figure 1.2). The first has to do with the level of excitement that results from doing something new and different, as well as the learning and opportunities that go with it. The second stage involves the challenges of getting something done and the satisfaction that comes with accomplishment. The third stage is the realization that the individual and team have made change happen. They start to see the results of their actions. An organization that continually and effectively makes change happen sees the energy level of individuals increase. They know they can accomplish change, and they know how to make it happen. If the culture of an organization supports change, individuals will look forward to engaging in future opportunities for change.
Keys to Successfully Managing Change

The role of the change leader and the change agent team and their collective skills can make a big difference in the extent of an organization’s success at managing change (see Step 3). Identifying and clearly communicating the reason and importance for change and related goals are key to achieving success. Building a strategy and getting people on board helps guide the process. Attempting to initiate change without having a strategy leads to confusion. Ask for input from key stakeholders. Making them part of the process from the beginning increases the likelihood they will accept and support it. When issues arise, you can come up with options to address them. Hiding information or giving misinformation causes individuals to fill in the blanks with information that may be worse than the truth. It also leads to credibility issues. Once credibility and consequently trust are lost, it is difficult to get them back. Break down the project into manageable steps and tasks. Set time lines and milestones to measure the change process. Acknowledge and celebrate milestones and accomplishments. Reward individuals for behavior in support of the change. Address issues from those who do not support the change or are sitting on the sidelines.
Table 1.1 lists some specific actions for change leaders to take.

## Table 1.1

### Active Roles of the Successful Change Manager

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build the guiding team</td>
<td>Get people involved with commitment and the right set of skills to accomplish the change goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get the vision right</td>
<td>Get the team to establish a simple vision for change and a strategy to accomplish the change goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a sense of urgency</td>
<td>Get people to understand they need to do something, the importance of it, and potential rewards and consequences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate regularly</td>
<td>Involve those who will make change happen and those who will be affected by the change that happens. Appeal to people’s needs. The team needs to know the what, why, and how. Involve stakeholders to get buy-in along the way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empower the change team</td>
<td>Give people the tools and access to the resources to help make the change happen. Remove obstacles, and reward achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create short-term wins</td>
<td>Break the change into manageable pieces. Identify what needs to be done sequentially and what can be done in conjunction with other tasks. Share the details of the project plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage resilience</td>
<td>Encourage determination. Highlight milestones. Support individuals in times of challenge. Seek additional tools and resources to help them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make change part of the organization’s culture</td>
<td>Reinforce the value of successful change. Make change part of the culture. Share the lessons learned throughout the organization.</td>
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### Elements of a Successful Change Initiative

No matter what type of change is being undertaken and regardless of the organization’s size, certain elements make a change initiative successful.
A Clear Understanding of the Need for Change

When we look at organizations, they generally change in one of two ways: reactive or proactive. It is often easier to analyze change and its level of success after the fact. Unfortunately, analysis after the fact comes too late to make a difference today. The process often involves confusion and uncertainty as to whether a particular change is appropriate and being carried out correctly. Starting with a clear understanding of the issues and opportunities is essential in order to get change initiative off to the right start. Not understanding why will produce only activity, not productivity.

A Clear Set of Goals

Some individuals will resist change at all costs, but the majority will be open to it and may even help to make the change if they understand its purpose and potential impacts. Anyone who has been involved in a major organizational change effort such as a merger or an acquisition has seen the paralysis and lack of productivity that sets in (often for extended periods) while individuals wonder and wait to find out how the change will affect them. Open communication makes a difference. Organization leaders supported by change leaders must communicate the end goal and how to achieve it. Individuals who will be affected need an idea of how, why, and when.

An Explanation of the Risks and Rewards

Along with stating the goals and the extent to which the process for achievement has been developed, explain the potential risks and rewards. The many examples of this include the state of the automotive industry and the experiences of General Motors, Chrysler, and Ford. Don’t avoid or delay sharing information on the best that can happen, the worst that can happen, and the most likely to happen.
Ongoing Communication

Regular sharing of information is important. If individuals receive no information, they make it up, and usually it is incorrect. If you don’t fill in the blanks, others will, and it may be with the wrong answers. Organizational leadership must be willing to accept and answer questions that are asked. With technology, information can be checked, cross-checked, and disseminated widely and quickly. Leaders in this day and age can no longer lie or mislead. The relationships, even of those close to the individual, may never be the same.

Credibility is important; without it your influence will go nowhere. Individuals will not blindly follow, and they may oppose you simply because you did not tell them everything correctly, or lied. Share what you can. Have a good reason for what you can’t.

Sharing Results on an Ongoing Basis

People want to know where they stand and how the changes around them will affect their lives. Individuals vary in their level of “need to know,” but even if it’s at a minimum, most people like to be informed. As you build your communication strategy, keep in mind not only what you can share, but how best you can share it. It must be ongoing; even a weekly report to state that not much has changed is better than no report at all. Are there areas not directly related to the change topic but of interest to the population? That is something you can provide. The following example is a stretch, but if you were an employee, how would such disclosure influence your perspective of the company’s change effort and the leadership driving it?

*Publish the purchase and sale data of stocks by key company executives. Most people will see purchases as a vote of support. If sales occur with a legitimate reason, say so. Before you are quick to reject this, remember publicly held companies must provide this data, which is available in the public domain, and in this day and age your employees are probably finding it anyway. End speculation before it begins.*
Related to these elements of a successful change initiative are some of the often-cited reasons that change initiatives fail. These include:

- lacking leadership that visibly supports the initiative
- communicating an unclear vision of the future
- allowing individuals to believe change is an option, not a requirement
- focusing on accomplishing tasks rather than achieving goals
- lacking a process to hear the concerns of those needed to initiate change
- failing to celebrate/reward early successes
- lacking clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Keep these pitfalls in mind as you build your plan and strategy for change.

Onward!

Key Points to Keep in Mind

Change happens in a number of ways. Some questions to keep in mind include the following:

- What are the reasons behind the change initiative?
- How does it impact what you are doing today?
- What alternatives exist, and what are the opportunities and consequences that go with them?
- Are the goals of the change initiative clearly defined?
- Do individuals understand their roles and the risks and rewards that go with change?
- Have you identified what it’s going to take from you as a change leader to help others get through it?
- From a communication perspective, what is it going to take to get buy-in and keep others informed?
WORKSHEET 1.1

Understand Why Change Happens

What’s going on around you and your organization, and how is it impacting what you do?

Fill in the blank with the word customers and then repeat the process with other areas that may impact who you are and what you do. Examples may include competitors, business partner relationships, uses of technology, government rules and regulations, financing options, and global factors.

How are ____________ changing?

What is the impact on you?

What can you do?

Do you see any patterns or trends? What are they?

How critical is it you respond to them? What happens if you do nothing?