The Change Management Foundations: Webinar Q&As

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ASKED AT THE 19 JUNE 2024 TRANSFORMATION WEBINAR

I am interested in the positive psychology of projects. People get wrapped up in a project and claim it has been delivered, but Stage Gate 5 is not done properly - and workload is increased throughout the organisation mopping up a badly implemented project - yet the project team are hailed as heroes.

A practical way to address this is to shift the organisational discipline to celebrating/recognising impact from celebrating task completion. This can be difficult when expectations are often anchored in and around completion of tasks. Arranging, for example, celebratory drinks when org goals have been met (rather than the project plan) can set expectations more clearly during the project and beyond.

From a cultural point of view it can be a strong message if universally adhered to. For any organisation that claims or aspires to be customer-centric it is a good way of ensuring that's embodied in the way work is evaluated. It's natural for people to be relieved at the end of a significant piece of work, but stakeholders/sponsors remaining focused on impact is a good way to avoid the issues you describe.

How can principle of change management be applied to smaller businesses or those with smaller teams?

The key thing to remember is that effective change management is fundamentally about enabling people to move an organisation to a better place. Being as clear and consistent as you can be in helping people to understand the benefit that the change will bring, allowing them to contribute to shaping the change and acknowledging and celebrating key wins along the way are elements that drive success irrespective of the size of the company. The key is not to overengineer the change process if you are small organisation with a small change team. Just focus on these essentials and access support wherever you can.

Anyone in your HR team who is a member of the CIPD can access a wealth of change management resources, a community of professionals and mentoring to support them as they support your business, whatever the size, to put the people-focused principles of change management into practice as you need them.

I've been listening to the webinar series and am finding it very informative, thank you. We know we need to do finance transformation on our Finance Operations area but the thing that I'm struggling with is how we go about making the decision on what the transformation should look like. I can find lots of info on the various options themselves eg to set up an SSC, which could be based on geography or by process area, or to offshore it - near or far -

etc. In your experience, how does an organisation go about deciding which of the options is the best or right one for them?
To understand which option appears best (there's no guarantees) you need to appraise each option against some key criteria to get to a balanced position and recommendation. Some of these criteria might include the following:

a. Strategic alignment – will the solution be fit for purpose for the future and will it grow with the business.
b. Costs benefit analysis and ROI.
c. Technology compatibility / feasibility
d. Legal feasibility
e. Any regulatory issues to consider.
f. User experience and interaction with rest of business > how will servicing be impacted.
g. Cultural fit > related to piece above.

When considering above options, I would also reach out to similar companies to understand their experience of having gone down a particular route to understand the impacts more fully and take lessons learnt.

What has been your most difficult transformation and why?
Two come to mind. One, that I am currently doing because of the breadth of change and the diverse nature of the business (every venue wants a bespoke solution). Current transformation is both technically challenging and landing the change management element will be particularly tricky. The other transformation involved creating an entirely new business model within an existing multi-national business. Finding ownership for processes and tasks that didn't already exist and with a stretched workforce was particularly challenging.

What's the best way to flex transformation programmes to different sizes of businesses? What changes between a small business and a large business to make a programme a success?
A large business will probably warrant a large-scale transformation that covers the entire business with various workstreams. The resource to kick start and operate a large-scale transformation could require a sizeable team and potential external resource and advise in the form of consultants. A small business can still achieve transformation through prioritising its strategic objectives and focusing on these areas through targeting projects with a more manageable team. The small business transformation can often have a bigger impact and demonstrate the value of change quicker. However, this approach can be good at 'fixing the foundations' but not necessarily solving for future strategic needs. In both large and small businesses, the transformation should ultimately be strategically aligned and usually focused to achieve the biggest bang for buck. The size and volume of initiatives might vary but the approach is often the same > initiatives need to demonstrate financial and strategic value and solve for problems at hand. Resource to manage change and stakeholders will likely vary with an opportunity for more dedicated transformation resource in a larger organisation.

Please could you repeat the name of the author who wrote about Management needing to do more than they expected to support transformation?
The name of the book is Step Up, Step Back by Elsbeth Johnson.