[Faculty of Commerce - Papers (Archive)](#)　　　　　　　　　　[Faculty of Business and Law](#)

1-1-2010

What do managers do during major organisational change

Michael L. Jones
University of Wollongong, mjones@uow.edu.au

Recommended Citation

What do managers do during major organisational change

Abstract

Management texts have long been prescriptive regarding management practice, recommending managers do this, and managers do that, to ensure greater and greater effectiveness. Only a relatively minor proportion of management researchers have gone into the field to observe just what managers actually do. Change management literature tends to be prescriptive regarding how organisations should manage change, and why some leaders are better than others. There is a relative paucity of empirical information discussing what effective change managers actually do. This paper aims to present empirical data from a longitudinal change management research study to develop an enhanced understanding of what managers do during major organisational change. The first part provides a comprehensive overview of the main empirical studies of 'what change do managers do' over the last fifty years. The more salient among these are explored in greater depth, with their strengths and weaknesses examined. The second part assesses the applicability of the conceptualised categories using data from the research project, by comparing what change managers actually do against what is espoused in the literature. An analysis is provided which examines each activity performed by the managers, classifying these activities in terms of the change management roles identified in the literature, assessing the weight given to each role in terms of time and frequency. This research finds that the literature is reasonably accurate in its espousal of the roles for change managers. It also finds that information handling is a significant component for both managers and change managers, yet the research literature gives little significance to this role.

Keywords

Disciplines

Business | Social and Behavioral Sciences

Publication Details

WHAT DO MANAGERS DO DURING MAJOR ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Michael Jones
Management Lecturer
School of Management and Marketing
Faculty of Commerce
UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG NSW 2500 AUSTRALIA
Tel: 61 2 4221 4706
Email: mjones@uow.edu.au

TRACK = Business

Abstract

Management texts have long been prescriptive regarding management practice, recommending managers do this, and managers do that, to ensure greater and greater effectiveness. Only a relatively minor proportion of management researchers have gone into the field to observe just what managers actually do. Change management literature tends to be prescriptive regarding how organisations should manage change, and why some leaders are better than others. There is a relative paucity of empirical information discussing what effective change managers actually do. This paper aims to present empirical data from a longitudinal change management research study to develop an enhanced understanding of what managers do during major organisational change.

The first part provides a comprehensive overview of the main empirical studies of 'what change do managers do' over the last fifty years. The more salient among these are explored in greater depth, with their strengths and weaknesses examined. The second part assesses the applicability of the conceptualised categories using data from the research project, by comparing what change managers actually do against what is espoused in the literature. An analysis is provided which examines each activity performed by the managers, classifying these activities in terms of the change management roles identified in the literature, assessing the weight given to each role in terms of time and frequency.

This research finds that the literature is reasonably accurate in its espousal of the roles for change managers. It also finds that information handling is a significant component for both managers and change managers, yet the research literature gives little significance to this role.

Key Words

Change Management
Change Leadership

WHAT DO MANAGERS DO DURING MAJOR ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Abstract

Management texts have long been prescriptive regarding management practice, recommending managers do this, and managers do that, to ensure greater and greater effectiveness. Only a relatively minor proportion of management researchers have gone into the field to observe just what managers actually do. Change management literature tends to be prescriptive regarding how organisations should manage change, and why some leaders are better than others. There is a relative paucity of empirical information discussing what effective change managers actually do. This paper aims to present empirical data from a longitudinal change management research study to develop an enhanced understanding of what managers do during major organisational change.

The first part provides a comprehensive overview of the main empirical studies of 'what change do managers do' over the last fifty years. The more salient among these are explored in greater depth, with their strengths and weaknesses examined. The second part assesses the applicability of the conceptualised categories using data from the research project, by comparing what change managers actually do against what is espoused in the literature. An analysis is provided which examines each activity performed by the managers, classifying these activities in terms of the change management roles identified in the literature, assessing the weight given to each role in terms of time and frequency.

This research finds that the literature is reasonably accurate in its espousal of the roles for change managers. It also finds that information handling is a significant component for both managers and change managers, yet the research literature gives little significance to this role.

Introduction

Since the early nineteen hundreds, when Frederick Taylor convinced America that management should be scientific, management has been in a quandary endeavouring to discover itself. Typical early management research was based on a hard structure, perpetuated by the naïve views of previous researchers, whose work was also highly structured (Mintzberg 1973, 277). To keep the science current, fresh insight should be frequently sought from the practitioner, and a softer methodology allowing inductive insight should be allowed. Much is written about what academics think managers do, but few studies go into the field to discover what managers really do, and to determine the interface between these two realms of reality.

This paper presents a quick navigation of current change management literature, discussing what has been discovered, and to what extent empirical studies have explored what change managers really do. Following this, an empirical examination is made, using a methodology espoused by Mintzberg (1973), of what change managers actually do during change. Lastly, these research findings are compared to the models proposed in the literature to present the fit between the empirical data and the literature.

Six models are presented to adduce the fundamentals of change management, commencing with Lewin – one of the early pioneers of change, and ending with Nadler and Tushman. From these, four studies are presented which empirically examine the role of change managers and change leaders. This analysis results in a set of six roles which characterise what it is that change managers actually do.

What is Organisational Change?

How many times have we heard the adage: 'the only constant in business is change' (Burke, Spencer et al. 1991)? It is now commonly accepted that most businesses do, or should, change, but why, what is the force behind change? There tends to be a great deal of consensus amongst researchers regarding the drivers for change, finding three major spheres of influence which drive organisational change. These are Technological, Economic, and Socio-Cultural. Escalating technological advancements have provoked a continuing evolution in the shape and structure of organisations, having a direct influence on the conduct of management. These rapid developments in technology underpin the dramatic shifts in the economic environment. There is now a greater emphasis on knowledge and human capital, and global boundaries have been eroded to extend operations in dimensions of both time and distance. This larger world focus has opened the doors to all aspects of human equality. Combined with these pressures and influences is a greater awareness by employees, customers and shareholders, working to constantly reshape and redefine the paradigms of modern business. Change is thus, the only outlet for organisations, which seek to stake their competitive position in society (Kanter 1983, 37-40; Burke, Spencer et al. 1991, 88; Church, Siegal et al. 1996, 25).

Models of Organisational Change

There are many different models of change. It is however beyond the scope of this paper to discuss them all. A selection of models has been introduced here to illustrate that various different opinions exist. This exposé will commence with the work of Kurt Lewin, whose model is considered by many as the *classic* model of change. The discussion will then progress through several, more contemporary models. The final model, developed by Nadler and Tushman, is considered to be of significant value, and will be explored in greater detail.

Kurt Lewin (1951-52)

Among the very first researchers to examine organisational change was Kurt Lewin. After pondering the relationship between the organisation and its context, Lewin came to recognise that potential change scenarios gravitated toward an equilibrium, and were products of a field of interrelated and opposing forces. This change theory he termed 'force field theory'. Disturbances in the field of forces would result in either change, or *status quo*, depending upon whether the forces favoured change or resistance. In order to manipulate change, a change agent would execute a 'force field analysis' which would identify major forces, for and against the change, and then develop an action plan to move the equilibrium point in one direction or the other. Lewin followed this theory with a three-stage model for change. Change began with an *unfreezing* – by reducing the forces that maintain the organisation's behaviour at its equilibrium an organisation can be persuaded to change toward a new equilibrium. The next stage is *moving* – this step shifts the behaviour of the organisation to a new level where forces will once again balance out and meet equilibrium. This involves the development of new behaviours, values, and attitudes through changes in organisational structures and processes. The final stage is *refreezing* – this is where the organisation locks in the new '*status quo*', and is frequently accomplished using supporting mechanisms that reinforce the new organisational state, such as organisational culture, norms, policies, and structures.

Tichy & Devanna (1986)

Lewin's model was heavily drawn upon by Tichy and Devanna, although they have not credited him in any of this work; probably because these three basic change principles are straightforward and used almost generically in most change models (Siegal, Church et al. 1996, 56). Their model is likened to a play, with three acts, and although it discusses organisational change, it is guised under the classification of leadership. Their model begins with *Act 1: Recognising the need for revitalisation*. During this stage, organisation leaders must recognise that a change is needed, and then create dissatisfaction with the *status quo*, sufficient to induce an organisation-wide desire for transition. *Act 2: Creating a new vision*, is the same as Lewin's Movement stage, where a new strategic focus is sought, toward which the organisation can steer and realign. *Act 3: Institutionalising change*, as with Lewin's refreezing, any transformation must be locked in, during this stage "[n]ew realities, actions, and practices must be shared so that changes become institutionalized" (Tichy and Devanna 1986, 31).

Schein (1985)

Schein's model is another that is developed around the work of Lewin. His three-step model starts with 'unfreezing', which is similar to Lewin, and includes building a desire for change and developing an anxiety gap between the present and the desired state. It also proposes an additional element, which is to create an environment of psychological safety identified with the target state to induce a willingness for individuals to make the journey. The next stage is cognitive restructuring, which is akin to Lewin's 'movement'. Finally, we have refreezing, which involves aligning new behaviours to one's own sense of identity, and in alignment with others within the organisation (Siegal, Church et al. 1996, 56-57).

Dunphy & Stace (1988)

Dunphy and Stace combine change types: Incremental and Transformative with collaborative and Coercive, and produce a matrix (see Table 1) showing four possible outcomes, which they call types.

Dunphy & Stace (1988)	*Incremental*	*Transformative*
Collaborative	Type 1 - *Participative Evolution*	Type 2 - *Charismatic Transformation*
Coercive	Type 3 - *Forced Evolution*	Type 4 - *Dictatorial Transformation*

Table 1. Change Model – Dunphy & Stace (1988)

A company adopting a *Type 1* change will have a high degree of employee involvement during the change process, and will employ a comprehensive and systematic approach to human resources management at all levels. A *Type 2*, would see a company maintain close relations and consultation with employees, but changes would be more sporadic and less harmonious. *Type 3* utilises a continuous process, but does not luxuriate in engaging or negotiating with employees, relying on a more autocratic means of command and control. The last type, *Type 4*, will often rely on external change agents like consultants to execute a change. The change is likely to be rapid and direct.

Stace & Dunphy (1994)

A few years later, Dunphy and Stace extended their original 1988 model. After researching 20 sample organisations, they split the two existing *intensity of change* categories into four, introducing *finetuning* and splitting *transformative* into *modular transformation* and *corporate transformation*. Finetuning they saw as nothing more than a maintenance function, and found it generally, to be a non-viable change strategy. The difference between modular and corporate transformation is the breadth of change, where modular is partial, progressive change, and corporate is complete, holistic change. Stace and Dunphy also extended the continuum of *management style*, adding two new intermediary levels: *consultative* and *directive*. Table 2 shows these scales with the various change types.

Stace & Dunphy (1994)	*Finetuning*	*Incremental*	*Modular Transformation*	*Corporate Transformation*
Collaborative				
Consultative	**Taylorism** (Avoiding Change)	**Developmental Transitions** (Constant Change)	**Charismatic Transformations** (Inspirational Change)	
Directive		**Task-focused Transitions** (Constant Change)	**Turnarounds** (Frame breaking Change)	
Coercive				

Table 2. Change Model – Stace & Dunphy (1994)

The four viable change types they found were:

- **Developmental Transitions** (constant change). A company is able to use this approach when they are able to maintain their strategic alignment with the environment. The style is most successful in firms that emphasise a collegial and team focussed environment, change is led using a consultative style.
- **Task-focused Transitions** (constant change). This style of change is directed from the top. Unit managers are the consultative interface between top management and workers, and thus they are given autonomy for change, but are held accountable for results. This type of change has the potential to make rapid strategic changes, but due to its disjointed nature, the implementation may lose focus from the intent.
- **CharismaticTransformations** (inspirational change). This type of revolutionary change is useful when a company is out of fit with its environment, and when time limits the amount of participation in the process. A leader will take a charismatic approach to change, engaging the intellectual, emotional, and behavioural characteristics of people to steer them toward change. The advantages of this style of change are its ability to gain majority support in a short period of time. It does however depend on particular personal characteristics of the change manager, which are not always present.
- **Turnarounds** (frame breaking change). A firm facing a turnaround will be in a similar environment to companies contemplating transformation; poor fit and limited time. However, the critical differences are – the dire need for change, which will be driven by a desire for survival; and, clear lack of employee support. This approach is hard and fast, the change motive will be heavily directed or coerced by executive management. The strengths of this approach are its ability to radically change an organisation through decisive leadership, without being dependant upon attitudinal changes within the workforce. The downside is the potential this strategy has for permanently damaging sensitive components of the company, like employees, motivation, and culture.

Nadler & Tushman (1989-95)

Nadler and Tushman combine incremental and discontinuous with anticipatory and reactive dimensions to produce a matrix similar to Dunphy and Stace. This matrix also shows four outcomes, which Nadler & Tushman refer to as Tuning, Reorientation, Adaptation, and Re-creation (see Table 3), these will be discussed individually below.

Nadler & Tushman (1989-1995)	Incremental	Discontinuous
Anticipatory	Tuning	Reorientation
Reactive	Adaptation	Re-creation

Table 3. Change Model – Nadler & Tushman

- **Tuning**. A company that adopts a 'tuning' approach will perform continuous or incremental changes in anticipation of environmental demands. There is generally no immediate requirement for change, it is more of a position-maintenance strategy, and is driven through a desire to maintain close congruence between the various sub-systems of the organisation and its environment.
- **Adaptation**. Where *tuning* was change through *anticipation of* external events, *adaptation*, is change triggered in *reaction to* external events. The desire for change was not predicted, but change still occurs on an incremental basis. The situation is generally one of: change, or suffer a competitive cost.
- **Reorientation**. Change which is commenced in anticipation of external drivers, but which is discontinuous, is called reorientation. It usually involves changing the core elements of the company, including identity, values, culture, strategy, and structures. As it is executed in advance of a crisis or any percept of necessity, it can appear to be gradual and to lack exigency. Therefore, a key role of change managers is to create a sense of urgency and to build commitment. An advantage of reorientation is the luxury of time, where changes can be instigated in the peripheral areas of a firm, allowing the gradual building of coalitions, which will help ease the changes throughout the organisation.
- **Re-creation**. Business leaders who have the foresight and skills required to succeed with reorientation are a rarity. Generally, the need for change is not recognised until a crisis is imminent or actual. Re-creations are thus much more common than would be desired. Re-creations occur in reaction to a desperate situation, where time and resources are strained. Change will be frenetic, all encompassing, and irreversible, with minimal chance of pre-change long-term survival. The firm will need to literally re-create itself with a fast, focussed and furious effort, usually over just a few months.

Frame Bending and Frame Breaking

In its everyday operation, an organisation functions within a set of predefined parameters, these include its values, beliefs, strategies, and operational plans. These parameters can be known as an operational framework or frame. The changes an organisation undergoes can be within this frame, as in the case of incremental changes, where the framework of parameters maintain a close congruence with their pre-change position, or they can move beyond the frame, as these parameters undergo major transformations, as is the case in discontinuous change. Nadler and Tushman (1985, 1986, 1995) identify reorientations as 'Frame Bending', where the "frame of the organisation is changed, modified, and reshaped, but hopefully not broken", this is because the time allowed during this process stretches tolerances and prevents breakage (Nadler and Tushman 1995, 30). 'Frame Breaking' occurs during re-creation type changes, where the more sudden and desperate nature of the change creates stresses of such intensity that many of the elements of the existing system are broken, discarded and replaced. In this case, the sheer lack of time generally allows no other alternative (Tushman, Newman et al. 1986, 40-41).

What Do Change Managers Do?

While there has been an abundance of research published which relates to the behavioural, psychological, and personal characteristics of effective change managers and leaders – discussing *why* and *how* managers lead, there is an unfortunate paucity of empirical research which discusses what change managers do (Foster 1986; Conger 1999, 150). While the available research discusses many of the functions of change management, these are broadly defined and generally unsubstantiated. This evident sparsity provides shallow resource for deriving a set of definitive functions which characterise the roles of a change manager.

Four research studies will be examined. The first is a celebrated study by Kanter (1983), which has been widely cited and discussed; her expertise in the field of organisational change is readily recognised by most researchers. The study is based on Kanter's extensive work in the field of management and change management consulting, and it is drawn upon here because of its empirical depth. Though criticised for its lack of methodological integrity, the study provides great depth, in an ethnographic style, which reveals the nature of change in organisations, and discusses, with great clarity, what processes are executed in successful change programmes. The next study, by Kotter (1988) was also selected for the robustness of its research. Kotter's study is substantial in depth and breadth. Data are derived from four specifically designed empirical studies, comprising both qualitative and quantitative analyses, and supported with a host of robust examinations of leadership in the business environment. While the focus of Kotter's research was based around leadership, the emphasis is on *leadership during change*.

The final two studies are of less renown, but provide equally valuable support to the understanding of change management. The first is a study by Kouzes and Posner (1987) who utilised a questionnaire as their research instrument to extract the prime characteristics of exemplary leaders during a change situation. The data they elicited were both qualitative and quantitative, derived from a survey of over 7000 managers and executives. The study was selected because of the robustness of the research and because its discussion on leadership during change is appropriate to the thesis of this paper. The last study by Vandermerwe and Birley (1997) relies on the use of questionnaires and interviews to evaluate change characteristics of middle managers who have recently managed a frame-bending type of organisation-wide change. The study is useful because it examines change from two perspectives, from the point of view of the change manager, and from their superiors.

What follows are these four empirical studies, which together form a composite picture of the roles a change leader will perform in his or her capacity as change manager.

Kanter (1983)

Over a period of five years, Kanter studied over 100 different American companies, ten of which were in-depth studies. This knowledge entwined with her less-formal interactions with the various companies forms the basis for her assessment on managers during an innovation triggered change process. Her data comprised direct observation, interviews, and document analysis.

Kanter found "three identifiable waves of activity" (Kanter 1983, 217), which define change management. First, the change imperative must be defined. This requires the acquisition of knowledge – this is known as *problem definition*. Second, is *coalition building*, where a network of allies are developed to provide resources or support for

the transition. The final step is the execution of the change, defined by Kanter as *mobilisation*, here the work of the previous two steps are harnessed and put into action. These three functions are expanded upon below:

- **Problem Definition**. Problems and their solutions do not exist in vacuums. In discovering problems and recommending remedies, information sources are accessed, and potential benefactors are identified. The first step in problem definition is identifying the problem. This is the investigation of the actual cause for the need to change, whether it is from internal or external influences. Following this, the change manager will need to gather information in order to ascertain an optimum solution to the problem. A third step in this process is to identify stakeholders, discover their individual stakes in either the status quo or the change, and determine their desire for change. A final step in this process of problem definition is to justify the solution, this involves illustrating the advantages (and disadvantages) of the final state. For example, a company contemplating the use of a new distribution system may survey end users for their expectations, or may highlight probable statistical outcomes of the new service.
- **Coalition Building**. The next step is to enlist cooperative support. The broader the ramifications of the change or the attendant uncertainties, the larger the coalition of support should be. The coalition must engage the people who have greatest influence over the project, and those people who have the energy, the commitment, and the desire to instigate implementation, and maintain momentum. The first step in building a coalition is to gain the approval of superiors, or at least ensure there is no disapproval, so that the project can move forward with negligible top-down resistance. After gaining the approval, managers tend to build support from the lower ranks, before engaging peers and executives. A method commonly used to engage support from peers is what Kanter refers to as 'horse trading' referred to here as transacting, where information, services, or resources are traded for the promise of support. The final step in securing the coalition is to enlist the support of executive managers, this is usually a formal process where specifics are discussed, and the coalition team is revealed.
- **Mobilisation**. Armed with a strong coalition and appropriate information the change manager moves into the execution phase, putting the various people and resources to work in the mobilisation of the plan. The role of the change manager during this phase is to empower team-members to manage personal change responsibilities while ensuring unimpeded operation of the programme. Therefore, the first role the change manager is likely to adopt is that of handling opposition and blocking interference. Objections and resistance are likely to escalate as the programme progresses, will occupy more and more of the change manager's time, and will require sensitive handling to avoid conflict. Another element of the mobilisation phase is the need for continuous motivation, to drive team-members forward with commitment and enthusiasm. If individual drive is allowed to flag or wane it becomes a contagion quickly spread to other team-members. A fourth step in this process is secondary design, where modifications to the old environment bring to life collateral concerns such as in the case of the previously mentioned example of the distribution system. The final step in this whole process of managing change is communicating, as it was initially important to collect information, at the end of the cycle it is equally important to communicate to the world beyond the team. Successes should be celebrated, promises should be delivered, and the project lessons should be shared so that the whole organisation will benefit from the positives and negatives of the process.

Kanter's study while being widely celebrated as an in-depth look at the role of 'change masters' has been criticised as lacking methodological integrity and robustness, and to an extent this is true, her study would be very difficult to repeat, therefore other researchers cannot, by replication, validate her findings, and many of her findings are derived from the sum of her life knowledge, not the specifics of this or any other study. As she states:

> … in making choices about what material to use to express and illuminate my ideas, I leaned toward rendering those dramas of life in the corporation which would make my conclusions come alive, which would cause readers to believe me not because of my numbers but because of the echoes of my ideas in their own experience (Kanter 1983, 385).

However, the information she provides is rich in detail and description, and has been substantiated by many other studies, completed by either Kanter, or other researcher's. Therefore, her findings have been incorporated into this study, without qualification or exception.

Kotter (1988)

Drawing on his extensive research in the field of leadership, derived primarily from his early work on 'The General Managers' (Kotter 1982a, 34-58), and expanded with four specific studies, Kotter has developed a comprehensive understanding of leadership within the organisational context. The four studies comprised:

1) <u>General Background Interviews</u>. Kotter approached 150 managers, targeted due to their experience with leadership, or because it happened to be convenient, and questioned them directly, soliciting specific information about leadership.

2) <u>Executive Resources Questionnaire</u>. Kotter developed a ten-page questionnaire with 59 questions broadly covering three general aspects of leadership. He sent this to almost 1000 management executives from more than 100 firms. Over 900 of these surveys were completed and returned, and eight percent of those respondents participated in an additional interview, discussing their responses.

3) <u>The Best Practices Study</u>. In 1985, *Fortune Magazine* surveyed hundreds of experts to determine which were the USA's top 250 companies according to a) quality of management, and b) the firm's success in attracting, developing, and retaining talented employees. Fifteen companies were selected by Kotter from the top twenty of these firms. The study was based around an interview of approximately one hour in duration, of the top executives (eight or more) in each firm. The focus of the interviews was to determine how these firms attract, develop, and retain employees with leadership capabilities.

4) <u>The Organisational Change Study</u>. Over a period of three years, Kotter observed and diarised the efforts of five corporations in their attempt to improve their capacity to attract, develop, and retain leadership talent. Kotter analysed each firm's actions and the various ramifications of these actions.

The information obtained through these studies has been supplemented with empirical studies from other influential researchers in the field. From this wide resource of data, Kotter discusses a list of 'requirements for effective leadership':

1. ***Industry and Organisational Knowledge:*** Broad knowledge of industry (market, competition, products, technologies); Broad knowledge of the company (the key players and what makes them tick, the culture, the history, the systems).
2. ***Relationships in the Firm and Industry:*** Broad set of solid relationships in the firm and in the industry.
3. ***Reputation and Track Record:*** Excellent reputation and a strong track record in a broad set of activities.
4. ***Abilities and Skills:*** Keen mind (moderately strong analytical ability, good judgment, capacity to think strategically and multi-dimensionally); Strong interpersonal skills (ability to develop good working relationships quickly, empathy, ability to sell, sensitivity to people and human nature).
5. ***Personal Values:*** High integrity (broadly values all peoples and groups).
6. ***Motivation:*** High energy level; Strong drive to lead.

Kotter found that of these attributes, knowledge is an important prerequisite, which must extend in all directions to capture the nuances of products, technologies, markets, and people. A comprehensive grasp of knowledge will set the ground for well-informed leadership. Partnered with knowledge, is good management of information and contact networks, which is maintained though strong personal and social skills. An overlay to all of this is a keen and sensible mind, capable of analytical and abstract thought. And, perhaps most importantly, an effective leader requires an abundance of energy, motivation, and self-confidence. This list, which is not exhaustive, is perhaps a most difficult list to fulfil, and is why "[p]roviding effective leadership in senior management … requires you to have a lot of things working on your behalf" (Kotter 1988, 31).

Kouzes & Posner (1987)

Through their studies on successful leaders in the business community, Kouzes & Posner developed five best practices of exemplary leadership:

   I. **Challenge the process:** Search for opportunities; Experiment and take risks.
  II. **Inspire a shared vision:** Envision the future; Enlist others.
 III. **Enable others to act:** Foster collaboration; Strengthen others.
 IV. **Model the way:** Set the example; Plan small wins.
  V. **Encourage the heart:** Recognise individual contribution; Celebrate Accomplishments.

The study comprised two stages. Stage one was considered qualitative, and would provide the researchers an idea of what leaders do, based on a *personal best survey* consisting of 37 open-ended questions and administered this to over 1300 managers. In addition, 38 in-depth interviews were conducted. Content analysis revealed a list of behaviours and strategies, which were consistent with more than 80% of the respondents. The next stage of the study was a quantitative process which *measured* what change leaders do. Kouzes and Posner developed a *Leadership Practices Inventory* (LPI), containing 30 statements, each cast on a five-point Likert scale. After pre-testing in several rounds on more than 2200 managers, the final instrument was tested on more than 3500 managers and executives (Posner and Kouzes 1990, 206-208).

Kouzes and Posner found leaders are people who are willing to take risks and shake the system, who recognise a new opportunity, or a need for change and drive through with initiative, courage, and motivation. Leaders are also able to create a compelling vision of their desired future and build enthusiasm sufficient to encourage people to become willing followers. Most significantly, leaders do not work alone, they inspire and nurture an environment of collaboration and teamwork, they focus on building a coalition of supporters and collaborators, the operative word becomes *we*, and the common sentiment is *empowerment*. Leaders must also practice what they preach, and lead by example. Their actions and behaviour should be consistent with their beliefs and goals, and their efforts should be a persistent pursuit toward their visions. Finally, Kouzes & Posner found that exemplary leaders recognised individual and group effort and celebrated every milestone toward achievement of the vision.

Vandermerwe & Birley (1997)

Vandermerwe and Birley provide research on 100 senior executives; 70 of them completed a questionnaire, and the other 30 were involved through in-depth interviews. These executives were selected from a sample of 300 executives from companies that had recently undergone a major transformation programme. These executives were not directly involved in the change programme but were superior to the change managers who orchestrated the change. Therefore, they were able to observe the change and the leadership that was employed during the change. Qualitative feedback was sought to evaluate the success of the change and the effectiveness of the change leader during that change.

In their study, Vandermerwe and Birley provide two opposing perspectives regarding change managers. The first is what change managers think of themselves – what should they be doing to perform effectively, here we find heavy emphasis on communication skills, networking (or social) skills, and visionary skills, this viewpoint is consistent with other researchers. The second perspective comes from the leader's supervisor, and illustrates what is expected of leaders from a more senior position. From this list, it seems executive management value a leader's ability to get on with the job, without the need to draw on senior assistance. While the study focussed on the key characteristics of change leaders, it is possible to draw from this discussion five key roles of a change leader: 1) change leaders are highly *motivating*, of themselves and others, and with this 2) they spend time *influencing* others, with a will to win, and to see the big picture. 3) A great deal of the change leaders time is spent *networking* – developing, maintaining, and using a useful set of contacts. 4) Effective change leaders also indulge in frequent *risk-taking*, which sets them apart from their contemporaries. 5) Probably the most important role of the change leader is their keen desire to *communicate*, an effective change leader will use every opportunity to engage with followers, to relate the goals and build enthusiasm.

Summary

The four empirical studies above, while not an exhaustive representation of the relevant literature, provide a useful cross-section. *Table 4* tenders a summary of these studies. The studies by Kanter and Kouzes & Posner focus on behavioural attributes, Kotter discusses skills, and Vandermerwe and Birley covered both of behaviour and skills.

Researcher(s)	Date	Major Findings

Kanter	1983	Three Identifiable Waves of Activity:
		■ Problem Definition
		   o Identify the problem
		   o Gather information
		   o Identify stakeholders
		   o Justify the solution
		■ Coalition Building
		   o Gaining approval
		   o Building support
		   o Transacting
		   o Enlist executives
		■ Mobilisation
		   o Handling opposition
		   o Blocking interferences
		   o Continuously motivating
		   o Secondary design
		   o Communicating

Vandermerwe & Birley	1997	Key Roles of Effective Change Leaders: ■ Motivating ■ Networking ■ Communicating ■ Risk-Taking ■ Influencing
Kouzes & Posner	1987	Leadership Practices of Exemplary Leaders: ■ Challenge the process ■ Inspire a shared vision ■ Enable others to act ■ Model the way ■ Encourage the heart
Kotter	1990	Requirements for Effective Leadership: ■ Industry and organisational knowledge ■ Relationships in the firm, and in industry ■ Reputation and track record ■ Abilities and skills ■ Personal values ■ Motivation

Table 4. Outcomes of the Studies of Change Management

From this representation of the empirical information, we can derive an inventory of change leader practices, a *curriculum vitae* for today's successful and effective change manager:

- <u>Networking</u>. A change leader will develop and engage in extensive and useful networks of contacts both in the internal business environment and from areas external to the business, which may result in probable future benefit and support (Kanter 1983; Kouzes and Posner 1987; Kotter 1990; Vandermerwe and Birley 1997).
- <u>Leading</u>. By personality, word, and example, a change leader will lead the way. A change leader will project an image of high integrity; building and maintaining trust with followers through honest personal values. The change leader will become a role model and a pathfinder clearing the way and providing an example for others to follow. Direction is likely to be inexplicit or inferred, authority is less despotic and more implied, cooperation and cohesion are gained through a set of shared values and goals (Kouzes and Posner 1987; Kotter 1990; Vandermerwe and Birley 1997).
- <u>Empowering</u>. Change leaders are apt to monitor the big-picture, leaving the actual execution to others, who have been empowered, either implicitly or explicitly, to act as required to fulfil the change programme (Kanter 1983; Kouzes and Posner 1987).

- Motivating. A change leader will be enthusiastic and self-motivated, and will devote time to motivating and inspiring staff, utilising shared goals, and visions of a better future (Kanter 1983; Kouzes and Posner 1987; Kotter 1990; Vandermerwe and Birley 1997).
- Communicating. A change leader will utilise every opportunity to communicate with followers. Communications will be impassioned and optimistic, either celebrating or reinforcing the change programme. Both words and actions will consistently signal commitment and dedication to the change (Kanter 1983; Kouzes and Posner 1987; Kotter 1990; Vandermerwe and Birley 1997).
- Risk-Taking. Change leaders are not afraid to deviate from convention, or to take risks, when a change leader recognises an opportunity, he or she will develop a voracious appetite for its pursuit (Kouzes and Posner 1987; Kotter 1990; Vandermerwe and Birley 1997).

Research Method

The case study method was selected as a means of data collection and analysis because it allows the researcher the opportunity of explaining the causal links in real-life interventions that would be too complex for surveys or experimental strategies (Yin 1989, 25). A case study is an empirical inquiry that (Yin 1989, 27):
- investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when
- the boundaries between phenomenon and context are clearly not evident; and in which
- multiple sources of evidence are used.

There are four general types of case study *(see Table 5)*. These can be classified according to two dimensions: single or multiple case designs and holistic or embedded analysis. These are discussed below:
- Single-case design is the use of one case to explain or support a popular theory or hypothesis, because a single case is all that is needed to critically test the research question. This type of case study is analogous to a single experiment in science. Another reason for using a single-case design is in a situation where the researcher has an opportunity to observe a phenomenon or situation that is generally inaccessible to other forms of investigation, as in this case for instance with longitudinal participant observation.
- Multiple-case designs are usually a series of replications where the original design, often the pilot study, is repeated a number of times, sometimes with minor modifications. The study is usually designed so that results are either predictably similar, so that mutual support for a single conclusion is found (literal replication), or contrary results are predictably achieved (theoretical replication). If these results turn out as expected, the multiple-case design can be seen as providing evidence, which is compelling.
- Embedded analysis is where there is more than one unit of analysis, for instance where, as with this study, there are two or more individuals who will provide observational data to support the same hypothesis or theory.
- Holistic analysis is the opposite of embedded, where only the global nature of the study is considered. In this case there is little value in collecting data from various other sources. An analogy of these two, is to think of holistic analysis as a macro view, and embedded analysis as a collection of micro views.

	Single-Case Designs	Multiple-Case Designs
Holistic (single unit of analysis)	**Type 1**	**Type 2**
Embedded (multiple units of analysis)	**Type 2**	**Type 4**

Table 5. Basic Types of Designs for Case Studies (Yin 1989, 46)

Therefore, we have four types, resulting from differing combinations of these factors. The type used here is Type 2 – a single-case embedded design, as this type enables the study of one organisation (this study), to support the one question 'what do managers do during major organisational change', with supporting evidence from multiple managers.

The method of data collection is based on a similar study by Henry Mintzberg in 1973 where a manager is observed for a period of time (e.g. every two or three minutes), and during the observation period every action, interaction, and communication is recorded, noting – the time, purpose, and other situational factors. An additional dimension enhancing this study is the extension of the observation process to include after hours observation, this extension allows a more complete understanding of what a manager does, because it is a rare situation when the manager ceases to manage after the five o'clock bell has rung. The purpose of the study is to determine **what do change managers do**.

In classifying the distinct management types, the activity was considered *change management* if it was ***a) specifically stated or explicitly known, b) its execution would extend the organisation beyond status quo, or c) the activity resulted from such an extension.*** If there was any doubt, the activity was categorised as an activity related to general management. For example:

> The shift supervisor called to tell the change manager that the radio-communication link had gone out in the plant. He asked if it would be OK to use mobile phones instead of the radio.

This activity triggered a response that was more likely to be regarded as general management, as the decision had no tangible effect on any change or transition within the company, that is it did not satisfy any of the three criteria above: a) it was not stated or known to be a change activity, b) its execution would not change the organisation, and c) the activity was not performed as a result of a change.

In another example, there is evidence of an effect on the change process, and the activity is classified as change management:

> During a tour the change manager met with several of the plant crew, while they were having lunch. During the verbal exchange, the crew discussed an idea they had about improvement to the process. The change manager encouraged the crew stating the improvement would be a great idea. In this case b and c are active: b) its execution would change the organisation (discussion and encouragement helped to confirm the new organisational culture) and b) the activity was performed as a result of a change (this discussion was a direct result of the new culture of participation and creativity).

The Plant Manager and a senior executive in charge of a large steel processing plant were followed around and observed with a note taken of their activities every three minutes. These people held primary responsibility for instituting change within the plant. The observational study comprised three stages. The first two stages were pre-studies used in preparation for the final stage, the observation.

Stage 1 – Collection of preliminary data
Through content analysis of various organisational documents, supplemented with occasional interviews and informal discussions, preliminary data were collected, to establish an understanding of:

- The organisation, the division, and the manager's context within this environment – to gain knowledge on the responsibilities of the manager's position, the lines of communication, and the singularities of cultural influences.
- The personality of the man behind the position – to ascertain any biases, inconsistencies, or anomalies, which may affect the study.
- The character of the work the manager does during a usual business day and week – to give insight into the nature of the work and the management style, and to ensure the observational week was or would be typical.

Stage 2 – Interviews
Eight interviews were held – one with the manager under study, one with his superior, and with each of his six subordinates. The main purpose of the interviews was to gain insight into the change process within the organisation, to get to know the change manager, and to get to know the perceptions of people about the change process and the change manager.

Stage 3 – Recording and Coding of Observations
This final stage is the actual observation. During this stage two types of data were collected:

1. <u>Structured data</u>, these are compiled from three different observational records:
   - The *chronology record* notes times and basic activities and describes the pattern of activities. It shows the distribution of functions and roles performed throughout the day. The chronology record is coded into nine discrete categories: *Deskwork – mail handling, deskwork – meeting preparation, deskwork – telephone call, informal time, observer interaction, scheduled meeting, tour, travel, unscheduled meetings.*
   - The *mail record* characterises each piece of incoming and outgoing mail, including email, along with the manager's reaction to it. This record comprises sixteen categories: *Acknowledgement, advice on situations, authority request, events, external board mail, general reports, general request, ideas and business*

proposals, periodical news, problems and pressures, reference data, report on operations, set tasks, solicitations, specific request ongoing operations, status requests.
  - The *contact record* describes every verbal contact, how it is initiated and what purpose it serves. The *contact record* contains thirteen categories: *Non-managerial work, scheduling, ceremony, external board work, status request and solicitations, action request, manager request, observational tours, receiving information, giving information, review, strategy, negotiation, encouragement.*
2. Anecdotal data, this is a log of the activities and incidents selected for in-depth description, and are used to support analyses and form conclusions.

The observation of each manager, as he performed his work, took one week and during this week, the observer looked at the pattern of the manager's activities throughout every minute of the workday.

Findings – Alignment with Literature

The empirical findings (Table 6) confirm that, apart from risk-taking, all of the roles discussed in the literature are a function of change management in this study.

Change management roles identified in the literature		Proportion of the _total_ _number_ of roles performed	Proportion of _time_ spent performing each role
Change Management	Networking	34%	27%
	Leading	7%	8%
	Empowering	5%	9%
	Motivating	21%	26%
	Communicating	33%	30%
	Risk-Taking	0%	0%
	Total	100%	100%

Table 6. The Roles Defined by the Research

From this table *(Table 6)* several observations can be made:
- Communicating and networking consume the majority of the change managers time and focus.
- Leading and empowering were only at the maintenance level.
- There is no evidence of risk-taking occurring.

Why is risk taking not an evident role for these managers? There may be many reasons for this. Paramount among them is the difficulty with which risk-taking can be measured. Risk-taking is primarily a mental process, where the advantages and disadvantages of any given decision are weighed in the brain, and unless the process of calculation, which accompanies risk taking, is explicitly declared by the manager, the observer is likely to be unaware of the mental process. Additionally, propensity for risk is a personality attribute, where the proclivity of taking a risk is inherent within the person, and is not an external process, which is even apparent to the manager, let alone observable by an onlooker. Another explanation is – the change programme adopted by the company followed a virtual sinusoidal path, where change would be great and rapid, and then would wane to just a trickle. The phase the company was in during this study was between the peaks, and was more of maintenance than revolution, therefore there was little opportunity for these managers to make large decisions and to take risks. Another problem which is inherent with this study is the uncertainty of interpretation. What may be deemed as risk-taking in the manager's mind may have been misinterpreted as something else by the observer.

Findings – Contribution to Literature

Each role the manager performs can be analysed to determine the part it plays in either change or general management. Table 7 illustrates these data, showing the significance of the roles derived from the literature to these managers. According to either the number of times the role is performed, or the amount of time the manager spends on the role (the maximum of these), a significance factor was derived:

- The role was valued as highly significantly if the managers, between them, spent more than 15% of their overall time on a particular role, or the role was performed more than 15% of the time.
- Similarly, if a role was performed 6-15% of the time, or accounted for 6-15% of the manager's time, the role was considered moderately significant (medium).
- Finally, 2-5% would indicate a low significance.

Research Findings	*What do change managers do*	*Significance*
Roles which correlate with the literature	Communicating; Networking & Motivating	High
	Empowering	Medium
	Leading	Low
	Risk-Taking	None
Newly derived roles	Transacting Information	High
	Planning	Medium
	Decision Making	Low

Table7. The Roles, Old and New

The first part of the table looks at the roles declared by the literature to be highly significant to the work of the change manager and seeing whether there is a similar correlation in this study, when looking at all of the roles a change manager performs. It was found that when managing change, *communicating* was a significant role, occupying 17% of the managers' time. *Leading* and *empowering* were significantly low averaging at only 5.5% of the managers' time. Figure 1 illustrates these percentages.
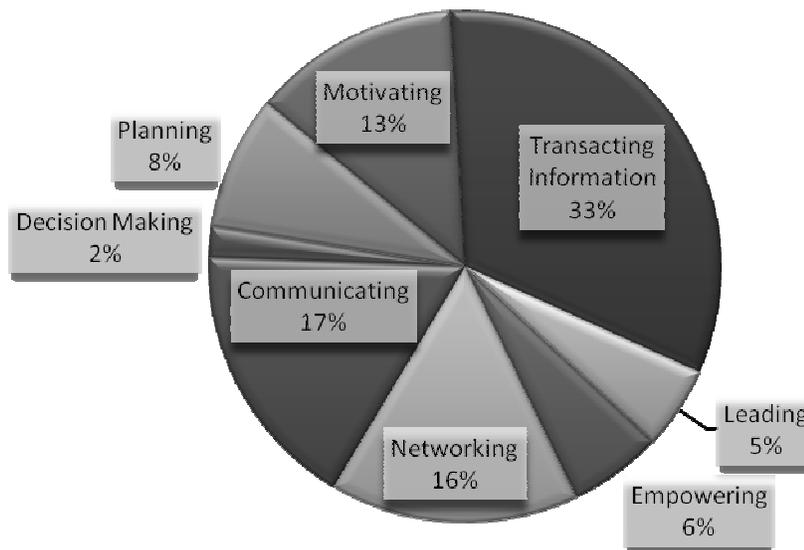

Figure 1. Proportion of time in roles

Planning and decision-making are roles clearly identified in management (Hales 1993), but these have received little prominence in change management literature. The research found that they are of relative significance during change. A more significant role, which is not discussed in the literature, is that of *transacting information.* Analysis found these managers were spending a third of their time transacting information. While *information* is discussed in

the literature particularly from Kanter (1983) and Kotter (1988), it is given much less significance than it actually deserves. Without doubt, managers spent more time transacting information, and engaged with it more frequently, than they did any other role.

The term *transacting information* is developed in this paper to describe how a manager deals with the constant assault of information within which he or she is immersed. During the working day, the manager was almost constantly receiving information from various sources, and in particular, from meetings. The information was stored internally, seldom was any recording instrument used. The information was then distributed selectively, either on demand, or by prompting discussion with other people. In general, the managers acted as repositories of information, a resource that is frequently accessed by other members of the organisation, from all levels and functions. To these managers information was the basis of occupational currency, and their base function appeared to pivot around their ability to manage it.

From these findings, it is apparent that the roles defined in the literature are relatively accurate, the significance of each varies from low to high, but each role is represented in the research. This study found that, nominally, one third of the managers' time was consumed transacting information, and this has great bearing on the overall function of the change manager.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the role of managers in change management. The discussion focused on two distinct areas. Firstly, relevant literature was studied, concentrating on empirical works, which endeavoured to understand what change managers do. The second area of exploration was research data derived from a study of two managers undergoing organisational change. This study involved following around these managers using a research method of direct participant observation, borrowed from Mintzberg (1973). The data from these two areas of examination were drawn together and compared to discover significant differences or similarities.

The main objective was to discover what change managers actually do during organisational change. Validation of the research literature finds that change managers perform five core roles. The most interesting finding was the addition of a new significant role, which has previously been under-emphasised. *Transacting information* was found to consume 33% of a change manager's time. It is recommended that further research be undertaken to evaluate the importance and significance of this role. These six roles are listed below:

- Communicating – accounting for 17% of a managers time
- Networking – accounting for 16% of a managers time
- Motivating – accounting for 13% of a managers time
- Empowering – accounting for 6% of a managers time
- Leading – accounting for 5% of a managers time
- Transacting Information – accounting for 33% of a managers time

References

Burke, W. W., J. L. Spencer, et al. (1991). "Managers get a "C" in managing change." Training and Development Journal 45(5): 87-92.

Church, A. H., W. Siegal, et al. (1996). "Managing organizational change: what you don't know might hurt you." Career Development International 1(2): 25-30.

Conger, J. A. (1999). "Charismatic and transformational leadership in organizations: An insider's perspective on these developing streams of research." Leadership Quarterly 10(2): 145-179.

Dunphy, D. C. and D. A. Stace (1988). "Transformational and Coercive Strategies for Planned Organizational Change: Beyond the OD model." Organisation Studies 9(3): 317-334.

Foster, W. (1986). The Reconstruction of Leadership. Deakin University, Deakin University Press.

Hales, C. P. (1993). Managing Through Organisation - The management process, forms of organisation and the work of managers. London, Routledge.

Kanter, R. M. (1983). The Changemasters: Innovation and Entrepreneurship in the American Corporation. New York, Simon and Schuster.

Kotter, J. P. (1982a). The General Managers. New York, Free Press.

Kotter, J. P. (1982b). "What Effective General Managers Really Do." Harvard Business Review 60(6): 156-167.

Kotter, J. P. (1988). The Leadership Factor. New York, The Free Press.

Kotter, J. P. (1990). "What Leaders Really Do." Harvard Business Review 68(3): 103-111.

Kouzes, J. M. and B. Z. Posner (1987). The Leadership Challenge - How to Get Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Lewin, K. (1951). Field Theory in Social Science. New York, Harper & Row.

Lewin, K. (1952). Group Decision and Social Change. Readings in Social Psychology. G. E. Swanson, T. M. Newcomb, E. L. Hartley and e. al. New York, Henry Holt and Company: 459-473.

Mintzberg, H. (1973). The Nature of Managerial Work. New York, Harper & Row.

Nadler, D. A. and M. L. Tushman (1989). "Organisational Frame Bending: Principles for Managing Reorientation." Academy of Management Executive 3(3): 194-204.

Nadler, D. A. and M. L. Tushman (1990). "Beyond the Charismatic Leader: Leadership and Organizational Change." California Management Review 32(10): 77-87.

Nadler, D. A. and M. L. Tushman (1990). Leadership for Organizational Change. Large-Scale Organizational Change. A. Mohrman Jr, S. A. Mohrman, G. E. Ledford Jr, T. G. Cummings and E. E. Lawler III. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass: 100-119.

Nadler, D. A. and M. L. Tushman (1995). Type of Organizational Change: From incremental improvement to discontinuous transformation. Discontinuous Change: Leading organizational transformation. D. A. Nadler, R. B. Shaw and A. E. Walton. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass: 14-33.

Posner, B. Z. and J. M. Kouzes (1990). Leadership Practices: An Alternative to the Psychological Perspective. Measures of Leadership. K. E. Clark and M. B. Clark. Greensboro North Carolina, Leadership Library of America: 205-215.

Schein, E. H. (1985). Organizational Culture and Leadership. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Siegal, W., A. H. Church, et al. (1996). "Understanding the Management of Change: An overview of managers' perspectives and assumptions in the 1990s." Journal of Organizational Change Management 9(6): 54-80.

Stace, D. A. and D. C. Dunphy (1994). Beyond the Boundaries: Leading and Recreating the Successful Enterprise. Sydney, McGraw-Hill.

Tichy, N. M. (1983). Managing Strategic Change : Technical, political and cultural dynamics. New York, Wiley.

Tichy, N. M. and M. A. Devanna (1986). The Transformational Leader. New York, John Wiley & Sons.

Tushman, M. L., W. H. Newman, et al. (1986). "Convergence and Upheaval: Managing the unsteady pace of organizational evolution." California Management Review 29(1): 29-44.

Vandermerwe, S. and S. Birley (1997). "The Corporate Entrepreneur: Leading Organizational Transformation." Long Range Planning 30(3): 318-319.

Yin, R. K. (1989). Case Study Research - Design and Methods. Newbury Park, CA, Sage.