



Managing and Leading Change

By Hilary Sayers on 1 July 2016

Organisations everywhere are finding the world around them is changing and a reappraisal of how they are doing business is needed. Internally, too there are changes, such as generational change in the workforce, shifting employee expectations and the supply of talent.

All this looks likely to continue and even accelerate into the foreseeable future. So, how well prepared are today's leaders to transform their organisations? It is well documented that up to 70 percent of change initiatives fail to meet expectations, so it appears they have a way to go.

Thinking about those statistics, we propose a new way of thinking about how we deal with change by separating two distinct but complementary processes – managing and leading change.

We define managing change as implementing a set of processes that lead staff to transition from the current to a desired state. There are many models or theories to draw from to ensure that change is conducted in an orderly and systematic manner.

Yet, making it work is tough and two distinct challenges face the leaders of change:

1. There is a natural human resistance to change, and
2. Leaders themselves need to be flexible and adaptable in dealing with change.

Leading change is about winning the hearts and minds of people, energising them and sustaining a change in their behaviour and approach. Developments in the field of neuroscience are revealing why this can be so difficult and what leaders can do about it.

Of course, some people are more ready to embrace change than others. Curiosity, a readiness to challenge the status quo and the drive for continuous improvement are key characteristics of those who are change agile. These qualities can be measured and developed, which is good news for organisations embarking on change.