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# THE CHANGE MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK

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A Road Map  
to Corporate  
Transformation

Lance A. Berger,  
Martin J. Sikora

with Dorothy R. Berger



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## A Road Map to Corporate Transformation

*Lance A. Berger*

*Martin J. Sikora*

*With*

*Dorothy R. Berger*

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## Preface

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The world is in a constant state of change as the 20th century winds down, and no business organization—in the United States or elsewhere—can escape the effects of operating on a continually evolving landscape. The forces of change are so great that the future success, indeed the very survival, of thousands of companies depends on how well they respond to change or, optimally, whether they can actually stay ahead of change.

That change exerts constant pressure—from such forces as industrial globalization, relentless technological advance, political upheaval, and opening of new markets—is widely acknowledged. But there is far less recognition of the need for individual companies of all sizes and types to shift their own gears in response to evolving developments in the world. And perhaps most disturbing is the poor batting average posted by companies that have sincerely dedicated themselves to change. Although a handful have scored seminal successes, the majority have failed to find the magic new mode or style that is needed in the volatile macroenvironment.

Identifying the primary reasons for this irksome difference and clearly delineating methods for aggressively combatting them are the primary purposes of *The Change Management Handbook*. Although the concept of a changing world has seemingly been explored to the most finite degree, *The Change Management Handbook* is the first work that spells out exactly how a company must execute its change actions—and promote a culture that places a premium on a comprehensive orientation toward continuous change.

Through firsthand experience and intensive research into cases of success and failure, the editors and authors have discovered that the winners have adhered to a concept of corporate alignment whereas the losers have let at least one key business element get out of their control. As *The Change Management Handbook* stresses, alignment comes at several levels, beginning with the alignment of the company to its market and the continual fine-tuning necessary to stay in step with customer needs and demands. Internally, alignment means ensuring continuous synchronization of four key business gears: a strategy that will develop a blueprint that attacks change, operations that are flexible and nimble enough to be quickly altered, a culture that encourages people to promote and work with change, and a compensation system that rewards people for buying into change and constantly seeking improvement.

*The Change Management Handbook* thus presents a road map for the actions needed to anticipate and execute change and simultaneously maintain alignment. It lists the specific actions that must be taken by senior business managers, by the people that they assign to implement change policies on line, and by the professional advisers they enlist to assist and monitor the change processes. *The Handbook* sketches the route that must be taken toward change and denotes the milestones, the turns, the stop signs, the red lights and yellow caution lights, and the sensing devices that keep people on the main road. But the *Handbook* does not set down rigid or generic

approaches. In line with the *Handbook's* dictum that companies must always be flexible and nimble, the approaches presented in the following pages stress the ways the basic format can be varied for firm- and market-specific situations.

The *Handbook*, then, is a practical, action-oriented document for use by change agents and managers. Its contents can be used to reference the entire process—from finding market changes to reaping the payoffs from the right responses—to determine how to fit two or more key elements together or to check out the change implications of just one facet.

The editors wish to thank our blue-ribbon group of authors who have crafted their array of skills both on the firing line and in the think tanks of change. They represent the leaders as well as the pioneers in the still-emerging discipline of change management, with its bedrock foundation of total alignment. They have contributed generously of their time and skills to *The Change Management Handbook* to provide excellent guidance for the business managers and their advisers who must live with change day in and day out.

We also are indebted to the nine change agents whose accounts, based on interviews with Lance Berger, of how they met the challenges of change have added a special dimension of practicality and experience to the *Handbook*. Some had the luxury of working their companies into a change environment; others were thrust into crises not of their making. But the remarkable way in which the concepts of alignment transcended all their experiences helped emphasize the key points.

*The Change Management Handbook* is dedicated to the families of the editors, who have been great sources of strength and support, notably Dorothy Berger, who has tirelessly assisted in editing, assembling, and processing our work, and Vivian Sikora, who has helped in editing and fact checking. The book is also dedicated to our parents, Henry Berger, Florence and Max Turk, and Anna Sikora; and our children, Adam, Craig, Cheryl, and Nancy Berger and Clifford S. Sikora, Esq., and his wife, Valerie. The *Handbook* is dedicated posthumously to Ruth Berger, who was a role model for women's rights and freedoms and who will be greatly missed.

The *Handbook* also is dedicated posthumously to Ralph Petersen, former Vice President of Human Resources at CPC International, a true professional and early change agent who was promoting the sound precepts of change long before most people even acknowledged that great change was a challenge. He is sadly missed but fondly remembered as a great mentor and a warm friend.

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## Introduction

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*The Change Management Handbook* has been issued at a time when the stakes in successfully revamping a business are greater than ever. However, the *Handbook* and the concepts it encompasses have been evolving for decades.

The need to change a business so it meets the challenges of developing conditions in its marketplace is not new. It's been around perhaps as long as business and commerce themselves have been recognized forms of endeavor. But the rules have changed dramatically. The forces currently driving a business to change are more powerful than their predecessors and assert their potency far more frequently than in the past. Moreover, never before have so many "pile drivers" of change been in full force at the same time. The company of the 1990s and the early 21st century that is seriously interested in retuning itself must simultaneously deal with such issues as leapfrogging technology, globalization, political upheavals that have opened new markets, consolidation in major industries, environmental problems, dynamism in world population demographics, and alterations of legal systems.

As a result, the job confronting the change manager of the past was child's play compared with what his or her successors face today. And the realities that mark the road toward the 21st century demand an entirely new way of handling change. Companies no longer have the luxury of laid-back, trial-and-error, hit-or-miss approaches to change management that take huge amounts of time to implement. Tinkering has been replaced by decisiveness. Deliberation by speed. Halfway measures by total effort.

The company that gets in step with a ceaseless, systematic, companywide commitment to change management is the company that will be the winner after the smoke has cleared. That involves a total effort and nothing less. As we will blueprint in *The Change Management Handbook*, this commitment includes a process that starts with a formalized intelligence program to detect forces in the market place—or change triggers—that augur significant change for the business, changes that are powerful enough to destabilize the business. It is a process that has the company responding immediately to the trigger by taking actions to meet the competitive threats. It is a process that goes beyond the immediate responses to make sure that all primary elements of the company—under the umbrellas of strategy, operations, culture, and reward (compensation)—are totally in alignment and unified to get fully behind the new market responses. It is a process that will initiate major revisions in these four factors should any be found to be in conflict with the others. And it is a process with the goal of restabilizing the company so it can remain an effective competitor on a long-range basis—or at least until the next change trigger is spotted.

I have been fortunate enough to be in the business world during the past few decades as it moved from the era of inconsistent change and inconsistent response to the current era of rapid change and rapid response. That fact enables me to take stock of both periods, both to observe firsthand and to take part in change management

efforts of various types and schools of thought. Most were well intentioned and, in general, timely. Yet I never ceased to wonder why some were striking successes and others were unceremonious duds. Why did some firmly stabilize the company, make it a stronger competitor, regain lost market share, or even prevent a threatened share erosion, with an actual gain in share? Why did others fall flat and perhaps force a company out of a changing market or even out of business? I concluded there were definite and definable reasons for the different outcomes. But what they were proved to be elusive. However, I was able to hone in closer on the “missing links” when I was given direct responsibility for assembling the strategic plan at the Hay Group, the Philadelphia-based worldwide management consulting firm. It was during this period that the concepts of *The Change Management Handbook* began to take shape. We were concerned that the rate of growth of our core practice—compensation, or the reward system employed by companies to provide incentives for its people—could slow down. At the same time, anecdotal reports from consultants suggested that clients were demanding higher value-added services. Exactly what was meant by higher valued-added services was not clear.

In retrospect, we realized our clients were telegraphing a change trigger that could damage the firm’s alignment to its market. Although it was a little too early to fully recognize the concepts that are enunciated in the *Handbook*, we did know that there was enough evidence in hand to suggest that something had to be done.

I took an inventory of what we knew about the situation. Over the firm’s 40-year life we, like our competitors, had transferred a great deal of our knowledge and technology to our clients. Basic compensation methodologies were becoming more well known to in-house practitioners. That reduced the market need for maintenance work by compensation consultants, such as follow-up consultations to ensure that programs were working well and to make adjustments if needed. These had been a traditional and major source of revenue for Hay and its competitors. But the impact of in-house expertise was even more far-reaching because the transfer of expertise could also affect our potential for new work assignments. What I would now call a change trigger was that the market no longer valued the services of compensation consultants as greatly as in the past simply because clients, through the instruction of my firm and its competitors, were now able to do much of the work at significant cost savings by themselves.

The prospect for destabilization now existed, although none of us recognized it at the time. There was an intriguing ace in the hole, however. The request for value-added services—although we still didn’t know what that meant—suggested that we had carved out enough of a reputation for quality and premium products, service, and delivery that the clients could be receptive to related offerings that we might present them.

So we started to review the results of a variety of analyses including the market research data that showed we had a preeminent position in slower-growing markets. The study was conducted by a multifunctional, multilevel global task force that con-

firmed our need to develop new services, particularly those that met clients' demands for higher value-added wares.

The next step was to get professionals from several practices together to shape an entirely new practice area that would reflect market requirements. Interestingly, and again this was something that wasn't quite defined at the time, we were actually ahead of the broad market's consciousness (although obviously not in front of the change trigger itself). We had, again without knowing it, sailed quickly and effortlessly through the zone of denial—the period immediately following the change trigger in which many firms try to sell themselves on the idea that either change is not imminent or they are so terrific that change will leave them untouched and unbloodied.

But being ahead of the market often is a two-edged sword. On the positive side, the firm in the vanguard starts out with a big lead over the competition. But there is the countervailing danger that the new and highly innovative offering is too far ahead, that the market is not ready for it. Market intelligence is required to determine if the new product's time has come or if the market requires conditioning prior to launch.

We had been conducting this intelligence through our market research and our multidisciplinary analysis. And we determined it was a bit early to move with our new product (practice). So we held back while preparing ourselves for a timely move through two key preliminaries. One was training our people in the discipline. The other was preparing to communicate with the market so that a broad segment of the management population would be receptive to our ideas. These actions evolved into important steps in the change management process that are discussed in this book.

Much like Milton L. Rock, the Hay managing partner and visionary, had done years before in his landmark *Handbook of Wage and Salary Administration*, we had to educate managers and executives about the implications and effects of the corporate reward system. In this respect, my goal was to work with my colleagues to transform our reward practice into a multidisciplinary service that spread it into even farther reaches of the business organization. What was the new practice? The discipline that we now call change management.

As a result, the market response that we had defined as a pressing need in our organization had actually become a metaphor for our clients' needs. Our work had determined that our clients lacked a unified approach to change management, were not nimble enough to change as quickly as the market demanded, and, when change was instituted, had no commitment to aligning the four key functions (strategy, operations, culture, and reward). Change was unsuccessful because a vital function needed to effect the change was in conflict with the other key elements and, therefore, change was being impeded. Our studies also affirmed how many companies shrug off the impact of change by bogging themselves down in the zone of self-deception and how, conversely, as in our case, many companies rush to market too soon with a response that the market is not yet ready to receive.

As the change management practice was coming together, I left Hay and veered off for a literary sabbatical that included working with Milt Rock on the grandchild of

*Handbook of Wage and Salary Administration*, *The Compensation Handbook*, and other endeavors. Three years later, I jumped back into the world of change management.

I must candidly admit, however, that the concept of change management is so new and so extensive that I could not handle the book on my own. My major function has been to tie often disparate pieces together—a process that has included designing and shaping the change management model, described in Chapter 1—to incorporate the major elements as operating parts, to format the book to reflect the components of the model and the change management process, to select the experts who could authoritatively comment on the individual elements, and to serve as a traffic cop to ensure that all of the contributors directed their best efforts to affirming the critical need for corporate alignment.

To turn the concept of change management into a book that lives and breathes as it prods people to action, I enlisted Martin Sikora as coeditor to add the literary touch. Marty is a colleague from my days at MLR Publishing, which followed my time at Hay. He has been fully prepared to facilitate the growth of the seedling that has been sprouting during all these years. Marty and I share many of the same beliefs about business concepts, and he has worked on various change management perceptions as editor of the premiere professional publication, *Mergers & Acquisitions*, and of several other successful business books. Marty brings the journalist's perspective of time and motion to change management, which adds an extra dimension to the book since it is at the heart of our change management ideas.

In other moves to nourish the seedling, we enlisted experts who have worked with me on change management or were my colleagues to write separate chapters. Collectively, these contributors constitute an outstanding collection of change management professionals. But more importantly, each author was distinguished by his or her willingness literally to push the envelope, to downplay traditional change management approaches and demonstrate how the bold and the ultrainnovative were the right ways to deal with change triggers that demand bold and ultrainnovative responses.

Finally, I am grateful to the senior executives that I interviewed because they shared with me their firing line experiences in successful change management. They all have done the job, and have done it well, acquiring invaluable skills and perspectives. We are pleased to have incorporated their views and experiences into our description of the Change Management Model in Chapter 1. These people include the following: Leonard Abramson, president of U.S. Healthcare; Jeff Boetticher, president and CEO of Black Box Corporation; Gary Fernandes, senior vice president of Electronic Data Systems; Paul Grunder, former president of CPC's Corn Products; James L. "Rocky" Johnson, chairman emeritus and retired CEO of GTE Corp.; Donald E. Meads, chairman of Carver Associates and former chairman/CEO of Certainteed Corporation; Joseph Neubauer, chairman/CEO of ARA Services; Stanley Silverman, executive vice president and COO of PQ Corporation; and Wayne Smith, former Airco Gases CEO.

Thus, *The Change Management Handbook* has been years in the formation and it has taken a team effort to produce it. But this underscores the pervasiveness of change management in both practice and impact. We have gathered the latest thoughts, the best talents, and the utmost in experience to size up the problems and demonstrate how they can be eliminated; and we have described firm courses of successful action that will allow change-minded companies to reach the goals that were set at the very beginning.

Change management is a big job and, yes, often a messy undertaking. But it is a task that can be done by committed people willing to work together. We hope *The Change Management Handbook* can help change-struck organizations accomplish their goals.

**Lance A. Berger**

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