"Only the wisest and stupidest of men never change." Confucius

Introduction
Whenever an organization embarks on a change in the way it conducts business, resistance immediately arises among those who believe they may be impacted. "Why do we need to change?" is often the question. A change or an organizational transformation is not a process that is predictable. The adoption of change occurs in fits and starts, and it demands those involved to have a personal transformation.

There are two aspects of making an organizational change. The first aspect is the leadership of the change, which consists of the vision of the future, the passion for the change, modeling the required type of new behavior, and a description of the driving forces that are making the organizational change necessary. The more the driving changes are grounded in solid data and rationale, the more compelling the case will be to those who must participate in the change. Change Leadership focuses on the behavioral side of the change since it is the ongoing, constant, energizing force that maintains pressure and the motivation for the needed change. The goal of Change Leadership is to accelerate the pace of the desired change within an organization.

The second aspect of organizational change is the development of the change management process, which is the infrastructure that facilitates the change. This structure consists of tools, trainings, and techniques to keep the change effort on track. Training in the what and how of change is necessary so that the employees develop the willingness and the ability to make the needed change.

This paper focuses on the first aspect of organizational change, specifically the PDCA cycle for being a Change Leader. One timeless definition of a Change Leader is best summed up by Lao-Tsu (604 B.C) when he stated, "As for the best leaders, the people do not notice their existence. The next best, the people honor and praise. The next, the people fear; and the next, the people hate. When the best leader's work is done, the people say, "We did it ourselves!'" (Great Quotes on Leadership).

What is a Change Leader?
James Belasco and Ralph Stayer, in the Flight of the Buffalo (1994), summed up the Change Leader's constant struggle to overcome when they stated, "Change is hard because people overestimate the value of what they have—and underestimate the value of what they may gain by giving that up" (Changequotes).

How does a Change Leader confront this conundrum of overestimating and underestimating by employees? Change Leaders do this by constantly communicating a consistent and compelling vision for the need to change within the organization that generates excitement, enthusiasm, and commitment to the change process. Change Leaders dedicate the necessary resources to implement change initiatives, and they work to make others feel ownership of the change.

A Change Leader must be a consensus builder by pulling together key stakeholders, individuals, and resistance groups to enlist their support in the change initiative. In building such consensus the Change Leader must clearly communicate a compelling vision to those enlisted to change their direction, habits, and daily work activities. Additionally, the Change Leader must be realistic and describe the challenges and consequences that will occur if they do not make the change.

At all times the Change Leader must consistently be a personal role model and ambassador of the desired change that results in continuous improvement in organizational performance. To do this Change Leaders must have a relentless passion for the change they envision and the ability to nurture and engage others in the change enterprise. To do this they must be willing to display the new behaviors consistently, have keen instincts as to when to be adaptable as they move forward, and demonstrate the willingness and ability to learn new skills. They must have a constancy of purpose that is unwavering, and they must regularly articulate what the new culture must be, how the organization will behave in this new culture, and what the habits and daily activities will look like.

Example of a Change Leader Using the Process Above:
When one of the authors served as a state commissioner of health, he joined a health department with a long history of indifferent leadership and faced a current scandal. Moreover, the health department was perceived as ineffectual and lacked external support. The new commissioner, as Change Leader, had to demonstrate that his behavior was above reproach, and that he could orchestrate the transition to a vision of a respected, high-performing public agency. He was frequently tested, personally challenging his commitment to change, and whether he would truly “walk the talk.”

Change Leader PDCA Model
Dwight Eisenhower once stated, “Neither a wise man nor a brave man lies down on the tracks of history to wait for the train of the future to run over him”. Change Leaders know that they cannot wait and hope for a change but instead must visibly and passionately lead it. Change is not a spectator sport (it can be a contact sport!), and those desiring the change must constantly lead it. The PDCA Model for a Change Leader is shown in Figure 1. This model gives Change Leaders a process to follow to

(The PDCA Cycle for Change Leaders, continued on page 14)
help implement the organizational change they desire. The model is to think before speaking, to speak before acting, and after acting, to ensure the change holds.

This Change Leader PDCA model requires leaders to Plan content before they speak, Do deliver a consistent message at all times to the organization about the change, Check to see if what they are saying is inspiring the action required to make the change, and then Act to provide nurturing and attention to areas within the organization not moving forward as quickly as desired, and to ensure that the gains achieved are held.

When we Plan what we are going to say, we need to consider the following topics for any change initiative:

**Customers:**
- Who are our customers, and what do they think of our process?
- Do we know what our customers want and need?
- Are we delivering what they want and need?
- Are we satisfying our customer(s)?

**Process:**
- What is working and not working in our process?
- Is there a focus on process, data, perfection, customer, and information sharing?
- What processes have problems and why?

**Data:**
- Do we have the data or information we need to assess our processes?
- Do we have data about the problems in the processes?

**Improvement:**
- What are our improvement plans?
- What would it be like if they were perfect?
- What do we have to do to move things closer to perfect?

- Who would benefit from knowing what we know?

**Motivation:**
- How do we keep the organization motivated to make the change?
- What messages are best, and how often?
- Who is best to deliver the message to specific audiences?

When we Do speak as a Change Leader, we must make sure we are consciously focused on:
- Processes and not people
- Fixing processes and not people
- Asking questions to encourage thought about improvements, critical processes and tasks, and understanding our customer
- Why we must focus on the customer
- Customer satisfaction survey results and their impact on the organization
- Customers who are happy with the organization’s service and why
- Customers who are unhappy and why
- Talking to process owners when we have concerns, seeking their thoughts and ideas for change/improvement
- Talking to teams and individuals about what they are doing to make improvements
- Talking about the change we want to make and how we are proceeding—invite unfiltered feedback

- Talking about why we need data and how we will use it to guide our change efforts
- Avoid allowing perfection to become the enemy of “good.” Talking about change as a process and not perfection will help those attempting the change to understand they do not have to get it absolutely right the first time. Let the organization know that we will have failures. Leaders who overcome their fears and broadcast their feelings as they work through the messy internal growth process will be viewed more favorably by their followers. They also will legitimize their followers’ own growth journeys and will have higher-performing organizations (Humility)

A Change Leader needs to follow the 10-second rule before speaking. Make sure what you are going to say is consistent with what was developed in the Plan step. When speaking, believe what you say, and make it believable to those to whom you are saying it.

**Example of a Change Leader Using the Four Steps:**

When appointed as commissioner of health, one of the authors worked directly for a board of health. The board had anointed “tobacco” as public enemy number one and charged the new health commissioner with its eradication as a health threat to the state. Tobacco had a stranglehold on the legislature and enjoyed favorable relationships with key decision-makers, influence as strong as in many tobacco-growing states.
For the health commissioner as Change Leader to reduce the health threat posed by tobacco, true organizational change was required. Deploying the PDCA cycle in the form of Think, Speak, Act, and Care through multiple iterations, the public health impact of tobacco was reduced over a period of several years. Internal and external health department customers were approached with the pivotal messages for change, adjusted to the audience, but consistent in the urgency to alter the present tobacco dynamic. Acting included efforts to build constituencies dedicated to imposing new tobacco taxes and demanding clean indoor air laws in public places. The successful efforts required a multi-faceted strategy that evolved as the challenges to change altered their course.

A Change Leader needs to constantly be Checking to ensure that the desired change is taking place in the organization by:

- Acting the way you want others to act (modeling the behavior you seek)
- Maintaining the focus on the customer—internal and external
- Using the QI tools any chance you get
- Maintaining constancy of purpose
- Serving on teams and performing all the roles—sponsor, team leader, team member, and facilitator
- Collecting and displaying information throughout the organization on the performance of your processes
- Making thoughtful plans and following through on them
- Asking the team questions about their processes
- Actively listening to the answers to your questions
- Recognizing and rewarding those who are displaying the desired behavior
- Congratulating improvement teams on their successes
- Conducting process reviews that are both educational and supportive

If things are not changing at the pace desired, a Change Leader must Act by providing consistent and constant attention to:

- Carefully nurturing all staff involved in the change process
- Monitoring all areas of the organization to be certain they are on the right course
- Conducting meaningful reviews of any major change initiatives
- Seeking and finding those having difficulty with the change and providing them with the assistance needed to move forward.
- Consistently focusing on the Customer both internally and externally

**Observe and Listen**

While using the PDCA Cycle for a Change Leader, another dimension needs to be added as shown in Figure 2—observe and listen. Observing how the message is being received, translated, and understood by those you are trying to motivate is a key part of any change effort. You need to ask yourself as a Change Leader, "Is my message believable to those who are hearing it? Am I passionate enough about what I am delivering? Am I making a compelling case for change?" By observing and listening at each of the PDCA steps, you help answer these questions.

During the Think and Speak phase we should be looking for clues about what may be blocking the desired change. Some questions to be asking yourself include:

- What is the body language of the audience?
- What are the questions they want answered?
- Is there a tense atmosphere?
- What obstacles and resistances are being raised?
- Are they buying the message? Is it believable?
- Am I conveying that I believe it?
- Am I delivering it with the right amount of passion?

Answers to these questions should help frame the revised message for future audiences. The message of change needs to be revised to suit the audience it is being delivered to so that their resistance levels are reduced.

During the Speak and Act phase we should be looking for what has and has not changed and what we need to do to accelerate the desired change. Some questions to be asking yourself are during this phase are:

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(Listed PDCA Cycle for Change Leaders, continued on page 16)
Example of a Change Leader using Observe and Listen:

Leading organizational change that focused upon tobacco as a public health threat was an all-consuming and all-encompassing priority for the health commissioner. Immediate feedback to the commissioner was positive from perspectives of both internal and external customers. However, as the change process continued to unfold, staff with responsibilities unrelated to the tobacco wars became less engaged. They voiced their frustration about being left out of the most visible priority of the department. Observing and hearing their concerns allowed the health commissioner to refocus his message. The emphasis centered more on improving health threats to residents of the state and was able to incorporate the work energy of most health department employees. Over time, pride and morale swelled as the department visibly challenged the poor health status that had previously been perceived as inevitable.

Summary

"Faced with the choice between changing one's mind and proving there is no need to do so, almost everybody gets busy on the proof."—John Kenneth Galbraith

Most organizations do not change in response to what is on the horizon. Organizations change because they are forced into it, kicking and screaming, by the aggressiveness of their competitors, by the influence of political or fiscal changes, or by their customers' changing needs. Change is critical to the survival and sustainability of organizations. Unfortunately, all organizations have "antibodies" that resist change and challenges to their legacy. These antibodies drive out new ideas and people who are considered either odd or at odds with the organization's current existence. These antibodies strive to maintain the status quo at all costs (Bialek, Duffy & Moran, p. 91). A Change Leader needs to anticipate that there will be resistance to any proposed change and that following the Change Leader PDCA cycle will provide light as the alternative to heat in the change initiative.