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PROOF

Introduction

What happens in troubled times?

Every generation looks back to what it thought were less turbulent and troubled times. The 1980s look to many to have been a quiet, stable time marked certainly by a little, but not a lot of, change, division, and strife. During that period people even looked back to the 1960s, remembering only hippies and flower power and not Vietnam: the marches and the sit-ins. Even people in the peaceful 1950s looked back – while their world was threatened by the Korean war, the Suez Crisis, and decolonialization – to what they remembered as a golden, peaceful period of stability.

The past is always portrayed as more orderly, stable, and predictable than the present. This is as true in business as elsewhere. We seem very conscious of instability and changes in our current situation believing that we, *now*, live in especially turbulent times. The wish "May you live in interesting times" can easily be read as "Oh dear, we seem to be living in turbulent and troubled times."

Assuming that the speed of change is indeed increasing, and the world is becoming more difficult and complex, what does this mean for people at work? Does it mean a Darwinian shake-up with the fittest surviving? Does it mean a massive increase in work and life stress and all the associated problems that go with that? Does it provide powerful and important lessons for companies and managers in how to manage better?

Economic and organizational crises can lead to dramatic changes at work. Many activities cease. Some organizations freeze, then cut, budgets on things they think less essential. Favorite targets are recruitment and training, then advertising and marketing, and, if they have it, R&D. Making an error on easy cuts that turn out to be essential has cost many organizations dearly. Cost cutting leads not to recovery but demise.

When the chips are down senior executives fear "derisory" early retirement packages; communication of all sorts then changes. Some senior managers hide or go silent. The PR machine either goes into overdrive or is itself cut. The organization may suddenly become the focus of press interest which may not be welcome. Executives that once sought publicity now become "unable to comment." They are unable to talk about the crisis around them which could be, in part, of their own making. Soon there are announcements of general "belt tightening" policies. Pension schemes are closed, budgets slashed, people are not replaced.

Ordinary people – indeed, those at all levels – begin to get worried, even frightened. Many are concerned they will be made redundant and whether the organization will have a LIFO or FIFO policy (last in/first out or first in/first out). Many get concerned about wage freezes occurring alongside mortgage payment increases, as well as the sudden and difficult-to-manage increase in the cost of living. Those working on an hourly basis see a reduction in their hours. Senior executives fear their early retirement packages.

Those made redundant or even moved to a new position often experience a well known *shock cycle*. There are many version of this stage-wise, or cyclical, theory that is based on the death and dying literature. These different, but related, concepts or stages include:

- Shock stage: initial paralysis at hearing the bad news.
- Denial stage: trying to avoid the inevitable.
- Anger stage: frustrated outpouring of bottled-up emotion.
- Bargaining stage: seeking in vain for a way out.
- Depression stage: final realization of the inevitable.
- Testing stage: seeking realistic solutions.
- Acceptance stage: finally finding the way forward.

Other observers have opted for a simpler three-point construction:

- **N**umbness: mechanical functioning and social insulation.
- **D**isorganization: intensely painful feelings of loss.
- **R**eorganization: re-entry into a more "normal" social life.

Put in an organizational context the U-curved, shock cycle operates something like this:

1. First they suffer a classic *shock response*. This may be accompanied by strong emotions, some positive, others negative. The loss of routine, status, and income soon impinges, though some clearly enjoy the freedom that the change brings. Many appear immobilized, both physically and mentally. Others go into denial, talking about easily finding another job. Some attempt to minimize their trauma and grief – for that

is what it is. Many middle-aged executives are quite unprepared for this experience and are surprised by their own reactions.

2. Next there is the classic depression phase. This starts with pessimism and turns into lethargy. All the classic signs begin. Some people become almost agoraphobic, staying inside, sleeping a lot, and vacantly watching television to pass the time. They seem to lose pride in their appearance, suddenly age, and lose interest in their friends. It's partly associated with the same symptoms as reactive depression. However, initial inertia can become much more serious. Some relieve their state with drugs or alcohol, which can lead to dependency. It's grim, serious, but neither inevitable nor irrevocable.
3. A third phase is a *search for meaning*, although this process may occur right from the beginning. It's about trying to understand what has happened to them but, more importantly, why. The question becomes how to explain and who to blame for what is usually seen to be a calamity. Blame often shifts from the organizations to social forces and then to self-blame. Some people take a highly fatalistic response to their situation, but this usually prolongs the depression.
4. The fourth phase may involve a *testing of a new life*. This may mean the adoption of a new identity, new life-style and routine, and the acquisition of new skills. Often the loss of a job can threaten family relationships and cause major problems. Paradoxically, when people need social support the most they may often get it the least. The younger, better educated, more sociable, and able the person the easier it is for them to pull through the testing phase and reinvent themselves.
5. The final phase is adaptation and adjustment; but some never reach this phase alas. Often those who have changed jobs and organizations, or indeed their whole career, fare better because they have had the experience before. However, though they have done this voluntarily before, it is far less pleasing if it is *done to* them.

There are a number of caveats with the cycle or stage theory idea. It is not clear if people go through all the stages in a set order or whether they may skip some or get stuck in others. It is not certain what makes people "move on" from one stage to the next.

However, the concept of *vicious* and *virtuous cycles* is well known. The idea is that in bad times people get worried. Managers take their eye off the ball or retreat into crisis group meetings. Workers too, worry and may be ill, bad tempered, and pick fights with others. The ambiguity and the uncertainty is experienced almost exclusively as a threat. Threats lead to poor job focus and distraction which reduce productivity and bring in worsening results at what is already a bad time. This leads management to become anxious and possibly angry and to increase both of those negative emotions in their staff.

Virtuous cycles also occur in turbulent times. Here managers need constantly to "steady the ship." They can give confidence and energy to staff and seek to explore their fears and doubts. They can explain what has to be done and why, and they can model their own behavior accordingly.

The management essentials

The management of people is about five things. First, the *recruiting* of talented, productive, motivated people. Having done that one needs to *select* the best and reject the less able, motivated, or dedicated. Third, management must *engage* their heads and hearts so that they are maximally happy and productive. Fourth, there is the necessity of *developing* staff so that individuals are enabled to reach their full potential. Finally, managers need to know how, when, and why to let people go (to "exit" them) so that they leave with dignity and positive feelings about the organization.

People stay productive and loyal because of many things: their personality, values, and life situation; their available opportunities; and, but most frequently, because of the way they are managed. All the more important then that things are well managed. There are clearly things to do if trying to manage in turbulent times:

- Re-engage through frequent, consistent, and honest communication – such as lunchtime workshops.
- Lead from the front: strongly, boldly, and adventurously giving confidence to others.
- Learn from previous recessions: beware of cutting that which adds customer value, not going for big gestures – and so getting the little things right.
- Fix the leaks that soon appear when people leave or things are cut.
- Innovate: get creative with all the stakeholders.
- Change: sharpen your focus, streamline processes.
- Try to attract talent badly managed elsewhere: see this as an opportunity.
- Prepare for economic recovery which will (eventually) come.

Just as pessimists see the glass half empty so they see turbulent times predominantly as a threat: a threat to their stability, livelihood, and continued practices. Indeed, their perceptions may well be self-fulfilling with all those potential vicious cycles already discussed.

Optimists believe that changes mean opportunities. Complacent, monopolistic organizations that have not moved with the times often go under in bad times. These bad times can be Darwinian in the sense that they are periods when only the fittest survive.

Turbulent times test leaders. They can reveal hidden or obscured insights such as what really motivates people at work. They demand creativity, new thinking, and courage. History has shown us how wars, emergencies, and crises can bring out the best in people. When the chips are down, the best survive on their skill, innovativeness, and ability. It has been observed that peace is bad for the military because the sort of people that rise to the top tend to be conventional, change-averse, and unimaginative, whereas what one needs in war is people willing and able to embrace change and challenge conventions.

Turbulent times and change

We live, as all people have, in a time of great change. To be sure, at the beginning of the twenty-first century we are all in a time of great change with respect to how we structure and grow organizations. What will happen to low-tech jobs in the high-tech revolution? What will organizations look like in 20 years? Speculations on the future of organizations are many and varied, although there do seem to be some common threads.

Two themes seem consistent. The first is that organizations are getting *flatter*: this means there are fewer levels, less of a hierarchy. The second is that businesses are trying to *integrate* their functions better to achieve "joined-up" processes that reduce waste and help competitiveness.

There are many forces for organizational change which include:

- Rapid changes in *technology*, nearly always associated with the microchip revolution, robots, virtual reality, the web, and biotechnology. Rapid product obsolescence must occur.
- *Economic shocks* associated with such things as oil crises, the stock market crash, and the sudden inflation characteristic of the age of discontinuity.

- *Social trends* associated with demographic trends and social attitudes toward relationships, materialism, and religious beliefs.
- *Global political* changes, such as the rise of Asian countries and the "change of power."
- Economic *competition* from new and different sources.

The general economy, the habits of customers, the stability of supplies, the enthusiasm of competitors, and some sociopolitical forces can all lead to significant change in business life. But perhaps the most important is, inevitably, rapid and profound changes in technology, as well as concerns about resource dependency. Technology has changed not only production but communication and has led to sudden, dramatic globalization of products, markets, and the workforce.

Forces of weak change require *proactive change*; forces of moderate change require *reactive change*, and forces of strong change demand *rapid change*. Those more "closed to change" provide reactions such as a change in leadership, organizational tinkering, or downsizing/restructuring. Those more open to change try process re-engineering and restructuring middle management to give them more autonomy. Those most open to change are more experimental and radical.

It is certainly true that the business environment is becoming more uncertain because of simultaneous increases in complexity of operation and the increased rate of change. Many forecasters believe that organizations will become "virtual corporations" characterized by small, dynamic, temporary, networked alliances. The new organization will electronically network all sorts of groups aiming to provide excellent services as they are needed. It is uncertain whether these new "organizations" will improve the quality of working life, which can be defined in terms of such things as participation, trust, reward, and responsiveness.

Workers have to be more flexible, multiskilled, and quick to react. Technology has destroyed old jobs and created new ones. Many jobs have become automated. Many big corporate giants have been split up in an attempt to create more adaptive, flexible, creative, customer-sensitive businesses. Most organizations seek that perfect combination of lean production, high performance structures, and processes that minimize cost and maximize revenue. Hence the vogue for business process re-engineering, or whatever it has been relabeled as, which attempted to redesign processes which cut across functions and departments, that pushed decision-making down organizations and that maximized the use of information technology. This aimed at quick-response production.

Huge and rapid changes mean a knowledge explosion, product obsolescence, and new patterns of working, environmental changes associated with greater competition, more sophisticated consumer demand, changes in the availability of certain resources, and national and international political changes. No organization can resist these changes. What is clearly desirable is adaptable and adaptive organizations, and flexible employees and management.

Change can be both continuous and discontinuous. It can be minor fine-tuning change or major dramatic change. It is usually aimed at making organizational processes, structures, and strategy more profitable, streamlined, and adaptive. Looking critically at the adaptiveness of the organizational structure as a strategic response to environment, uncertainty is now much more common. Restructuring by downsizing the original structure or adopting a different (e.g. matrix) structure are common forms of strategic response to the increasing uncertainty. There are many other forms of strategic response. These include *vertical integration* (attempting to take formal control of all sources of supply and distribution), *mergers and acquisitions* (by acquiring competitors, increasing economies of scale or by diversifying to reduce resource dependence on a particular segment of the environment), *strategic alliances* (which are active cooperative relationships between legally separate organizations, including competitors, suppliers, customers, or even trade unions), and *interlocking directorates* (where people serve as directors on more than one management board and bring their knowledge and expertise to both). But then there are forced responses to dramatic changes.

The uptake of innovation

Individuals and organizations differ in the speed (and willingness) at which they take up innovation. This is something that is very important for surviving turbulent times. Everett Rogers, over 30 years ago, wrote extensively about this topic and identified five typical (personal) reactions which could easily be applied to organizations.

The first are the *innovators*. These are individuals who are always seeking to try out new ideas or equipment. They come in many shapes and forms: the eccentric, genius inventor, childlike adults who enjoy the electronic toys of their youth, socially inadequate technophiles who prefer computers to people. They may scour the pages of specialist magazines for new equipment or may even try building it themselves. They had CDs, computers, microwave ovens, and faxes long before most people even knew what they were. They prefer to surf the Internet than play in the surf. Some can be innovation junkies who go for anything new and different regardless of its quality, usefulness, or design. Others like to improve on current ideas and techniques. Innovators don't fear change, they thrive on it. All crises are opportunities. They can be a bit wacky but often anticipate change well.

The next group are the *early adopters*. These people take little or no persuasion and are among the first of the population to take on the innovation. They are at the beginning of the steep climb of the S-curve. All they have to be told is that there is new equipment that is faster, smarter, or more elegant than theirs and they want it. Early adopters are ideal types for the advertiser because one mention of the product is sufficient to spur them to buy. They watch what others do and wisely copy their good ideas.

As the diffusion of innovation occurs and the new phenomenon becomes recognized, the *early majority* begin to take an interest. They need to be sold the idea, persuaded to buy. A little skeptical and a little cautious, the early majority are good candidates for adopting innovation, but they need some convincing. This is the midpoint on the diffusion curve and includes the bulk of the population. The product or the idea appears in the media and in shops more widely than before and it seems to be everywhere. They are front runners in the change business.

The *late majority* need the hard sell. Skepticism turns to cynicism when they are faced with innovation, and they frequently demand that its benefits are proved to them. They may once have bought some new idea or product that proved to be pretty useless or cumbersome, and they have not forgotten it. Some argue that the later ones adopt the innovation when it becomes cheaper and more reliable.

Finally, at the top of the curve, is the *laggard*. Like dinosaurs they can wake up to change only when it is too late. Laggards come in very different forms but share a common reaction to innovation. There is the technophobe, terrified of anything not simple and mechanical. They share a fear of, and hostility to, innovation. For employers and legislators, the only way to make them comply is to change the rules. You have to ban or physically remove old equipment or make laws (for instance about seat belts or gas appliances) to achieve compliance. There are few easy ways to persuade the laggard, and advertising of product benefits is a waste of time for this group.

The problem of the diffusion of innovation for the manufacturer is threefold. First, they have to segment their market and be able to identify the demographic, geographic, and psychographic correlates of the five different types mentioned above. Second, they have either to change their marketing strategy as the population moves up the S-curve or target it quite specifically to the different groups. But the third problem is the greatest of all: what to do when even the laggards have adopted the innovation. The only solution is to find a new product, a new idea, or a new approach and start all over again.

The problem for the organization is the intuitive style of the manager. How quickly, happily, and easily do managers embrace change. Innovation is not only about gadgets and technology. It is also about processes and procedures. It can be about organizational structure and training, about selection and customer relations – indeed, about every aspect of the organization.

Organizational change

Rapid changes in technology, markets, and the world economy have meant that organizations have been forced to change dramatically, not only in what they do but how they do it. This happens all the more in turbulent times. There have been substantial shifts in supply and demand. Changes have taken place in working practices, processes, design, and materials management. In the private sector there have been changes in the desirability (fashion) for particular products and services; changes in product price; changes in market size; changes in promotion awareness and availability; changes in the distribution of goods and service; changes in field support from suppliers; and changes in labor and operating costs.

The targets of change are frequently the organizational structure, the technology, and the people. There are often both internal and external pressures for change. Organizations such as the Franciscans (cf. the famous prayer of St Francis) must have the *courage* to change the things they can change, the *tolerance* and adaptability to leave unchanged the things they cannot change, and the *wisdom* to know the difference. Many hope to be adaptive and flexible. A major determinant is attitude to risk. One objective is to eliminate the typical structure in favor of an ever-changing network of teams, projects, alliances, and coalitions, which adapt appropriately to internal and external forces. Organizations cannot change everything. They can, with difficulty, persistence, and determination, change their goals and strategies, technology, structure, and people, ideally to suit the times they work in.

It is useful to distinguish between planned, intentional, goal-oriented change and that which inevitably occurs. Change may be at different levels and applied to structure, technology, and products, as well as individual behavior. Perhaps the four most common pressures for change are:

- *Globalization*: there is an increasing global market for products, but, in order to compete effectively in it, many organizations have to change their culture, structure, and operations.
- *Changing technology*: the rapid expansion of information systems technology, computer-integrated manufacturing, virtual reality technology, and robots; the remarkable change in the speed, power, and cost of various operations.
- *Rapid product obsolescence*: the shortened life cycle of products occurs because of innovations, which thus leads to the necessity to shorten production lead times. Hence, organizations have to adapt quickly and constantly to new information and facilitate transitions to new forms of operations.
- *Changing nature of the workforce*: depending on the demographic nature of the country, there are many important and noticeable changes.

Tactics for change can be described in various dimensions: quick versus slow, unilateral versus participative, planned versus evolving, and aiming to eliminate resistance versus pacification. The choice of strategy inevitably depends on many things, including the importance of the required change, the distribution of power in the organization, the management culture and style, as well as the perceived strength and source of the resistant forces.

Individuals don't change themselves; they are changed by others. They tend to be more accepting of change when:

- It is understood.
- It does not overly or unreasonably threaten security.
- Those affected have helped to create the new systems or procedures.
- It follows other successful changes.
- It genuinely reduces a work burden or offers real security or organizational longevity.

- The outcome is "reasonably" certain.
- The implementation has been mutually planned by those affected by it.
- Top management support is strongly evident.

The problem is that it is very rare that people tick more than a third of the above criteria. Change involves the unfreezing of old ways, the establishing of new ways, and the refreezing of these into a normative pattern. When does change occur and when not? Whether or not an organizational change will be made depends on members' beliefs regarding the relative benefits and costs of making the change.

Factors associated with organizational change

Some factors make organizations ripe for, and amenable to, change, but render others much more difficult to change in fundamental ways. Although these factors may include wider macroeconomic reasons (such as increased competition from developing countries), legal changes (protecting certain groups or markets or prohibiting products), or sociological changes (in attitudes to particular issues), it is simplest to divide these into various organizational and personal characteristics. There is nothing like a sudden economic crisis to necessitate real, immediate, and dramatic organizational change.

Organizational factors

- *Centralization of decision-making*. Where decisional prerogatives are concentrated at the highest levels of the organization, there is a natural tendency for those in authority to try to maintain and protect their position of power and to resist change. The likelihood of change in organizations depends significantly on the personality characteristics of the person(s) at the top. In the hands of progressive and dynamic leaders, organizations tend to be fairly flexible and adaptable. Radical individual leaders can also change large organizations, but centralization is usually a result of, and a contributor to, anti-change bureaucracy.
- *Organizational hierarchy*. Tall organizations with high degrees of differentiation in terms of social status, administrative position, and compensation levels tend to exhibit less change than do organizations with flat structures. People who are high up on the administrative ladder

are typically insulated from operational problems that may require change. They have also spent a long time getting there and feel they deserve their current status. Such organizations tend to be unresponsive to changing forces within, and sometimes outside, the organization. This may account for the current enthusiasm for delayering and downsizing middle-management jobs, although there is now much doubt about the wisdom of downsizing. However, in times of organizational crisis it is often their heads that roll.

- *Degree of formalization*. The greater the extent to which organizational activities are governed by formal rules and procedures, the less flexible the organization and the less likely it is to respond readily to external changes. Local, national, and international laws and customs may well inhibit change. By contrast legal changes can really provoke considerable organizational change.
- *Degree of professionalization*. The degree of professionalization of organizational members is understandably high in such organizations as law offices, medical clinics, and engineering firms, and comparatively low in most mass-production manufacturing companies. Professionals tend to favor continuous adaptation to changing technologies, and therefore exert a slow but positive influence on organizational change. Many are independently minded and can cause much internal disagreement. Thus, advertising and engineering firms tend to be more given to change than are law firms and financial institutions, which tend to be more tradition bound, partly because of the speed and nature of change in the profession.
- *Complexity*. Organizations that undertake wide-ranging tasks or produce multiple products usually perceive a greater need for change than do organizations with simple structures and processes. Complex systems interact with many segments of the external environment, and the adaptive process therefore requires more frequent organizational changes. Furthermore, they assume the habit of change more easily. But product and process complexity of operation and structure can certainly mitigate against speed and ease of change, particularly if they are heavily regulated.
- *Organizational size*. Small organizations tend to be less formal and less differentiated and therefore more flexible. Moreover, they typically have fewer resources committed to specific activities or processes, and therefore incur relatively few sunk costs of change compared to large organizations.

- *Age of the organization*. The older the organization, typically the greater the degree of formalization and standardization of procedures, and therefore the less flexible. They often have more formal and established commitments to their external environments (in the form of contracts or working arrangements with trade unions, suppliers, competitors, regulatory agencies, and other entities with which they regularly interact), thereby limiting their opportunities for change somewhat. They may have accumulated the experience necessary to cope with change more effectively. Indeed, it may be that, being in an old organization (staying alive in the business world), one has to be change oriented.

Personal characteristics

- *Age*. Normally, younger people are more inclined to initiate and accept change than are older ones because they tend to be less risk-averse and are more willing to try out new things. More importantly, young people have little to lose from change, while older members of organizations tend to be more set in their ways, have much stake in the status quo, and therefore tend to be more wary about change. Along with chronological age is cultural *deference to age*, which may inhibit change. To the extent that older more conservative people occupy leadership roles in organizations, and to the extent that organizational members acquiesce with or despise them, organizational change may be slow in coming. A company's age profile may give some indication as to its attitude to change, and more particularly the age profile of its decision-makers.
- *Training and education*. Well trained and better-educated people tend to be more progressive in outlook and have a better appreciation of the need for the most appropriate time to set in motion effective strategies of change. They can be aware of the potential impact of change on the organization and have a clear understanding of the cost of implementing change. They base their judgments more on facts and analysis than on personal values and sentiments, and usually have more confidence in their ability to learn new skills. Being young, bright, and articulate means being able to deal with change.
- *Rank*. People of rank and status at the upper reaches of the administrative hierarchy, along with those who wield power and authority, tend to be resistant in adopting change, for fear of losing their power and resulting rewards. Yet, the successful implementation of change in organizations requires the active involvement and support of the people

who make the major decisions in the organization. For good or bad, organizational managers play a key role in the change process.
- *Values and beliefs*. Certain values, such as conservatism, tradition, and order may be expected to relate quite specifically to attitudes to, and indeed phobias about, change.
- *Management courage*. To be successful organizational change takes courage. Successful change-oriented managers need three types of courage: the courage to accept failure when their efforts at change fail for whatever reason; the interpersonal courage to confront poor performers and where necessary deliver bad news; and the moral courage to uphold ethical and moral decisions and eliminate various forms of corruption and counter-productive behavior.

Quite simply habit, fear, the need for security, self-interest, a different assessment of the situation, and a natural conservatism often drive people to resist change. But it may be that attitudes to change are culture and sector dependent. Consider the following four questions and the extent to which they are culturally determined:

- Do people believe that change is possible (let alone desirable)? Some fatalistic cultures may not believe it as strongly as those infused with instrumentalist beliefs. That is, for some, change is instituted externally and one must wait patiently for it to happen.
- If change is possible, how long will it take and when will it seem necessary to change again? This relates to cultural differences in reactions to time.
- Do some cultures resist more than others? This may be determined by how much a culture values tradition and is past, as opposed to future, oriented.
- Do cultures influence *how* changes can or should be implemented? This refers to top-down autocratic versus bottom-up democratic attitudes to change.

In some countries change is managed at the organizational level through restructuring, the introduction of new reward systems, and attempts to change the corporate culture. Other interventions may be based on technology, job design, and concerns about sociotechnical systems. Finally, some organizations prefer to focus on the individual through such things as sensitivity training, feedback, and personal performance and team-building.

Characteristics of the change situation

- *Cost*. Other things being equal, the higher the costs associated with a particular change proposal, the less likely that it will be put into effect. Cost is a major consideration in the installation of a computer-based management information system, or in the expansion of plant capacity. But once cost–benefit calculations are done, over a particular time period even the highest-cost program may look reasonable if not essential. Ultimately, the cost of not changing may be higher than the cost of change, although this calculation is difficult, speculative, and often avoided. And in bad times the cost of things is the best predictor of whether it is cut, downsized, or removed.
- *Riskiness*. The resource requirements and ultimate results of a change proposal are often difficult to ascertain well in advance. As a rule, the less certainty surrounding a particular change, the less likely that it will be considered. People and organizations are all risk-averse in varying degrees. The "no-pain-no-gain" philosophy has made more organizations less overtly risk-averse, but once they have introduced a costly and unsuccessful change, the experience of "having their fingers burnt" makes them very cautious.
- *Adaptability*. Changes that are irreversible, or those which are difficult to modify once started, stand less chance of being adopted than changes that are easily adaptable. Adaptability is easier than innovation. Some have a period when the "dual system operates," tending to favor adaptation, whereas sudden change favors innovation. Many argue that adaptability is an enemy of change because it allows those who resist change never fully to come to grips with changed circumstances.

Certain aspects of the change itself affect the likelihood of its being proposed and the chances of its successful implementation. Some of these are objective and can be reasonably well managed, whereas others are based more on perceptions and attitude.

- *Magnitude of the change*. Changes that require substantial time and resources to implement, and those that result in major transformation of organizational structure and processes, are of course more difficult to adopt than those that entail little effort and few resources, or have minimal impact on organizational life. Moreover, the larger the size of the change, the greater the degree of risk associated with it. In this sense, all these factors listed above are interrelated.

- *Type of change*. Administrative changes are those that alter positions, responsibilities, reporting relationships, and compensation, whereas technological changes are those that affect the process by which inputs are transformed into outputs. These two types of change are, typically, implemented through different procedures. Administrative changes are typically initiated and enforced by the organization's top decision-makers, and technical changes are conceived and implemented by its technical, professional, and operational staff. They elicit more objections and controversy than do technological changes, and are therefore more difficult to implement.

Reactions to change

Inevitably, organizations are most concerned with resistance to change, which will be manifest in everything from strikes and sabotage, to a drop in motivation and morale, to no participation in, and commitment to, change initiatives. There is both individual resistance and organizational resistance for a variety of well known and anticipatory reasons.

Organizational change causes powerful emotions, from a sense of liberation to depression and humiliation. People's support of, or resistance to, change depends heavily on how they answer the following questions: Will this change cause me to gain or lose something of value? Do I understand the nature of this change? Do I trust the initiators of this change? Do I agree with the advisability of this change? Given my personality, personal values, and attitudes, how do I feel about this change?

How they answer these questions may lead to various responses:

- *Quitting*. The most extreme reaction an employee shows to a change is to leave the organization. For example, following the introduction of a major organizational change, such as a merger or a transfer in job assignment, many workers leave because they believe the change is so difficult to accept that staying would be intolerable. Sometimes organization members depart even if the change is a good one, because they find it personally difficult to cope with the change. Early retirement is a convenient and acceptable way to "let people go" who are unhappy with organizational change. Although leaving an organization may be the most extreme reaction to change, it is not necessarily the most damaging one to the organization. Indeed, things probably proceed more smoothly if the most adamant opponents of a change leave rather than stay to fight it.

- *Active resistance*. Workers who actively resist a change may try either to prevent it from occurring or to modify its nature. At its extreme, active resistance sends the message "No, I will not do this." Active resistance often goes beyond personal defiance and includes attempts to encourage others to resist the change. Many organizational changes have been scuttled by active employee resistance. A strike is a good example of group-oriented active resistance.
- *Opposition*. Somewhat less extreme than active resistance is behavior that can be labeled "oppositional." Usually, somewhat passive in nature, oppositional behavior might result in no more than simple "foot dragging" to delay implementation or to bring about a scaled-down version of a proposed change. Opposition is a tactic commonly used by those who control resources that are necessary for the change to be made. By withholding essential resources, people can slow or modify a change quietly without having to make their dislike for the change known actively or aggressively.
- *Acquiescence*. Opposition reactions tend to occur when those affected dislike a change and engage in passive resistance to delay or modify it. Sometimes, however, those opposed to a change feel powerless to prevent or alter it and they allow the change to occur without interference. This acquiescence to an unwanted change may arise from an impending sense of its inevitability – like death or taxes. People put up with the inevitable as best they can, shrugging their shoulders, gritting their teeth, and steeling themselves to face the inevitable. They hardly welcome the change but understand its inevitability. This is sometimes manifest as passive aggressive behavior.
- *Acceptance/modification*. Employers who demonstrate an acceptance/modification response accept a change to a certain extent but have some reservations about it. For example, suppose a manager has been told that her employer intends to move the company's headquarters to the provinces or to another European capital to save on costs. A person may support the idea of moving operations because local taxes and other restrictive ordinances are hurting the company's ability to compete in the marketplace. On the other hand, she is worried that the change may alienate many of its major customers and adversely affect its supply and delivery systems. At a personal level, she would rather not move her

family too far from friends and relatives. One option available is to try to persuade her employer that there are sound reasons for finding a different site in the same country. Acceptance/modification responses to change usually can be characterized as bargaining over details (albeit, perhaps, important ones), rather than over principles.

- *Acceptance*. This type of reaction is likely when people are either indifferent toward the change (that is, they do not *dislike* it), or they agree with it. Acceptance reactions to change are characterized by passive support. If asked whether they like the change, for example, workers might agree that they do – but they are unlikely to volunteer such information. If asked to participate in the change, they will cooperate – but they probably will not initiate participation. They may see change as inevitable or that their jobs ultimately depend on it.
- *Active support*. Some organization members choose to engage actively in behaviors that increase the change's chances of success. Active supporters often initiate conversations, explaining why they support the change and think it is a good idea. They embrace, welcome, and even rejoice in change. They are for managers fine examples of people they really like and need.

Resistance to innovation and change occurs for different reasons. Managers may consciously or unconsciously resist the relearning and adaptation process that is part and parcel of change. It is true that people tend to become satisfied with the status quo. Insecurity develops when changes occur. Sometimes this insecurity is caused by economic factors, such as those of 2009. Lower-level workers fear that automation will result in unemployment. Higher-level employees might view change as a threat to their status and eventually to their economic well-being. For example, doctors might resist the professional acceptance of paramedical personnel for fear that the increased volume of work paramedics could handle would reduce the amount of work performed by physicians.

The following is a checklist of factors that account for why people don't change, even though it may be in their best interests:

- *Because of ignorance*. Often, concerned individuals are simply not aware of the changes taking place. Manufacturers may continue to use a certain production process because they are unaware of a better method. People ignore foreign competition or turn a blind eye to management incompetence or corruption.

- *By default*. Sometimes people may reject a change, even though they are aware of another better technique, with little justification except a desire not to learn to use a new method.
- *Because of social reasons*. A manager may refuse to change because of a rationalization that the people within, and society outside, the organization will not accept it.
- *Because of interpersonal relations*. Because friends and even competitors have not accepted the change or are threatened by it.
- *Through substitution*. Another process or technique is selected in favor of the proposed change, because it seems easier, safer, and less threatening.
- *Because of experience*. People reject a change when they try it but do not like it, or do it badly, wrongly, or half-heartedly, thus self-fulfilling their prophesies.
- *Through incorrect logic*. People may reject a change on supposedly "logical" grounds without having well-founded reasons. Collective rationalization is strong when passion is involved.

In short, people resist change through habit and the inconvenience of having to do things differently. Fearing the unknown, insecurity, or indeed economic implications (having to work harder) are main causes of individuals resisting change. All organizations can initially be considered as being in a state of equilibrium due to a consequence of various forces, some pushing for change and others resisting it. One technique for overcoming the resistance to change is "Force Field Analysis." Here an attempt is made to identify all the salient forces for and against change and then to identify those that seem controllable. Once the most important controllable forces are isolated, they can at least be worked on. First, *unfreeze* the organization by reducing the forces that hold the behavior in the organization as stable; next, *change structures and procedures*; then, *refreeze* by stabilizing the organization in a new state of equilibrium.

The power structure is targeting by attempting to influence the appointed/formal and unappointed/informal leaders: the 'keepers of the corporate culture.' Furnham (2005) has identified seven organizational change strategies that senior managers often use to change organizational culture. Various points about these need to be made. First, the choice of strategy is partly a function of the culture of the organization and partly a function of the personality and values of the change agents. Second, it is both possible and likely that organizations will try more than one strategy, either at the same time or sequentially. Third, there will perhaps be other preferred strategies not specified here. Fourth, it is difficult to assert confidently and with empirical support that one or more strategy is clearly more successful than others. Fifth, whatever strategy or strategies are employed it takes sustained effort, concentration, and pressure to bring about the change. Here are the strategies:

- *The fellowship strategy*. The fellowship strategy relies heavily on interpersonal relations, using seminars, dinners, and events to announce and discuss what needs to be changed and how. People at all levels are listened to, ideally treated equally, and conflicting opinions and anxieties are expressed. This "warm and fuzzy" approach emphasizes personal commitment over ideas. However, the process may have serious problems getting under way, if at all. Because this strategy is averse to conflict, it can miss crucial issues and waste time. It rarely succeeds in changing culture alone.
- *The political strategy*. This strategy seeks to identify and persuade those most respected and who have large constituencies and therefore shape the culture. Political strategies flatter, bargain, and compromise to achieve their ends, which is usually the introduction of new methods that reflect different values. But this de-establishes the organization because of continuing shifts in people's political stances. Maintaining credibility can be difficult because the strategy is often devious and paradoxically often is the very opposite of the values that the new company is proposing in the new culture.
- *The economic strategy*. This strategy asserts that money is the best persuader for changing values and behavior. Everyone has a price: a serious increase or decrease in money will change behavior into that which reflects the values of the new culture. This is the approach that assumes people act more or less logically, but that their logic is based on entirely economic motives. However, "buying people off" can be costly and the effects short term. The strategy also ignores emotional issues and all questions other than the bottom-line profit. It too often is a strategy at odds with the new desirable cultural values of the organization.
- *The academic strategy*. The academic strategy assumes that if you present people with enough information and the correct facts, they will accept the need to change and understand how to do it. The academic strategist commissions studies and reports from employees, experts, and consultants. Although such strategists are happy to share their

findings, it is difficult to mobilize energy and resources *after* the analysis phase. "Analysis paralysis" often results because the study phase lasts too long and the results and recommendations are often out of date when they are published. Also, most managers do not really know what they should do, to whom, how, or when. Many people often feel left out and ignored by the consultant academic.

- *The engineering strategy*. This technocratic approach assumes that, if the physical nature of a job is changed, enough people will be forced to change. It is the approach of process re-engineering, with a strong emphasis on the structural aspects of jobs: what people do, and how and why they do it, and what the realistic alternatives are. A major channel of communication can prompt structural change, but fails to commit most people. Technology changes how, when, and why people communicate. It determines the speed and the cost of jobs. Such change can also break up happy and efficient teams. The strategy is limited because only high-level managers can really understand it; it is impersonal; and it ignores the question: 'What is in it for me?' It can work well once those who can't change leave.
- *The military strategy*. The military strategy is reliant on brute force. The emphasis is on learning to use the weapons for fighting the law, the union, and the media. Physical strength and agility are required and following the plan is rewarded. But the change-enforcer cannot relax, in case the imposed change disappears. Furthermore, force is met by force and the result is ever-escalating violence. It only ever works when organizations are in real crisis and seriously struggling to survive.
- *The confrontational strategy*. This strategy asserts that, if you can arouse and then mobilize anger in people to confront the problem, they will change. Much depends on the strategists' ability to argue the points, as well as being able to stir up emotions without promoting violence – and control them. This approach encourages people to confront problems they would prefer not to address, but it tends to focus too much on the problems and not on the solution. Anger and conflict tend to polarize and can cause a backlash.

Sense and sensibility in troubled times

Most of us like to believe both that we are blessed with a good deal of common sense (whatever that may be) and that as regards to many areas of life, but especially business, we are able to differentiate consistently and clearly sense from nonsense. This is blatantly not true. Tricksters, snake-oil salesman, and others thrive on the fact that our hopes overpower our head, that our emotions overpower a rational examination of the facts.

There are various subtly different meanings to the word "nonsense." It can mean statements that convey no intelligent ideas, such as "absurd," "foolish," and "illogical." It can also refer to ideas or concepts of little or no importance, such as "trivial", "irrelevant," and "pointless." And of course, it is a word used interjectionally to express forceful disagreement.

"Nonsense" is effectively similar to "insensible," the strict antonym for "sense." "Insensible" means speaking or behaving in an absurd, fatuous, foolish, or silly way.

There are many shades to the concept of "sense":

- Conscious awareness.
- Capacity for appreciation and discernment.
- Intelligence or an ability to put the mind to effective use.
- Agreement with sound judgment.
- Practical intelligence.

Sensible people are judicious and reasonable. Sensible people are discerning and refined. Their senses pick up the issues (as feelings, thoughts) and they apply sound reasons to this data. They are sensitive in the cognitive rather than the affective sense. That is, they are perceptive but not easily hurt or provoked emotionally.

Keeping cool under fire, being emotionally stable, and putting into practice sensible policies should be the best way to steer a path through the choppy seas of recession. Some of these essays speak of the issues of turbulent times. Others speak of the general vicissitudes of life and the difficulties of being a manager in the workplace.

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Who learns what from coaching?

Is there a paradox at the heart of adult executive coaching? Those who need it most, benefit from it least. The central question is why they haven't acquired the skills, awareness, or coping strategies in the first place. Why do they need to be coached, while others don't? Or is it, as the aggressive salesperson may put it, that we all need coaching?

The literature on intelligence at work is clear. Intelligence (or whatever "disguised concept" or term one want to use: cognitive ability, problem-solving capacity, business smarts) is the most powerful individual difference predictor of success at work. This means more than any other factor such as charm, educational background, or personality.

Further, and this is crucial, higher intelligence reflects higher trainability. In this sense, training increases rather than decreases differences among employees, because the brighter ones gain more and gain it more efficiently, effectively, and therefore more cheaply.

Is training and/or coaching a punishment or reward? What, indeed, is the difference? Partly cost: the staff–student ratio is quite different between the two. Training can be pile them high, sell them cheap, ten delegates to one tutor. Whereas coaching is usually a one-to-one business. Training is usually more circumscribed in time boundaries and aims. It is more specific about knowledge or skills acquisition. It's simply more didactic.

Some organizations seriously believe in training. But usually, people at the same level or experience are "sheep dipped" according to one formula. Training is mandatory: everyone is required to attend a course. Learning something, however, is optional.

More and more organizations are attempting to identify high-flyers – the really talented. As a result, organizations and in particular their HR departments become obsessed with the recruitment, selection, and retention of those perceived to be talented. But what of those who do not fit or fall into this happy group? Are they talent-less, talent-free, or talent developable? And that is the rub: can you develop talent that isn't immediately there?

In some organizations training is a punishment. If you are sent on a course it means essentially that you failed at some task. You gave a disastrous presentation, so you are sent on a presentation skills course. You have a bullying charge, so you are sent on anger management or interpersonal skills development. In this sense, training is remedial. The weak receive it: the strong don't need it.

Bright people learn faster and better. To train or coach the intellectual high-flyers, therefore, increases the blue water between the top and the average. The good get better, the average stay that way.

So is coaching a good investment? The question of course is what exactly occurs in the process of coaching? What is its fundamental aim? Is it really providing a stressed and lonely senior executive with a reassuring confidant who can be used to test ideas? Or is it a form of education? And how is it different from mentoring?

To have wise counsel is always desirable: a board of trustees or perhaps non-executive directors. To have help in analytic matters is crucial. That may mean expensive consultants. To have a person listen to one's woes is pretty crucial: those are called partners, friends, and family.

So what role do coaches play? And if they are so crucial, why did we not have them years ago? Or did we just call them something different then? Many managers like the idea of a trophy coach. Don't say consultant, or counselor, or clinician, or confessor. Worse still are the T-words: therapist, trainer, teacher, tutor. But we probably need a new word for this befriending and mentoring activity. Ask a senior executive to name the person who knows them best, who tells them the truth, and whose judgment they really trust. Only partly in jest, many will say their wife (husband, partner).

One of the oddest paradoxes of all is that those who reach the top have a profile that makes them pretty well uncoachable. Bold, self-confident executives are both unlikely to say they want a coach, or to benefit from coaching. While those who do enjoy and respond to coaching may never make it to the top.

Work–life ethics

The work–life balance (WLB) debate and discussion is not new news. Some men see it almost exclusively as either a women's issue or an indicator of not being really serious about your job. You have to give your all to the organization. And some prefer a spot of overtime to tedious, humiliating, domestic chores.

Others not only claim that work–life balance encourages just that – balance – as an indicator of mental and physical health, but also that it makes good business sense. The evidence, they maintain, is that organizations that have a healthy WLB policy make more money, have happier staff, and are more attractive to applicants.

Whatever: the wrangling continues. But a rather interesting and unclear consequence of this debate concerns whether organizations and interviewers could, should, or might inquire about the private lives of employees and applicants. Is it OK to find out about marital status, children, or living circumstances? Many say no – none of your business. But it seems OK to inquire about your hobbies, leisure pursuits, and out-of-work passions.

And what about your ethics? Organizations often, possibly hypocritically, make a really big thing about their ethical status, their integrity, and their moral stance. Many put the prefix "ethical" in front of their product or process. So we have ethical banking and investing. And some, dare one say almost exclusively for commercial reasons, boast all sorts of things with an ethical, moralistic air. The tea is "fair trade," the cosmetics have not been tested on animals, no child labor has been involved in garment production.

Some organizations are more eager than others to occupy the high moral ground. Usually it's those whose products and processes have been challenged on ethical considerations.

And witness the sudden rise of business school courses in business ethics, thought by some to be a hilarious oxymoron akin to empathic tax inspectors or emotionally intelligent actuaries. Free marketeers cannot abide all the cant they associate with earlier fads for social responsibility, *noblesse oblige*, and stewardship hype. The purpose of business is to provide products and services in free and open competition, without deception or fraud. Their business is maximizing profit for stakeholders, not social engineering.

But the pendulum has definitely swung the other way. Dodgy dealing in business and high profile cases of bullying, harassment, cheating, fraud, and the like, make the ethical position seem relevant.

So should selectors not be interested in candidates' ethics? And are they utilitarians or deontologists? Should you pose "ethical dilemma questions" to candidates, to examine the level of their reasoning? The problem with all the hypothetical stuff is just that – it's hypothetical. And, furthermore, relatively easy to fake.

Ignore what people say and rather watch they do. Moreover, their ethics on and off the job can't, and shouldn't be, separated. Is there a link between bedroom and boardroom behavior? If individuals cheat on their romantic partners, are they not the type more likely to cheat on their business partners?

There is plenty of evidence from criminology, psychology, and psychiatry that rule breakers and those who have "problems with authority" are dishonest at work and at home. Business embezzlers, liars, and cheats are likely to have a history of marital infidelity, driving license points, credit problems, and the like.

The "science of misbehavior" has shown that people who "get into trouble" do so in their marriage, personal finances, and at work. The security services know this and always have. Hence the nature of vetting. This is all about your private life – sex, drugs, rock and roll.

So surely the wise selector, particularly if he or she is recruiting senior executives with power and control or those who are party to secrets, vast sums of money, or material temptations, should inquire about a person's private life. And if this person tells lies – as dodgy people do – then get a private detective.

We seem to be pretty hypocritical about all this at the moment. Apply to be a scout master and there are all sorts of criminal checks. Apply to be a CEO and you get a cosy chat and possibly a good lunch.

More of the surveillance society; more whittling away of our hard won freedoms? Or an eminently wise decision? People who cheat (on their wives, the taxman, or their neighbors) do so at work on their colleagues, clients, and bosses. It's worth the investment to find out. Ethics and ethical behavior know no work–life divide.

Work on your weaknesses

Positive psychology in business has a new and beguiling message. The old-style, puritanical, work-on-your-weaknesses message is rejected. The reason is that this is a mistaken misallocation of energy and focus. It's difficult, if not impossible, to correct, eliminate, or conquer your weaknesses, particularly if you are "getting on a bit" – a quite odd fatalism from a school of maximal optimism.

The message is that you are let off the hook for your weaknesses. Put them aside; ignore them. Rather – find, develop, and explore your strengths. Focus on what you are good at. Well, maybe, if these are what the organization needs, then fine, but not if they don't assist organizational performance.

The "strengths" school urges you first to find your strengths. The idea is that we have all been given a reasonable handout thereof. A tad naïve there. Some people are clearly multitalented, others somewhat short-changed.

Next, use those strengths. Play to them. But could this lead to problems? Could the charismatic, inspirational leader rely too much on presentation and not enough on substance? People with great strengths may over use them, misapply them, or rely on them too much. Could determination become obstinacy? Could integrity become zealotry, and thoughtful analysis turn into paralysis?

To celebrate one's new-found strengths may also make people less exploratory, change-oriented, or eager to learn alternative approaches. They can perseverate on the past. As Maslow once said, if the only instrument you have is a hammer you tend to treat everything as if it were a nail.

Should you really ignore your weaknesses? Is there no point in working on them at all? What about learning and development? Surely the strengths-based philosophy suggests that people are assigned to tasks and areas of responsibility which allow them to use their strengths. And this robs them of learning something new: developmental opportunities, a bigger picture, diversity of experience.

Working your way to the top is about learning new ideas, approaches, and skills as you "transition through complexity." Ignoring weaknesses can excuse you the necessary and important work. Big jobs require many skills and strengths. You can't just ignore those which you don't have! The strengths approach can sound egocentric, self-indulgent, and delusionally optimistic. Bizarrely for such an upbeat creed, it doesn't emphasize growth but usage of that which is there.

Weaknesses left unchecked do damage. More importantly, it can seem simplistic to divide the world into these clear categories. Are there not many examples of people who have turned weaknesses (such as physical handicap) into their greatest strength? Stutterers who became great orators. The Helen Kellers of this world.

Moreover, the many studies on management derailment show that great strengths, overused, misapplied, and overabundant, can be great weaknesses. Where is the line between self-esteem, or self-confidence, and clinical narcissism? Between careful, rule-following meticulousness and perfectionistic, obsessive compulsiveness? Where the line between colorful, dynamic, vivacious, and narcissistic personality disorder?

There can be too much of a good thing. So find your strengths. What took you so long? And now what? Insist your company uses them whether they are relevant or not?

Certainly the strengths-based message about maximizing your innate gifts is correct. But a few ifs are in order here: if you have strengths relevant to your job; if you are prepared to learn new skills; if you also work on those things you have to do, but which you are not so good at; and if you do not become an arrogant overuser of these talents. Hubris leads to nemesis. Few great leaders have not known what they were good at, but they also learnt to put in the work and effort to develop other skills and techniques that did not "come as easily."

Workplaces for oldies

Forecasts suggest that in just over a decade half the indigenous work force in Europe will be over 50. Moreover, many will be encouraged, induced, or forced to work over what we have become used to thinking of as a "normal retirement age."

Most will be "knowledge workers" in offices rather than "rude" mechanics in factories or on the land. Some of us are already getting used to "gray tops" all around the office.

Retrained older workers are more loyal and less likely to change their jobs than younger workers. Knowledge workers may be paid the most but they also bring most value to the organization. And mostly, given that they are fit and well educated, older workers perform as well as younger workers.

This presents an interesting problem for office designers. Can an office be designed that would maximize the performance (and satisfaction) of middle-aged, knowledge workers? The recently published Welcoming Workplace study thinks so. It argues that we need spaces for three essential functions:

1. *Space to concentrate*. This means places free of distraction where one can focus, analyze, and pay attention to details. If they are to be used by many in some sort of "hot bunking" arrangement they need to have adjustable features and settings. They need good, preferably natural, light and more than the usual buffers to block out background noise. They need airy, spacious, ionized rooms to make good decisions.
2. *Spaces to collaborate*. We are social animals and we often work in teams. People need places to spread out their stuff, shoot the breeze, argue without being chastized for either making a mess or a noise. They need to have adjustable furniture, big spaces, places to scribble. It's the high tech kitchen table area: warm and well equipped with all you need.
3. *Spaces to contemplate*. The literature on creativity talks of an incubation period. It means "time out" for ideas to grow. Should we provide a surveillance free, relaxing place at work where it is OK to do nothing? Somewhere to retire, to relax or re-energize before a task? A calm, quiet, distraction free, even Zen like space? A mini Japanese garden perhaps with plant and water feature? A day bed? A home in the office? A place for a ten-minute or two-hour recharge? Could the cost be justified?

Of course, the space has to be designed for the job. Compare an air traffic controller to an architect; a designer to a data analyst; a director (management) to a dentist. Jobs put different demands on concentration and collaboration which, in turn, affect contemplation.

But what of our oldies with declining agility and perception? Older people need better light. Changes occur in depth perception, simple visual activity, and peripheral vision. Quite simply, older people can't read as well as they once did. So they need good adjustable light for specific tasks. Poor light affects speed and accuracy of performance and also mood. It's not that difficult to start a vicious circle of decline just by using cheap, inappropriate, or unadjustable lights.

People in their mid-forties begin to notice a slight decline in their hearing. It's more difficult to distinguish background and foreground; the voice from the background noise. So the issue is how to transmit sound that helps the hearer note everything of importance that is being said.

Everyone accepts that strength and agility changes with age. Older people are less flexible, suffer more wear and tear, are less strong, and more prone to falling. They need good furniture that helps them sit, move, and work comfortably and safely.

Maybe we need gerento-ergonomics: the study of work environments that enhance well-being and productivity for the older worker. Older workers, it seems, also need better signage as they can have difficulties with navigation and finding their way. Color coding works well, as does proper landmarking and lay-out differentiation.

There is the subtle stuff as well: the issues about dignity and respect for the old; the discrimination against, and special (unfair) treatment of, certain groups.

The idea is this. It is cost effective to design work spaces to enhance the usual activities of knowledge workers: creative thinking, analysis, project and team work, decision-making, and pattern finding. Open plan offices may be cost efficient in terms of bodies per square meter, but not necessarily in terms of cost.

The simple question is: does the cost of providing a workplace conducive to the well-being and productivity of an older knowledge worker justify the cost of the design and building of that space?