

# Change Management in the Voluntary Sector

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NOVEMBER 2008

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present the initial findings of research exploring the process and management of change as experienced by Chief Executive Officers affiliated with A.C.O.S.V.O. The central themes explored are drivers for change, experience of change, identifying and overcoming barriers to change, and resultant success.

Managing change is a very complex process which involves the co-operation of all stakeholders, which is both problematic and time consuming. Voluntary sector organisations are beholden to a multiplicity of stakeholders, often operating within short term financial horizons. As a consequence of this environmental turbulence an ever present climate of change is created and must therefore be managed to secure the longevity of the organisation.

An online survey was conducted with ACOSVO members regarding the nature, progress, consequences and perceived success of their change efforts. These findings illustrated the often rapid nature of change which must be managed by stakeholder inclusion. Effective, unambiguous communication coupled with a clear rationale was cited as the most fruitful way to initiate and introduce change in a non-threatening, positive way. All respondents considered their past and present change efforts to have been successful.

The themes of the questionnaire were then explored with individual chief executives to provide more contextual and operational detail. This was achieved by a series of one to one interviews where drivers of change, outcomes and operational analysis were discussed. In harmony with the survey findings there was significant emphasis on communication, trust, and the need to have all stakeholders on board. This was deemed to be essential to face volatile funding environments and legislative requirements.

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## The Challenge of Change in the Voluntary Sector

### *Some Key Issues and Principles*

The practice of reviewing key research in journal articles and reports provides the foundation stone for development of change management tools in the voluntary sector context. This short review looks broadly over some pertinent themes in the change management area and places them within the sector context in order to provide initial food for thought. Further information will be available as the project progresses.

It is well known that voluntary organisations continue to face radical changes in their wider economic and political environment (Batsleer, 1995). The encouragement of market forces in the area of social and welfare services resulted in local authorities utilising their budgets to purchase services from both voluntary and private organisations which were in direct competition with each other. This competitive environment led to increased choice for those in need of support services (Langan and Clarke, 1994) which resulted in significant benefits for voluntary organisations in terms of funding (Taylor and Bassi, 1998). The public funding in turn resulted in the creation of a *contract culture* which meant that public bodies move to regulate the sector by establishing price, measurable and binding performance criteria and output controls in exchange for funding (Tonkiss and Passey, 1999). It is also clear that despite New Labour's movement towards a *partnership culture* (e.g. Public Service Partnerships) with the voluntary sector, the controls associated with government finances remains tight (Taylor and Bassi, 1998). In addition, the 'best value' system still exhibits strong competition for contracts and strict performance requirements (Passey et al, 2000). This ensures that change is a *continuous influencer* in voluntary sector organisations.

When change management research, tools and techniques are scrutinized, it becomes clear that, in general, they can be perceived as fully planned (see, models from Lewin; Bullock and Batten; and Cummings and Huse), one dimensional, managerialist and prescriptive (Dawson, 1994). Thus, it could be argued that the wholesale, uncritical application into the voluntary sector is problematic given the fundamental differences and culture of the voluntary sector – Joyce (1998) has long suggested that this is the case for public sector organisations, which may have some similar concerns/issues to voluntary sector organisations. However, on balance it is important to ensure that the planned approach to organisational change is considered in appropriate circumstances. For example where a process led structural or IT systems change must take place internally in an organisations, the planned approach may be useful and feasible as it will have a clearly identifiable start and end point.

Given the points made above, it is important to begin to consider alternate ways in which organisations can deal with change in a complex and competitive environment. The emergent approach to change takes a more analytical stance by considering the questions "to what extent does the environment (internal and external) drive changes within a system (i.e. organisation) and to what extent is the system in control of its own change processes?". Thus, it is suggested that building true organisational change capacity involves leading change in ways that are appropriate to the situation.

This approach is characterised by a ‘bottom-up’ action orientation, rather than a ‘top-down’ control approach. This approach ensures that the responsibility for change is devolved to change champions from a cross the organisations – which changes the senior management role to one of a facilitator. Interestingly, Pettigrew and Whipp (1993) believe that there are no universal rules when leading change because it involves linking action by people at all levels of the organisation. See Kanter at al’s (1992) “big three” model or Pettigrew’s (1985) process/content/context model for more information.

As a result of the need to provide more contextual, flexible and/or integrative approaches to organisational change, CIPD research (Molloy and Whittington, 2005) has provided seven fundamental areas of activity that help make a successful change happen– **‘the seven C’s of change’** - no matter whether it is a planned or emergent change. Coupled with research carried out in the voluntary sector by Cunningham (2000), Kellock-Hay, Beattie, Livingstone and Munro (2000), and Bryson (1995) the seven areas below become increasingly important in managing successful, if complex, change.

- **Ensure that there is a meaningful case for change** – it is critical that leadership frame change in which the pressure to change is real and believable.
- **Choosing a team** – all volunteers/staff can be change agents or champions.
- **Crafting the vision and the path** - the importance of commitment to relevant organisational culture, values and *leveraging history* within a competitive, resource scarce environment.
- **Connecting organisation-wide change** - perhaps expanding to sector-wide change where appropriate or constricting to department/section change where appropriate.
- **Consulting** (multiple and diverse) stakeholders by the notion of “organisational citizenship” and authentic debate.
- **Communicating** (internally and externally).
- **Coping with change** - ensuring an understanding of how various employee types/levels feel about change and how it affects them, including volunteers and paid staff, and considering how to proactively address their concerns/resistance.
- **Capturing and embedding learning** - e.g. learning organisation principles - reflecting on and appreciating *stories* of change in order to move forward by engaging volunteer/staff motivations for the long haul.

These key areas could be seen a cyclical fashion in which the process is iterative, thus allowing for continuous learning and change where the internal or external environment requires it.

In this short review of key areas of change and the management of change it has been suggested that change is largely situational – context is key. Thus, it is crucial for any voluntary organisation to continue to think carefully about how to handle both planned changes which can be structured from beginning to end and those which happen suddenly as part of the wider external environment. It is not suggested that there is a magic solution to continuous change and the pressures of the environment of the sector. However, from considering some research literature, it can be proffered

that the voluntary sector does have a specific culture and history which provides a context within which to address changes in the internal or external environment – this should be leveraged in order to maintain some stability and commonality during change.

The next section takes this discussion further and discusses both the approach to the research and the results.

## **Research Method**

The initial data collection method was that of a structured survey which was distributed electronically. The survey was circulated by means of the A.C.O.S.V.O. email bulletin where it had the potential to reach a respondent population of approximately 200 Chief Officers. The resultant response rate was 25% which yielded 51 questionnaires. Not all questions were answered by all respondents.

The questionnaire was designed around what the authors felt were the key issues emerging from both academic and practitioner literature sources. The format of the questionnaire also allowed respondents to comment beyond the original closed questions by using text boxes.

The advantages of the questionnaire method are that it can be relatively quick to design and distribute, especially using electronic means such as Survey Monkey. What must be considered however is the limitation of using closed response questions, which can mean that the data may be limited in scope. The authors addressed this by incorporating space in the questionnaire for respondents to include additional comments. An additional disadvantage is that there is generally a low return rate for questionnaires as demonstrated in this study. This means that the authors cannot claim that the data represents the entire ACOSVO membership, but rather a small proportion of it.

The next phase of the research involved conducting one to one interviews with chief executives. This was designed to build on, and explore the themes raised from the questionnaire data. Interviewees were chosen from a population who had indicated that they were willing to contribute to this part of the research. Chief Executives were then contacted from this list to elicit their participation. From the list the authors were able to secure six interviews.

The interviews were conducted on a conversational footing, loosely structured around relevant themes. This can be likened to a story telling approach, where the interviewee provides their own personal narrative. As a data gathering method it has many distinct advantages. It allows for a much clearer, in depth understanding of the research topic and open questions can alert the interviewer to new lines of enquiry. However, the interviewee must be competent in questioning technique, so that relevant data can be obtained.

Focus groups were not considered as a feasible method due to time and logistical constraints.

## Survey Findings

As stated in the research methods section, a questionnaire was devised and issued to the CEOs affiliated to A.C.O.S.V.O. The purpose of this questionnaire was to provide an initial snapshot designed to achieve a greater understanding of the main issues. There now follows a summary of what the authors consider to be the key considerations. The data results are provided in the appendix for ease of reference. All numerical values represent percentages.

### *Typical biographical profile of respondent:*

- Female
- Age range: 36 - 55
- Community development & 'other' focus of organisation
- Voluntary sector involvement: 11 - 21 years
- Medium sized organisation
- Organisation has been established between 11- 20 years, and 21 years +

### *The Nature and Extent of the Change Process*

The first section of the questionnaire took as its focus the nature and extent of the change experienced by the sample respondents.

From the responses given, the major concerns reflected in the responses appear to be operational, (68.6) restructuring, (76.5) resourcing (64.7) and changes to people management practices (62.7). This is very much in keeping with the often turbulent environment of the voluntary sector. Many organisations trapped in the short term funding cycle often have to reinvent themselves in order to maintain their established base. Additionally, the emergence of the voluntary sector as a provider of services traditionally supplied by entities such as local authorities has significant implications. This can result in essential restructuring to ensure that the capacity is present to deliver the service. Another interesting point to consider is the significant percentage of respondents who have indicated that changes in people management practices have impacted on their organisation. This is certainly reflective of the drive to 'professionalise' the voluntary sector with the importation of what can be regarded as traditional corporate practices, extending to both volunteers and paid staff alike. In terms of time frames, the respondents reported that the majority of change had happened within the previous three years which reinforces the constant nature and presence of change in the operational lives of the sample organisations.

Another feature of interest is the majority of respondents (60) indicating that the change was rapid. Again, as stated before, this can be typical of the shifting sands that voluntary sector organisations have to navigate in order to serve both funders and service users. This is also significant in terms of the potential impact on organisational operations. Wholesale rapid change can often be detrimental to organisational morale, thus exacerbating problems such as staff retention and quality of service or output.

What can also be seen from the results is that a healthy percentage of respondents (44) have adopted the incremental approach to change. In terms of accepted wisdom as

espoused by seminal literature, this is the most viable way of introducing and effecting change. This allows for a gradual shift in operations lessening the often seismic nature of change. It buys time for the organisation and staff to adjust and can often facilitate the natural 'weeding' process of those who do not wish to remain. This ensures that the foundations of the organisation are not unnecessarily destabilised during a relatively short time scale.

There is also evidence of strategic planning as indicated by the large response (58) to 'long term focus'. Arguably this could apply more to larger, more established organisations who are not exposed to short term funding pressures to the same extent as newer, small scale operations.

### ***Drivers and Mechanisms for Change***

What appears strongly from the results is that the vast majority agreed that change was needed in their organisation either on a moderate (46) or large scale (84) basis. Again this continues the theme discussed earlier of the turbulent environment which many voluntary sectors find themselves in, where reinvention and adaptability are essential tools for survival. This was continued with the next question which indicated that the process of change is not a finite activity but by its very nature is a constant concern and focus of activity.

What emerges from the data is the predicted impact of changes (51) emanating from the government, whether in policy or legislative form. This is especially true of those organisations operating within the social care sector, as legislation often dictates how they interact with staff and service users. An example of this would be the required disclosure checks which have been linked to unwelcome financial burdens and reduced volunteer interest.

There is also evidence of knowledge sharing which may or not have a formal basis. The influence of other organisations was also rated highly (56) which could point towards the existence of informal or formal benchmarking. Increasingly, the need for partnership and network building is being shown as a positive and productive way to share best practice and experience.

It is also important to note that there is evidence of responsiveness to user needs (48) which has prompted the instigation of change. This is especially important to many social care organisations whose users depend on them for essential life enhancing services.

The role of the board (48) would also appear to be significant, as in most cases they see themselves as the custodians of the organisation. This means that they play a major in the strategic and operational development of the organisation. This emphasises the value of a board which has within its ranks a strong sense of environmental and strategic awareness, shaping and safeguarding the future of the organisation. However, it is also important to consider that a 'change for changes sake' or knee jerk approach instigated by a board can often lead to tensions between all stakeholders. This emphasises the need for positive relationships between paid

staff and board members in order to progress the organisation in a way that benefits all.

Resource allocation (64) was cited as a major driver for change, which is not surprising given the constant financial restrictions of the sector. The balancing act of juggling budgetary, staff, funder and user demands can often mean that change has to be designed and implemented in a permanent cyclical basis. This may mean that services are either expanded or reduced depending on the capacity of the organisation and the funding available. Organisational direction is inevitably shaped by this.

The 'others' section contained a wide range of singular responses, with several citing pressure from staff. This is not surprising, given that staff can often be vocal drivers of change. Front line workers are often in the best position to appraise the organisation both strategically and operationally. This upward communication can benefit an organisation significantly if it is properly channelled and captured. Ironically it is often these voices that are continuously neglected as many changes are imposed from top level. This is detrimental to the organisation as employees and volunteers will not respond positively to forced change. This increases the risk of widespread surface compliance which is incongruent to the voluntary sector characteristic of value driven organisations.

The next concern for the authors was to investigate how the desired change(s) were initiated and implemented. From the survey results it can be seen that informal discussions (85) played a major part in the change process. This response is not unexpected given that the voluntary sector is frequently portrayed as adopting a much more humanistic approach to people management than their corporate counterparts. The value of effective organisational communication (57) as an aid to change cannot be underestimated as it can provide an opportunity to encourage 'buy in' and allay fears or misinterpretation. This was supported by the use of workshops (55) which can also function as an effective means of conveying information. They can also be used to introduce staff and volunteers to the new values, as well as providing the practical means for them to implement them.

The role of people management in the form of HR practices (67) has also been used by the survey respondents. In its corporate incarnation HR is the gatekeeper of organisational culture. This is achieved by recruiting those with the desired mindset, facilitating the absorption of organisational values by training/development, appraising to determine adherence to those values, and rewarding appropriate behaviour, whilst punishing the inappropriate. This is in direct parallel to voluntary sector where these activities are crucial to ensure that the organisational mission is upheld and reinforced.

## ***Barriers to Change and Resolutions***

When the respondents were asked to identify where any barriers to change originated, internal barriers (87) were cited as the strongest obstacle.

Respondents were then asked to identify these in more detail. Some examples are included below:

- Staff found the changes difficult. Many of the current volunteers left the organisation as well due to the changes in policy and direction.
- Members of staff who had been with the organisation for years liked the way things had been done for years and didn't like these young executives coming in to tell them how to do their jobs. They were too comfortable in the rut!
- Reluctance to embrace change (cultural) Personal consequences of change(e.g. career impact or job security) Ideological resistance(failure to recognise market forces).
- Staff resistance to new funder dictating new client groups and increased targets with less resources.
- Staff who had been around for a long time and who did not see the value in extending services and introducing more equitable systems of pay, etc.

The vast majority of responses stated that opposition from existing staff was a major stumbling block to the change effort. This stemmed from a reluctance to move out of their comfort zone and a clear lack of strategic awareness relating to the wider environment beyond their own personal job horizon. This is typical of most organisations undergoing change as inevitably self interest becomes the most important driver for some employees while others embrace the notion of change as an opportunity to grow personally and professionally.

Although external stakeholders were viewed as a lesser barrier to change (37) they were still an important consideration. A selection of comments gathered from this section are given below:

- Funders are always asking for more information, procedures for less funding. More time is spent evaluating, at meetings and creating reports and now we may have to tender for services.
- Other strategic partners were resistant to our change of focus (threat to them and move from our core service - which they valued).
- Whilst change is expected, especially in relation to partnership working, this has not been resourced to support the change. Also, resources for core services have not been reviewed in line with demand. Additional reporting requirements have been significant but not resourced.

The majority of the comments centred round the demands and expectations of funders which clearly have to be complied with in order to ensure organisational survival. Additionally, those organisations that were actively involved in partnerships mentioned the difficulties of maintaining these relationships to the satisfaction of all parties.

The next section of the survey was designed to investigate the strategies for overcoming these barriers in either the past or in the future. A wide range of comments were provided, some examples given below:

- Regular meetings, clear communication within the team. listening to staff following all communication up in writing. staff survey that is anonymous
- Workshops, team meetings and one to one discussions on how to overcome barriers and staff's contribution - involving staff in the process and ensuring they know they are valued.
- Consultation with service users and staff. Gradually the balance of people who supported the change out numbered the people who did not and that was the tipping point. Some people left the organisation. We also used external agencies such as the Care Commission and investors in people processes to push through changes.
- Keep the communication open by team meetings, giving individuals the chance to have their say, road shows and repetition through team briefings
- Taking the change slowly 2. Listening to people 3. Telling them there is no going back 4. Demonstrating the improved results as a result of the change - need to have short term and quick results as well as the longer view of results.
- The Board and Chief Exec must be seen to be working together with everyone else. A final point - there must also be good news mixed with the bad - there must be light at the end of the tunnel.

The comments gathered strongly exhorted the need to involve all stakeholders in the change process. Central to this buying in process is the commitment of existing staff, whose psychological needs have to be addressed as a key priority. Extensive use was made of communication which acted as the chief source of initiating change for most of the respondents. It is not uncommon for organisational change to be driven through an organisation with no clear rationale communicated to staff. This causes significant unrest and can generate misdirected or unnecessary opposition to the proposed change.

The importance of upward communication was also stressed as staff need to feel included in order for them to feel that they have a degree of ownership. This direct communication can be supplemented by reinforcement strategies such as those mentioned above, such as team briefings, road shows, workshops and regular meetings.

The initiation of the change process can also trigger what can be termed as organisational ‘natural selection.’ Those who find themselves at odds with the new philosophy or practices will almost always self select and leave the organisation. This is certainly desirable as pockets of resistance will hinder the change efforts and make them less effective.

### ***Future Developments***

As an overall review the respondents considered that their change processes could be defined as a combination of successful (32) and ongoing (65). This is very positive, as no respondents deemed their efforts to be unsuccessful. As before, this reinforces the constant influence and presence of change as not something that can be quickly dealt with and then set aside.

The survey data was then able to produce a wide range of examples of successful change. Some illustrations are given below:

- Although a further wave of change lies ahead, the organisation has grown and developed considerably in the last 3 years and retains its identity and cohesion.
- No individuals challenged the decisions beyond internal consultation processes. Feedback from staff group and Board that issues were sensitively and appropriately handled.
- Outcomes achieved - all remaining service users found alternative provision. All redundant staff bar one either offered alternative employment or assistance to find other suitable work. Organisation retained other contracts and increased activity in remaining services.
- Change was needed and it was difficult but could have been worse. Our loyal core team helped the standard of service to be maintained. Our staff was our strength.

## Chief Executive Findings

### *The Drivers for Change and the Change Experience*

Of particular concern to one respondent was the increasing need for a market orientation that was affecting their organisation. This meant that there was much more emphasis on the need to generate positive PR as,

*“...you need to get the public on your side..”*

This emphasis on marketing was viewed to be a negative development as organisations would need to adopt a financially driven outlook which does not sit congruently with the ethos of the voluntary sector. This was also supported by an additional respondent who voiced concerns that the sector expansion will attract workers who regard it as just a job rather than a passion for a value based ethos.

*“ ...managerialism by stealth...”*

The emphasis on generating increased outside exposure was also echoed by another respondent especially as their organisation had been boosted by additional staff members. There was recognition of the fact that the donations market place is highly competitive which leads to the need to learn and utilise a new vocabulary to make connections with new and potential partners.

The need to increase professionalisation was cited by another respondent as a key driver for change. Their organisation had been run in a somewhat adhoc way and the needs of the staff and the organisation required a strategic rethink and more concrete operational planning.

Another important driver discussed was the financial changes undergone by one of the respondents. The gradual reduction in grant meant that the organisation has had to work to towards achieving a greater degree of self sufficiency. This meant that there was a much stronger reliance on the network of members whose stakeholder significance had increased substantially.

### *The Change Experience*

For one of the respondents the change required was essentially a root and branch review of all organisational operations. This had to be led from the top and filtered down to staff by ‘planting seeds’ and questioning. This led to staff reflecting on existing practices and procedures. What also emerged was that some staff self selected when they could not align themselves with the new shape of the organisation. This resulted in an increase in leavers who were described as ‘casualties’ of the shift in emphasis and direction. It was acknowledged that the change process contained a lot of what was termed to be ‘shock’ value but it was essential due to reduced funding and acute pressure to measure up to the perceived competition. At this point undertaking a skills audit of the board was a very beneficial exercise as it allowed painted a clearer picture of the organisations capability and capacity. What also

followed from this was the development of an alternative financial model that would allow the organisation to sustain their existing work under different resource constraints.

Cultural change was a prominent feature of the change experienced by another respondent. New senior management were encouraging significantly more organisational retrospection resulting in a fresh look at the existing mission statement and goals. Extensive use of an organisational intranet system ensured that the new philosophy was widely visible and accessible to all. This meant that the new message and vision could be successfully articulated in a tangible way. An additional emphasis was put on the need to be professional which extended to all interaction within the organisation, whether it be staff or volunteers.

*“..Vision driven change is important for vocationally driven staff. Don’t focus too much on process in case you forget vision. “*

The remaining theme for the other respondents was the emphasis in demonstrating and improving on their current level of professionalism. For one of the respondents this involved a lot of practical measures, for example setting up an organisational bank account. What was also interesting to explore with this respondent was the amount of time and effort involved in getting the established workers and management board to start thinking ‘out of the box’. This involved the new considerations of business plans and legislative requirements which were essential to the organisation. This addressed their need to start functioning more independently than had previously been the case.

This was also discussed by the other respondents who had also found themselves in a period of expansion. These expansions had brought with them significant implications for all stakeholders. A key priority for one respondent was the design and implementation of an effective organisational communication structure. Although email was considered to be a fast and effective means of imparting info, often the tone and meaning is lost on the screen. Getting the balance right between face to face and electronic means was difficult and still had not been achieved.

Social capital building was also considered to be very important with the awareness that participating in network or partnership arrangements can have significant strategic benefits.

What was also considered by one respondent was the impact of change on volunteers. What emerged is that volunteers will also self select, in that they will withdraw in the same way as staff if they find that they cannot align themselves with the new emphasis and direction. This has significant consequences for the organisation as they may find that their volunteer pool is reduced and they may struggle to attract new recruits. This means that the change must be carefully managed as to not alienate much needed labour and support. Specifically volunteers were now finding themselves in a position where they had to be well versed in legislation even if their time commitment was minimal, as shown by the quote below,

*“...Changes in legislation can be burdensome for volunteers. Sometimes volunteers don’t have the confidence or time to take up more extensive roles..”*

The responses above demonstrate the complexity of the change process where all stakeholders must be satisfied whilst operating within ever changing funding conditions.

### ***Identifying and Resolving the Barriers to Change***

One respondent emphasised the need to secure staff support first and then try and establish ‘board champions’ who will encourage others to facilitate the change. It is of vital importance that new recruits are those who will support and further the vision as this helps to overcome opposition.

*“ ... Need to strip the rotten wood before you gloss over it...”*

Consultation was also mentioned by a respondent as a key way of smoothing the way for change. The essential process of providing a vehicle for expression whether on a one to one basis or more formally is a central part of the change process. By utilising appropriate communication mechanisms myths can be dissuaded and a practical way forward can be generated. This also generates trust as the openness of the process is reassuring and staff can feel that they own the change.

As part of this process networking and sharing was regarded as very beneficial, especially in terms of peer support which is not as freely available as desired.

A key consideration for one respondent was the need for empathy and understanding, as staff who feel that their employment is threatened will not look favourably upon any proposed changes. This can lead to a feeling of disempowerment.

The role of the CEO was also considered to be of vital strategic importance. The CEO has to be seen to be hands on during the change process, giving the organisation direct strategic guidance which allows the new vision or message to filter down.

*“...important to emphasise the difference between manager and leader...”*

Other respondents had made use of external experts such as accountants and business advisors in order to shape the desired changes. This was particularly true of one organisation that needed to rethink their own outlook and establish themselves as a solid, independent entity. GCVS was mentioned as having a very important role to play, providing access to a wide range of experts and advice.

## ***Assessment of Success***

All respondents stated that they felt that their change efforts had yielded positive results.

In particular what emerged is a feeling that the organisational resources were being used much more strategically and effectively, especially in terms of volunteers. This was discussed in relation to the increased clarity of the volunteering role which had benefited all concerned.

*“...what we have now is a culture of high trust, great environment, lots of positive feedback..”*

Staff contentment also featured highly and several respondents reported that absenteeism and turnover had reduced since the newly implemented changes. Staff empowerment was also a recurring theme as new roles often meant new responsibilities and approach. Staff had, in the main welcomed this, provided they were given a transparent and coherent rationale.

*“...external profile has changed bringing confidence to the staff team...”*

There was also an increased awareness of the drive towards professionalisation and the use of communication mechanisms as a supportive pillar of the change process. This included practical measures such as increased frequency of team meetings and greater availability of the CEO. This had repaired previously strained relationships between board and staff. This also extended to one respondent exploring possibilities of gaining recognition from bodies such as Investors in People and embarking on an extensive benchmarking exercise.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The data collected from this report has demonstrated the often complex balancing act that has to be performed by voluntary sector organisations on a regular basis. Financial concerns in particular can have a fundamental impact on the direction, operation and sustainability of the organisation. This means that in some cases the only constant is change itself.

Staff and volunteers inevitably find themselves bearing the brunt of change and therefore need to be given extra support. Communication is vital to this process, with team meetings and one to ones acting as a valuable channel for staff involvement. Staff and volunteers must also be given a recognisable and coherent rationale for the process, so that they can reconcile the old ways with the new. It is essential that the leadership from the CEO is strong and that they endeavour to create 'change champions' from within staff or the management board.

Creating a culture of involvement is also a key part of the process. Staff and volunteer input can be a very useful tool to shape the change and may be able to lessen resistance. This lessens the perception of dictatorial imposed change which may leave them feeling powerless and resentful, ultimately reducing organisational effectiveness.

## Recommendations

- Establish effective communication mechanisms for staff support, e.g. workshops, team meetings, one to ones discussions.
- Create 'change champions' within staff and mgt. board to counter resistance.
- Implement and encourage a culture of involvement to facilitate 'buy in'.
- Ensure a clear rationale for change is defined, presented and evaluated.

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- Tonkiss, F. and Passey, A. (1999) Trust, Confidence and Voluntary Organisations: Between values and institutions, Sociology, 33/2.

## Other Useful Resources

- Heart of Change, The: Real-Life Stories of How People Change Their Organizations: Real Life Stories of How People Change Their Organizations by John P Kotter.
- Leading Change by John P Kotter.
- Making Sense of Change Management: A Complete Guide to the Models, Tools and Techniques of Organizational Change by Esther Cameron, and Mike Green.
- The Change Management Toolkit by C.A. Carnall.
- Our Iceberg is Melting: Changing and Succeeding Under Any Conditions (Hardcover) by John Kotter, Holger Rathgeber.
- Who Moved My Cheese?: An Amazing Way to Deal with Change in Your Work and in Your Life by Spencer Johnson.

## APPENDIX: SURVEY DATA

What type of change have you and/or your organisation experienced, or are currently experiencing? Please select all that apply.			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Operational		68.6%	35
<b>Restructuring</b>		<b>76.5%</b>	39
Resourcing (e.g. funding)		64.7%	33
Increased workload		51.0%	26
Change in HR policy/practice – e.g. job evaluation, pay scales, increase/reduction in staff numbers		62.7%	32
New services added		56.9%	29
Merger		9.8%	5
New leadership		35.3%	18
Other (please specify)		5.9%	3

How would you describe the speed and nature of the change? Please select all that apply.			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Incremental		44.0%	22
<b>Rapid</b>		<b>60.0%</b>	30
Short term focus		22.0%	11
Long term focus		58.0%	29
Other (please specify)		14.0%	7

Please rate the following statements in terms of level of agreement:							
	disagree strongly	disagree	not sure	agree	agree strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
No change <b>was</b> required in my organisation	<b>69.2% (27)</b>	23.1% (9)	2.6% (1)	0.0% (0)	5.1% (2)	1.49	39
Moderate change <b>was</b> required in my organisation	15.4% (6)	<b>28.2% (11)</b>	10.3% (4)	<b>28.2% (11)</b>	17.9% (7)	3.05	39
Major change <b>was</b> required in my organisation	2.2% (1)	2.2% (1)	11.1% (5)	33.3% (15)	<b>51.1% (23)</b>	4.29	45

Please rate the following statements in terms of level of agreement:							
	disagree strongly	disagree	not sure	agree	agree strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
No change <b>is</b> presently required in my organisation	42.1% (16)	<b>50.0% (19)</b>	5.3% (2)	2.6% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.68	38
Moderate change <b>is</b> presently required in my organisation	6.8% (3)	4.5% (2)	6.8% (3)	<b>70.5% (31)</b>	11.4% (5)	3.75	44
Major change <b>is</b> presently required in my organisation	<b>23.5% (8)</b>	17.6% (6)	20.6% (7)	20.6% (7)	17.6% (6)	2.91	34

Why did this change take place? Please rate the effect of the following external and internal influences.						
	No effect	Moderate	Strong	Unsure	Rating Average	Response Count
Government policy/ legislation	21.3% (10)	27.7% (13)	<b>51.1% (24)</b>	0.0% (0)	2.30	47
Users	11.4% (5)	<b>47.7% (21)</b>	40.9% (18)	0.0% (0)	2.30	44
Influence of other v, sector orgs	26.8% (11)	<b>56.1% (23)</b>	17.1% (7)	0.0% (0)	1.90	41
Board of your organisation	13.6% (6)	<b>47.7% (21)</b>	38.6% (17)	0.0% (0)	2.25	44
Resource allocation	6.7% (3)	28.9% (13)	<b>64.4% (29)</b>	0.0% (0)	2.58	45
Other	5.0% (1)	10.0% (2)	<b>75.0% (15)</b>	10.0% (2)	2.90	20

What mechanisms did you use to aid the change process? Please select all that apply.			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Workshops		55.1%	27
Revised communication strategy		57.1%	28
HR practices (e.g. appraisal, training)		67.3%	33
<b>Informal discussions</b>		<b>85.7%</b>	42
Management training		40.8%	20
External support		55.1%	27
Other (please specify)		16.3%	8

If you encountered any barriers to change, where did they originate from? Please select all that apply.

	Response Percent	Response Count
External stakeholders	37.5%	15
<b>Internal stakeholders</b>	<b>87.5%</b>	<b>35</b>
Other (please specify)	10.0%	4

How would you describe the change processes within your organisation?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Successful	32.7%	16
<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>65.3%</b>	<b>32</b>
Other (please specify)	2.0%	1