

CREATING ORGANIZATION CAPACITY FOR CONTINUOUS & ADAPTIVE CHANGE

DISSERTATION RESEARCH FINDINGS

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY:

Today's global business environment is dynamic and highly uncertain. To become and remain viable, organizations must successfully respond to constantly morphing environmental conditions. An organization's response to these constantly changing conditions can no longer be episodically driven planned changed events. Organizations must have the capacity for continuous and adaptive organizational change (CAOC). CAOC is now an essential organizational competency.

DEFINITION: Continuous, anticipative and adaptive movement (*thinking and actions*) taken by organization members to achieve a desired future.

QUALITATIVE STUDY: 20 leaders, practitioners, scholars

- Healthcare
- Financial Services
- Religious
- Academic
- Pharmaceuticals
- Communications
- Municipal agency
- Global electronics
- Federal Government

RESEARCH RESULTS: 1) Nine best practices of continuous and adaptive change:

- Leadership
- Learning / Teaching
- Mobilization
- Environmental Savvy
- Focus
- Systems
- Values Congruence
- Belief in self and others
- Will / The Exercising of Choice

2) CAOC is a *complex social system* in *continuous and adaptive relationship* with its environment. CAOC characteristics:

- Non-linear
- Multi-dimensional
- Synchronous / inter-reliant
- Adaptive to changing environmental conditions
- Chaos & order are simultaneously present

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PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS:

“IS IT WORTH GOING THROUGH ANOTHER CHANGE WHEN WE MAY HAVE TO JUST CHANGE AGAIN?”

We desire sustainable change and a state of environmental equilibrium and so we build into the practice of organization change the fallacies of linearity and stability.

Recognizing the complex nature of change, recognizing the need to create organization capacity for continuous and adaptive change requires leaders, organization members, and practitioners change. We must:

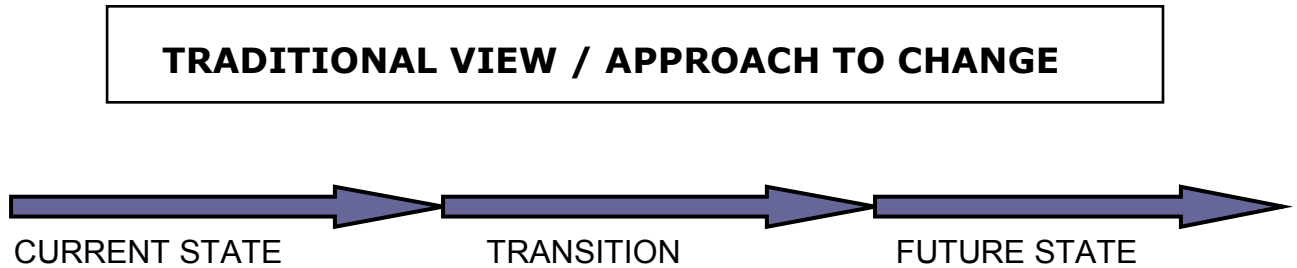
- See with new eyes – Hold the worldview that organization change is:
 - *not* linear, episodic or static
 - *not* a noun, person, thing or endpoint – a place the organization, some time in the future, arrives at
 - *is* an inter-reliant and synchronous set of practices, strategies, goals that flows in and through constantly changing environment

- Practice with new understanding:
 - Must build capacity for adaptation NOT stability into methods, practices, strategies, systems
 - Must balance prescription with creative action

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Figure No. 1



(Adopted from Lewin's Change Model)

Figure No. 2

CONTINUOUS & ADAPTATIVE VIEW / APPROACH TO CHANGE

