

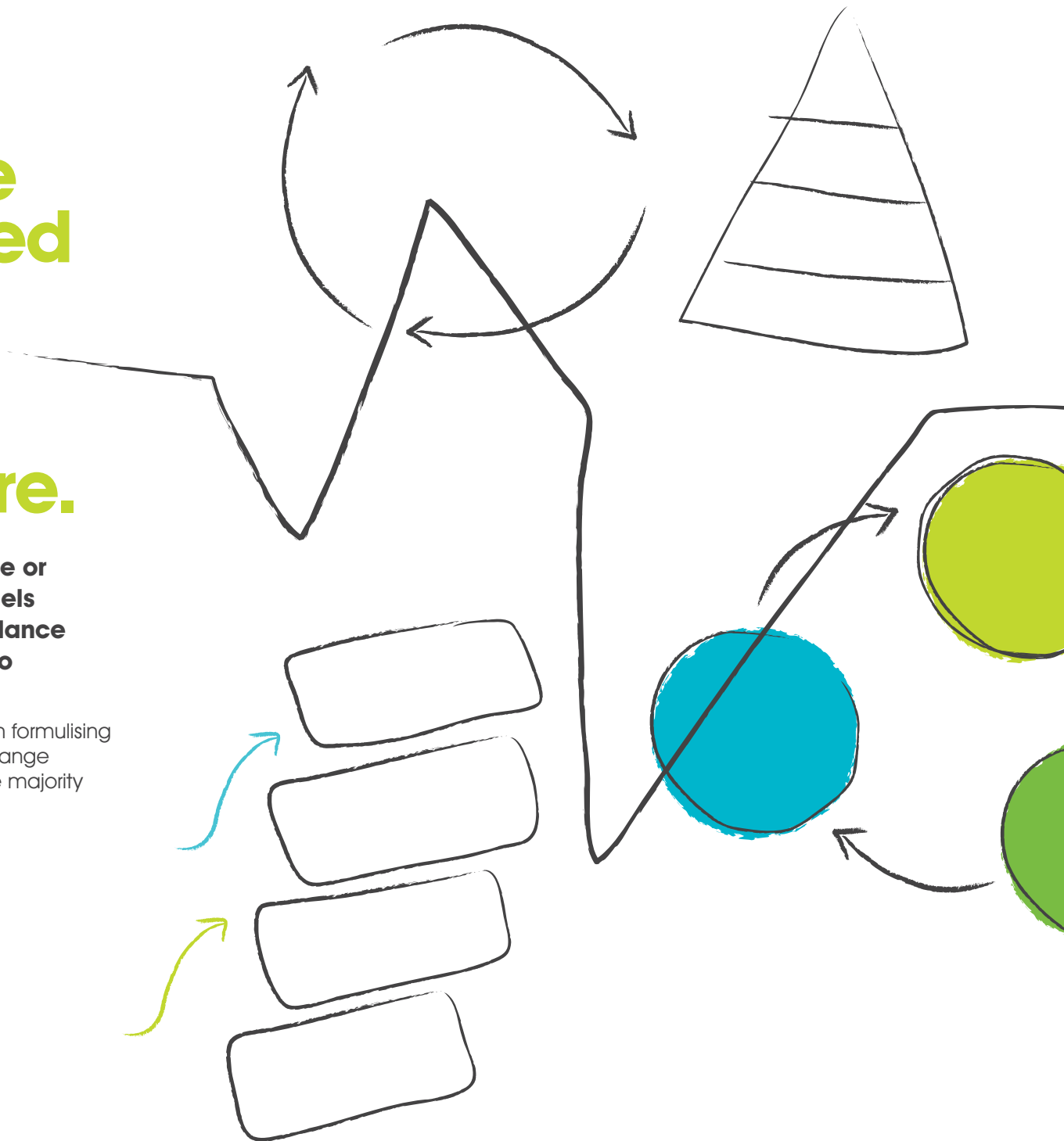
THE CHANGE CONUNDRUM

*How do you increase
the chances of change
programme success?*

The necessity of managing change is a well established concept and the subject of reams of business and academic literature.

Change models abound and each business, change or transformation Director has their favourite. The models range from the complex to simple and provide guidance on managing the factors that make the difference to an initiative's success.

With the quantity and quality of academic brainpower focused on formulating how to manage change you'd have thought that the average change project would have a good chance of succeeding. Startlingly, the majority of change initiatives fail either fully or partially.



Managing change isn't straightforward and selecting the right change model is certainly not a guarantee of success.

Unfortunately, many project leaders still encounter serious obstacles which derail their efforts, notwithstanding following apparently robust models.

"What's in it for me?"

"We just kept our heads down and it passed us by."


"We should have involved more people!"

"Managers undermined our efforts because they didn't understand why we were changing and therefore felt threatened."

"I just didn't understand the point of it."

"If only the Executives had been more vocal in their support..."

**OVER THE COURSE
OF 20 YEARS
DEFINING
AND RUNNING
MAJOR CHANGE
INITIATIVES,
WE'VE NOTICED
SOME COMMON
POINTERS WHICH
HAVE A BEARING
ON SUCCESS.**



**These aren't
necessarily new
ideas, nor do
they need to be
considered in order.
They're just ideas
that work.**

ACCEPT CHANGE ISN'T LINEAR, IT'S COMPLEX

Beware of methodologies that present enabling change as one activity following another. One of the common misinterpretations of John Kotter's '8 Steps for Leading Change', for example, is to assume that strictly following the linear progression of these steps delivers the best results. This is not the case. Change is, at its simplest level, all about people and they are unpredictable and complex. At any point during the change process it may be necessary to revisit activities from earlier in your process, or to re-order activities based on the lay of the land. Being prepared for this, and building regular review cycles, will save cost and help to manage expectations.

IDENTIFY PURPOSE

Most organisational change entails stepping into the unknown, which can be daunting. Doing so requires trust and significant effort on the part of those affected. The presence of an authentic reason for why change is happening can be the difference between a successful, inclusive process or resistance. But articulating the real purpose behind a change is not always straightforward. It's not as simple as saying "we'll save money"; that's an outcome not a purpose. We've noticed that spending the time with leaders to uncover the inspiring and authentic purpose for change helps those affected connect on a rational and emotional level and become open to different ideas. Simon Sinek, author of 'Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone To Take Action', expresses it perfectly, "People don't buy what you do. They buy why you do it."

CREATE A LEADERSHIP UNIT THAT HOLDS THE CHANGE

To facilitate effective change it is important to engage leadership at each level; since individuals look to their leaders for confirmation and ownership of the shift in direction. If leaders are not seen to be on board with change then the organisation will slip back into old patterns of behaviour. By its nature therefore, change is shaped at the top. The bonding of the senior team, creating a sense of oneness, will give strength and momentum for the journey. To accomplish this the senior team should co-develop an inspiring and authentic purpose for change and enrol subsequent layers of the organisation by honouring the flow of leadership.

HARNESS THE VALUE OF CO-CREATION

A classic barrier to change is the “not invented here” reaction. The process of co-creation, enabling individuals to shape the outcome, is an important way of building commitment and usually building better solutions. This needs to be done with skill and within parameters set by the senior team. People expect guidance from their leaders, yet they are most engaged if they can co-create their own part. Co-creation often involves the introduction of new skills which has the added benefit of investing in people for the future. This goes some way to addressing the “what’s in it for me?” question.

REALISE CULTURE CAN DEVOUR A PLAN ANY DAY OF THE WEEK

You can have the best strategy in the world but without the culture to implement it you're sunk! All companies or systems have enabling and disabling patterns which are often repeated at all levels. Identifying these patterns and designing interventions to shift culture is central to the work. These interventions can re-enforce a sense of identity and set the right tone for the new.

DON'T NEGLECT THE BASICS

Understand where you are – always invest in change diagnosis to help shape the interventions and the choreography of them needed to shift the organisation.

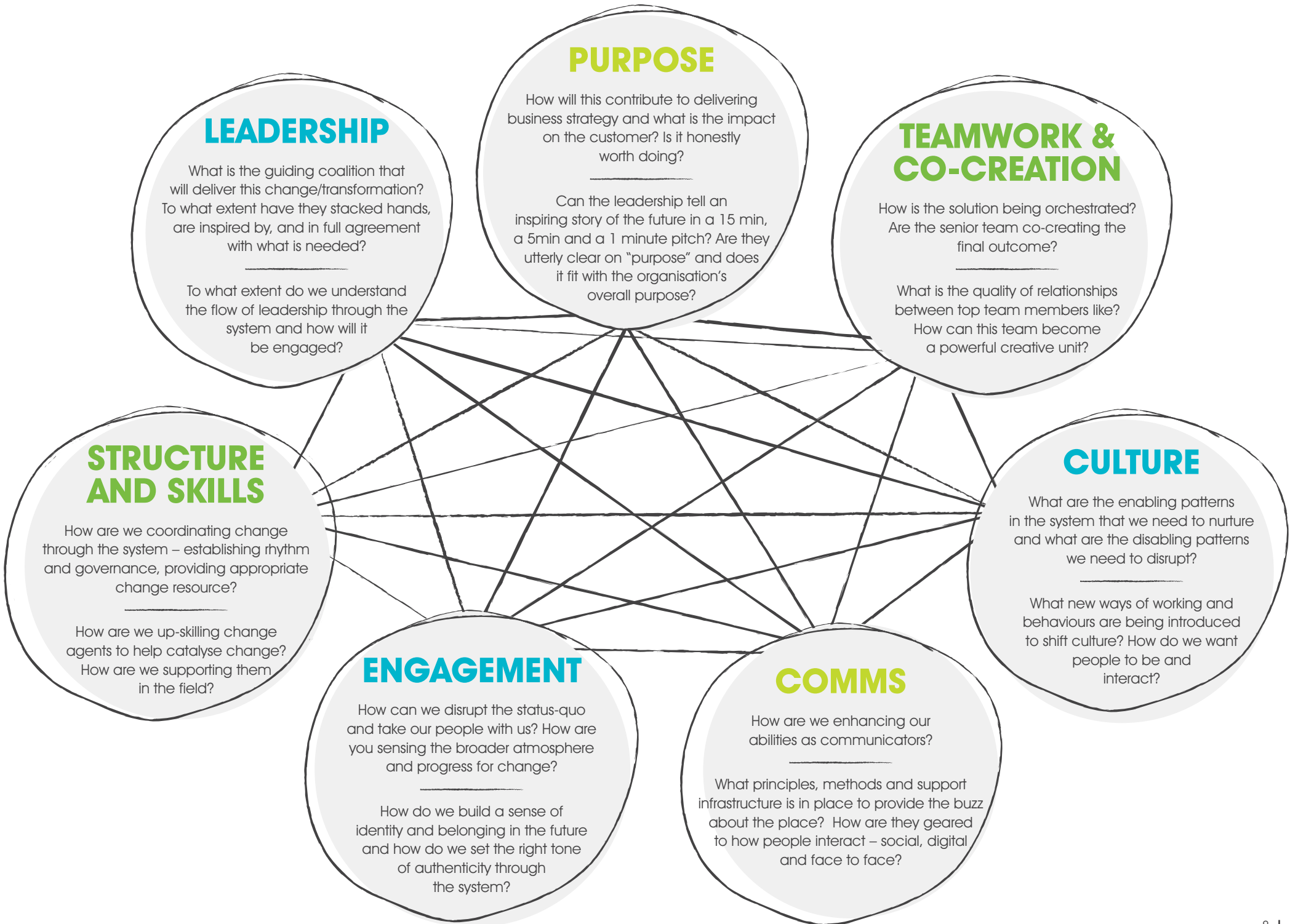
Communication – how you communicate goes a long way to set tone. The approach to communications needs to be authentic to the culture you are trying to build.

Engagement – as a leader, how you take your people with you defines you. Knowing how to stretch, to support, when and how to disrupt are all skills that generate momentum.

Structure and skills – Leading change is a challenging task. Often it can become lonely and daunting as people are usually operating outside their comfort zone. Developing internal change agent or catalyst skills to support the process is key to sustainability. In large complex programmes, this support network needs effective marshalling.

These ideas underpin our thinking about change and inform how we approach change planning. When constructing change support we pay attention to seven dimensions which are interconnected, and raise critical questions about any change initiative. Seeking the answers to these questions helps to shape the course the change programme should take.





LEADERSHIP

What is the guiding coalition that will deliver this change/transformation? To what extent have they stacked hands, are inspired by, and in full agreement with what is needed?

To what extent do we understand the flow of leadership through the system and how will it be engaged?

PURPOSE

How will this contribute to delivering business strategy and what is the impact on the customer? Is it honestly worth doing?

Can the leadership tell an inspiring story of the future in a 15 min, a 5min and a 1 minute pitch? Are they utterly clear on "purpose" and does it fit with the organisation's overall purpose?

TEAMWORK & CO-CREATION

How is the solution being orchestrated? Are the senior team co-creating the final outcome?

What is the quality of relationships between top team members like? How can this team become a powerful creative unit?

STRUCTURE AND SKILLS

How are we coordinating change through the system – establishing rhythm and governance, providing appropriate change resource?

How are we up-skilling change agents to help catalyse change? How are we supporting them in the field?

CULTURE

What are the enabling patterns in the system that we need to nurture and what are the disabling patterns we need to disrupt?

What new ways of working and behaviours are being introduced to shift culture? How do we want people to be and interact?

ENGAGEMENT

How can we disrupt the status-quo and take our people with us? How are you sensing the broader atmosphere and progress for change?

How do we build a sense of identity and belonging in the future and how do we set the right tone of authenticity through the system?

COMMS

How are we enhancing our abilities as communicators?

What principles, methods and support infrastructure is in place to provide the buzz about the place? How are they geared to how people interact – social, digital and face to face?

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