

THE FOOD FOR THOUGHT SERIES

PART TWO



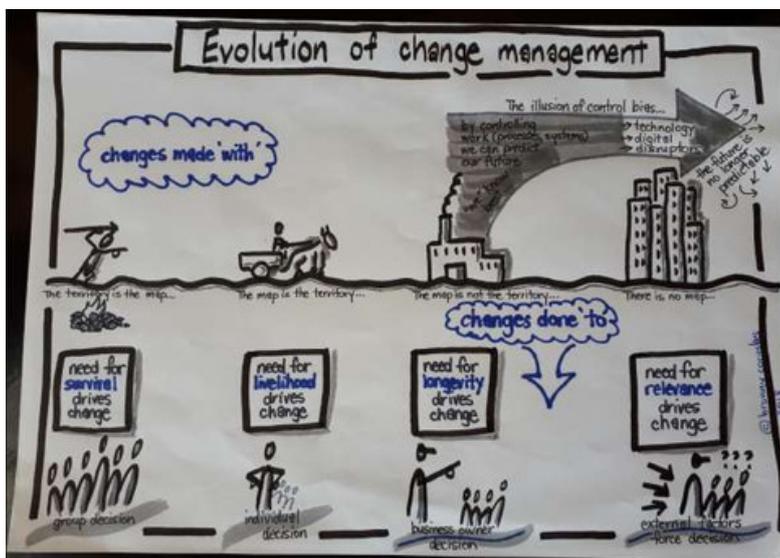
FROM CHANGE MANAGEMENT TO THE ART OF SENSE MAKING ...

In my previous article I explored change and I proposed a shift from the illusion of control that the term change management insinuates toward the term sense making.

I think in pictures – here’s my interpretation of what I think has happened to change management over the years.

People have gradually been taken out of the frame of change management in the false security that a change processes will ‘get us there’. Change has been ‘done to’ people.

Change management historically has provided a plethora of methodologies and tools to guide organisations through a linear change process.



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As organisations continue to be tossed on currents of unpredictable disruption, it is not fair to assume our leaders know what to do. Many of our leaders as we also transition leadership demographics, are trying to work out what leadership looks like in an atmosphere of uncertainty, let alone knowing how to help their people cope with unprecedented, relentless change.

What we know today, as the neuroscience shows us, is that change is non-linear. It’s time to put our people back in the frame of change.

“...change has revealed itself to be non-linear and chaotic. It’s time to find a new model – one that incorporates insights from neuroscience research and takes into account 21st century workplace dynamics and realities.”

<https://hbr.org/2012/10/this-is-your-brain-on-organizational-change>

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HUMAN?

Without people, there is no organisation. People are human beings, a leader is a human being. Human ... what does it mean to be human? Humans over thousands of years have made sense of 'their' world in order to (rightly or wrongly) maximise their advantage – and depending on your perspective, have been pretty successful at it. Humans haven't required a linear process to adapt in order to survive. Humans have successfully adapted to myriad environmental, economic and social conditions.

And how have we done that? We've worked together using collective sense-making skills to help us understand our context in our world. We've worked together to sense-make solutions, we've worked together to make sense of our personal and collective experiences in order to learn and to adapt, in order to survive.

I am suggesting the time is right to reframe change management and about how change occurs for people – for human beings. Our strength is in our collective ability to help make sense of our worlds in an era where nothing seems to make sense.

"What is sense making?

I define it as ... How do we make sense of the world so we can act in it, which carries with it the concept of sufficiency (knowing enough to make a contextually appropriate decision)."

David Snowden

"Uncertainty threatens us all."

Linda Ray, NeuroCapability, SCARE model.

PUT PEOPLE BACK INTO THE FRAME

The term 'sense-making puts people squarely back in the change frame, helping to grow human centred organisational change practices. And helping people to make sense of complexity.

My proposal is that we rethink the term change management for the 21st century and shift towards the term sense-making. A world where we provide organisational human beings with renewed skills about how to help them and others make sense of their world for their context.

None of us can do this alone.

Calling all sense-makers ...

