Dimensions ofChange Execution

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The business world is facing an increasing number of new, daunting challenges: shifting customer needs, unstable markets, globalization, technology advancements, environmental challenges, political volatility, and others. As a result, executives across sectors are examining what changes their organizations need to make to remain relevant, to have impact, and, in some cases, to even exist. This paper does not attempt to prescribe specific strategic solutions to the myriad of obstacles and opportunities leaders face. Instead it examines seven key dimensions of change execution that leaders must address in order to successfully implement their organization's strategic response.

In our work over the past forty-five years, we have witnessed countless senior leaders grapple with disruptive forces that have fundamentally reshaped not only their organizations, but their entire sectors. The automotive, banking, telecommunication, healthcare, and entertainment industries are just a few that have undergone massive change. In each instance, these upheavals have created winners—often new entrants who are on the cutting edge of change within an industry—and losers—often incumbents who did not change quickly or dramatically enough to keep up with the industry. However, some incumbents did recognize the need to transform early on: they exercised creativity and courage in envisioning a dramatically different future for their organization, and were quick and effective in executing strategic transformation. In the end, these are the organizations that succeeded in staying relevant, profitable, and, ultimately, in business.

Disruption across industries has not slowed, and companies are perpetually entering and exiting the playing field. However, while the specific details of the challenges buffering each sector may differ, the patterns related to change success and failure remain similar. From our experience advising senior executives all over the world in how to navigate their transitions, we have noted seven dimensions of change execution that consistently test leaders and their teams. How leaders attend to these elements has proven to be a reliable indicator of whether or not a particular change will fulfill its promise. Leaders who are successful at executing their strategies take care to address each of these dimensions. Conversely, leaders who ignore one (or more) of the seven dimensions or address them with insufficient attention or resources often find that their strategic initiatives fail outright or that they accomplish fewer, shorter-lived, and/or less substantive results.

SEVEN KEY DIMENSIONS OF CHANGE EVERY SENIOR LEADER MUST ADDRESS

The seven key dimensions of change execution are:

- **Intent:** Has leadership developed a well-formulated description of and rationale for the needed changes, and do the leaders share the same understanding of, commitment to, and alignment with the critical outcomes of these changes?

- **Sponsorship:** Have leaders at all levels throughout the organization been properly prepared to drive the change in their areas of responsibility?

- **Synergy:** Do leaders see themselves as part of an interdependent team in pursuit of a common set of transformational outcomes?

- **Resolve:** Do leaders demonstrate the commitment required to lead the change, especially when circumstances and resistance to the change make this difficult?

- **Capacity:** Is leadership attentive to the limits of the organization's ability to absorb the scale and pace of the change?

- **Culture:** Have leaders considered how the organization's culture supports or impedes the full realization of their strategic intent?

- **Infrastructure:** Are the critical enabling mechanisms in place to support both the installation and realization objectives of the change?

Each dimension of change execution has its own narrative, which we will expand upon in the following pages.[i]

I. Intent

While many leaders have a high-level sense of the kinds of changes their organizations need to undertake, they often struggle to both succinctly and fully express the intended outcome of these changes. Furthermore, in their rush to address imminent threats or leverage emerging opportunities, leaders often neglect to create a "coherent narrative" that describes their strategic endeavors to their organizations, much less for their own senior team.

When the members of one executive leadership team were individually asked the simple question, "*Why do you need to execute this strategic transformation?*" we heard as many different answers as there were members of the team. The broad range of answers reflected that they were interpreting the transformation through very different lenses. What made it worse was that some of these interpretations contradicted each other. Some saw the changes as truly transformational, while others saw them as incremental to the status quo. The result was that their respective functional teams and operating units were receiving significantly different messages about how to execute the strategy, each of which emphasized a different set of change priorities. Therefore, it was no surprise that the CEO was frustrated with the lack of progress; the entire senior team (and indeed various parts of the organization) were pursuing different and non-integrated aspects of the espoused strategy. With this dynamic in place, they might achieve *installation*[ii] of certain components of the plan, but they would never see *full realization*[iii] of the overall strategic intent.

This example is not unique; it shows up in most of the interactions we see with business leaders, their teams, and their boards. It is the proverbial tale of the blind men and the elephant, where each individual describes encountering a significantly different animal based upon which part of the elephant he touches. Such divergent views of strategic intent make it hard for the overall strategy to be understood by the rank and file. Unless the disparate pieces are pulled together into one coherent narrative, teams will be prone to making decisions that address certain components of the strategy to the detriment of others.

Consequently, for desired outcomes to materialize, considerable time and attention must be invested to refine the intent statement. Leaders should be able to express the overall desired outcomes of the change in ways that are ***complete, concise, clear,*** and ***compelling***:

- Complete so that the members of the organization can gain a full understanding of what is intended by executing the change.
- Concise so that everyone can remain aware of the true purpose of the change at all times.
- Clear so that the intent can be easily communicated to and understood by all involved in executing the strategy.
- Compelling so that people relate to it at a personal level and are mobilized into action.

In summary, a robust articulation of intent is essential to fully realizing strategic initiatives within an organization; without it, people's grasp of the change will remain vague or diffused, and the execution of the directives will be inconsistent at best.

If this dimension of change is understood and operationalized:	*If this dimension of change is not understood and accepted:*
Leaders devote sufficient time to developing intent at the level of detail required to achieve true understanding, commitment, alignment. Senior leaders can describe the intent of the change in a simple and meaningful way that ensures core elements of the story survive telling and retelling without distortion. People across the organization understand and can describe the change concisely and consistently.	Leaders confuse high-level business strategy with intent clarification. Often, the primary vehicles for explaining the intent of the change are emails or lengthy slide decks that attempts to describe everything known to date about the expectations and plans for the change. People frequently misinterpret what leaders really want or continually return to seek explanations and challenge unclear direction.

II. Sponsorship

When an organization is planning and executing a major change, developing a shared understanding of, commitment to, and alignment with the change among the top echelon is just the first step to building a strong foundation for change. Sponsorship is the next key element of successful change. A sponsor is essentially a leader (or group of leaders) who can legitimize the change and who has the authority to allocate the resources that are necessary to fully realize it.

Executives at the top of an organization are referred to as “initiating sponsors.” In addition to sanctioning the change and providing the needed resources, their job has three additional requirements: 1) to effectively communicate the strategic intent of the future state; 2) to apply meaningful positive or negative consequences in support of the desired outcomes; and 3) to recruit additional sponsors at all levels throughout the organization.

This last requirement—to recruit sponsors down and across the organization—is a critical and often overlooked component of leading change. Since direct day-to-day communication and consequences must be employed at every level in the organization to realize strategic goals, sponsors are needed throughout the organization to legitimize the changes at their level of responsibility. We call these local leaders “sustaining sponsors.”

Creating a strong network of sustaining sponsors requires a deliberate plan to enroll and prepare leaders from one level of leadership to the next, moving down the organizational hierarchy. We refer to this as “cascading sponsorship.” Without sponsorship at all levels and across all segments of an organization, gaps develop where the change initiative may be announced (and even understood), but little commitment and/or alignment is generated.

An example of the need for cascading sponsorship came from a CEO who could not understand why the organization was not making faster progress in implementing its new three-year strategy despite nearly unanimous positive feedback and enthusiasm from the field. This organization had granted significant latitude to regional leaders in an effort to empower them to adapt to unique local circumstances. However, when it came to rolling out a global strategic plan and set of priorities, this level of autonomy worked against a unified and aligned effort, as regional leaders reinterpreted (and in some cases ignored) aspects of the plan that they felt did not suit their region. By selecting and implementing only parts of the plan, realization of the full strategy was falling well short of its goals. At this point, the CEO and her executive team realized that until they brought the regional leaders fully on board as local sustaining sponsors, they would continue to experience hit-or-miss outcomes and would certainly not realize their complete strategic intent. In response, they put forth a concerted effort to cultivate among the regional leaders a deep and shared understanding of, commitment to, and alignment with the strategy.

The reality is that 70% of organizations fail to fully realize their major change initiatives. Executives at these organizations are often the same ones who devote the time, money, and energy necessary to make the hard decisions about what should be changed, but then ignore or inadequately address the need to build a deep dedication to the successful execution of the decisions within their own ranks and throughout the organization. The 30% of executives who realize their organization's change aspirations typically put as much effort into fostering high levels of determination and tenacity throughout the organization—by enrolling sponsors—as they do ensuring that the right changes are being implemented.

In short, sponsorship across an organization that aspires to undergo transformational change is crucial. Strategic initiatives will be jeopardized if leaders responsible for their successful execution do not suitably track, assess and, if necessary, address gaps in sponsorship across their organizations.

If this dimension of change is understood and operationalized:	*If this dimension of change is not understood and accepted:*
An organization is willing to invest in the work required to prepare leaders at all levels to perform the sponsor role effectively. They will not proceed with a major change unless there is adequate support from leaders throughout the organization. Leaders are	Leaders delegate implementation responsibilities and then operate from the sidelines. They neglect to fully take on sponsorship duties, fail to gain the required level of commitment from the appropriate group of leaders within their organization,

cautious about the number of initiatives they sponsor because they understand the responsibility and burden they accept when they do so.	and oftentimes accept responsibility for too many initiatives, thus diluting their ability to perform as needed to ensure full realization.

III. Synergy

As important as strong individual sponsorship is, major change requires sponsors to unify and leverage their collective power to act. This is true throughout an organization, but particularly so among the senior executive team. For important changes to become fully realized, these leaders must work as a cohesive, interdependent unit.

At no time is "team" more important than when senior leaders take on dramatic change. The organization's leadership needs to be united in word and in action; they must come together around a common set of objectives, recognizing the team's interdependence in order to accomplish the desired outcomes. It is essential that they both trust one another and are trustworthy themselves. And, as in any team environment, they have to be willing to make personal sacrifices, if needed, for the sake of the greater good. Quite simply, major organizational change cannot succeed in the absence of a cohesive senior leadership team whose members uniformly put the success of the change ahead of their individual needs and agendas. We call this leadership quality putting the "mission before me."

A pattern we have observed with executive leaders is that when they lack a strong sense of common goals and interdependencies regarding the changes in play, "factions" within the senior team often develop . In one case, some members of an executive team were advocating for a bolder, more aggressive pace of implementation, while many of their peers preferred a more measured and cautious approach to the transformation. In another case, leaders had different opinions about how much time and energy to devote to preserving legacy programs versus devoting those resources to exploring new (and potentially riskier) alternatives. We have even seen cases of teams that became united in opposition to their leader's approach to the required change.

In any of these scenarios, when effective change sponsorship is compromised by a lack of top team synergy, the interpretations of and support for the intended changes that ultimately filter down to the rank and file often wind up being inconsistent at best. This can lead to the appearance (if not the reality) of silo thinking and/or pet projects taking priority over the realization of the overarching strategy. Therefore, if major change initiatives are to be successful, top team synergy must be carefully developed, monitored, and bolstered throughout the transformation. Without attending to this dimension of change, leaders responsible for the successful execution of the strategic intent risk compromising the entire endeavor.

If this dimension of change is understood and operationalized:	*If this dimension of change is not understood and accepted:*
The leadership team has established a high degree of shared understanding, commitment, and alignment in support of the change. They have made personal promises to themselves, one another, and the entire team regarding what they will do to operationalize their commitment; they are acting according to those promises; and they expect to be called out when they are not. They are also acting consistently in the best interest of realization of the change at the organizational level, even when it requires sacrifice within their own areas of responsibility.	There is an inadequate level of understanding, commitment, and/or alignment across the senior team regarding the change. Some leaders may not even support the change, and those who do may pursue it within the context of their individual areas of responsibility in ways that put the overall realization at risk. Silo thinking and pet projects supplant the realization of the overall intent.

IV. Resolve

Sponsors might work well together, but significant transformations can only succeed if led by *deeply committed* sponsors. With weak or non- existent sponsor commitment, there are only two options: expend time, energy, and resources in the “hope” of accomplishing change without the required leadership support, or create the appearance of change with little chance of sustainability—neither of which will save an organization in need of transformational change.

Strong resolve to accomplish the ultimate goals of a major change is evident when sponsors are deeply committed to ***why*** the status quo is no longer feasible, ***what*** will be substantively different after implementation, ***how*** the strategic intent will be achieved, and ***when*** it is to be accomplished. This kind of commitment manifests in both their actions and mindsets. These sponsors:

- Invest resources such as time, energy, and money to ensure the desired outcome.
- Pursue the change goal consistently over time, even when under stress.
- Reject ideas or action plans that promise short-term benefits but are inconsistent with the overall change strategy.
- Stand fast in the face of adversity, remaining determined and focused on fully realizing the intended outcome.
- Apply creativity, ingenuity, and resourcefulness to resolving problems or issues that would otherwise block change success.

In other words, these leaders demonstrate through their words and actions that *“Failure to realize this change is not an option on my watch!”* In the research for *Strategic Speed*, a handbook for strategy execution, co-author Ed Boswell found that leaders of organizations that successfully realized their change expectations were engaged in the behaviors listed above two to three times more frequently than leaders who were struggling to achieve their strategic intent. The successful leaders did not delegate 100% of execution; instead, they stayed visibly involved with—and committed to—driving the initiatives. They demonstrated resolve.

Sponsors who are successful in driving major change display a steadfastness that shows up in how they allocate their time, what they pay attention to, and how they ensure that what needs to happen, happens. Their resolve inspires similar commitment in others throughout the organization. Therefore, it is crucial to stay vigilant to levels of resolve, for if this falters, strategic initiatives will stall and, ultimately, run the risk of failing to be fully realized.

If this dimension of change is understood and operationalized:	*If this dimension of change is not understood and accepted:*
Sponsors with strong resolve declare which initiatives carry "imperative" status, ensure that competing demands don't hinder full realization, make tough decisions, are willing to take political risks, narrow attention to focus intensely on initiative-related progress or problems, and stay personally and visibly involved.	Weak sponsors leave the organization unclear about realization priorities, avoid making tough and politically risky decisions, are inattentive to signs that the organization is confused and/or overwhelmed with the volume and scale of change, and are often perceived as not personally engaged.

V. Capacity

Major organizational change requires those affected to think and act in new ways. Adapting to these new mindsets and behaviors means individuals must expend mental, emotional, and physical resources. However, at any one point in time, human beings have a finite supply of these resources, and when the demands exceed supply, they enter the state that Alvin Toffler called "future shock."[iv] Although they may go through the motions of changing, they do not make the shift at a deep level and eventually fail to contribute to the achievement of the desired strategic outcomes.

Early on in the process of engaging key transitions, leaders need to be attentive to the organization's current capacity to absorb additional change. Unfortunately, we often see companies create the unsustainable practice of pursuing new initiatives with great energy, effort, and fanfare, while not seriously stopping or scaling back enough other projects for people to have sufficient capacity to execute and absorb the important implications of the new changes.

One executive team had extreme difficulty identifying projects or programs to stop (or re-scope) in order to create the organizational bandwidth for their new strategic initiatives. Instead, they piled a new set of change projects on top of an existing portfolio of initiatives, which led to overloading the already over-burdened staff, as well as creating confusion and cynicism about the viability of accomplishing the desired outcomes. Ultimately, by not tackling the hard decisions, the senior team was unsuccessful in achieving their stated strategic intent and impact.

Another senior team had great difficulty saying “no” to new revenue opportunities, even when those opportunities were off-strategy. By giving in to the constant temptation to chase new business opportunities that were inconsistent with the change strategy, they diverted precious resources from the work necessary to achieve the long-term strategic intent. Ultimately, while financial gains were achieved in the short term, progress on the new strategic direction was effectively put on hold indefinitely.

Admittedly, making choices to re-scope, delay, or stop existing change projects can be difficult. As a result, executives often identify and act only on the “low-hanging fruit”—those initiatives that should have been terminated or redefined regardless of the circumstances. Other leaders go one step further and spend time making what they consider a series of “tough decisions” to halt or modify important efforts that have strong advocates and/or are well underway. Few companies, however, take the third and critical step: making the decision to discontinue or drastically re-think initiatives that are generally considered sacred, “off limits,” or exempt from any real scrutiny. In our experience, it is only when leaders take this third step in decision-making that they truly open up their organization’s capacity for transformational change—and, in so doing, signal to the entire organization an unequivocal commitment to full strategy realization.

In summary, overburdening an already hard-working team is a major risk when attempting to enact strategic transitions. Thus, leaders responsible for successful execution must attend closely to their organization’s capacity for change and, when necessary, cut programs and activities to make time and free up resources. Otherwise, the staff will become overwhelmed, and strategic initiatives will ultimately fail to achieve their stated goals.

If this dimension of change is understood and operationalized:	*If this dimension of change is not understood and accepted:*
Leaders are continually balancing the tension between pushing the organization to adopt the required changes and not exceeding the capacity of the organization to absorb and adopt the changes; they pay attention to signs that the organization may need a chance to catch its breath.	Leaders err either on the side of pushing the organization too hard, too fast, and too long to properly metabolize the changes, or they squander unused organizational capacity to transform by not driving hard or fast enough.

VI. Culture

A critical dimension of strategy execution that surfaces time and again with organizations pursuing significant shifts is the impact that an organization's culture has on either helping or hindering full realization of its change. Culture permeates every organization, showing up as "the way we do things around here" and providing guidance, whether intentional or *de facto*, on what is (or is not) done, how it is done (if it is), and why it is (or isn't) done. In the context of strategy execution, it is useful to think of culture as defined as *the patterns of mindsets and behaviors shared by people in an organization*. These prevailing mindsets and behaviors help people understand what actions are considered appropriate or inappropriate and, ultimately, can either support or destroy even the most critical initiatives.

When implementing strategic change, it is essential for leaders to assess whether it is necessary to alter the existing culture to achieve full realization. The question they should ask is, *"What is the degree of consistency between our existing mindsets and behaviors and those required to realize the promised benefits of this change?"* The greater the difference between the two, the higher the risk of failure without appropriate cultural modifications. Alternatively, if there is a high level of consistency, the organization's existing culture, in all likelihood, will support the new initiative. However, projects that don't drive at least some degree of cultural change are usually incremental, not transformational, in nature. If they lack significant shifts in mindsets and behaviors, the result will probably be a rather modest movement from the current status quo.

Related to the degree of consistency between the existing and the required mindsets and behaviors, there is another equally important cultural factor for leaders to consider when deciding to move forward with a strategic initiative: *"How* strong *is the existing culture?"* Not surprisingly, weak cultures (where people pay little attention to cultural messages) can be changed much more easily than strong ones. However, the stronger the culture, the more challenges leaders will face when working to instate the desired behaviors and mindsets, particularly if there is a sizeable gap between the existing culture and the one necessary for initiative success.

In addition to assessing both the consistency of the existing culture with the required mindsets and behaviors, as well as its strength, leaders must ask a third and final question: *"Should the change be modified so it more easily accommodates the existing culture, or should the culture be modified to be more consistent with what is needed to fully realize the strategic intent?"*

The preferred approach is usually to recalibrate the initiative itself ("change the change") to be more in line with the prevailing culture. Unfortunately, many essential strategic initiatives that companies are pursing cannot be fully realized if modified in this way. When this is the case, leaders will need to take on the difficult and risky challenge of modifying at least some elements of their organization's culture.

Differences between an existing culture and the new required mindsets and behaviors take a number of forms. Some common examples of cultural patterns that threaten the successful realization of change include:

- An existing culture that rewards effort and tenure, rather than results, when the new change requires accountability for tangible outcomes.

- An existing culture that allows staff at many levels to "opt out" of strategic decisions or policies without consequences when a unified and integrated approach throughout the organization is crucial.

- An existing leadership culture that says it is "all about the organization's ultimate purpose (its mission)" but routinely demonstrates a "me before the mission" mindset—that is, prioritizing an individual leader's emotional comfort or career considerations over what is needed to realize the organization's desired outcome.

In each of these cases, if the prevailing mindsets and behaviors are allowed to continue, the changes being pursued will be severely compromised at best and, more likely than not, doomed to fail. It is only by calling out and addressing these cultural patterns that leaders will have any chance of fully realizing the benefits of their strategic decisions.

If this dimension of change is understood and operationalized:	*If this dimension of change is not understood and accepted:*
Leaders have a profound respect for the power of culture on execution and are attentive to the attributes of the existing culture that support and facilitate the change as well as those that hinder successful realization. They visibly model and reinforce the cultural attributes required by the change and ensure other leaders do the same.	Leaders ignore or discount the power of their organization's culture to undermine even the most noble and well-intentioned changes and consequently see their efforts stumble, or they give up on the change effort too easily when confronted with resistance caused by the existing culture.

VII. Infrastructure

Typically, companies establish robust support functions (finance, technology, human resources, etc.) to enable day-to-day operations to run as smoothly as possible. And yet, many of these same organizations launch major internal transitions without adequate *execution infrastructure*—the enabling mechanisms necessary to achieve intended outcomes of critically important initiatives. Such infrastructure is essential to building the foundation for successful organizational change. In its absence, important endeavors become diffused, deteriorate, and eventually derail before their aspirations can be realized.

There are six enabling mechanisms that are critical to an organization that is facing significant change and where achieving full realization is an imperative. Failing to adequately address any one of these six elements can put transformational undertakings at risk.

The six core elements of effective execution infrastructure are:

- **Change execution team**: Assembling an experienced and skilled team of individuals who can work together to build, execute, and oversee a robust change plan
- **Required resources**: Ensuring that the change execution team has the resources they need (e.g., time, money, technology, and access to sponsors) to prepare and execute a realization-focused change plan
- **Governance**: Creating clear guidelines and practices for effective decision-making as well as appropriate and timely escalation of risks as they arise
- **Change execution plan**: Building a plan that encompasses putting all of the needed elements in place (installation) as well as how to achieve the necessary mindset and behavior shifts for delivering the promised results (realization)
- **Change methodology**: Adopting an approach to implementation that reflects a broad and deep understanding of the human landscape during change and accounts for the challenges associated with both installation and realization of critically important initiatives
- **Tracking and reporting**: Constructing a complete, accurate, and ongoing picture of the status of the change initiative so that appropriate adjustments can be made as implementation takes place

Without these six *enabling mechanisms* in place, the risk that major initiatives will fall short of their intended outcomes increases dramatically. On the other hand, when all elements are properly engaged, the prognosis for accomplishing the desired change objectives is dramatically enhanced.

If this dimension of change is understood and operationalized:	*If this dimension of change is not understood and accepted:*
Leaders make clear-eyed assessments of the mechanisms and resources required to enable both the installation of the desired change as well as the realization of its intended shifts in mindsets and behaviors. They are aware of the risks to full realization if they underinvest in building adequate execution infrastructure.	Leaders treat execution infrastructure as an afterthought and hope they can achieve full realization with minimal investments in the enabling mechanisms. Change execution teams become frustrated when they are asked to achieve realization but are only provided the mechanisms and resources that allow them to achieve installation, at best.

CONCLUSION

Given the challenges of change execution described above, one could not be blamed for feeling, at this point, that leading major organizational change is difficult to say the least. If it looks hard, that's because it is. Even with considerable effort, success is not guaranteed. And yet, many leaders feel that they have no choice but to take their chances navigating the risky waters of major change. Despite the hurdles that must be faced, the implications for not changing far outweigh the risk of attempting significant transitions.

This paper was written to help leaders take their best shot at this daunting task. We have discussed seven critical dimensions of strategy execution that make the difference between being in the 30% of organizations that fully realize their strategic intent and the 70% that fail to achieve their promised outcomes. In our experience, leaders who are successfully negotiating the disruptions currently buffeting the sector are investing time, effort, and resources in:

- Properly formulating their organization’s strategic ***intent*** while building shared understanding of, commitment to, and alignment with the change;
- Establishing a cascading network of ***sponsors*** who are well-prepared to drive the change at all levels;
- Creating a strong sense of ***synergy*** among and across members of the senior leadership team;
- Leading the change with ***resolve***, even under challenging circumstances;
- Balancing the demands of the change with the organization’s ***capacity*** to absorb and adapt to them;
- Effectively aligning the organization’s ***culture*** with its new strategy; and
- Ensuring that the necessary change execution ***infrastructure*** is in place to help achieve the intended outcomes (installation as well as realization) of the change initiative

By remaining attentive to these seven dimensions while planning and implementing strategic responses to the disruptive forces affecting their organizations, leaders increase their chances of successfully driving the changes that will help overcome their operational and/or existential challenges.

ENDNOTES

[i] While we illustrate each dimension of change with challenges that leaders face when trying to drive organization-wide changes, we are increasingly finding that chief executives face similar hurdles when trying to bring their boards into alignment with the changes (and vice versa). CEO–Board challenges of this nature will be the subject of a future Conner Partners essay.

[ii] *Installation* is achieved when a solution is inserted into the work environment (i.e., announcing, placing, and setting it up, as well as training people in its appropriate use).

[iii] *Realization* occurs when the sought-after mindsets, behaviors, and promised outcomes are consistently demonstrated over time.

[iv] Alvin Toffler, an American writer and futurist, used this concept for the basis of his identically-named and bestselling book, Future Shock (Random House, 1970).

SUGGESTED READINGS

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Ed Boswell

Ed is co-founder and CEO of Conner Advisory, a consulting firm established for the sole purpose of supporting leaders who are pursuing *changes that matter*. In this capacity, he collaborates with leaders from a diverse set of humanitarian and development organizations such as World Vision, Doctors without Borders, and Relief International, as well as associations such as InterAction and InsideNGO that support the international NGO community.

Prior to starting Conner Advisory, Ed was a partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) where he headed up the US People and Organization consulting practice. In this role, Ed was responsible for leading a team of more than 400 practitioners who helped clients execute large-scale strategic change, transform HR into a more effective and strategic function, and optimize organizational talent. Before that, he served as President and Chief Executive Officer of The Forum Corporation, where he advised senior business teams involved in major change initiatives.

A recognized leader in the field of strategy execution, Ed co-authored *Strategic Speed: Mobilize People, Accelerate Execution* (Harvard Business Press, 2010), which provides a blueprint for leaders who are executing transformational change in their organizations. Ed earned his Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Pennsylvania. While at Penn, he also received The Wharton School Certificate in Business Administration.

Daryl Conner

Daryl is founder and chairman of Conner Partners, a consulting firm specializing in strategy execution; Conner Academy, a professional development firm dedicated to helping leaders and change practitioners explore character and presence as a means for advancing their capabilities; and Conner Advisory, a consulting firm dedicated to serving leaders who are pursuing *changes that matter*.

During his 40-plus years of practice, Daryl has educated and advised strategic leaders and seasoned change practitioners in many of the world's most successful organizations. His focus has always been on helping them both understand and address the challenges and opportunities they face during transformational change.

Daryl's work is built on a strong foundation of research, extensive consulting experience, and a master's degree in psychology. He has authored two books—*Managing at the Speed of Change* (Random House, 1993) and *Leading at the Edge of Chaos* (John Wiley & Sons, 1998)—and more than 250 other publications including journal and magazine articles, monographs, book chapters, and videos.

You can read Daryl's blog on executing major change at connerpartners.com/blog-series as well as his new essay series on the mastery path for experienced change practitioners at conneracademy.com/essays-on-the-mastery-path/.