

Changing the Way We Change Using Cartaphor Technology



Why is it that most organizations struggle tremendously to make real change? Whether consolidating a merger, re-engineering business processes, restructuring, changing value propositions, introducing new IT systems, or even relocating, all too often the change process is derailed by the resistance of employees. The challenge of change increases even more when the group is diverse and incorporates many cultures, nationalities, ages, genders religious beliefs, social classes and work experiences.

When there is change, often there is resistance. Resistance is one of the most powerful drivers of human behaviour. This resistance to change consequently creates a challenge for leaders. Most organizations make two fatal mistakes when it comes to dealing with resistance to change. First, they underestimate how important, deeply rooted cultures, behaviours and thinking styles play a part in the change process. Secondly, they underestimate what is required to change those behaviours and thinking styles and ensure the change isn't interpreted as a threat.

So how can an organisation successfully change with so many differences and so much resistance? In reality if you don't convince people that change is beneficial, they may initially comply yet consciously or subconsciously become saboteurs to the change effort. This is often because their old established behaviours and thinking patterns are rooted in a belief that says 'this is how I've survived around here so why change?' No matter what culture you are from, change is resisted because people:

- i) Like to do what is familiar
- ii) Respond to 'threats of survival' by resisting or fighting
- iii) Respond first with emotion then with logic

As a leader you cannot impose change - people and teams need to believe **their** solutions and positive responses to the challenges are valued and therefore become part of the solution.

The biggest leadership challenge is in creating that buy-in especially in multi-cultural, often multi-lingual environments.

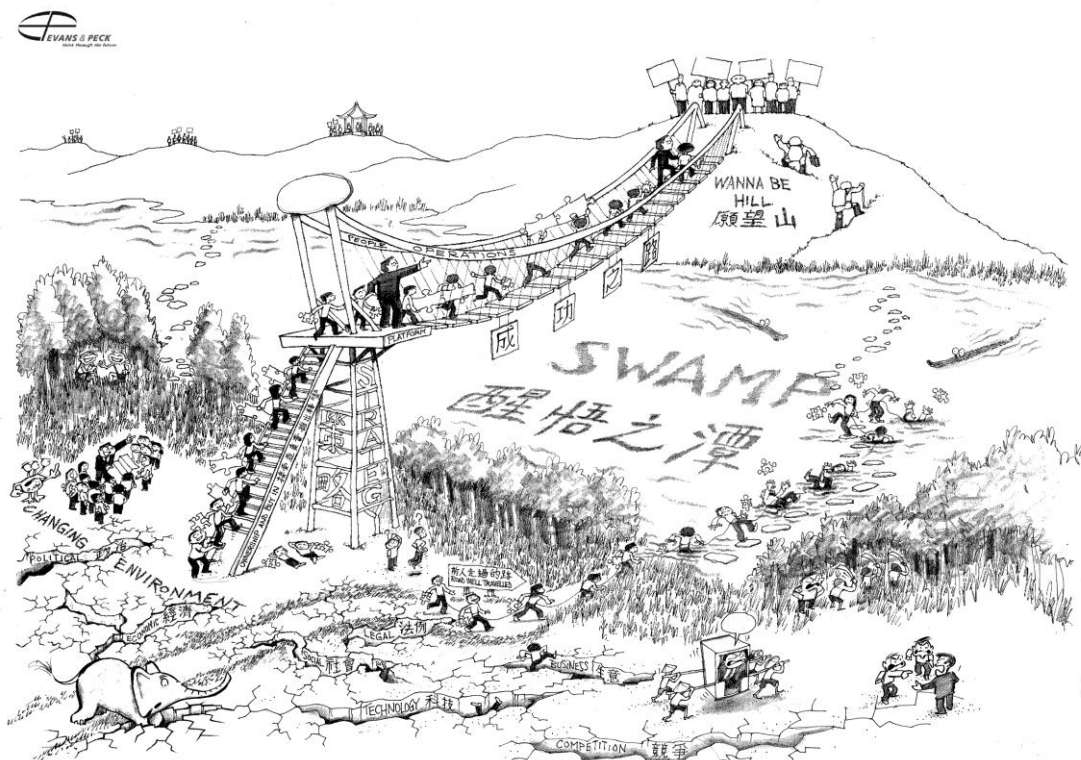
In 2003 The Evans & Peck Organisational Development team of Barry Brewster and Jeremy Kidner were working in the field of Organisational Development and needed a tool for organisational change initiatives. They wanted a tool to aid communication across cultures, values and languages. Brewster and Kidner worked with cartoonist, Gavin Coates to create the Cartaphor process in Hong Kong. The process, in part, involves building buy-in by facilitating collaborative planning sessions to map out the "Desired Future State" of the organisation. The concepts created from those discussions, are turned into metaphors and the metaphors are turned into pictures in the form of a cartoon. Hence the name Cartaphor (a metaphor drawn in the style of a cartoon) was created. The practice of Cartaphors is now spreading across the world as facilitators and leaders move into the new world of Agile Business Leadership.

The power of Cartaphor Technology lies within the facilitated development of the organization's specific metaphor. By using proven facilitation techniques, knowledge and wisdom is extracted from the group and collaboratively used to develop the final product. The completed Cartaphor provides a visual representation and narrative of the path towards the 'Desired Future'. By creating this visual representation of the situation, all employees begin to believe their issues are addressed and they see hope for the future through positive visualisations.

Cartaphors increase clarity of the situation and serve as an excellent tool for communicating with all people of all cultures who may speak in different languages and live in different geographic locations. The principles of using Cartaphors for change include:

1. **C-** Create a collaborative environment through facilitation.
2. **A-** Agree on the “current state” of the organisation. What works and what doesn’t.
3. **R-** Reflect on what could be your ‘Desired Future State.
4. **T-** Turn the reflections into a metaphor.

5. **A-** Animate the metaphor- draw it
6. **P-** Precisely define the key learning points and fine tune the message using pilot groups to develop a narrative that allows anyone using the Cartaphor Technology to understand and feel part of the strategy.
7. **H-** Honour the knowledge and wisdom of your people by eliciting feedback. Ask people to comment from within the language of the metaphor.
8. **O-** Operationalise the change by actually looking for evidence of what is working not what is broken.
9. **R-** Reinforce the message by rewarding the behaviour you want and celebrate the success.



If this Cartaphor represents your organisation, how would you answer the following questions?

1. Where do you see yourself and your organisation in this picture?
2. Why do you fit into this picture? Why? What role are you playing?
3. What does this picture tell you about how your organization can change and improve?
4. If you asked your subordinate the questions above, what would they say?

When facilitating a discussion within the protection of a metaphor “undiscussables” become “discussable”!

Leaders have a responsibility to facilitate, communicate and enable change. Cartaphor Technology generates commitment to change through the process of participation and helps cross the boundaries of language and culture to ensure results are achieved. The process creates huge potential for issue resolution and positive change.

In Government Departments people are often reluctant to speak up or give feedback to senior people. By using the “protection” of the Cartaphor, people are more comfortable to become engaged in the metaphor, imagine themselves part of it and provide comments that provide insights into the thinking and feelings of staff.

At Evans & Peck the use of Cartaphors have become a staple for;

- Creating a positive motivation towards change
- helping people broaden their perspectives
- increasing efficiency
- creating a sustainable future
- developing and deploying a corporate vision
- explaining complex messages in a simple and understandable format
- presenting business plans
- allowing every person in the organisation understand their value and role in achieving success
- creating cultural change (especially in multi-lingual organisations)
- gaining feedback from all levels of the organisation
- focus group tool
- creating partnerships (partnering) agreements
- roles and responsibilities mapping