



UNCOVERING THE REAL DRIVERS OF CHANGE

Angela Boyd's case study

I love the journey of change, I liken it to the weather, stormy, unpredictable, sunny and energising, usually in the same day. Change is not confined to single events, people or organisations. It is part of every day life, learning to adapt and respond has always been part of the evolution of the human race.

I want to share with you the approach and 3 key success factors from a recent change journey with the IT division of one of the largest Universities in Melbourne:

1. Change needs a clear vision, where are we now, where are we going and how do we know we are moving in the right direction?
2. Be the change you want to see,
3. Change as a continual improvement mindset.

Exploration

When engaged to work with a major university to increase the emotional intelligence of its people, I was curious to know what was driving this request. After some strategic questioning, I found out the need was driven by the response from a recent customer service survey that indicated service levels and quality of service were below acceptable levels.

Using an Integral approach (see graphic opposite page) which helps us understand the complexity of change, we delved into systemic questioning to explore each of the four quadrants.

What we learnt was there had been a major organisational re-structure, downsizing of the workforce, low morale, change in leadership team and lack of strategic direction. This brought home the fact we faced more than a lack of EQ skills, what was emerging was a need for:

1. A collective vision, strategy and road-map for change (Collective External),
2. Leadership capability to role model desired changes and build the desired culture (Individual External),
3. Continual improvement mindset (Individual Internal) so people could be empowered to deal with issues and focus on achieving results.

Take note, most change efforts fail as they focus on one quadrant and do not address wider systemic and interrelated issues.

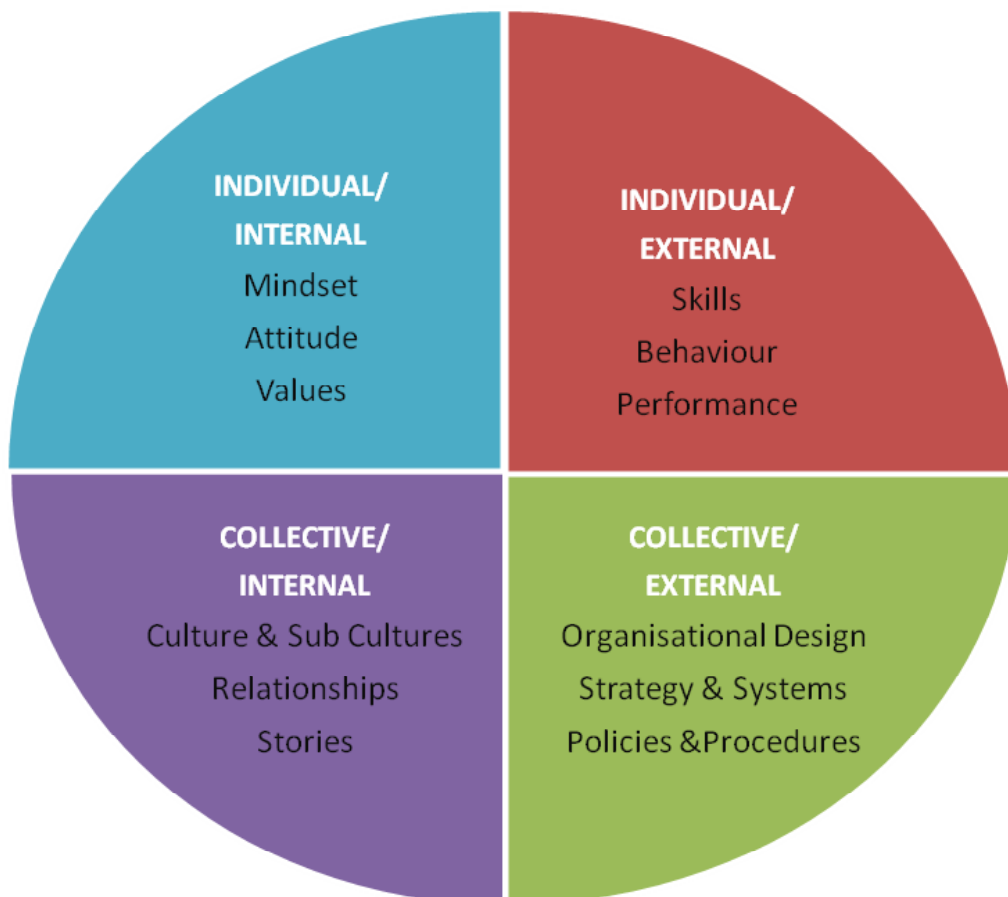
Design

A project team was established including two senior executives, an internal communications and change agent and myself, to act as program design, soundboard and coach. A change champion team was also established to represent the voice of middle management and staff.

A change roadmap was designed in stages of activity, each stage spanned 3 months and informed the following stage spanning an overall 12 month period. This approach worked well and enabled us to communicate activities in advance, adapt and integrate feedback at each stage.

• Stage one

Vision and Strategy workshops. These were interactive sessions involving senior leaders and change champions. The outputs were 4 pillars for change with clear objectives and measurable outcomes.



• Stage two

LSI 360 degree survey which identified mindset and behavioural climate of senior and middle management as well as development needs. Executive coaching was provided to senior leadership team to support and enable desired change.

• Stage three

leadership development for senior and middle managers to create a shared understanding, common language and mindset to achieve the vision. (We tailored a full day program to develop communication and coaching skills to empower leaders to role model desired change).

Implementation

This is the stage people struggled with most, transitioning from cognitive 'knowing' what needs to happen to actual 'doing'. I refer to this the 'being' stage. Senior leaders were provided with individual coaching to help support this transition stage. A key to success here was to gain commitment from each leader to engage fully in 'being' the change. Without a learner's mindset and openness to role model desired behaviour with teams, cynicism and mistrust emerges which can seriously de-rail progress.

In this case, senior leaders were not seen to be modelling desired behaviour immediately. This was reported by middle management who through informal feedback mechanisms commented on lack of visible change in areas like openness and communication with team, involvement with planning and problem solving. That said, there were many positive stories emerging. Coaching conversa-

tions emerged as the key skill applied by managers after the one day training program. Adopting a more results focused style helped managers to:

- empower team members to problem solve and make decisions, reducing dependency on managers time,
- engage cross functional discussions, breaking through silo's and systemic issues,
- improve team communication and dynamics, resulting in better morale and performance.

In summary, embarking on any change as a final destination is a limited path. Adopting a continuous improvement approach invites deeper inquiry, discussion and accountability. Acknowledging that organisations are made up of complex interrelated webs will enable us to look beyond the immediate and to consider the systemic driver.