# Change Management in a Chaotic World

### Change Through Chaos

Change is defined by its impact, and impact could be defined as the intersection of two variables: magnitude and speed of change. COVID-19 has both; as such, it could be called the mother of all change. And while world leaders and heads of organizations are busy putting out the pandemic fires, there is one area they can't ignore; change management.

Prosci, a world leader in change management defines a change manager's role as such: "A change manager will play a key role in ensuring projects (change initiatives) meet objectives on time and on budget by increasing employee adoption and usage. This person will focus on the people side of change, including changes to business processes, systems and technology, job roles and organization structures".
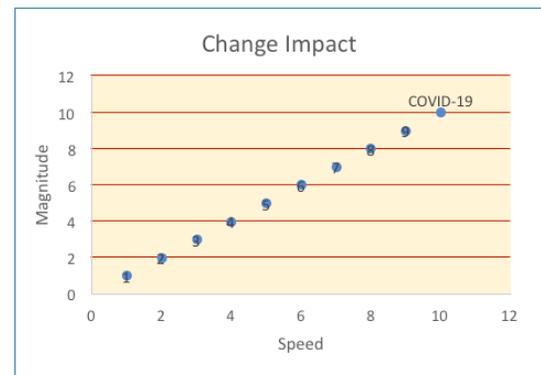
However, COVID-19 is not a project. This pandemic has created global chaos touching every aspect of life with dizzying speed to the extent that decision makers can't keep up. It is forcing change managers to rethink their approach starting with a fundamental question: **How do we build a change management framework that handles chaos?**

In order to build a chaos accommodating model, we begin by examining some definitions and fundamental principles highlighted in a study by Rensburg and Ströh, 1998, titled: *Communicating on the edge of Chaos: a Transformation and Change Management Perspective.*



COVID-19 Change Impact: Magnitude/Speed Matrix

a) Transformation is about moving the organization from its current state to a future state that meets the vision and objectives of the socio-political environment. Change management is a set of tools and techniques that are used to drive the transformation process;

b) Change causes conflict;

c) Establish patterns of order out of seemingly chaotic behaviors?

Change management focuses on outcomes. Outcomes could be benefits or disbenefits and the people impacted by change could be winners or losers. With COVID-19, the first step is to recognize that while the magnitude of change is global, the impact is societal and sectoral. In order to establish patterns of order we need categorization.

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**We ask more questions:**

1. What industries and societal groups are going to be impacted and how?

2. Are there are any beneficial side effects from this Pandemic?

3. Could those benefits be used to mitigate some of the disbenefits?

Change management practitioners have different ways of categorizing domains of change. "Managing Successful Programs", (MSP), has a simple yet malleable categorization focusing on four major domains: Process, Organization, Technology and Information, (POTI). Under each domain, several sub-domains could be grouped as the need might arise. Once the desired outcomes and benefits - or disbenefits - are identified, the practitioner proceeds to examine the gap between the "As Is" and the "To Be" states, find "Patterns of order", establish a roadmap and then use all the tools at his or her disposal to make the transformation less painful or even beneficial.

**Change Managers and Change**
The pandemic has changed the way business is conducted. Consulting companies are not immune and should adapt. Perhaps the first way of adapting could be in the way consultation is provided. Consulting companies – and clients – might wish to consider different service offerings based on a variety of models: hourly, daily, weekly, monthly or longer.

The second could be in embracing the rapidly evolving virtual conferencing and online collaboration. Working from home is going to be the norm for many industries. Today, I can offer my international clients the same kind of service from the comfort of my home office to theirs. There is no need for them to fly to Canada, nor flying me to their countries. The same applies to our local government and private sector clients.

All to say, the world is changing; those who adapt will survive.

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**Meet our Subject Matter Expert – Oussama El-Mohtar**
Oussama El-Mohtar is a change management practitioner with over twenty years of Canadian and international experience. He is certified as a Change Manager, (Prosci) Program Manager, (MSP), Strategy Manager, (Balanced Scorecard) and IT Project Manager (a two-year certification program). He also holds a BA in Mass Communications from the University of Ottawa. He lives in Pontiac, Quebec.

We continue to support our clients working remotely, and safely
during the Covid-19 precautions.

**If you are interested in learning more about Change in Chaos,
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