

# Leadership and Change Management

Annabel Beerel



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# PREFACE

As this book goes to press the world economy appears to be falling apart. Every corner of the globe is experiencing some version of the global economic meltdown. The United States benchmark stock index, the Dow Jones, has fallen well below 7000, a level it has not held since 1997, twelve years ago. Unemployment in many countries is ratcheting up at a rapid pace. Banks are failing, companies are going bankrupt and individuals are losing not only their life savings but also the roof over their heads. The TARP (troubled asset relief program) set up in the US with the goal of saving banks by taking over their toxic assets and pumping in taxpayers' money, has so far not achieved many of its intended goals. The Bank of England is desperately trying to resist nationalizing one of its largest banking entities while also shoring up a bleak economic situation. Everywhere it seems mortgage defaults are on the rise as is the collapse of many businesses previously considered sound. What is going on? How is one to understand this emerging new reality?

This book, *Leadership and Change Management*, emphasizes that the fundamental task of leadership is the management of change and all that entails. Change always arrives by way of new realities. Effective leaders recognize new realities when they are new! This is not easy to do for many reasons. First, new realities often emerge in covert and intricate ways. They do not make themselves immediately obvious and can only be detected by an eye attentive to what is really going on in the present moment. Second, new realities always have a systemic impact. This means that in order to correctly identify and read new realities requires adeptness at systems thinking. Third (and by no means last), communicating new realities to others meets with their resistance. In general people resist new realities because they know new realities always signal some kind of change. In particular they resist unpalatable new realities, preferring to deny or ignore that these exist. If they have to deal with new realities, people prefer to deal with ones that are hopeful or favourable. Unpalatable realities are readily deferred.

The current crisis we find ourselves in is a result of many deferred realities we have collectively chosen to ignore or to repackage into fantasies we would rather deal with. For example, the financial system has demonstrated over and over again it is not able to self-regulate without devolving into excess and corruption. Remember the 1980s and Michael Milkin; the 1990s and the crazy

support of the dotcoms soon to be dotbombs, and the beginning of this century marked by Enron, Worldcom, Parmalat and so on?

The banking sector, as with most of our other more mature industries, such as automobiles and major consumables, has excess capacity. Excess capacity, a problem Karl Marx foresaw as part of capitalism's downside, creates huge problems of finding new demand or creating it. The relentless pursuit of new markets, and the pressure to create consumerist behaviour wherever we go, is our attempt to deny the reality of excess capacity and the need to address the capacity issue. We prefer instead to create unrealistic and unsustainable markets. Our new free market hope is that we can convert the billions at the bottom of the pyramid, as we refer to them, into avid consumers so that we do not need to address the huge number of unpalatable capacity problems. If we were to face our industry capacity problems head on we would realize that many, many organizations need to be allowed to fail. This reality is particularly prevalent in the financial services sector. The shadow financial market, which ingenious financial innovators have created with their collateralized instruments, derivatives and hedge funds, have provided some sophisticated techniques in creating market activity without really adding productivity utility. At the end of the day, as we now see, much of it is smoke and mirrors. Rather than address the reality of overcapacity head on, we are going to prop up many failing organizations citing the argument they are too large to fail. In the short term, this seems easier to deal with than the reality that we have created a world of excess (capacity), dependent on excess (consumerism). Somehow we hope this will all 'come out in the wash.' Unfortunately this wash is going to cost taxpayers around the world not only billions of dollars but also faith and trust in a system that used to pride itself in faith and trust.

The text *Leadership and Change Management* points out that reality, by definition, never goes away. It is here to stay. We have a choice: do we embrace new realities as soon as we can or do we try to manipulate them and respond to them according to our own comfort or timing? Effective leadership, this book argues, is about helping people and organizations embrace reality head on, regardless of how challenging the reality might be. The better able we are to deal with new realities, the more adaptive we become. Given that change is relentless and is arriving faster, with more systemic implications than ever before, there is no greater asset, personal or organizational, than having an adaptive outlook that encourages the following.

- Integrity by facing reality, as reality is the truth.
- Wisdom by working with the systemic nature of what is truly happening here and now.
- And resilience by willingly and openly embracing change no matter how uncomfortable it might be.

This book explores all of these issues. It provides insights, examples and opportunities for reflection. This book is essentially a call to everyone's own ability to exercise leadership and to manage change, thereby living life well.

Annabel Beerel  
Sudbury, Massachusetts  
March 2009

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book has been ten years in the making. While in some ways it is a sequel to my previous book on leadership, *Leadership Through Strategic Planning*, the ideas in this book are far more adventurous and challenging than those in my previous text.

There are many, many people to whom I owe a huge thank you for guiding me as I formulated the ideas included in these pages. Most specifically I would like to thank Ronald Heifetz of the J.F.Kennedy School of Government who, fourteen years ago, presented me with a new perspective on leadership, and who inspired me to wrestle with my own adaptive work in new and challenging ways. My thanks also go to the many individuals, colleagues and friends who engaged tirelessly with me on leadership issues and who supported me when I put my ideas on leadership into practice.

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Annabel Beerel, PhD  
Sudbury, Massachusetts  
March 2009

# INTRODUCTION

*Leadership and Change Management* takes a very specific approach to the topic of leadership. This approach is called the **Systemic Leadership** approach. The Systemic Leadership approach views leadership as fundamentally concerned with the process of change. The change process begins with why and what needs to change and continues right through to the execution and implementation of change.

In *Leadership and Change Management* we do not dwell on the execution and implementation aspects. A great deal has been written on those topics to the point where execution and implementation have in many instances become the ends rather than the means to important ends or goals. In this book, we focus instead on what we believe is the main purpose of change. The main purpose of change is to attune and align the organization to new realities that are continuously emerging and presenting themselves. New realities, by definition, are both new and real. The sooner the organization recognizes new realities, the more time and opportunity it has to initiate appropriate strategic responses. Failing to recognize new realities or instigating change initiatives based on a false reading or understanding of new realities, is a sign of poor organizational leadership and inevitably has a detrimental effect on the organization's future survival.

Because new realities always signal change, effective leaders are attentive to environmental changes and trends. Environmental changes and trends are detected by mindfulness and an insatiable curiosity regarding what is currently taking place in the environment and its impact on different systems. A systems thinking mindset helps identify new realities and their systemic ramifications.

Staying attuned to new realities is difficult for a host of reasons. In this book we investigate these reasons in detail. One critical reason is that change always creates some form of loss. Both people and organizational systems resist accepting unpalatable changes for as long as they can so they can defer dealing with those losses. Since reality does not go away, nor can it be deferred, the longer the organization resists – or if it elects to change to a more palatable reality – the greater the negative impact on the organization's ability to adapt to change. Leadership is about holding the organization's feet to the fire to recognize, face, embrace and adapt to change. The measure of effective leadership is the extent to which leaders have helped the organization and its members enhance their adaptive capacities. Enhancing adaptive capacities takes time.

There are many reasons why change efforts fail or are minimally effective. Two important reasons are that the organization does not respond appropriately to new realities, and/or organizational leaders do not provide a sufficient containing function for the anxiety and distresses that change creates. *Leadership and Change Management* stresses these two aspects of the change process and delves in detail into how mistakes in the reading of new realities and insensitivity to the emotional life of the organization can be avoided. The ideas with regard to dealing with organizational distress have been inspired by Ronald Heifetz of the J.F. Kennedy School of Government, who developed the concepts of adaptive challenge, and adaptive and technical work. The ideas of the Tavistock Institute and its Group Relations approach have also shaped many of the ideas presented in the discussions of human behavior and their defenses against anxiety.

Because the critical task of Systemic Leadership is wrestling with new realities, leadership adopting this approach is an inherently ethical endeavor. New realities represent new truths. What is real is what is true. Wrestling with the truth and trying to be aligned to the truth represents this ethical quest. Effective leadership is thus ethical leadership; they represent two sides of the same coin.

In *Leadership and Change Management* I explain these ideas and many more in detail. Each chapter includes practical exercises and case studies. This is an excellent text for anyone interested in leadership, management, organizational behavior and ethics. It also provides interesting insights to the discerning general business reader.

Some of the key points of each chapter are summarized below.

Chapter 1 introduces the concept of new realities and how the organization needs to stay attuned to new realities in order to remain relevant and survive. New realities are always arriving. They always signal change, hence change is continuous and the call to change never ends. Change always challenges people's values. This explains their tendency to resist change. In order to be more flexible and accepting around change, organizations need to become more adaptive. Organizations must develop their adaptive capacities so that they may become better at anticipating and responding to change. Effective leaders identify new realities and help the organization enhance its adaptive capacity.

Chapter 2 focuses on the importance of systems thinking and having a systems mindset if one wishes to be adept at recognizing new realities and grasping their implications. A systems thinking mindset sees the world as interrelated systems that are in perpetual motion and change. Patterns and relationships are more important than individual units or events. A systems thinking mindset provides opportunities for understanding the environment from multiple perspectives and from more than one dimension. Since new realities are always systemic in nature, effective leaders use systems thinking and approach problems systemically.

Chapter 3 explores a range of normative leadership theories and introduces the Systemic Leadership approach. Systemic Leadership is a transformational

approach that differs from other leadership approaches in that it emphasizes the tasks of leadership rather than the qualities or traits of leaders. While certain dispositions and talents will contribute to effective Systemic Leadership, anyone can essentially exercise leadership. There is no one blueprint model for leaders or leadership.

Chapter 4 develops the Systemic Leadership approach in detail. It explains important concepts such as adaptive and technical work and sets out the twelve steps of effective Systemic Leadership. It also explains the conflicting roles of leadership and authority and the implications of leading with or without authority.

Chapter 5 is devoted to the topic of authority. The notion of authority plays a huge role in our lives beginning in our earliest infancy. Our early experiences of authority shape our understanding and responses to people in authority in a variety of ways. Two important responses include our fear of authority and our tendency to cede our own moral authority to those who have authority over us. It is important that leaders understand the powerful influence the role of authority has over people and how easy it is to abuse one's authority. Leaders also need to understand that naming and defining reality is not the preserve of those in authority but requires the collaboration of others.

Chapter 6 focuses on the organizational behavioral aspects of change. At this time new realities are arriving faster than ever before and are challenging once sacred ground. New realities increase the stresses and anxieties already inherent in organizational life. Systemic leaders understand this dynamic and are attentive to the group dynamics that result. In this chapter we adopt the Group Relations approach to human behavior to provide a framework for understanding the emotional undertow of organizations, the anxieties that exist and the individual and group defenses against those anxieties. We also explain how the key task of the leader is containment of anxiety so that the creative energy of organizational members is not inhibited.

Chapter 7 addresses the shadow side of leadership. Here we explain how unethical, corrupt and ineffective leadership begins with leaders who are out of touch with reality, especially their own. Leaders who are focused on reality, especially the arrival of new realities, are far less likely to fall into the many moral traps that a leadership role invites and attracts. Narcissistic leaders and people in positions of power and authority who are distracted by fear are the most dangerous types of leader. They abuse their power, encourage dependency in their followers and surround themselves with sycophants. Only self-aware and self-reflective leaders can survive and remain effective.

Chapter 8 introduces the two important concepts of ethics and morality and explains their difference. It discusses how Systemic Leadership is primarily concerned with new realities so is concerned with the truth. What is real is true. New realities refer to new truths. Wrestling with the truth is essentially an ethical endeavor. Systemic Leadership thus equates with ethical leadership. Leadership and ethics are directly related. Therefore, according to Systemic

Leadership, effective leaders are ethical. Systemic leaders also understand the moral power of groups and how group pressure lowers the ethical standards of most groups.

Chapter 9 discusses the role of leadership in the strategy development process. Strategy addresses new realities and sets out the plans for the organization's response. Adaptation to change always requires a certain amount of transformation and learning. Effective leaders ensure the organization engages in continuous learning and uses that learning to strategic effect. Strategy development is in essence a continuous learning process. Scenario planning is a powerful tool for reality testing new realities and for developing key assumptions around change that require a strategic response.

Chapter 10 brings together the challenges and opportunities leaders face, especially those who adopt a Systemic Leadership approach. It highlights self-awareness, mindfulness, the ability to see the big picture and courage as four particularly important ingredients of Systemic Leadership. Systemic leaders realize that organizational leadership and management is as much a rational as an emotional process. In order to survive the pressures and projections of the group while holding up new realities they need to form strategic alliances. Above all, effective leaders understand that leadership begins with oneself. In reality, one cannot change others, only oneself!



# 1 NEW REALITIES AS THE FORCE OF CHANGE

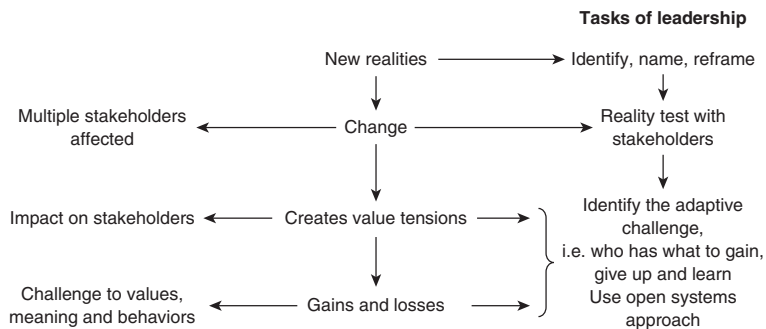


Figure 1.1

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces important themes and concepts that underpin the rest of the book. It begins with a discussion of the need for organizations to remain **relevant** to their stakeholders if they wish to survive. To remain relevant requires the ability to read and respond to **new realities**. New realities are the forces that herald change. New realities are pervasive and are continuously arriving at our doorstep, whether we invite them or not. ‘New realities’ is the most important concept of this book. As we shall discover, leadership and new realities go hand in hand.

Our virtual world, where time and space are collapsed into a virtual here and now, has speeded up the arrival of new realities and compounded their number. We are easily overwhelmed by the amount of new realities we are expected to embrace. We also need to create new mindsets that recognize perpetual change is the only true reality. The notion that change is a series of one-off events that can be anticipated, planned and tidily managed is fallacious. This mindset is outdated. New realities are continuously arriving and change arrives swiftly on their heels.

To remain relevant and alive in today's world requires a **shift in consciousness**, new ways of perceiving the world, and new ways of wrestling with the challenges of change. We also need to understand that there are good and bad responses to change. Simply changing is insufficient. If we do not change in response to new realities but rather in favor of some fantasy of our imagination, this will not serve us in the long run. Good change aligns us with new realities; bad change does not. Good change keeps us relevant, bad change does not.

By and large we do not like change. We resist it if we can. Change frightens and inconveniences us. One reason for our often deep resistance to change is that it always implies loss of some sort. Adapting to change requires **transformation**. Transformative change results from learning, and learning is not always easy. Change creates value tensions that require us to reprioritize or compromise our deeply held values or cherished beliefs. Harder still, change usually tests our own self-esteem or sense of self. Adapting to change is hard work.

Since we live in a world of continuous change the only way to survive and even thrive under this perpetual challenge to who we are and how we see ourselves is to strengthen our **adaptive capacity**. This is not easy. It requires adaptive work, which is different from **technical work**. This book argues that the most important tasks of leadership are to identify the new realities facing the organization and to help build the organization's adaptive capacity. This chapter explores these ideas in greater detail.

## **PRIMARY GOAL OF ORGANIZATIONS**

### **The Criticality of Relevance**

All organizations, regardless of their purpose or mission, have one common, primary goal. That primary goal is to remain **relevant**. Organizations must remain relevant to their societies and relevant to the stakeholders interested in and affected by their actions. As a key organizational purpose this seems obvious and even trite, yet this essential requirement for continued organizational existence is often forgotten or overshadowed by fancy discussions about strategy, competitiveness and profits.

Relevance must be the major driving force behind all the actions of the organization. If relevance does not remain at the forefront of organizational thinking, the organization will soon lose its attraction to its markets and customers, slip into dysfunctional behaviors, decay, and ultimately disappear. Many, many organizations fade into the zone of non-relevance (for example Singer Sewing Machines or the well-known Digital Equipment Corporation) and, despite all efforts, they cannot regain their previous position. The world has moved on!

## Relevance is Relational Power

Being relevant is about ‘engaged power.’ When something or someone is ‘relevant’ this describes their relational significance. If someone is considered significant, it means he or she has a ‘power’ that has traction when engaging with others. With power one can do and achieve things. Powerless people or organizations are insignificant and readily become irrelevant. Power is a relational concept. Power as a force does not exist unless it can be exerted, expressed or used in relation to something else. Power and relevance go hand in hand. Being relevant generates power. Without power the individual or the organization ‘dies’ (May, 1972). (authority, obedience and power are discussed in Chapter 5)

The key challenge leaders of organizations face is how to ensure their organizations remain relevant so that they have the power and the resources to do meaningful things. Leaders need to consider what ‘relevance’ means from the perspective of the organization’s mission or purpose, and to whom; which markets to target and where geographically they should position themselves. It is unlikely that any organization can be relevant in the eyes of everyone. Even the mighty Wal-Mart cannot make that claim. According to *Business Week*, July 2007, Wal-Mart retreated from the German market by selling eighty-five of its stores to the local competition. Wal-Mart could not adapt to German culture and was thus unable to become relevant to sufficient German consumers. The consequence: exit the market or die. It exited.

## Relevance Requires Responding to New Realities

To remain relevant requires organizations to be adaptive, creative and innovative.

This means that the mission or underlying purpose of the organization must be made relevant through vision statements that lay out goals and strategies that cohere with the organization’s competencies and above all address changing realities. Being in tune with new realities is what makes organizations adaptive and creative. This task is by no means easy. New realities are always arriving. Some realities are obvious and explicit, e.g. the looming retirement of baby boomers; some are not that readily obvious and are more implicit, e.g. a change in the structure of households away from the traditional nuclear family model; and some changes slowly creep up on one and suddenly appear to be a big new reality although they have been emerging for some time, e.g. global warming and climate change. Often, identifying the current reality is not easy. Identifying new realities when they are still new is even more difficult for the many reasons we discuss throughout this book. Easy or difficult, there is nothing more important for any system that wishes to remain alive and relevant than to orient its activities to responding to new realities.

## NEW MEDIA REALITIES

Google has radically overturned the newspaper industry. Google's search results track how many people click to view an ad thus providing advertisers with a measure of how many people actually read their ad. Advertising on the web linked to Google's search engine provides advertisers with a benefit they cannot get from traditional print media.

Newspapers and magazines have had to reposition. Large advertising budgets have been redirected to online advertising. Without repositioning, print media will become increasingly irrelevant. (Charan, 2007: 31)

## THE FORCES OF CHANGE

### The Pervasiveness of Change

Whether it is news on TV, the newspaper, discussion at the boardroom table or in the corridors of offices or manufacturing plants, everyone is talking about change. Change, they say, is the only constant. (Heraclitus, the Greek philosopher, told us this over 2,000 years ago – no new reality!) Everyone claims to be in so-called change mode. Products and processes are being revised, revamped, and re-engineered to respond to change. New industries are emerging, new types of companies are being created; new partnerships forged; new territories 'invaded'; new departments established; and newly skilled employees hired. Evidence of rapid and radical change is everywhere.

Change is pervasive. Many assert that never has there been so much change, such radical change, or such swift change as now. They insist we are facing change of new dimensions and proportions that exceed anything ever experienced. Is that true? Consider the time of the industrial revolution when, seemingly overnight, factories appeared; people left their traditional work at home to be employed by others; steam engines and automobiles replaced donkey carts and bicycles; and new types of medicines cured century-old diseases. Songs and discussions on the local commons were supplanted by the gramophone and the wireless, and flying machines soon ushered in the jet age. People living in those times must have been overwhelmed by the impact of change and are likely to have said much of what we are saying today about the radicalism and rapidity of change.

If we go further back in history we are likely to find many similar turning points where massive changes were the order of the day. If we look carefully we will note that not just every century, but every country heralded a series of spectacular changes.

## EXAMPLES OF RADICAL CHANGES

- Horses to chariots
- Sailing ship to hydrofoil
- Morse code to the telephone
- Printing press to the computer
- Bicycle to the automobile
- Radio to television
- Kites to aeroplanes
- Library to the world wide web

### Change: A Shift in Space and Time

The twentieth century brought with it a major change in our experience of space. One example is that thanks to advances in aerodynamic technology we can now travel faster than the speed of sound. This reality can hardly be grasped conceptually!

If we look back over the centuries we can mark our progress in the realm of travel. We evolved from walking, to riding the horse, to the donkey cart, to the bicycle, to the automobile, to the propeller plane, to the jet plane, and now to supersonic flight. Along with our new technical abilities, our consciousness has shifted in order to keep up with our changing understanding of distance. Distance, we know, relates to space.

Several hundred years ago, a once in a lifetime physical journey from, say, Casablanca to Mecca would take months. Now this trip is possible within several hours. We can also repeat this journey weekly or even daily without undue hardship. Our twenty-first-century understanding of journey is thus quite different to that of say four hundred years ago. There is no place on earth we cannot physically reach within twenty-four to forty-eight hours.

If for a moment we set aside the physical element of traversing distance and transport ourselves instead to the intellectual or mental plane, we recognize that here too we have made dramatic strides. In earlier centuries we could only communicate face to face via oral messages or handwritten briefs. Communication took time and space (distance had to be covered). Now, with the computer, the internet, and satellite communication, we can communicate almost instantaneously. There is no perceived space between us. Distance is collapsed into the immediate here and now. Space and time no longer exist. Everything is *virtually* here and now. The communication revolution has eradicated the 'space between.' Thus new happenings or new news is not new for long. We are relentlessly assailed with new realities. New realities are made known to us by seemingly instantaneous data feeds. No matter how much you and I might glue

ourselves to the news or the internet, there is no way we can absorb, never mind grasp or embrace, all the new realities being communicated.

The communication revolution is likely to continue. The speed of communication has stimulated the development in new technologies, which in turn has improved the technology of communication. The so-called information revolution has resulted from these new technologies that have spawned and fed the ubiquitous world wide web. One important reminder is that the bombardment of information we experience does not guarantee its relevance or quality. Our new challenge is not paucity of information but how to sift out the grains of relevant truths from the mounds of data, facts and fanciful narratives. This too is one of the key challenges of organizational leadership. How does one lead in a **virtual world**? How does one identify the most salient information required for good decision making?

## Change as the Only Reality

Judging by the enormous hype regarding the change we are experiencing one might be led to believe we are living in a new era. Well, are we? What makes this time so spectacular, so different? Is 'change' really a special phenomenon? Contemporary physics tells us that everything, everywhere, is always (and always has been) in perpetual motion and change. Nothing is static; everyone and everything consists of continuously vibrating molecules of energy. The cosmos comprises one pulsating mass of particles in continual movement toward new potentials, new possibilities and new outcomes (Capra, 1991; Laszlo, 2007). Waves of change perpetually wash through the cosmos. If this is true, and the new science is the governing scientific paradigm at this time, then it is clear that change is inherent in all that we are and do. Change *is* a constant; has always been with us, and will continue to dictate reality. In fact change *is* reality. Nothing can remain the same for any length of time. Change is as inevitable as night follows day.

So what is so different about our present time? Maynard and Mehrtens in their book *The Fourth Wave* (1993), argue that we are moving from an era of interconnectedness (third wave) to an era of integration (fourth wave). (The first wave was the agricultural revolution and the second wave industrialization.) In the fourth wave, as we come to realize how integrated the world is, we experience a shift of consciousness. As we learn and experience that China, for example, is only a few jet hours away and that China's culture and industrial activity can be brought into our living rooms via TV, we apprehend China differently. The charming notion that the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil can impact wind currents over Asia is now understood as an existential reality. Our perception of what is and can be has altered. The combined forces of technology and communications have not only removed or destroyed old fences and archaic stereotypes but have ushered in a profusion of new possibilities and choices. Entrenched ideas have always been

challenged, but never at the same rate as now. Old technologies have always faded away, but never at the current pace. The more we realize how interrelated we are with one another and with the environment, the more interrelated we become. The collapse of space and time brings to our consciousness something the sages have always insisted on: the only thing we need to pay attention to is the present moment. As Peter Drucker claimed in one of the books he wrote at the turn of the twentieth century, the future is now!

Given this reality the phenomenon of change is not what requires our attention as much as the impact and meaning of the change. Robert E. Quinn, author of *Deep Change: Discovering the Leader Within* (1996), writes 'If we want to make the world a better place, we need to understand change.' He claims that every person and every organization continually faces a core dilemma: deep change or slow death. Unless work is done to the contrary, all living systems move toward **entropy** or loss of productive energy. He claims that if we do not make deep change we are doomed.

I say more about change in Chapter 2. At this juncture we recognize that change is reality and not keeping apace with change soon renders a person or an organization irrelevant. If one ignores the reality not only of change, but also the need for continuous change, one dies!

## A STORY OF RELEVANCE

Recently I moderated a panel discussion on leadership. One of the panelists, the CEO of a small high-tech engineering company in New Hampshire, mentioned during her presentation that 80 percent of the tools and gadgets that are in common use today did not exist over ten years ago. She was making an important point about the rapidity of change. The audience nodded agreement. Further on in the discussions, when it was my turn to say a few words, intent on building on her comment, I asked the audience if they recognized my pen, which I held up for them to see. The pen at the time was a blue fountain pen. Over half the audience indicated they had never seen a fountain pen, never mind used one! When I carried out the same exercise in my class of juniors and seniors a week later, only five out of sixty students had ever seen a fountain pen before. How times change! Certain fountain pen makers have remained relevant to people like me who love all forms of special writing materials. Their market is surely a dwindling one and they are challenged to continuously recreate themselves to ensure their relevance. Not only are most people not that intrigued with fountain pens

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any more, most people depend on computers to do their writing for them. Writing by hand is a 'dying' art. There is no longer much *need* for fountain pens or any pens at all for that matter. How will organizations that make any kind of writing instrument or writing materials remain relevant in this kind of a world? Well, notice the growing market in specialized journals! If we do not write for work any more maybe we can be encouraged to handwrite in a beautiful journal with special pens, possibly fountain pens, as part of our reflection or leisure pursuits. This is one attempt at keeping writing materials relevant in changing times.

## Change Theories

Many theories of organizational change exist. Christiane Demers provides a synthesis of some of the predominant change theories in *Organizational Change Theories* (2007). In this book she illustrates how change theories have evolved over time and how our understanding of what initiates or motivates organizational change has altered from the 1970s to our present-day understanding. I do not wish to provide a synthesis of her synthesis but simply to highlight some of the different approaches to organizational change that she mentions.

Change theories address the issue of change from a number of different perspectives. One perspective considers whether change is internally determined or environmentally determined. I argue in this book that all change is and should be driven by environmental change. In other words, the stimulus for change is external to the system changing.

Another discussion about change rests on whether change is a radical or incremental phenomenon. Here the focus is on whether change is a transformational or evolutionary phenomenon. This theory looks into the implications of radical turnarounds as opposed to creeping strategic, structural and behavioral change. I argue that both types of change occur simultaneously in a far less definable and/or controlled fashion than we like to imagine.

Yet a further perspective on change focuses on the actions of management either selecting certain specific change strategies in a strategic and controlled manner or responding to crises and driving change through urgency and haste. In both cases change initiatives are considered to be highly rational and top-down-driven activities where leadership is exercised from the top. I resist this view of the management of change, as we will explore in Chapter 4.

The late 1990s and the twenty-first-century vision of change is different in that, instead of being deemed a one-off event, it is seen as pervasive, continuous and indeterminate. Here managers have less control as the organization grapples with change at all levels all the time. All members of the organization are caught up in change initiatives and everyone in the organization needs to see him or herself as