



# Chapter 7

## Evolutionary- Revolutionary

I worked for the phone company at the time of the Bell System breakup. The monopoly was being asked to compete. It turned out to be a trying time, because the local phone company was being asked to change from a provider of POTS—plain old telephone service—into a competitive supplier of communications, information, and entertainment. After years of providing the same old service, the company was being asked to provide new, more innovative and better services. Unfortunately, the company had selectively hired people who liked the status quo. A decade later after rounds of downsizing, the phone





# Evolutionary– Revolutionary

## Response To Change

**Evolutionaries** like to improve things. Find a way to make things better in your job or relationship. This is the essence of the Six Sigma, quality improvement movement.

**Revolutionaries** like to tear down the old and replace it with the newest ideas, technologies, etc. Instead of changing everything, find out what small change will produce the biggest impact. This is the essence of reengineering and innovation.

**Fundamentalists** like everything to stay the same. Find ways to see the similarities between coming changes and the current state of affairs. Fundamentalists are prime candidates for Darwin Awards.



companies were caught unaware by the sudden growth of "wireless" communications and the internet's demands for high-speed, second lines for home computers. Corning Glass, which invented fiber optics in the 1960s, had a hard time interesting the phone companies in high speed fiber networks because no one needed that much bandwidth to carry person-to-person calls. Besides, the prevailing wisdom was that you needed copper wire, not fiber, to carry voice signals, and there was already so much invested in copper. While perfectly positioned to be the internet communications solution for the country, most telephone companies hesitated to build these new, high speed networks, allowing smaller, faster, more innovative competitors to grab this high end market. Most hesitated to build wireless communications systems, as well. This story encapsulates the essence of the fifth motivation style—response to change:



- **difference** people are paradigm “shifters” who change the rules and patterns that formerly succeeded. Consider the digital clock vs the mechanical clock; the personal computer vs the mainframe. These revolutionaries like to initiate major changes in their life every 18-24 months. They represent about 30% of the population. In what area of your life are you driven to change every 1-2 years?



- **progress** people are paradigm “pioneers” who take the paradigm shift and begin to extend and enhance it. Compare an early Intel 8086 computer chip with only 27,000 transistors to a Pentium chip with over 9

# Questions & Answers

**Ask:** What is the *relationship* between your job this year and last year?

**Listen:**

- Same, similar (Same)
- Better, more (Progress)
- There is no relationship. (Difference) Do you mean "What's the *difference*?"

## Motivating Language

<b>Sameness</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Difference</b>
same	improve	new
similar	enhance	different
familiar	better	breakthrough

million! These evolutionaries like to initiate major changes in their life every 5-7 years. They represent 65% of the population.



- **sameness** people are the paradigm “settlers” who arrive after it’s been proven perfectly safe to do so. These fundamentalists only initiate major changes in their life every 15-25 years. They represent the remaining 5% of the population.

One of the greatest areas for conflict in business or relationships is our individual response to change. Some people thrive on change, others prefer incremental improvements, and still others want everything to stay the same. Sameness people, companies, and ideologies have a hard time adapting to changes in their environment as the phone company story demonstrates.

**Progress** people can take any product or process and begin to make it better. America found this out in the 70s and 80s. American companies created lots of new products, but the Japanese companies rapidly improved and enhanced the designs to quickly meet the varied needs of consumers. In grade school, students learn about the American Revolution and embody much of this entrepreneurial spirit, but they may not be as effective at improving, expanding or enhancing products as other cultures, because of the overriding metaphor of revolution and independence.

**Difference** people are always looking for the next breakthrough. They often change the “paradigms” or existing rules in a given industry. In a phone company resistant to changes in the status quo, difference-oriented

# Evolutionary



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H. R. Martin

*“...and just exactly what is the ‘and much, much more’  
mentioned in your ad?”*

# Revolutionary



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*“There goes the neighborhood.”*

leaders started moving into other lines of business: real estate, financial business...almost anything except the core business. Most of these businesses have now been sold and the capital funneled back into wireless or high-speed internet communications.

Current business books suggest that you need to "lead the revolution" while others tout "breakthrough improvement," but consider that all businesses rely on some combination of these three patterns. All businesses succeed by following procedures and routine, but they also need some element of innovation and improvement to stay competitive. Unions are mainly sameness. R&D departments are mainly difference.

In a relationship, one spouse will want to keep the house the same, while the other will continually redecorate. A parent may want their child to look "normal" while the teen may change their hair style or clothing every few months.

## Motivation

To influence a *sameness* person, we must discover how the change is the same or similar to what they already know or do. To influence a *progress* person, we must show how it's an improvement. To influence a *difference* person, we must highlight how it's new and different. *And* do all three for any *group* of people.

**Sameness:** This is *similar* to the way you've always done it, so it should be *familiar*.

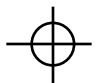
**Progress** This incorporates several *improvements* and *enhancements* that will prove invaluable.

**Difference:** This *breakthrough* strategy is *new*.



# Corporate Change

*Progress is a nice word.  
But change is its  
motivator. And change  
has its enemies.*  
-Robert F. Kennedy



**All:** This is *similar* to the way you've always done things with some useful *enhancements* and some totally *new* functionality.

## Motivating Companies to Change

Successful change is the process by which:

1. an innovation
2. is communicated through certain channels
3. over time
4. among the members of a social system

The average period for the universal adoption of an innovation is 25 years. Question: "Is there a way to speed it up? Is there a way to make any change more contagious in your company?" I believe the answer is "Yes!" So I'd like to offer for your consideration some information about how contagious ideas spread, what we can learn from it, and how to apply it.

For over 50 years, researchers have studied how changes are adopted, adapted or rejected by societies and cultures. This research is described in *The Diffusion of Innovations*, by Everett Rogers (Free Press, 1995). Diffusion is a model for understanding social change. There are several characteristics of "innovations" that can be adjusted to increase the speed of adoption—*advantages*, *compatibility*, *complexity*, *trialability*, and *observability*. You might think of these characteristics as a way to develop rapport with any group of people that represent a culture—corporations, departments, etc. There is a clear decision strategy people follow when they decide to adopt, adapt, or reject an innovation. And there are various communication channels through which an innovation



# Innovation

*The new always carries  
with it the sense of  
violation, of sacrilege.  
What is dead is sacred;  
what is new, that is,  
different, is evil,  
dangerous, or subversive.  
-Henry Miller*



"infection" can spread, although the winner is one-to-one positive word of mouth. And the change agent (motivator) plays a key role in the speed of adoption.

I'd like you to consider that TQM and reengineering failed to take root in many companies because the implementation failed to apply the lessons learned about diffusion—how changes are adopted by society. Let's use this change model to filter our experience. Along the way I'll suggest some possible ways to adjust our approach to increase the spread of new, improved, and time tested ideas.

## Characteristics of Innovations

The heart of any change is about doing business better, faster, and cheaper. By letting customers get what they want, when they want it, at a price they perceive as offering superior value, businesses thrive. TQM or reengineering, however, are often about preventing problems through improvement or redesign. Innovations involving prevention spread more slowly than innovations that solve pressing problems.

**Compatibility** - To be successful, any innovation must seek compatibility (i.e., similarity) with a culture's:

- values and beliefs
- previously introduced ideas
- "felt" needs

What can you do to make a change more compatible?

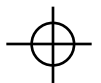
**Complexity** - the degree to which an innovation is perceived as difficult to understand and use (i.e., different). What can you do to reduce a change's perceived complexity?



## Decision to Adopt

*To say yes, you have to sweat and roll up your sleeves and plunge both hands into life up to the elbows. It is easy to say no, even if saying no means death.*

**-Jean Anouilh**



**Trialability** - new ideas, tried on the installment plan are easier to adopt because you can learn by doing.

People like to try things and then decide. Most employees want to serve customers more effectively. What else can you do to increase an idea's trialability?

**Observability** - the ability to see results and for others to see them too. Notice this satisfies the motivation programs *internal* and *external*. Recommendation: Find a way to make the effects of improvements "visible" to casual observers.

So these are the characteristics that can make a change more contagious—advantages, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. Now let's look at the decision process used to adopt, adapt, or reject an innovation and the various types of adopters.

## The Innovation-Decision Process

There is a step-by-step process people follow to decide to adopt, adapt, or reject a change or innovation in their lives:

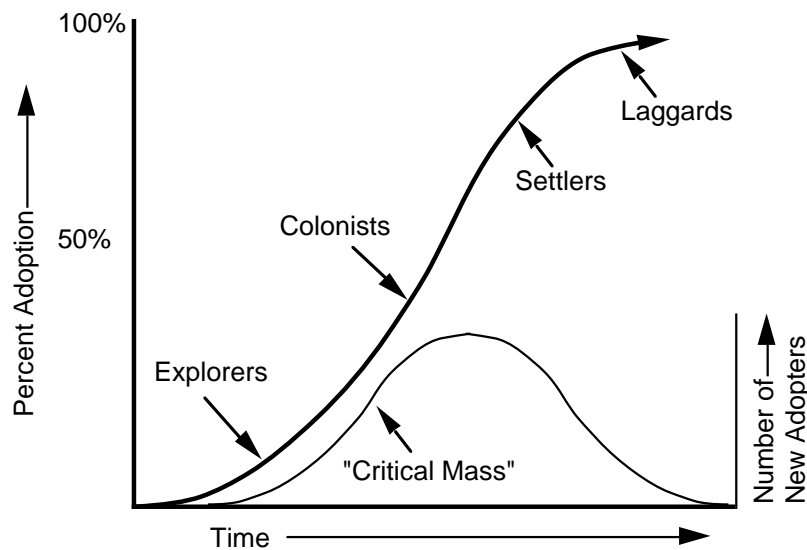
1. First comes **knowledge** - an awareness and understanding of the problem. This happens when a company decides to implement an improvement. This initial awareness always involves personal questions:

- What is the change?
- How-to apply the change? (Most important when trialing innovations.)
- Why? - reasons and values for making the change
- Where might it apply in your life?

2. Next comes **persuasion**. People need to be persuaded (i.e., motivated) to try the change. Using the

# Adopter Categories

*The reasonable man  
adapts to the world,  
the unreasonable man  
persists in trying to adapt  
the world to himself*  
George Bernard Shaw



language skills of preceding chapters, learn to speak out of all sides of your mouth when presenting the change. How can you become the role model to influence more people to embrace a change in people, process, or technology?

3. Then comes the **decision**. Each person seeks information to decide (*internal*) whether to adopt or reject, either *passively* or *actively*, the change.

4. Then, assuming the person decides to adopt the change, they begin **implementation**. This sometimes requires adaptation (i.e., *improvement*) of the change (e.g., applying the change in a context of interest).

5. Finally, after a period of time or a number of trials, people achieve **confirmation** (*convincer strategy*). They confirm for themselves that the change is a good one and that it deserves to stay. Or, they may decide to reject the change.

This decision process becomes increasingly complex when working with a system, group or organization rather than one individual, because of varying adopters.

## Adopter Categories

**Innovators** (Venturesome explorers)—they are the active seekers of *new* and *different* ideas. They are intuitive (they depend on *internal* knowing not external information, because the facts to back up the choice usually aren't available yet). Often perceived as deviant from the social system. A few become opinion leaders (champions) of the innovation.

**Early Adopters** (Respectful Colonists)—they are quick to notice shifts. Also *internal*, they begin to imple-



# Accelerating Change

*Adapt or perish, now as  
ever, is Nature's inexorable  
imperative.*

-H. G. Wells



ment and *improve* on the paradigm shift. Early adopters are evolutionaries. Sales people (motivators) are essential for early adopters.

**Early Majority** (Deliberate Settlers)—these people rely on the early adopters and opinion leaders—centers of influence—to decide to adopt (*external*). They need a coach.

**Late Majority** (Skeptical Settlers)—These people won't adopt until it's safe (*away from*). Neighbors from the early majority are important for later adopters (*external*).

**Laggards** (Traditional)—These people can be every bit as influential as the early adopters. In businesses, laggards are the corporate *immune system*, they try to *prevent* a new idea from spreading (*away from*). They want things to stay the *same*. A gentle, non-threatening introduction of changes with early adopters will avoid triggering the immune response.

## Speed of Adoption

The speed of adoption can be improved by how it is done and who has the authority to make it happen. The adoption decisions (in order of speed of adoption):

**Speed      Type**

**Fastest:      Optional**—choices made by each individual (e.g., participation in the change)

**Medium:      Authority**—made by one or a few people with power, status, or technical expertise.

**Slowest:      Collective**—made by consensus of members

**Varies:      Combination** of the above.

# Change Agents

*The greatest response to change agent effort occurs when opinion leaders adopt, which usually occurs somewhere between 3 and 16 percent adoption.*  
-Everett Rogers

## Communication Channels

A communication channel carries messages. It determines how information travels from one person to another.

**Mass Media:** TV, radio, and print can:

1. Reach large audiences
2. Create and spread information
3. Change weakly held attitudes

### **Interpersonal Channels**

These are a slower but more effective means of persuading people to adopt a new idea. Used in the persuasion stage, it can:

1. Provide two-way exchange of information.
2. Allow an individual to form or change strongly held attitudes or beliefs (Chapter 9).

## Change Agent Role

What is your role in getting people to adopt a change?  
How can you make it more contagious?

1. *Prevent* too much "adoption" (i.e., adoption by laggards—people who might reject it or delay implementation) which, paradoxically, will speed up diffusion.
2. Develop the need for change (*toward-away*)
3. Exchange information (*internal-external*)
4. Diagnose problems (*away from*)
5. Create an intent in the employees to change (*toward*)
6. Translate that intent into action (*active*)
7. Stabilize and sustain the adoption (*progress*)
8. Achieve self-renewing behavior.

## Speaking to Groups

When speaking to a group of two or more people, assume that all of the motivation programs exist in your audience. That means that you will need to speak out of all sides of your mouth using all of the motivation language: *toward-away*, *internal-external*, *options-procedures*, *passive-active*, and *sameness-progress-difference*. Each part of your audience will selectively hear what they want to hear making it easier for them to adopt the change. Because it's easier to hear messages coded in their preferred motivation style, the people in your audience hear what is meant for them and ignore the rest.

## Conclusions

Over 50 years of research has shown how to accelerate the adoption and application of changes through:

1. better presentation of the perceived attributes of the change. Use the language tools in preceding chapters to reach all of your audience.
2. understanding decisions and their effect on adoption
3. the power of mass media and personal communications
4. the change agent's role

To expand the impact of a change, you might need to begin to craft your communications in ways that invite the early majority to participate in the transformation. Only you can decide if this flexibility of choice is right for you, and how soon you can bring your remarkable talents to bear on the needs of our "global village."