

# TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE REALIZATION

BY BILL HOGG

*This is the first article in our [leadership consulting](#) series that looks at creating transformative change in your organization. The full series will be available for download as a white paper once it is completed by visiting [www.BillHogg.ca/resources/articles/](http://www.BillHogg.ca/resources/articles/)*

Change is not easy, but it is necessary if leaders want to achieve their strategic goals and objectives. It is inevitably much easier to maintain the status quo, rather than make the tough decisions needed to sustain growth over time.

People are inherently resistant to change, even positive changes that are beneficial to team members and the organization as a whole. One of the most difficult components of change, and an area that many people have difficulty understanding, is that change is necessary.

Understanding the need for change is the first key component to making transformative organizational change.

## 4 Questions to Ask When Assessing the Need for Change

There are 4 core questions that leaders need to consider when assessing the need for transformative change. These questions help leaders understand why change is needed in order to determine whether to begin the journey in the first place.

If you and your executive team are not committed to seeing this change through -- then don't start. It is hard work, and the downside of stopping part way through is a culture that becomes demoralized and not receptive to change the next time you make the suggestion.

Consider these questions before moving forward:

1. **Why is change necessary?** Identify the competitive advantage that you are trying to leverage.
2. **What will the organization look like after change is completed?** Identify the future vision for the organization that will result after the proposed changes. This provides the North Star for the organization.
3. **Which area of the organization requires change?** Identify the specific area of the organization (not usually a department, but overall working methodology or processes) that requires focus.
4. **What are the implications of change?** Identify what impact the changes will have in the short term (probably hard) and long term (probably beneficial).

Answering these questions provides clarity on why leaders should undertake the difficult journey to create

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187 Willow Farm Lane  
Aurora, Ontario L4G 6K5  
(905) 841-3191  
bill@billhogg.ca  
www.billhogg.ca



**BILL  
HOGG  
& ASSOCIATES**

change. Understanding the real benefits that change presents allows you to start assessing the need for change at a deeper level and designing a plan to begin the change process.

*Send me an email if you would like a copy of my simple assessment tool to help you identify which areas of your organization need change.*

Answering why change is necessary also reaffirms there are very specific and valid reasons that benefit the organization, rather than just changing because everyone else is doing it.

## **Creating Transformative Change in your Organization**

Creating and managing change is a key to creating a higher performing environment. One of the most important things about [transformative leaders](#) is they know how to assess their organization, realize when change is needed, and act upon change realization.

Transformative leaders assess the organization's need for change in stages:

- **Change realization:** Leaders understand that change is necessary and it is vital that they understand the reasons why change is needed and the end game benefit of change. If this is not clear, there is no reason to start the change process. They create an argument for the need for change, outline the outcome of the changes to be made, and establish guidelines and principles that will be used to manage and implement change.
- **Share the vision:** Initially, leaders need to share their vision with their executive team. They need to outline the scope of change, the vision for change, how it impacts the organization and when it will be implemented. Executive buy-in is essential and cannot be mandated.
- **Create a change management plan:** Work with other senior leaders to create a plan that will outline the scope, vision, benefit and impact of change.
- **Define components of change:** Leaders assign roles and responsibilities, establish metrics to track change, and outline how the initiative will impact organizational culture.
- **Communicate with the organization:** Share the vision with the organization and help them understand why the changes are being made (the benefits) and where they can play a meaningful role in the change process.
- **Involve the organization:** Once leaders define why change is necessary and outline change elements, the next step is to establish internal advocates and champions to engage employees and get them onboard.
- **Implement change:** Begin to implement the change in your organization and assess the impact of the changes from multiple perspectives. Examine [employee engagement](#) and acceptance, assess risk, monitor change metrics, make adjustments, and recognize progression.
- **Assess and adjust:** The change process takes time to implement and embed, so you must monitor and assess progress regularly to ensure that focus isn't lost after the initial excitement of change. Most change initiatives flounder and fail at this stage because the leadership has been focused on the project for a longer period and feel that once initiatives are launched, they are "done." They need to recognize that for the majority of the organization, the change initiatives are still new and need to be consistently reinforced if they are to stick.

## **Transformative Change: How to Approach Organizational Change**

How you approach change will be the determining factor in your ability as a leader to effectively communicate the need for change in a way that it will be met with a positive reaction and accepted internally.

As outlined in [How Transformational Leaders Make Organizational Change Stick](#), it is important that you

frame change in a way that will tap into peoples' emotions by providing inspiration, opportunity and allowing employees to have input.

There is a lot of heavy lifting that needs to be done before you inform the broader organization about impending changes. There is also a considerable amount of work that will be required as you involve the organization in planning before you actually start to change. The reasons for change and the beneficial outcomes need to be clearly communicated, otherwise people will start the journey of change without thinking about the implications.

Transformative leaders understand that change is not easy, but it is necessary. Change sticks when leaders understand their organizational culture so they can frame change in a way whereby it is viewed as an opportunity as opposed to a threat. [Framing change](#) in the right way can be the difference between success and failure. Leaders need to focus on the positive outcomes of change so that people are willing to endure the pain of making change. Tie change to your company value statements, find internal advocates, provide coaching and training, and hold people accountable by tracking the change process.

*The next article in our [leadership consulting](#) series will examine a leader's need to change first before an organization can change.*

### **Transformational Leadership Expert | Professional Speaker | Performance Excelsior™**

*Bill is the "just do it" guy who has walked in your shoes. Senior leaders at organizations like Anheuser-Busch InBev, The Bay, Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, Pita Pit, RBH, State Farm Insurance, Toronto International Film Festival and ServiceOntario hire Bill to navigate change and influence and inspire higher performing teams that deliver exceptional customer service, higher productivity and improve profits.*

*Bill provides dynamic world class executive consulting, keynote presentations and transformative workshops. For additional information email [bill@billhogg.ca](mailto:bill@billhogg.ca) or visit us online at [www.billhogg.ca](http://www.billhogg.ca) where you can sign up to receive an article like this each month or download [Bill's 1-sheet](#).*

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