



# Managing and Responding to Change



Where previously the focus was on systems and structures in an organisation, the focus is now on people and changing their mindset.

that organisations require employees to have for a role. The new focus on people is about training and developing the qualities and traits that enable transformation that comes from the self.

**DR OTTO SCHARMER, SENIOR** lecturer at MIT, author of *Theory U* and co-author of *Presence* stated that 'the battle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was a battle between system and system – capitalism and communism. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we now move into a different theatre – the theater of the self. This is where the real power of the next transformation is coming from.'

## What does this mean for the organisation?

Where previously the focus was on systems and structures, the focus is now on people. Focusing on its people is not new to organisations, however, it is a different focus on people that is described now. The 'old' focus on people is about training and up-skilling people in the skills and competency

In the current economic environment, one can say that new employees of an organisation never think of their job as long term, let alone a lifetime. And the employee accepts the possibility that due to change, their job may no longer exist in an instant. As a result, it almost seems necessary for organisations to help employees develop a mindset that will enable them to be flexible and responsive to the changes in the business environment and market.

So, how does an organisation help

its employees develop this mindset and more importantly, what is this mindset?

## The mindset

Mindset is defined as a set of assumptions, methods or notations, held by one or more people or groups of people which is so established that it creates a powerful incentive within these people or groups to continue to adopt or accept prior behaviours, choices

about stepping back from the scenario one is currently in and looking at the bigger context that we work in. This functionality is present in all of us. For some, it is very tuned in and for others, it needs to be tuned in. The extent to which it is tuned in will depend on how you have used and developed this functionality over time.

It is this 'perception' mindset that needs to be developed. So how do we develop this?

next client and do the same. This is fine. However, these actions can be delivered without resorting to our 'perception' function.

To develop the ability to resort to our 'perception' function requires us to actively be 'aware' in all transactions that we perform on a daily basis. This is the first step towards changing our mindset. More importantly, it is the first step towards personal and collective transformation.

Personal transformation is about taking employees through a set of processes that enables them to realise, for themselves, an action or actions that need to happen in their individual business scenarios that will help them raise their sense of 'awareness'. This is a position of deeper learning and the start to true empowerment. This 'awareness' can then be passed on to their teams or peer groups to achieve collective transformation.

## TO DEVELOP THE ABILITY TO RESORT TO OUR 'PERCEPTION' FUNCTION REQUIRES US TO ACTIVELY BE 'AWARE' IN ALL TRANSACTIONS THAT WE PERFORM ON A DAILY BASIS. THIS IS THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS CHANGING OUR MINDSET.

or tools. Also sometimes described as 'groupthink' or 'paradigm', it is often difficult to counteract its effects upon analysis and the decision-making process.

There is a negative and positive view to mindset. If one is set in one's ways, the mindset is viewed as negative. When one is more amiable and flexible, the mindset is viewed as positive.

The mindset that organisations should be developing in their employees has a more dynamic feel to it than the traditional definition. It is about developing qualities such as the ability to inspire, engage empathetically, be open and resilient in order to be more receptive and flexible in adopting new behaviours, choices or tools.

In my past articles, I mentioned developing our 'perception' function. This is our ability to assess a situation, conceptualise, engage empathetically, inspire, understand the real needs of clients, suppliers, team members. It is about seeing the bigger picture. It is

## Developing the 'perception' mindset

In a recent facilitated workshop that I conducted, participants were asked to think about the qualities that they required to be better prepared to deal with the changes in the business environment. Some of the answers given were:

- Ability to inspire trust
- Passion
- Open mindset and willingness to change
- Ability to motivate teams
- Resilience to failure and change

These are all components of the 'perception' function. The above answers are similar in other workshops.


So what does this mean?

As human beings and professionals, we are all trained to be action-oriented. If a client is before us, we seek the best course of action, usually based on a process or procedure within the organisation, to complete our task for the client. Then, we move on to the

## Personal and collective transformation

This is not a new or far-fetched concept. Organisations and individuals from various institutions, in Europe, have been using this concept to address the banking crisis of 2007-2009.

Though there has been much focus on how regulations and policies can be tightened from here on, across the financial industry, there has also been a focus on the 'people' who make up this industry. Particularly, what 'personal' qualities do we want these 'people' to now have, given that the past qualities that were rewarded were what had led to the crisis. This is the current challenge and transformation required for the industry to not falter again in the future.

Personal and collective transformation is applicable to all organisations in all industries. What is the transformation roadmap for your organisation? 

THE WRITER IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF O&C ADVISORY. SHE CAN BE REACHED AT YOGA@OPTIONSANDCHOICES.ASIA