

The Constants of Coaching in Organisations – 5 Key Points to Consider to Embed the ability to adapt to Change in an Organisation

Change in Organisations is Common and Complex and yet the how to is still a challenge.

“If you want to truly understand something, try to change it.” Kurt Lewin

Organisational change typically occurs for two reasons:

1. To develop staff and enhance their abilities and hence those of the organisation. It is typically incremental in nature and referred to as *change for development*.
2. To reformulate the organisation to meet a change in requirements either through a change in customer demand, or other external forces such as significant changes to the industry. This is referred to as change for transformation.

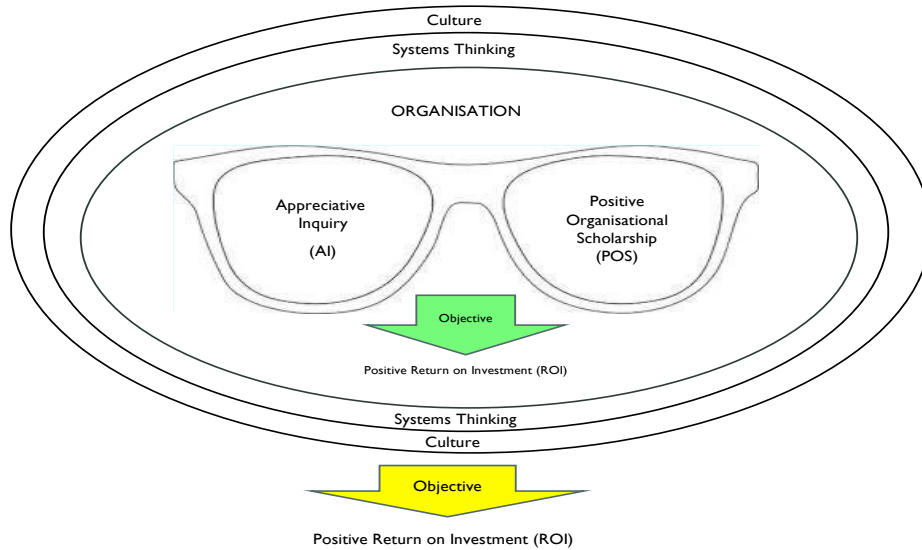
Oftentimes these aspects are addressed from a problem-solving perspective. Trying to fix something that is wrong.

Addressing Organisational Change Using a Positive Lens

There is a more positive way to address change. A key tool for helping to facilitate change is coaching. The 5 factors have been called the Constants of Coaching in Organisations and are represented in Figure 1. Coaching can assist with ensuring the desired change occurs through education and development of understanding of what is happening and how.

“The greatest danger in times of turbulence and change is not the turbulence or change; it is to act with yesterday’s logic.” Peter Drucker

Figure 1 – The Constants of Coaching in Organisations



The 5 Constants of Coaching in Organisations

The four constants that assist with understanding an organisation by using a positive lens are:

1. Understanding the prevailing *culture* within the organisation. Simplistically, culture is the heartbeat and DNA of the organisation, It is how people in the organisation think and feel that influences how they operate.
2. Use a *systems thinking* perspective when reviewing the organisation. One of the common challenges with change is that proposed changes are considered in isolation (by team or department). Hence, a silo manner and insufficient consideration is given to the overall impact of the change. Systems thinking requires a different mindset where relationships and interactions are as important to consider as the actual tasks or activities that might be being reviewed. Reviewing the work of David Snowden and the Cynefin framework can help with understanding the need for systems thinking and its various applications as organisation cope with complexity.

3. Employ an *Appreciative Inquiry* (**AI**) approach to reviewing the organisation. This means that the starting point is to consider the existing strengths (what is working) within the organisation (rather than what is not working) and leverage off these strengths to take the organisation in the direction it wishes to go. (See the work of Cooperrider and Whitney to help extend your knowledge in this area.)
4. Aim to achieve the ability to become a virtuous organisation by striving for positive deviance described by Cameron, Dutton and Quinn 2003 in their book entitled *Positive Organisational Scholarship* (**POS**). This is the seminal work in this area that has been expanded on since this time. This is an approach that through employing an AI approach can help organisations not only be good but become great through developing virtuous qualities as an organisation.
5. Evaluation framework (*developmental evaluation*) (**DE**) – this aspect can be the arch nemesis when trying to develop and explain a business case for change. ROI is a commonly discussed factor but is not easy to implement. The suggested approach when undertaking change is to consider a developmental evaluation approach recognizing it will not be known or understood at the start what needs to be evaluated so having a starting point that can evolve and develop as activities progress provides the opportunity for the framework to emerge over time. This means that the evaluator may need to become part of the process and not be independent or isolated from it. This requires trust that the capability exists both through relevant resources and available data to enable the relevant evaluation parameters to become apparent and be capable of being measured.

Developmental Evaluation has been described as:

Developmental Evaluation (**DE**) is an evaluation approach that can assist social innovators develop social change initiatives in complex or uncertain environments.

<https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/approaches/developmental-evaluation>

Each of these topics is extensive, being well researched and documented in the scholarly and professional literature. What this document seeks to do is show how they interrelated to help with providing an integrated empirically researched approach to undertaking organisational change and enable them to not only survive but thrive in the ever changing and complex world that businesses now need to operate in. Using each of the terms in Google Scholar will provide you with valuable resources to help you extend your knowledge on each of the topics and how they may apply and be used to facilitate organisational change.