Book review

Change Management: A Guide to Effective Implementation
McCalman, *J.*, *Paton*, *R.A.* and *Siebert S.*
SAGE
Thousand Oaks, CA
2016
4th ed.,
312pp.
US$68.00
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McCalman, Paton and Seibert do an admirable job of packing this text with change management concepts that cover the full gamut of current socio-technical studies. It is a refreshing departure from "positivists' change manuals" insofar as it deals with the validity of competing narratives, as well as the politics and ethics of change. The book serves students and practitioners, outlining technical tools and techniques as well as offering people management and organizational development philosophies.

This book will appeal to aspiring executives from technical fields, newly minted professionals and experienced consultants with various specialties, and people leading as well as experiencing change in organizations. For example, the aspiring executive may be drawn to the discussion of leadership in Chapter 4, where McCalman *et al.* (2016) indicate that "leaders initiate and build culture; managers maintain culture […] leaders are social construction; managers are given the position by the organization" (p. 67), "leaders are focused on changing the meaning system and cultural themes of the organization to frame and define the reality of others, changing how [they] talk about things" (p. 71), as well the opportunity to assess themselves against the "characteristics of transformational leaders" (p. 79). The aspiring management consultant and the change agent *in situ* may be drawn to Chapters 2 and 5, filled with deliberations on the responsibility to add value to the organization and the internal vs external change agent decision; discussion of the key characteristics of, and "the Golden Rules" for, change agents; techniques to evaluate a change, including the influences culture, the source of change, employment history (including mergers and acquisitions), and ownership of the change, so that an appropriate approach is used in transitioning; and the view that resistance is not necessarily negative but could be for the good of the organization. For the project manager with (or without) an operations or systems focus, Chapters 6-8 refresh the role of systems mapping in change management, the systems intervention strategy model, and the value of total project management. For the HR student in any discipline, Chapters 9 and 10 introduce the complexity of managing people, and the concepts of organizational development. For the extraordinary change manager, and the "resistors" to change, Chapters 11 and 12 outline a critical management perspective, introducing concepts such as hegemony, competing and multiple subjective narratives, and the organizational politics and ethics of change. Finally, all readers will appreciate advice from McCalman *et al.* (2016, p. 228) to "make sure you are willing to undertake change yourself."

This book would be a welcome text or reference in graduate business programs, including both the MBA and executive MBA, upper-year technical programs such as engineering management, or professional programs such as project management. The book is organized within chapters as provided in the "guided tour" orienting the reader: learning

objectives are provided at the onset, case studies and mini-case studies are provided in most chapters (with the sense that the authors had intimate knowledge of the case), reader activities are peppered throughout each chapter, and end of chapter "points for discussion" all help to engage the reader and demonstrate sensitive to the possibility of working and mature students. Recommended readings at the conclusion of each chapter are accessible, recent and seminal journal articles and books, as well as appropriate website and YouTube referrals. With readings and references from top-tier research journals in organizational management and human relations, readers gain an appreciation for the depth of this work, as well as what doctoral studies in these areas might bring. Further, this book is well organized as a body of work. The opening chapters draw in the reader with discussion of change as a complex, dynamic and challenging process requiring vision and management, then move to various models and systems of change mapping that will be familiar to engineering and systems professionals. While even the early chapters introduce the importance of people and the construction of meaning in leadership, and the middle chapters discuss the importance of how the problem is defined, the final chapters outline a critical management perspective, hailing the possibility of competing narratives, and the politics and ethics of change.

As a reader, I gained an important insight into common sense: everyone's common sense is different so that a common sense solution to one group is not necessarily a common sense solution to another. "Common" sense is not common, not because it does not exist, but because it is not shared; the experiences underlying common sense may be unique to a group. I learned that each change, regardless of its underlying basis (physical, technical, procedural or otherwise), involves a restructuring and leads to a change in relationships, which may be the source of discomfort with the change. For example, if a procedure changes, so that one no longer interacts directly or physically with another, the loss of relationship (including associated power or prestige) may be a sticking point in change. I felt supported in my experience of emotion as a real and motivating factor in change management. Finally, as I come to grips with changes being implemented at my firm, I appreciated the echo of Kant (Bowie, 1998) in the discussion of providing meaningful work.

The authors practice the organizational development philosophies and values they outline, as I feel readers are treated with respect, and with the objective of providing growth opportunities. Nearing the end of my career, with a number of change initiatives and a stint as a Consultant under my belt, and as a current Graduate Student, I think McCalman, Paton and Siebert do an admirable job putting together this text.

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References

Bowie, N.E. (1998), "A Kantian theory of meaningful work", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 17 No. 9, pp. 1083-1092.

McCalman, J., Paton, R.A. and Siebert, S. (2016), *Change Management: A Guide to Effective Implementation*, 4th ed., SAGE, Thousand Oaks, CA, 312pp.