

Al-assisted intervention model

Change process design platform

Management dashboard + Al prompts

Marcelo Manucci - 2024

Why does change fail?

Incorrect diagnostic questions

The failure of change often begins with the questions framing the diagnosis. The critical questions are not **who** or **what** to change but **when** and **how** dysfunctions emerge and persist. Effective diagnostic questions must probe the structure sustaining the dysfunctions, **where** resistance is anchored, and **when** this resistance first took root. Organizations risk addressing surface-level symptoms by focusing solely on **who** or **what** while overlooking deeper, systemic issues. Patterns of life or functioning embedded in the system often perpetuate resistance. Breaking these patterns requires reframing the diagnostic lens to uncover and address the underlying dynamics.

Negative impact on biology

Change initiatives frequently neglect the neurobiological foundations of human behavior. The brain operates based on two primary orientations:

Approach: Seeking and engaging with rewards or reinforcement.

Avoidance: Retreating from threats or discomfort.

When change processes fail to acknowledge and mitigate perceived threats or challenges, they activate biological resistance. This resistance is a survival mechanism that prompts individuals to disengage from transformational efforts. For change to succeed, organizations must reduce perceived threats while amplifying opportunities for positive reinforcement, fostering an environment where transformation feels safe and rewarding.

Narrative underestimation

Corporate culture is not just a framework of policies and practices—it is a web of stories that define how people coexist. Humans live within narratives. When faced with new or uncertain situations, the brain marks the unknown chemically through emotions, which are then encapsulated in stories. These emotional landscapes, layered with narratives, shape how people experience their environment. No matter how well-designed, a change initiative disrupts these landscapes and the intricate web of stories forming the culture. Overlooking the narratives people create around their experiences creates a disconnect between the initiative and the emotional territories participants inhabit. Leaders must engage with these narratives and align them with the change process to drive meaningful change.

Relationship tension

The success of change hinges on the emotional connections tied to the decisions and events surrounding it. Every transformation unleashes a cascade of emotions—hope, fear, uncertainty, and excitement—that define an individual's connection to the project, resistance, or commitment. Emotions form an invisible circuit that shapes people's narratives about organizational transformations. This challenges the idea that objective metrics and neutral planning alone can drive successful change. Ignoring the emotional undercurrents risks eroding trust, straining relationships, and amplifying resistance. Leaders must acknowledge and address the emotional dynamics at play to foster engagement.

The neurobiology of experiences

Prefrontal Cortex Scanns Arguments



Cingulate Cortex **Scanns Sensations**

The anterior cingulate cortex integrates visceral (bodily) signals with contextual and emotional information, helping to identify inconsistencies between sensations and rational arguments. It plays a pivotal role in aligning emotional and physical responses to external stimuli.

Amygdala Identifies Threats

The amygdala is responsible for detecting threats, regulating social emotions such as trust and rejection, and activating defensive responses. It plays a critical role in shaping reactions to perceived risks in the environment

Explain

Design accessible information: Present information in clear, digestible formats to reduce cognitive overload

Guide people through the process: Provide step-by-step guidance to build confidence and clarity.

Define best practices: Share proven methods that foster trust in the change initiative.

Specify appropriate timelines: Establish realistic milestones to maintain focus and reduce uncertainty.

Use diverse channels/media: Communicate through multiple platforms to ensure the message reaches all stakeholders.

Anticipate frequently asked questions: Address common concerns upfront to prevent confusion and hesitation.

Hold

Stimulate the senses in spaces: Create environments that appeal to sensory perceptions and reducing stress.

Maintain nonverbal consistency: Ensure that body language, tone, and gestures align with verbal messages

Design simple environments: Avoid overly complex or chaotic settings that overwhelm participants.

Create spaces for recreation: Incorporate opportunities for informal interaction to build trust and cohesion.

Listen to people: Actively hear concerns and feedback to validate experiences.

Reduce unnecessary divisions: Break down silos or hierarchies that hinder collaboration.

Support

Avoid hostile contexts: Eliminate aggression or tension that may trigger fear or mistrust.

Strength of participation: Involve people actively to build ownership and trust.

Provide clear explanations: Offer transparent communication to dispel confusion and perceived risks.

Attend to personal needs: Acknowledge and address individual concerns to demonstrate empathy.

Stop harmful rumors: Proactively address misinformation that could escalate fears.

Inspire people in their roles: Help individuals see the value of their contributions within the broader change process.





The formula of experiences

Change is not driven by the mere incorporation of data but by the subjective experiences that give meaning to that data. Human relationships are shaped by a dynamic web of symbolic factors, constantly rearranged by the emotional energy generated through interpersonal bonds. Managing experiences involves orchestrating cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes to transform fragments of information into meaningful, personal experiences. In essence, our daily lives are mapped by experiences born from the interplay between two key elements: the content and emotional responses to those events.

What

Content shapes how individuals interpret and process events, often influenced by cognitive biases and mental shortcuts.

Emotions impact the body's chemistry, creating an environment that fosters safety and confidence or heightens resistance.







content + emotions = experiences





How

Define the core ideas Avoid ideas distortion Frame people's expectations Prevent hostile environment Integrate diverse perspectives Inspire development possibilities





Why

Define clear ideas reduces interpretation biases, engaging the prefrontal cortex for rational evaluation and minimizing automatic interpretation and decision shortcuts that can distort actions.

Prevent hostile environment allows the control of the impact of adrenaline and cortisol, reduces the stress response, avoids defensive reactions, and helps people face change constructively.

Avoid ideas distortion helps to reduce confirmation bias, promoting more objective processing, adjusting perceptions to avoid responses driven by preconceived ideas.

Integrate diverse perspectives promotes the release of oxytocin and dopamine, which foster cooperation and mutual recognition, strengthening commitment and motivation.

Frame people's expectations helps the brain process uncertainty and reduce the bias toward negative expectations through a set of "rules" or "guidelines" that decrease the sense of threat.

Inspire development possibilities allows the stimulation of serotonin and endorphins to generate well-being and enthusiasm, helping the brain to associate change with a positive experience and maintain commitment.

Taking care of shared contents

This dimension emphasizes managing the meanings that shape personal interpretations and collective narratives surrounding situations that impact relationships. This intervention aims to create a coherent frame of reference that aligns individual and group experiences, supporting a shared understanding of change initiatives.

By taking care of shared content, leaders can foster a cohesive understanding of the change initiative, mitigating confusion, reducing resistance, and building a strong foundation for collaboration.

DEFINE THE CORE IDEAS. Content management significantly influences the interpretations and explanations individuals and groups form about their environment. Clarity in core ideas is essential to maintain focus and coherence. To achieve this: **(a)** provide clear and consistent explanations for the reasons and justifications behind interventions; **(b)** address and dispel rumors proactively to prevent misinformation from spreading; **(c)** share critical information that broadens decision-making alternatives and enables informed choices.

AVOID IDEAS DISTORTION. The risk of misinterpretation or distortion of facts can undermine trust and disrupt the change experience. Addressing idea distortion safeguards the credibility of the change process and reinforces confidence in its objectives. To manage this effectively: **(a)** expand spaces for open dialogue where differing perspectives can be discussed and clarified; **(b)** ensure the quality of explanations by providing clear, well-supported arguments that leave little room for misinterpretation; **(c)** use multiple communication channels to reach diverse audiences and maintain message consistency.

FRAME PEOPLE'S EXPECTATIONS. Unmanaged expectations can lead to ambiguity and stereotyping, hindering team responsiveness and alignment. When expectations are well-framed, individuals and teams are better equipped to engage meaningfully with the change process, leading to more substantial collective outcomes. To manage effective expectation framing: (a) guide personal projections and assumptions to align with the goals of the intervention; (b) clarify the role of each individual in the process, ensuring that everyone understands their contribution and how it connects to the broader objectives; (c) define organizational needs tied to these roles, creating a clear structure for collaboration and accountability.

2

Taking care of the quality of relationships

This dimension focuses on fostering a positive climate that shapes individual and collective emotional states. Since emotions directly influence the quality of decisions, maintaining strong, supportive relationships is essential for creating an emotional framework that promotes integration, motivation, and engagement.

By prioritizing the quality of relationships, change agents can create an environment where emotions fuel positive decision-making, collaboration thrives, and individuals feel motivated to contribute to shared goals.

PREVENT HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT. A threatening environment generates fear and defensive attitudes, triggering survival mechanisms that impair cognitive and emotional capacities. To address hostility, it is necessary to:
(a) design protocols to identify and eliminate sources of aggression or threats; (b) implement interventions to reduce tension through practices that foster empathy and respectful communication; (c) create safe spaces where individuals can express concerns without fear of retaliation.

INTEGRATE DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES. Encouraging openness to different points of view and experiences enhances cooperation, shared effort, and team performance. When people feel valued for their contributions, they are more likely to develop autonomy, focus, and a sense of personal commitment. To foster these outcomes, it is essential to: **(a)** facilitate workflows that promote the exchange of ideas and experiences among teams; **(b)** design initiatives that recognize and value unique contributions, fostering a sense of belonging and autonomy; **(c)** implement collaborative activities that celebrate group achievements, reinforcing cohesion and trust.

INSPIRE DEVELOPMENT POSSIBILITIES. Inspiring a sense of purpose encourages individuals to connect emotionally with the collective vision. This reduces anxiety and increases resilience, even in high-pressure situations. When people feel inspired, they are more likely to embrace change, take initiative, and contribute meaningfully to collective success. To promote this, it is necessary to: **(a)** establish clear and motivating goals that connect individual objectives with collective ones; **(b)** recognize and highlight the importance of diversity as a driver of creativity and innovation; **(c)** provide opportunities for learning and exploration that strengthen enthusiasm and resilience in the face of change.

Management of experiences

Experience management in the context of change is a dynamic process that requires careful attention to how individuals and groups respond to new and unpredictable situations. When the routine is disrupted, individuals encounter an unknown dimension that shifts them from their familiar, predictable environment. In this state, the mind works to reconcile the present unfamiliarity with past experiences through emotions, thoughts, and historical references. This reconciliation unfolds across three sequential moments—Contact, Integration, and Position—each shaping how individuals process and navigate change.

To guide this process effectively, interventions must align with three essential levels of management—Explain, Hold, and Support—that address the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of experience formation. By integrating these levels with the moments of change, experience management ensures clarity, emotional coherence, and sustained commitment, transforming potential resistance into proactive engagement.

CONTACT: This is the initial encounter with the new, where **emotions dominate** and **define the first reactions**. At this stage, the unfamiliar appears fragmented and diffuse, leading to contradictory feelings and uncertain interpretations. Personal perspectives, situational implications, and speculative projections shape how individuals react to and perceive the new.

INTEGRATION: In this phase, experiences take on a temporary, transitional meaning, where **emotions shape interpretations**, and emerging narratives assign causality to events. Individuals develop perspectives on the implications of the change for themselves and others, transforming uncertainty into preliminary arguments and structured narratives.

POSITION: This is the stage of negotiation where emotions solidify relationships with the experience. At this point, the experience takes a concrete form, influencing personal decisions and future actions. The framework established here determines how individuals engage with the new reality and their level of commitment to the change process.

Levels of Intervention

EXPLAIN: This level focuses on using knowledge and information to provide a clear framework for understanding the situation. By broadening explanations and diversifying perspectives, interventions facilitate access to different interpretations, helping individuals contextualize the new within their existing cognitive framework.

HOLD: The emphasis here is on managing emotional influences that might negatively affect relationships and trust. By clearing prejudices, addressing negativity, and reinforcing emotional bonds, this level ensures that participants remain emotionally aligned with the change process, preventing blockages in thought and behavior.

SUPPORT: This level sustains commitment by creating conditions that encourage individuals to deepen their engagement. Providing a sense of accompaniment fosters confidence, preventing the dilution of the new into routine or disengagement. This ensures that individuals remain invested in the transformation process.

Design an experience dashboard assisted by Al

This tool integrates the neurobiology of experiences in an Al-assisted management dashboard. Define in row (a) your [Project], set a maximum of three overall [Objectives] of the project and the different [Target Audience] of the project. Row (b) establishes the guidelines that are required to explain/hold/support to achieve the general objectives. You can use prompts Pr1/Pr2/Pr3 for these definitions. Row (c) defines the actions to explain/hold/support to achieve the overall objectives. You can use prompts Pr4/Pr5/Pr6 for these definitions.

PROJECT

Name and details of the project

GOALS

Aims of the project

[infinitive verb + complement]

TARGET

Details of those involved in the project

EXPLAIN



What is necessary to communicate [Pr1]

[infinitive verb + complement]

Report strategic changes during the year.

(add as many **verbs** as you consider)

HOLD



What it is necessary to take care [Pr2]

[infinitive verb + complement]

Mitigate resistance and rumors.

(add as many **verbs** as you consider)

SUPPORT



What is necessary to improve [Pr3]

[infinitive verb + complement]

Coach middle management.

(add as many **verbs** as you consider)

How to care for the process [Pr5]

[noun + complement]

Dashboard of challenges **Sessions** of participation **Activities** for integration

(add all the actions you consider)

How to improve the process [Pr6]

[noun + complement]

Helpdesk team **Evaluation** of performance Workshops on innovation

(add all the actions you consider)

How to communicate [Pr4]

[noun + complement]

Meetings with group leaders. Workshops with qualified staff. **Manuals** with new policies

(add all the actions you consider)

Download resources

Template prompt to apply the tool to the design of a change process in product/service companies.

Download

Template prompt to apply the tool to the design of a change process in non-profit organizations/government.

Download

Interactive dashboard (pdf) to shape the project and the results of the application of IA in the design of the change platform.

Download

Audio assistance for the application of prompts in different cases of companies or organizations.

Download

Marcelo Manucci 2024

DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.23959.28323