



Dear ODyssey,

My OD team has embarked on developing a more open culture in our organisation. We have started with an awareness campaign, where we engaged officers' emotions and provided clarity on the need for change. We know that the next step is to go beyond awareness and to start fostering a desire for the change. How should we go about doing this?

*Yours Sincerely,
Practitioner*

Deconstructing the **desire** for change

by Karin Soh and Geraldine Ling

Dear Practitioner,

Having employees who want to participate and support the change is crucial for any successful change initiative. The awareness for creating an open culture might already exist, but employees might still not want to openly share information with each other.

Still, many organisations forget about this step. If the desire for change is not instilled, then equipping unenthusiastic employees with the 'K'nowledge and 'A'bility required for the change will not be effective.

Yet creating desire is tricky because we do not have control over another person's choices.¹ A person's desire to support and participate in a change is dependent on factors like one's personal situation and intrinsic motivation (see next page). You cannot just tell a person to like or want something and immediately expect results.

¹ Prosci, ADKAR: A Model for Change in Business, Government and Our Community, 2006, Pg 17.

² Jeffrey Hiatt, ADKAR: A model for change in business, government and our community (Colorado: Prosci Learning Center Publications, 2006), 2.

THE ADKAR MODEL²

- A – Awareness of the need for change
- D – Desire to support and participate in the change**
- K – Knowledge of how to change
- A – Ability to implement required skills and behaviours
- R – Reinforcement to sustain the change

Note: The 5 blocks are sequential in nature. For instance, before looking into 'K'nowledge the issue of 'D'esire should first be addressed.

UNDERSTAND MOTIVATION FACTORS

Today, work is less routine, and more complex and creative³ - employees now view social needs (i.e, feeling included in a decision-making process) as equally important as survival needs (i.e, receiving an adequate salary).⁴

This is why we need to pay greater attention to intrinsic ways of motivating employees, and not default to using extrinsic motivators such as economic incentives, like bonuses or gifts.

One powerful intrinsic motivator is the use of 'social norms'.

In a social experiment conducted⁵ by psychology professor Dan Ariely, three separate groups of participants were asked to perform a task on a computer. The task required them to drag a computerised circle into a box, and to repeat this action as many times as they possibly could.

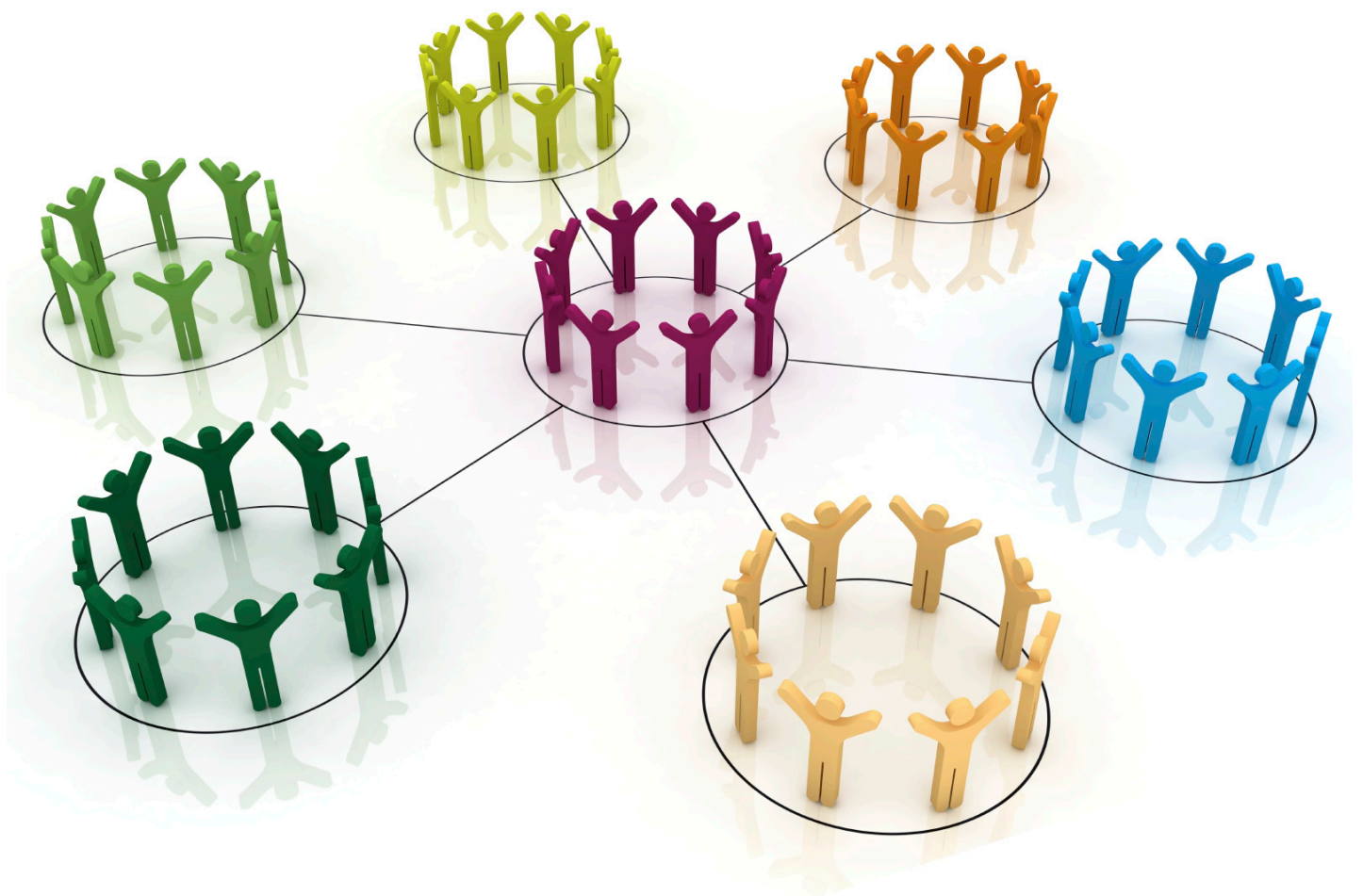
What was interesting about this was that the three groups of participants were incentivised differently. The first group was paid \$5, while the second was paid slightly lesser. As for the third group, they were asked to do this as a favour for the researchers.

The result? The group that was asked to do this as a favour without any financial incentive was the one that performed the best. They dragged 168 circles, compared to 159 and 101 by the second and first groups respectively. This clearly demonstrates the need for us to be savvier in the use of intrinsic motivators such as 'social norms'.

³ Daniel Pink, *Drive* (Great Britain: Canongate Books, 2010), 29.

⁴ David Rock, *Managing with the Brain in Mind*, <http://www.davidrock.net/files/ManagingWBrainInMind.pdf>.

⁵ Dan Ariely, *Predictably Irrational* (London: HarperCollins, 2008), 69.



TAP ON VISUALISATION AND FEELINGS TO TOUCH HEARTS

As bestselling change management authors John Kotter and Dan Cohen wrote in their book 'The Heart of Change', the best way to communicate to people about the need for change is to do it through compelling and eye-catching examples. This will help them visualise and feel the situation at hand.

Jon Stegner, an executive tasked with reducing costs at the manufacturing firm he worked for, saw how creating an eye-catching case for change worked for him.⁶

To make major savings, he knew he had to convince his bosses of the need for a big process shift. But he also knew that they would be sceptical about the change.

So he assigned an intern to investigate a single item – work gloves, which most of the company's workers wore. The intern found that the company had been purchasing 424 different kinds of gloves, from different suppliers and at different prices (between \$5 and \$17).

Stegner laid out all 424 types of gloves and invited the division presidents to visit his display. Their reaction was immediate. Stunned to see how inefficient their purchasing processes were, the presidents decided to buy gloves from only one supplier, thus creating huge savings.

⁶ Chip and Dan Heath, *Switch* (New York: Broadway Books, 2010), 12.

⁷ Chip and Dan Heath, *Switch* (New York: Broadway Books, 2010), 233.



COMMUNICATE THE DESIRED BEHAVIOURS AS BEING NORMATIVE

Humans tend to imitate popular behaviour, whether they know it or not. This is especially so during times of change, because people are unsure of how they should act.

To set cues for people to follow, you need to first look out for the bright spots - individuals or places where the desired behaviours or outcomes are being exhibited. For example, if you notice open conversations present in certain departments, ask yourself: 'What are the factors that are encouraging this behaviour?' and 'How can we replicate this for the other departments?'

Social science has shown that such a strategy works. In the 1980s, Harvard public health professor Jay Winsten decided to introduce, through a social experiment, the 'designated driver' concept into the United States.⁷

Nominating a driver in the group who would remain sober while others in the group could drink was a norm in the Scandinavian countries, but few in America were familiar with this practice.

Winsten and his team collaborated with producers, writers, and actors from over 160 prime-time TV programmes, subtly placing designated-driver moments naturally into the plots.

In 1991, three years after the campaign launched, nine out of 10 people knew what designated driver meant.



Winsten's strategy was simply to send signals of what a normative behaviour was and then encourage it using positive peer perception.

Of course in real life, we don't always have the luxury of falling back on the media.

So another way you can use peer perception is to rally the group which has already been demonstrating the desired qualities.

Then encourage the colleagues, who are already enjoying the benefits of having an open culture in their department, to share with the rest of the workplace their experience. This can be done through conversations or organised sharing-sessions.

These positive influences will help you to spark the desire for change.



Dear Practitioner,

Kickstarting the desire for change has no hard and fast rules. Instead, it involves an intricate understanding of human behaviour and psyche.

To create the desire for change, people need to first see and feel the future that the change would bring. Then, send cues of normative behaviour for people to follow.

We wish you all the best.

*Yours Sincerely,
ODyssey*

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

To build desire for a change initiative,

Understand what motivates people. 1

Touch people's heart with visuals and feelings. 2

Communicate desired behaviours as normative. 3



Contact us!

Have any burning questions or feedback about this article or any OD-related topics that you are interested in? Email us at cscollege_COD@cscollege.gov.sg.