

# **WHO IS THE CHANGE MANAGER?**

**By**

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## **Abstract**

There are endless possibilities for how to go about changing organisations, and there are just as many people who can, or may think they can, initiate, promote and implement organisational changes. Most literature to do with organisational change deals with the 'how', i.e., how is organisational change achieved? This research study looks at the 'who', i.e., who manages organisational change projects and what competencies they need to manage them effectively. Additionally, the study researches the factors contributing to the requirement for organisational changes that both influence and are influenced by the project. The questions being asked in this study are:

1. What do Change Managers do and what are their competencies on an organisational change project that is different from what Project Managers and Program Managers do and what their competencies are?
2. What are the organisational factors that influence decisions about how a change project should be managed?

Three case studies of organisational project change were studied in three different organisations. The three organisations were a telecommunication organisation, a bank and a university. Interviews were conducted with various project members as well as affected staff to address the research questions. The interviews were then analysed using grounded theory with the support of NVivo software for analysing data.

The major findings of this study are that there is a requirement for an individual to manage changes on organisational change projects. Whether this is the Program/Project Managers or a dedicated Change Manager depends on two main elements. The first is organisational factors such as culture and leadership. The second element is the degree of behavioural change required such as degree of resistance to the change, or the extent of changes to jobs. Organisational factors can also assist projects in achieving their goals, if the culture and leadership is supportive of the project. However, it is unlikely that these factors will eliminate the requirement for change management activities.

## Declaration

This thesis is submitted to Bond University in fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

This thesis represents my own work and contains no material which has been previously submitted for a degree or diploma at this University or any other institution, except where due acknowledgement is made.

Signature:..... Date: .....

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## Preface

For a consistent understanding of this thesis, it is necessary to agree on certain conventions at the outset:

- The word 'program', will be spelt 'program' rather than 'programme'. This is to avoid confusion and minimise variations.
- This research study aims to distinguish between any role with the primary focus of influencing change, and the role of a Project/Program Manager. Examples of roles with primary focus of influencing change are Change Managers (a role which will be further explained), Consultants and Organisational Development Practitioners. All roles which have an organisational behaviour background will be referred to as Change Managers and will be compared with Project Managers and Program Managers. Normally these change management roles would emerge from consultancies, Organisational Development and Human Resources.
- A *project* is the achievement of a specific objective that involves a series of activities and tasks which consume resources. It has a set specification for completion, having definite start and end dates.
- *Organisational change* projects are projects which change the way individuals in the organisation behave and the way the organisation is managed.
- A *program* is another way of implementing organisational changes. Programs are a group of interdependent projects that together achieve one or more strategic business objectives to maximise the value of their collective benefits.