The Characteristics of Change Agents In The Context Of Organizational Development

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Abstract: The significant role of a change agent is best illustrated by the thesis of Albert Einstein: "Without changing our pattern of thought, we will not be able to solve the problems we created with our current patterns of thought''. Thus, the essential definition of a change agent follows the thesis of Einstein. Accordingly, the role of a change agent is to change the worldviews of stakeholders towards an attractive but unknown future as well as to support the management of required changes towards such a future.

The purpose of this work is to provide an understanding of the characteristics that makes a change agent successful in the different phases of organizational development.

Therefore this work has been concentrated to focus and elucidate the following issue:

> What are the most significant characteristics a change agent can posses to successfully implement organizational change?

The elucidation is based on the confrontation of the theoretical interpretations, the empirical views of change agents and their impact on the different phases of organizational development.

This thesis show that the most significant characteristics that conform to the ideal view of a change agent are:

- A person of great analytical skills

- A person who is a good listener

- A person with great mediator skills

- An excellent architect

- A person with good teacher skills

- A person who is a wise coach

- A person who has a good understanding of the goals to strive for

- A person who has a good understanding of the activities to perform

- A person who has a good understanding of the methods and the communications styles to use in a given phase of organizational development

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank our supervisor PhD, Thanos Magoulas for his commitment and support during the writing of this Bachelor Thesis. He has conveyed a great amount of the knowledge he possesses in the area, for that we are thankful.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The world is changing and so does the business market and prerequisites all the time. The organizational capability to be flexible and to anticipate the market is more crucial today than a few years ago. Organizations that can't cope with such conditions and undergo difficulties with change management will have a hard time surviving the market [1][5]. Going through a change process within a company, department or some core group is a truly advanced step that needs a great deal of planning before the implementation of it. Empirical studies show that major change implementations' failure rates are approximately 70% [4]. Change projects share the same characteristics as regular projects with the distinction of that change projects have a big impact on the individuals participating [2]. Change could be defined as everything from re-engineering, right sizing, restructuring to cultural change [1], and companies have many proven and valid reasons of why they are willing to spend a huge deal of effort (money, time, resource etc.) on such investments. One of those reasons is to ensure that they are improving their competitiveness on the market [1][3]. Or as Vincent Barabba, a retired General Manager of General Motors Corporate Strategy and Knowledge Development explained it: "We recently joined, as a founding member, the "Internet Home Alliance", one might respond, "What is GM doing in an Internet Home Alliance?" The idea behind is to take customers needs into the consideration with questions such as: "When I'm in my vehicle, wouldn't I like to know what's going on in my home?". If the alarm goes off in my home, then I want to know about it just as soon as my neighbours do, no matter where I am. From that perspective, our management has had to rethink the boundaries of the General Motors enterprise" [3]. What Barabba describes is a way of adapting in order to ensure the existence of General Motors for a long time ahead.

The troubled situation many organizations apparently have found themselves in has caught our interest; consequently a wish to gain an understanding of the reasons that lie behind their troubled situation has emerged. Albert Einstein once said "Without changing our pattern of thought, we will not be able to solve the problems we created with our current patterns of thought'', we think this symbolizes the change agents purpose.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this work is to provide an understanding of the characteristics that makes a change agent successful in the different phases of organizational development.

1.3 Problem Statement and Delineation

Based on chapter 1.1 Background we wish to investigate change agents and their importance in organizational development. We therefore state the following question:

> What are the most significant characteristics a change agent can posses to successfully implement organizational change?

We delineate this thesis by using published case studies rather than conducting interviews or collecting data primarily, mainly because the time frame didn't allow us to do so but also because we experienced difficulties finding such data. Another delineation is that we do not take cultural aspects into consideration when answering the question.

1.4 The Organization of This Paper

The following is a brief content description of chapters within this paper.

Chapter 2: Research Method

> In this chapter the method for conducting this work is described.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Views of a Change Agent

> In this chapter we present the literature that was covered, this is done in order to build a solid platform for our arguments during this paper.

Chapter 4: Change Agents and their Environment

> Based on literature and personal communication with PhD Thanos Magoulas, the definition of a change agent and their working environment is presented.

Chapter 5: A Conceptual Model Placed in the Context of OD

> The purpose and the background of The Framework for Organizational Development are presented.

> The Conceptual Model of Change Agent is then presented. The model has the aim of highlighting the characteristics we believe are crucial for change agents in order to manage the problems they are facing and areas in which change agents operate on a daily basis.

Chapter 6: Design of Inquiries and Ideal Case Answers

> Questions to be used for analyzing the case studies are stated. Ideal answers to the questions are stated for each phase of OD. This illustrates the holistic view of a change agent in organizational development.

Chapter 7: Empirical Views and Practices of Change Agents, (Best & Worst practices)

> The scenarios of the three chosen case studies are described. The case studies cover two best practices and one worst practice scenario.

Chapter 8: Change Agents in the Context of Organizational Development: An Analysis

> The questions and the organizational development stated by this thesis are mapped with the case studies. This is done in order to obtain a holistic view of how the three organizations managed with respect to stated questions.

Chapter 9: Discussion

> The decisions, choices, attempts, behaviors, etc. made by the three organizations during their change processes are identified and discussed. They are also compared with the ideal case scenario created in chapter 6.

Chapter 10: Conclusions

> The conclusions that can be drawn by this thesis are stated and discussed. The suggestions for further research are also stated in this chapter.

2. Research Method

The method is the path followed for reaching the reports goal and purpose. The chapter will describe the path chosen in this thesis.

2.1. An Overview of the Research Method

The routine followed for this thesis report can be summarized with the following list:

0. Understanding Change Agents and Related Concepts Trough A Literature Review

1. Defining Change Agent's and the Environment They Work In

2. The Building of a Model

3. Design of Questions for the Case Studies and Stating Their Ideal Answers

4. Describing the Case Study Scenarios

5. Displaying the Case Studies in Relation With our Model

6. Discussion Based on a Confrontation Between the Ideal Answers and the Case Study Answers

7. Derivation of Conclusions Based on the Discussion

2.2. Understanding Change Agents and Related Concepts Trough a Literature Review

A literature review was conducted to obtain a clear view of research that had been done in the area. The method was to collect a number of research papers that was related to our topic. They were then reviewed to identify the most relevant papers.

2.3. Defining Change Agents and the Environment They Work In

In order for the reader to get an idea of what a change agent is, a definition of a change agent was necessary. The change agents' environment was another important aspect. In order to define the environment and the conditions of which a change agent must operate in, the three models from various literatures were reviewed.

2.4. The Building of a Model

A model was constructed in order to analyze the case studies. The model was based on collected literature that cover the change management area. The model consists of concepts critical for the change agent to take into account when running the change process. This self-created model is then placed in the context of a framework describing the different phases of organizational development as well as role a change agent should adopt in a given phase.

2.5. Design of Questions for the Case Studies and Stating Their Ideal Answers

The concepts covered by the model reveals the questions necessary to state in the case studies in order to answer the initial question of this thesis. In order to identify the outcome of the case studies an ideal case scenario was constructed. The scenario was based on an extensive review of research papers. The ideal case scenario describes the characteristics a change agent should posses for the concepts revealed by the created model.

2.6. Describing the Case Study Scenarios

A total of three organisations that had gone trough change processes were selected. As the time frame didn't allow collecting primary data, the case studies consisted exclusively of secondary collected data. When interpreting the organizations change attempts the irrelevant information was discarded while everything else was portrayed as accurate as possible.

2.7. Displaying the Case Studies in Relation With Our Model

In order to obtain an understanding of how the three organizations managed their change process each case was applied to our model, i.e. the questions stated was answered for every organizational phase.

2.8. Discussion Based on a Confrontation Between the Ideal Answers and the Case Study Answers

The discussion aimed to elevate the questions stated for the case studies and their respective answers. The answers were then compared to the ideal case scenario to provide partial conclusions based on the literature collected, the model created and the case studies examined. The discussion served as a basis for the conclusions.

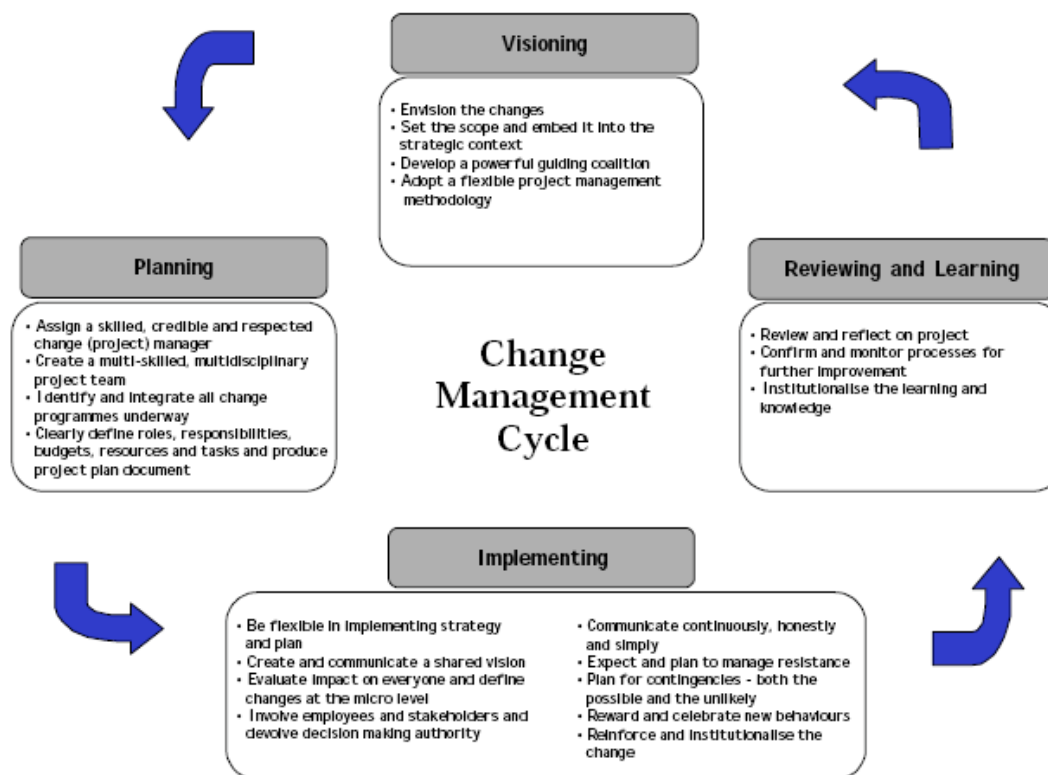## 2.9. Derivation of Conclusions Based on the Discussion

The conclusions are derived from the identified partial conclusions from the discussion. The conclusion further answers the initial question of this thesis report and elaborates on other important aspects in this thesis.

3. Theoretical Views of Change Agents, (Literature Review)

In this chapter we present the literature that was covered, this is done in order to build a solid platform for our arguments during this paper.

The fact that organizational change is a big problem is not a secret in the industry. Findings have shown that the companies on Fortune 100's change activities between the years 1980-1995 only achieved performance improvements 30% of the times [4]. The 1997 Study on Complexity show that the most complex thing is to integrate changes into the organizations work [4]. This is why much research has been done in the area to help organizations cope with change. A range of persons devoted to the problem has shaped models designed to guide organizations in change. Many of the leading authors agree on what is needed to implement change [4], the general idea is illustrated in Figure 1, and most of the models can be categorized into four categories [4].

Visioning
- Envision the changes
- Set the scope and embed it into the strategic context
- Develop a powerful guiding coalition
- Adopt a flexible project management methodology

Planning
- Assign a skilled, credible and respected change (project) manager
- Create a multi-skilled, multidisciplinary project team
- Identify and integrate all change programmes underway
- Clearly define roles, responsibilities, budgets, resources and tasks and produce project plan document

Change Management Cycle

Reviewing and Learning
- Review and reflect on project
- Confirm and monitor processes for further improvement
- Institutionalise the learning and knowledge

Implementing
- Be flexible in implementing strategy and plan
- Create and communicate a shared vision
- Evaluate impact on everyone and define changes at the micro level
- Involve employees and stakeholders and devolve decision making authority
- Communicate continuously, honestly and simply
- Expect and plan to manage resistance
- Plan for contingencies - both the possible and the unlikely
- Reward and celebrate new behaviours
- Reinforce and institutionalise the change

[Figure1, Change Management Cycle]

The first one being a model that describes what organizations should do and what not to do. The second one covers the change process itself with a problem solving and traditional project management method. The third model considers IT-enabled change while the fourth provide tools to help performing change management tasks such as change resistance [4].

John P. Kotters article "Leading Change: Why transformation efforts fails" falls into the first category. In the paper Kotter lists the eight main reasons of why change attempts fail and suggests what needs to be done instead. The steps are "Establishing a sense of urgency", "Forming a powerful guiding coalition", "Creating a vision", "Communicating the vision", "Empowering others to act on the vision", "Planning for and creating short-term wins", "Consolidating improvements and producing still more change" and "Institutionalizing new approaches" [1]. The eight steps is a conclusion made after the author had watched over one hundred companies trying to implement change [1], the main errors made that Kotter spotted was to not fulfil one or more of the eight steps. Some of the steps will be

highly useful when identifying where the organizations or the change agents in the case studies went wrong and right. A number of these steps occur in other articles, e.g. McFeeley concur with Kotters second step when writing "Without strong, informed, and steadfast commitment and sponsorship from senior management, the effort is doomed from the start" [10].

Understanding why people are resistant to change is key when reasoning about the change agents' work in organizations. A. J Schuler lists the top ten reasons of why people are change resistant, some of which we will see are described as problems in other literature. An example of this is "The risk of change is seen as greater than the risk of standing still", so is "People have no role models for the new activity" and "People genuinely believe that the proposed change is a bad idea" [6]. When change agents reach the point where they need to understand the actions of people in the organization they need to have an understanding of their psychology. For instance Abraham H. Maslow's Human Motivation [7] and Fredrickson's Positive Psychology [8] dwell upon just that and provide psychological explanations to resistance of change.

"The Change Problem" is discussed by Fred Nickols in his research article Change Management 101. He mentions "changes as a "what" problem" and "changes as a "how" problem" to find out the ends of a problem. Nickols' writes that it is often people who are not responsible for results who typically ask the questions; perhaps that is why people don't see the point of the change [9].

An important part of introducing changes to employees is to avoid recurring problems that might come with it. Chris Argyris talks about the importance of this in the article "Double loop learning". He emphasizes the importance of making employees understand what they have done wrong instead of just telling them, he argues that the manager should also present "the data and logic and logic of how he arrived at the conclusions" [11].

Other methods to consider are explained in Quy Ngyen Huy's article "Time, Temporal Capability, And Planned Change". Huy discusses four different approaches for change intervention: commanding, engineering, teaching and socializing [12]. Each is good for different scenarios; therefore one might not be able to apply one of them to all case studies. In order to decide upon which method to recommend one will need to understand the organization and how to transform it. Properties of organizations are described in Bolman and Deals "Reframing Organizations" where four perspectives are introduced that help understand the organization. "The Structural Frame" gives an understanding of social architecture and its consequences [13]. The highly relevant "The Resource Frame" covers the basic human resource assumptions, which describes the logical fit between the organization and its employees [13]. "The Political Frame" discusses the basic issues of power, conflict and ethics from both the individual and the organizational perspective [13]. The fourth frame: "The Symbolic Frame" gives an understanding to what culture is and why it is so important [13].

According to Ackoff there exist two types of consultants, the first type is a change agent that provide predetermined solutions for organizational development. The second type is a change agent that thinks learning and a mutual understanding with the stakeholders in development decisions and other important issues is important. Ackoff is one of the researchers emphasising the importance of creating a vision early. Ackoff says, "The thing that leaders do that managers don't is articulate an inspiring vision and guide the formulation of a strategy for its pursuit. Good or bad, you look at a Lenin or a Churchill, and what they did is produce a vision shared by others. In Churchill's case, he produced a vision of victory for the allies and helped formulate a strategy for getting there". After creating the vision the work effort should be put on preparing a strategy for reaching the vision. [23]

Ackoff receives support from Hedberg on his statement about the change agent needing to have a mutual understanding with the stakeholders. Hedberg stress that the change process must be implemented in a participative process where management and the other stakeholders work together [31]. Checkland further strengthen this idea as he emphasizes the importance of identifying the goals, worldviews and norms of all stakeholders in an organization. Checkland also emphasizes learning as an important part of organizational development, which means that each iteration should be followed by an evaluation [29]. Yet another author, Mackenzie, concur in this thinking. Mackenzie's model for organizational development consists of five phases, the fifth phase is about improving the methods and the model itself, in other words learning [28].

4. Change Agents and Their Environment

Based on literature and personal communication with PhD Thanos Magoulas, the definition of a change agent and their working environment is presented in this chapter.

4.1. A Definition of a Change Agent

A change agent can be defined as a person responsible for organizing and coordinating the overall change effort [19]. A change agent can either be an internal change agent, who are most frequently a sub-set of organizational leaders, or an external change agent, who are most likely to be consultants or managers brought in to invoke change [18]. According to Ackoff there exist two types of consultants, the first type is a change agent that provide predetermined solutions for organizational development. The second type is a change agent that thinks learning and a mutual understanding with the stakeholders in development decisions and other important issues is important [3]. We choose to delineate this thesis to focus on the second type of consultants that Ackoff describes.

4.2. Delineating and Defining the Environment of Change Agents

Decision is a process that transforms knowledge and ideas into an attractive architecture, which in turn promotes a well-organized reality, supporting the stakeholders' interests. Thus, to decide is the change agent's main task. The models illustrated and explained below defines the environment of which a change agent operates. Their purpose is to provide an understanding of where the need for change agents lies. The knowledge-based boundaries in combination with the decisional boundaries lead to the architectural boundaries of a change agent.

4.2.1. The Knowledge-based Boundaries of a Change Agent's Environment

Mackintosh state that the knowledge based boundaries depends on two dimensions. The first, Task variety, is where tasks are dynamical and often appear during conversation processes. The upper right corner Creative Base is the interesting one since that is where change agents usually work. The change agent's actions depend on empirical experience and there is no routine based solution for the non – trivial environment that change agents usually work in [21].

		Task variety	
		Low	**High**
Task Knowledge	**Un analysable**	Intuitive Base	<u>Creative Base</u>
	Analysable	Routine Base	Modular Base

[Table 1: The Knowledge-based Boundaries of a Change Agent's Environment]

4.2.2. The Decisional Boundaries of a Change Agent's Environment

According to Thompson, the struggle of approaching a shared decision depends heavily on two dimensions: perception of the cause and preferences of possible outcome. Both of them can take plenty of variables into consideration, but in our case we will focus on certain/uncertain environment for the two dimensions [20]. It is in the uncertain environment of both dimensions where change agents works.

	Certain environment	**Uncertain environment**
Uncertain environment	Negotiating & Compromising	<u>Inspiring & Creating</u>
Certain environment	Planning & Calculating	Interpreting & Judging

[Table 3: The Decisional Boundaries of a Change Agent's Environment]

4.2.3. The Architectural Boundaries of a Change Agent's Environment

According to Rebecca, there are two dominant dimensions that are relevant for the understanding of different types of architectural pattern and design strategy. These are (a) Basic Building Blocks of architectural and (b) Relationships between them. The character of them may be stable or fluid [22].

Relationships between Basic Building Blocks	Fluid	Reorganization Design Strategy	Reorientation Design Strategy
	Stable	Optimization Design strategy	Modularization Design Strategy
		Stable	**Fluid**
		Basic Building Blocks	

[Table 2: The Architectural Boundaries of a Change Agent's Environment]

Accordingly, the following patterns and design strategies can be identified. (1) When the basic building blocks and the relationships are stable then there is a case of optimization strategy. This means that the design remains unchanged; the implementation of design can be changed. E.g. to improve the response time is not a case of design, but a case of implementation. (2) When the relationships are stable but the basic building blocks are fluid then it is a case of modularization. (3) When the basic building blocks remain stable, but the relationships are fluid, some form of reorganization must be the case. (4) Lastly, when none of the three mentioned design approaches can function, we speak of a case for reorientation, creativity and radical design strategy. The last case is the case that we believe to be the change agents' environment because the need of knowledge is high and the uncertainties in organizational development are even higher [15] [22].

4.3 Conclusion of Change Agents and Their Environment

The change agent we choose to focus on is not the person that follows routine methods or techniques. In the same sense the change agent is not the person that operate with modularization, reorganization, optimization etc. but rather reorientation. The lowest common denominator for the three models described is uncertainty. Thus, the proper environment of change agents is the migration from a known and undesirable environment to an unknown environment but promising future.

5. A Conceptual Model Placed in the Context of OD

In this chapter the purpose and the background of The Framework for Organizational Development are presented.

Furthermore the Conceptual Model of Change Agent is presented. The model has the aim of highlighting the characteristics we believe are crucial for change agents in order to manage the problems they are facing and areas in which change agents operate on a daily basis.

5.1. A Framework for Understanding Organizational Development (OD)

The model described below represents the consultant's role in IT-Based organizations and provides a holistic view of organizational development.[1] The model is presented and explained under the headline The Framework for Organizational Development. The model has been based on the rational-, the socio political- and the socio cultural model, which are all described in chapter 5.1.2. The Background of the Framework. The purpose of making it our choice for a framework is described next, in chapter 5.1.1 The Purpose of the Framework.

5.1.1. The Purpose of the Framework

The purpose of choosing the framework lies in the need of delineating and understanding the never-ending process of organizational development. Furthermore, the purpose is to provide an understanding of the role a change agent should have in different phases of organizational development.

5.1.2. The Background of the Framework

The Rational model of OD

Mackenzie developed a framework for organizational development. The framework consists of five phases. The first one is to develop a conceptual/theoretical model. The second is to develop the methods needed to apply the theory on the organization. The third is to use the developed methods when designing the organization. The fourth is to analyze the results and the last phase is to identify improvements to the conceptual model and the methods. Since the last step is to improve the model and the methods used, the process is about learning. Mackenzie also underlines the importance of letting the stakeholders' interests outweigh the designers'. Mackenzie means that one of the main reasons organizations fail is the mistake of not beginning with defining the path to follow. [28][14][15]

The Socio-political model

The Socio-political model by Hedberg emphasizes the factor of codetermination as leading in change management. Hedberg believes that the work of implementing change needs to be managed in a different way. As long as the management alone dictate the change process the organization will only improve from their point of view. Hedberg stress that the change process must be implemented in a participative process where management and the other stakeholders work together. Hedberg describe the goal of change as often being cost related, i.e. cost saving. But it should also be about good work environment, improved learning and democratization. The socio technical design creates new power structures and new reward systems that leads to new structures and reorganization. [14] [31]

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[1] The model has been created by Thanos Magoulas [15] and was previously used by Ellinor Günther-Peter Jaworski [14] and Eleonor Johansson-Jerk Peres [30]

The Socio-cultural model

The Socio-cultural model of Checkland emphasizes the importance of identifying the goals, worldviews and norms of all stakeholders in an organization. Checkland believes it is important to find as many perspectives on a problem as possible in order to find the root of the problem. Learning is an important concept in the model as all events are evaluated before decisions are made about how to attend them. Learning is something that develops as time goes by, the model itself can be thought of as a learning cycle. The model also helps in defining a complex organizational problem situation. Checkland identifies the organizational culture and values as main reasons for organizational failures. He asks the question "does the system fit the organisations culture?" [15] [14] [30]

Tichy's Integrated model

If an organizations change process is to succeed then all three theories described above needs to be taken into consideration. According to Tichy an organization consists of the technical (described by Mackenzie), which focus mainly on implementation, the political (described by Hedberg), which focus on interaction with stakeholders and the cultural (described by Checkland), which create alternative business models and focus on design and modelling. Tichy means that for managing a coordinated development all three perspectives needs to be considered, not just one. [27][30]

5.1.3. The Framework for Organizational Development

The framework presents the role consultants should take in the different phases organizational development and provides a holistic view of organizational development. As explained above the model is based on the theories of Checkland, Mackenzie and Hedberg. The framework illustrated by Figure 2 was originally based on Checklands Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) model [14].

The model consists of four phases. The first phase is Situational Analysis, which is where the people that should be involved in the transformation are identified, and then their thoughts about the organization today and in the future are identified. The second phase is Architectural Design, which is where the work of producing suggestions of change takes place. The third phase is named Change Decision, which is the work leading to the answer of which change decision should apply. The last phase is called Implementation and it includes the work of introducing the change or strategy. After the fourth phase is finished the model goes back to the first phase to analyze the outcome of the implemented change.
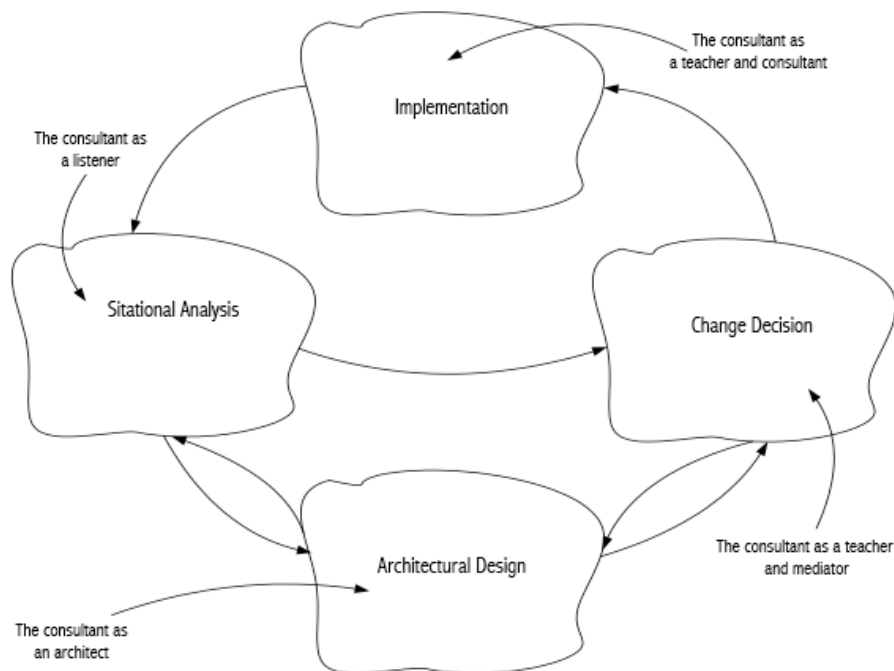
[Figure 2: The Framework for Organizational Development]

According to the framework the change agent should adopt different roles depending on the phase the change attempt is currently in.

During Situational Analysis the change agent should adopt the role of a listener. Günther and Jaworski stress that it is of importance that the change agent identifies the stakeholders in this phase together with their thoughts about the organization today and the future of the organization. These thoughts should serve as a basis for the future work of developing change proposals. Organizations often don't know the needs to be changed when they turn to change agents. It is therefore the change agent's job to help the organization/customer to figure out the problem. It is only then the change agent can decide what help he can offer. [14] [15]

During Architectural Design the change agent adopts the more prominent role of concept creator or architect. The change agent should create prototypes, models, designs etc. that should be used as a basis for the change decisions that is to come [14]. Mackenzie emphasizes the importance of communication between the change agent and the organization in this phase. The organization should be notified of the progress the change agent makes with the design trough different communication forms, e.g. through workshops or meetings. [14][15][28]

During the Change Decision phase the change agent should adopt a teaching or a mediating role. This is where the change agent communicates the results from the Architectural Design phase to the organization. It is important that the stakeholders understand the suggestions so that a good decision can be made; it is the change agents' responsibility to make sure this is fulfilled. The change agent should act as a mediator if some stakeholders should end up in conflict over a decision. [14][15]

During the phase of Implementation the change agent should act as a teacher and "consultant". The change agent should be the one leading the change process; he should also teach the stakeholders everything necessary to keep implementing the change. According to Mackenzie and Hedberg it is vital that the organization manages without the help of professionals once the change has been implemented. [14] [15]

5.2. A Conceptual Model of Change Agent

The conceptual model is based on a wide range of literature covering organizational change; it has been produced in consultation with PhD Thanos Magoulas. The Conceptual Model of Change Agent is presented and described in chapter 5.2.3 The Conceptual Model of Change Agent and the theory leading us to the model is described in chapter 5.2.2 The Theoretical Background of the Conceptual Model. The purpose of The Conceptual Model of Change Agent is described in the next chapter, 5.2.1 The Purpose of the Conceptual Model.

5.2.1. The Purpose of the Conceptual Model

The purpose of The Conceptual Model of Change Agent is to complete the chosen framework described in chapter 5 A Framework for Understanding Organizational Development (OD). The Conceptual Model of Change Agent represents the change agents' characteristics in relation to the models dimensions and the given phase of the organizational change. This together with The Framework for Understanding OD provides all information necessary to state relevant questions for the case studies, which is the final purpose of the model.

5.2.2. The Theoretical Background of the Conceptual Model

According to Kotter, change agents that are in charge of carrying out the analysis of the first phase, the Situation Analysis needs to prevent crucial mistakes such as: not creating a clear enough vision, failing to establishing the necessary communication channels, miscarry the constructing of powerful guiding coalition etc. All of those steps are critical in the beginning of a change process, but unfortunately that is not enough. For being able to share the vision with the rest of the organization, the change agent's people-, analytical- and social skills need to be well developed [9]. To be able to create a positive response is one of the people skills a change agent can have great use of while introducing change. People skills in combination with analytical skills are valuable to posses when identifying the stakeholders [8]. On the other hand, Nickols emphasise business skills, the change agents' goal should be to understand how the business works before trying to change it.

The Architectural Design phase is where change agents do their constructive magic. When designing the models, prototypes, and enterprise systems etc. the change agent's system- and engineering skills are put on trial, the change agent need to make use of the analyzed and collected data in a constructive fashion [9]. Likoebe and Agarwal argue for a framework to change agents in their attempt of choosing the right technology to meet their needs during the project process [13]. Thus change agents can use one technique during the design phase and another while presenting the work. Also making use of all available and appropriate communication channels will further strengthen the message they are trying to convey [1].

Mediation skills are indeed an important factor when the change process enters the Change Decision phase. The change agent's goal during this phase is to make sure that the stakeholders understand and accept his proposal. But also to act as a mediator when need, meaning that a change agent can provide the missing information, mediate between the stakeholders, act as a guider etc. [17]. The change agent's social skills goes hand in hand with the mediation skills and involve actions such as confronting the resistance among the co-workers, holding conferences, meetings and face to face encounters etc. [12]. Furthermore change agent's needs to have a solid platform of communication channels in order to ensure the delivering of the message to all parties involved [1].

During the implementation phase change agent's role should be to convert from a mediator to a wise coach [15]. This is where they will make sure to provide the necessary support for the change to be implemented. The change agent will have great use of his people skills and the available communications channels in this phase. Creating short-term wins will encourage the employees to proceed with and accept the change [1].

Checkland has introduced a simple checklist for thinking about a problem in his problem-solving methodology Soft Systems Methodology (SSM), namely CATWOE. CATWOE is used to identify the people, processes and environment that contribute to a problem and also to identify what makes the transformation meaningful. Change agents could go trough CATWOE before trying to solve a problem, they can do this to make sure they don't fix something and at the same time let something else go wrong. CATWOE stands for:

Customers – the beneficiary or victim of the system's activity.
Actors - those who would carry out the transformation
Transformation Process – an input that transforms to some output
Weltanschauung (World-view) - is related to our worldview and beliefs and explains what makes the transformation meaningful
Owner - Owner of the system, those who could stop the transformation
**Environmental Constraints** – is defined as "elements outside the system which it takes as given".
[24]

Another tool useful for change agents to know about is PEST. PEST is a tool used for identifying political, economic, social and technological influences on an organisation. It plays an important role in the value creation opportunities of a strategy [25]. Another useful tool is SWOT, which is used for identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for a company. SWOT is valuable when analyzing the internal strengths and weaknesses of a company as well as the external opportunities and threats [26]. CATWOE, PEST and SWOT are all useful for a change agent to have knowledge of in the initial phase of the organizational phase.

5.2.3. The Conceptual Model of Change Agent

We choose introduce the dimension, Change Agent, to emphasize the change agents' role in the different phases of organizational development. We choose to place Change Agent centrally in the model since the research is concentrated on him. The dimensions Organization of Development, Goal Associated With Change, Phase of Organizational Development and Stakeholders are all connected to the dimension of Change Agent.

Based on the literature described in chapter 5.2.2 The Theoretical Background of the Conceptual Model the dimensions described above have been identified as the most important ones to consider. They have therefore been placed around the change agent in the model; their meaning and their relation to the change agent will be described below.
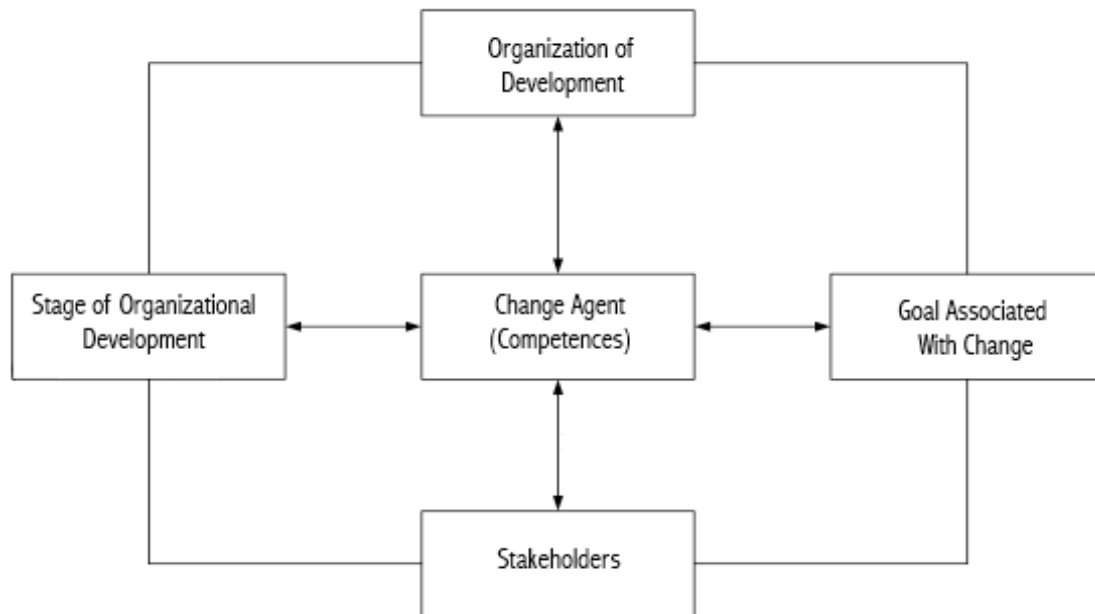
[Figure 3: The Conceptual Model of Change Agent]

The dimension of Stage of Organizational Development symbolizes the phase the organization is currently in (Situational analysis, Architectural Design, Change Decision or Implementation). The connection to the dimension of Change Agent indicates what methods or models the change agent should apply in the given phase.

The dimension Stakeholders symbolizes the people who are affected by the organizational change in any way. The connection to the central dimension Change Agent represents the relation a change agent has to the stakeholders at a given phase of the change process as well as the competences he possess in order to perform well.

The dimension Goal Associated With Change symbolizes the goal that should be fulfilled in the given phase. The connection to the dimension Change Agent emphasizes the goal of the change agent himself, rather than the organizational goal.

The dimension of Organization of Development and the connection to the dimension Change Agent symbolizes the responsibility and role that the agent embraces in a given phase of the organizational development.

5.3. The Conceptual Model of Change Agent in the Context of OD

The model illustrated by Figure 4 shows The Conceptual Model of Change Agent in the context of The Framework for Organizational Development (OD). The model puts the change agent into each phase of organizational development. Thus, the model illustrates the holistic view of a change agent's role in organizational development.
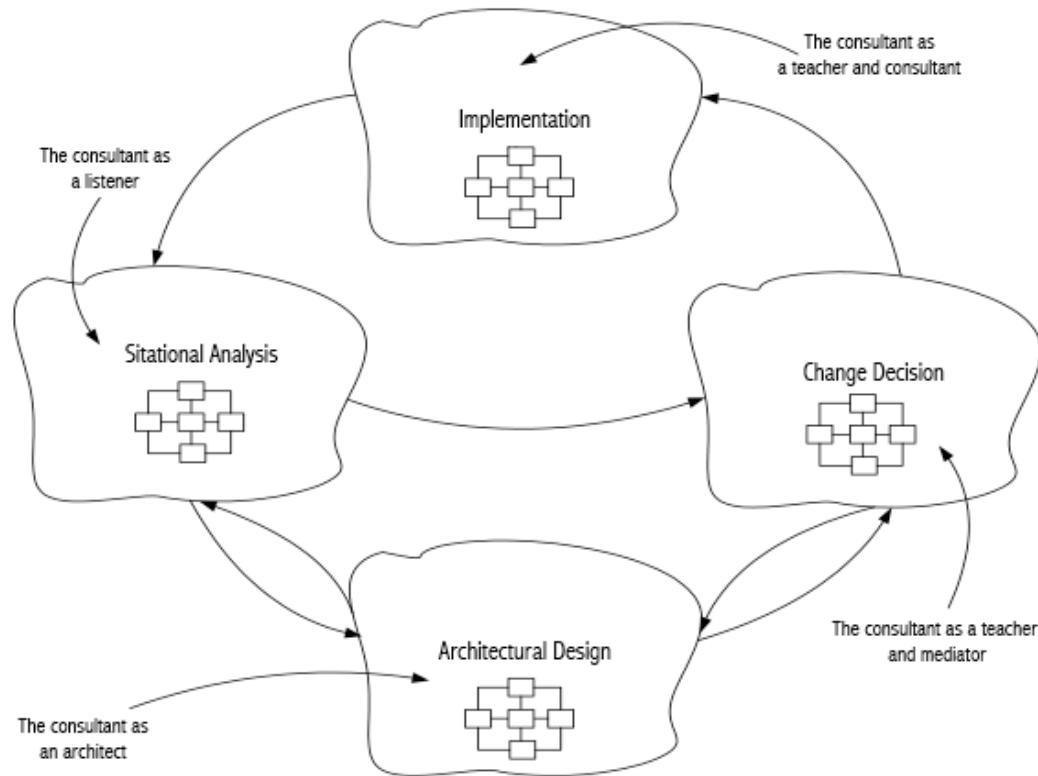
[Figure 4: The Conceptual Model of Change Agent in the Context of OD]

This model provides the information necessary for stating questions that can reveal the answer to the thesis' initial question. The answers to the questions stated can be derived from chapter 5.2.2 The Theoretical Background of the Conceptual Model as well as chapter 5.1.3 The Framework for Organizational Development explained above. The questions can be seen in the chapter 6 Designing the Inquiries of the Study and the answers to them are presented in the chapter 6.2 Understanding the Roles and Nature of Change Agents in the Context of OD.

6. Design of Inquiries and Ideal Case Answers

In this chapter questions to be used for analyzing the case studies are stated. Ideal answers to the questions are stated for each phase of OD. This illustrates the holistic view of a change agent in organizational development.

6.1 Designing the Inquiries of the Study

The questions listed below have been created with the purpose of finding the answer to the question asked by this thesis, namely what are the most significant characteristics a change agent can posses to successfully implement organizational change? The questions listed below define what the Conceptual Model of Change Agent has identified to be the most important aspects to consider when the characteristics of a change agent are discussed. The answers to the questions will be identified in each of the three case studies chosen.

Since the Conceptual Model of Change Agent cover the most important concepts described by the chosen literature it has been used for stating the questions listed below. One question for each dimension of the Conceptual Model of Change Agent has been identified. The fact that every question will be stated for each phase of organizational development (Situational Analysis, Architectural Design, Change Decision and Implementation) means that the questions will cover all ground necessary for answering the initial question of this thesis. Figure 4 in chapter 5.3 The Conceptual Model of Change Agent in the Context of OD visualizes this.

- What are the change agents' roles in the in a given phase of OD?

- What are the change agent's goals in a given phase of OD?

- What communication patterns are used between the change agent and the stakeholders in a given phase of OD?

- What are the change agents' specific competences in a given phase of OD?

- What knowledge of methods does the change agent possess in a given phase of OD?

6.2. Understanding the Roles and Nature of Change Agents in the Context of OD

The answers to the questions stated in chapter 6 Designing the Inquiries of the Study can be seen in the table below. It represents the ideal case change agent. The answers have been derived from The Theoretical Background of the Conceptual Model as well as The Framework for Organizational Development. The answers in Figure 5 do not follow any specific ranking.

Characteristics of Change Agents / Ideal Case	Situational Analysis	Architectural Design	Change Decision	Strategy Implementation
What knowledge of methods does the change agent possess?	• CATWOE • SNOT • PEST	• Extreme Programming methodology[2] • Agile methodology [3] • Budget Planning • Enterprise wide Prototyping • Enterprise Modelling • Task technology fit	• Mediation skills	• Extreme Programming methodology • Agile methodology
What communication patterns are used between the change agent and the stakeholders?	Usage of all existing communication channels to broadcast the vision, including: • Face to face • Conference • Meetings etc.	• Meetings • Conferences • Face to face • Usability tests • Workshops	• Face to face • Meetings • Workshops	• Face to face • Workshops • Meetings
What are the change agent's goals?	• Create a vision • Identify the stakeholders • Help stakeholders to define the	• To achieve a shared global understanding and agreeing amongst the stakeholders • Communicate the progress to	• Make the stakeholders understand the presented proposal • Communicate the results from the	• Successful implementation within the time and budget • Train staff for further maintenance of the system

[2] Extreme Programming (XP) is a deliberate and disciplined software development methodology that promotes the customer involvement during a life – cycle of the project. For more information about XP visit: http://www.extremeprogramming.org/ [Accessed 20/5-08]

[3] Agile software development methodology is a conceptual framework that enables iterations throughout the life – cycle of the project. For more information about Agile methodology visit: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agile_software_development [Accessed 20/5-08]

	problem • Create a powerful guiding coalition	the stakeholders • Create prototypes, models, designs to use as a basis for decisions to come • Creating short term wins	architectural design phase to the stakeholders	• Lead the change process
What are the change agents' roles?	• Listener • Observer • Analyst	• Architect • Engineer • Concept creator	• Mediator • Listener • Guider	• Teacher • Guider • Consultant • Wise coach
What are the change agents' specific competences?	• Business skills • Social skills • Analytical Skills • People skills	• Documented experience • System Skills	• Mediation skills • Pedagogical skills • People skills	• Experienced Engineer • High team skills • High leader skills

[Figure 5: Ideal Case]

7. Empirical Views and Practices of Change Agents, (Best & Worst Practices)

In this chapter the scenarios of the three chosen case studies are described. The case studies cover two *best practices* and one *worst practice* scenario.

7.1. Case Study 1: An Insurance Organization[4]

James Bennett, CEO at an insurance organization, hired a new chief information officer, Diana Sullivan, from one of their biggest competitors. The task was to lead the new multi-million project of developing the organizations' new system for business transmissions, called Lifexpress. Lifexpress was a complex computer-aided system that allowed more than 10 000 of the company's agents to perform business with their customers and prospects in a manner that was almost impossible just a few years earlier. For example, using a laptop computer agents could do things such as: create a complete financial profile of a customer, identify and diagnose the organizations most appropriate policies, conduct analysis, compare the organization against the competitors' ratings and performances and compile all necessary paper to consummate a sale. Lifexpress made it possible to complete all of the things mentioned above in just a few days, or in some cases a couple of hours, a process that could take four to six weeks before.

The project took three years and Sullivan managed to deliver a complete system within time and budget. Even though everything seemed fine, Sullivan started to feel that her role at the company no longer was as clear as it was in the beginning of the project. In the time it took to develop Lifexpress, two competitors managed to launch similar systems, and the organization started to fall behind. The problem laid in the organizations agents' computer skills; their learning curve and average age was much higher than the competitor's agents, who were more technical from the beginning.

Sullivan's boss, Clay Fontana, CFO at the organization, was not the support Sullivan could have used. He tried to hold her accountable for more than the creation and implementation of the system, he was also dissatisfied with the results from it. But Fontana showed lack of skills himself as he put a lot of effort on calculating how the organizations competitors did instead of concentrating more on leading his team out of the situation they had put themselves in. However, those are not the only reasons why things didn't go as planned with Lifexpress. The organization had been moving at a more traditional, slower pace. Instead of continually and dynamically re-evaluate decisions, they used calendar-year budgets. Hierarchical order was another organizational issue, instead of reporting directly to Bennett; Sullivan had to go through her CFO. This in turn slowed the decision process down; in fact the CFO was acting as a dysfunctional filter between Sullivan and Bennett. Also, Sullivan working solo was one problem, her vision of a three-year project another. As an expert she should know that such systems must be delivered in a much faster time.

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[4] Reimus Byron, (1997) The IT System That Couldn't Deliver HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW May - June 1997

7.2. Case Study 2: A Shipping Organization[5]

Every company within the shipping organizations' group develops their own systems; it would be extraordinary to have a general system for all companies, and it would be much more work. The IT department located in Copenhagen developed the reservation system that they now use. All of the companies within the group are connected through a huge network. All bookings are processed through an IBM mainframe. The systems are: a reservation system called STAR and a financial system called IAS, which is a system developed in-house in the early '90s. The organization used to work on a billing system called SAPS, and all reservations went through STAR before going to SAPS for billing. Since March '99 all of the groups' companies shared a common billing system, which was actually a part of the reservation system. An important reason for having a common system for all the companies is that it is easier to improve it if necessary, and that all companies have the required knowledge and experience of it.

Before developing the new system, representatives from all of the companies gathered for a three-day conference. The representatives from the financial- and business departments discussed the ideas and requests with representatives from the IT department about how they wanted the new system to be. This was crucial since the IT department had a very limited knowledge about the everyday work process of the other companies. Financial chief officers from all of the shipping organizations' companies sat down together regularly, in couple of occasions per year and discussed improvements. They came to an agreement that the need for a new billing system was rising very fast. The SAPS was an old system that was hard to maintain and even harder to improve for future needs. The SAPS was originally purchased from an external consultant company who stopped to support the system and no longer had employees who developed it. In fact, only one employee at the shipping company knew how to maintain the system and he was about to leave the organization. The solution was to buy him back very expensively, and that wasn't an ideal solution.

The other companies within the organization experienced similar issues with the SPAS, therefore the idea to gather them all together for a first brainstorm meeting came to mind. The meeting took place for couple of days. During the meeting ideas, requests etc. on the new system were discussed and documented. The IT department was in charge of developing the prototype according to the newly specified requirements. But before any programming occurred, a rough idea about how the system would function was presented to the management. The idea was approved and the implementation could begin. At the end of August '98 all parts of the system were finished and distributed to the companies for testing purposes. The response from the companies helped the IT department to fix bugs and to redesign the system where needed. Parallel with the implementation of the prototype, the meetings initiated by the IT department were held about the system's development progress. The meetings included participation from the financial department. The main management were not participating in the meetings, not even in the brainstorm meeting in the initial phase. In fact, the highest hierarchical involved member of the team was the division financial chief officer; he was also the project leader. His job was to report the progress to the financial management, which had the one main concern with this effort: to gain a working global system throughout the whole organization.

Agreeing on common functionalities on the system was harder than it seamed at first. Having members from different countries, with different experiences on the old system that they used, being used to work with specific billing templates etc., made the negotiations very difficult. The team from Norway and Sweden used the same system before, the SPAS, and they shared many opinions, whereas teams from Germany and England used totally different systems before and therefore where disagreeing on almost every function of the new system. A lot of the effort during the initial meetings was focused on adjustments. At the end, after listening to different suggestions, the team from Copenhagen delivered a policy on how e.g. forms should look like.

The investment paid off soon after the installation of the new system and the improvements were many. The new system handled different currencies and all functionalities were gathered in one place.

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[5] Maria Bergenstjerna, Lena Johansson, Marina Wojtasik, (1999) METODER FÖR STRATEGISK IT-MANAGEMENT

7.3. Case Study 3: A Consulting Organization[6]

A Consulting Organization is an IT organization delivering advanced custom-made software systems. A couple of years ago the organization worked with something they refer to as the Logic-method. The Logic-method covers a feasibility study together with the customer where the conditions, data flows, etc. on the system to be developed are discussed. After the initial stage, the design phase fires up with the aim to investigate how system models could be built up. This is followed up by the implementation phase. The whole process is well documented in order to ensure that the requirements are met. The last phase is the transfer of the system.

But nowadays the process differs from the previous method. The components that are usually the same for every system are already developed and made to fit together, the only components that are developed additionally are the special features on the system requested by the customer. The documentation and method process differs from the older approach, the standard components are documented and the organization is moving away from the Logic-method to new approaches. The idea to involve the customer early in the process still remains. The organization has a whole department responsible for customer relationships, analyzing the customer requirements, analyzing improvements of the system in order to support customer relationships even further etc. After the initial phase the customers are involved in processes such as development of the system, image design, and user interface design etc. The importance of having the customer close throughout the process described above is crucial for the organization.

The new applied method covers two different behaviours of management approach, the supportive and the commanding behaviour, with a mixture of both during the project. The commanding behaviour is mostly applied while developing the standard components where's the supportive behaviour is applied while collaborating with the customers.

The direct result from standardizing parts of the system is the financial profit and the increase of productivity. The work process chain has been optimized and therefore the delivering of the complete products has shortened in time. The goal with the new method is to improve the efficiency, increase the productivity, shorter the supply chain, increase the quality, etc. The effort of documenting the projects has a grater priority than before too. The new work methodology required and still requires plenty of adjustments to the routine work, e.g. when switching from the old method. The word revolution is a term often used in the office for describing the new method.

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[6] Maria Bergenstjerna, Lena Johansson, Marina Wojtasik, (1999) METODER FÖR STRATEGISK IT-MANAGEMENT

8. Change Agents in the Context of Organizational Development: An Analysis

In this chapter the questions from chapter 6 Designing the Inquiries of the Study are mapped with the case studies. This is done in order to provide a holistic view of the behaviour of the three organization's change agents and their attempts to implement the change. The figures in this chapter do not follow any specific ranking.

8.1. Change Agents in the Context of Situational Analysis

Characteristics of Change Agents / Situational Analysis	Case Study 1: An Insurance Organization	Case Study 2: A Shipping Organization	Case Study 3: A Consulting Organization
What knowledge of methods does the change agent possess?	• Traditional project management methods	• Documented past experience in engineering and design	• Methods for customer relations
What communication patterns are used between the change agent and the stakeholders?	• Fragmentary communication pattern • The change agent uses a commanding communication style • The change agent delegates the vision	• Conference • Follow up meetings	• Face to face • Conference • Observing
What are the change agent's goals?	• Increase the number of new services • Get new customers • To streamline the current working progress • To realize the organizations vision	• Increase the number of new services in the global market • To streamline the current working progress	• To lower the costs • To deliver the systems in new ways (components instead of complete systems) • Documenting the process for future projects
What are the change agents' roles?	• Coordinator of teams	• Listener • Observer	• Working with the customer • Listener • Observer
What are the change agents' specific competences?	• 20 years of engineering	• Experienced engineers	• Experienced IT organization (methods for learning) • Documented experience within mediation and leadership

[Figure 6: Situational Analysis]

8.2. Change Agents in the Context of Architectural Design

Characteristics of Change Agents / Architectural Design	Case Study 1: An Insurance Organization	Case Study 2: A Shipping Organization	Case Study 3: A Consulting Organization
What knowledge of methods does the change agent possess?	• Intuitive methods • Traditional project management methods • (Lack budgeting method skills)	• Documented past experience in engineering and design • Extreme Programming • Agile methodology	• Extreme Programming • Methods for involving the customer
What communication patterns are used between the change agent and the stakeholders?	• Fragmentary communication pattern • The CA uses a commanding communication style	• Meetings • Conferences • Face to face • Workshops • Prototypes	• Face to face • Meetings
What are the change agent's goals?	• Increase the number of new services • Get new customers • To streamline the current working progress	• To achieve a shared global understanding and agreeing on how the new system should run	• To share an understanding of the system together with the customer. • To move from the one big system into several components of the system • Document the process for future projects
What are the change agents' roles?	• Project manager	• Actively participate during the design • Engineer	• Architect • Engineer • Creator • Listener
What are the change agents' specific competences?	• 20 years of engineering	• Experienced engineers • Documented past experience in design and development	• Experienced IT organization (methods for learning) • Documented experience in development

[Figure 7: Architectural Design]

8.3. *Change Agents in the Context of Change Decisions*

Characteristics of Change Agents / Change Decision	Case Study 1: An Insurance Organization	Case Study 2: A Shipping Organization	Case Study 3: A Consulting Organization
What knowledge of methods does the change agent possess?	• Traditional project management methods	• Mediation methods • Leadership methods	• Mediation methods • Leadership methods
What communication patterns are used between the change agent and the stakeholders?	• Fragmentary communication pattern	• Meetings • Face to face	• Face to face
What are the change agent's goals?	• Unavailable	• Coming to an agreement with the stakeholders (users) • Creating a global policy • To involve all of the companies with the new system, sharing the knowledge about it, spreading the knowledge about it	• Coming to an agreement with the stakeholders (users) • Documenting the process for future projects
What are the change agents' roles?	• Project manager	• Listener • Mediator	• Listener • Mediator
What are the change agents' specific competences?	• 20 years of engineering	• Documented experience within mediation and leadership	• Documented experience within mediation and leadership

[Figure 8: Change Decision]

8.4. Change Agents in the Context of Strategy Implementation

Characteristics of Change Agents / Implementation	Case Study 1: An Insurance Organization	Case Study 2: A Shipping Organization	Case Study 3: A Consulting Organization
What knowledge of methods does the change agent possess?	• Traditional project management methods	• Extreme Programming methodology • Agile Development methodology	• Extreme Programming methodology
What communication patterns are used between the change agent and the stakeholders?	• Fragmentary communication pattern	• Face to face • Meetings	• Face to face • Meetings
What are the change agent's goals in a particular stage of OD?	• To deliver the system within the time and budget	• To deliver a functional system, or parts of the system • To train the users about using the system	• To deliver the functional system, or parts of the system • To train the users about using the system • Documenting the process for future projects
What are the change agents' roles in the context of OD?	• Project manager	• Teacher • Consultant	• Consultant • Engineer
What are the change agents' specific competences?	• 20 years of engineering	• Documented past experience in design and development	• Documented experience within development

[Figure 9: Implementation]

9. Discussion

The aim of this work is to provide an understanding of the characteristics that makes a change agent successful in the different phases of organizational development. We have stated the questions based on what The Conceptual Model of Change Agent identified as important to discuss and applied them to the case study scenarios. This chapter will cover, by now an already known structure when moving through the The conceptual Model of Change Agent in the context of OD, while critically analyze and discuss the results made in this thesis. For this study we have chosen to investigate two *best practice* and one *worst practice* case studies. They were chosen in order to investigate the differences between the two with the theory taken into consideration.

We found that the role of a change agent presupposes familiarity with the environment that he should operate in. Thus, a change agent is not the right person to follow routine methods or techniques. In the same sense a change agent is not the person that operate with modularization, reorganization, optimization etc. but rather reorientation.

Situational Analysis

Having the capability to conduct an analyze of an organization in trouble that later result in a successful change of that organization is one of the most important first steps a change agent could perform. The CIO in the case study of the Insurance Organization clearly lacked that skill and it had a major impact on rest of the project. Sure, the project made the deadline and budget, but poor initial planning, and a lack of a shared vision amongst the stakeholders doomed it from the start. The results from that miscalculation resulted in a loss of shares of the market to their competitors. The two *best practice* case studies testify of a completely different outcome in their attempts, showing a lot of knowledge and awareness of the business. In the first case, the Shipping Organization, the successful factor was the initial process of identifying the stakeholders, empowering them and involving them into decisions making. The top management was left outside; the future users of the system to be developed operated the whole project. The approach in the Shipping Organization scenario prevented a strong opposition of the change. This in turn made it possible to concentrate on the logic of the problem instead of putting a lot of effort into convincing stakeholders for the better end of the proposed change. The other successful scenario with the Consulting Organization was to divide their large system into small components, which could then be integrated into a customized complete solution. By doing that, the organization already made progress in streamlining the work effort. But that was not the only successful factor; pre-studies included the customer's requirements and thoughts on the functionality of the system, enabling the organization to deliver the products required. The communication was an important factor for their success. As shown in Figure 5 Ideal case both of the successful scenarios made use of several different techniques when analyzing the market.

Architectural Design

The Insurance Organization showed a lack of solid initial planning when entering the second phase of organizational development. Negligence in communication, not enough dynamical project management and system skills were the main missteps there. This is the phase where change agents need to make use of their constructive skills. Surely the CIO was aware of the users poor computer skills from the beginning, and failing to design the system to be user-friendly was another factor that dragged down the outcome of the project, an effect that became apparent late in the project. On the other hand, the primary goal and one of the key success factors of the two best practice scenarios were to establish the common understandings of the system together with their customer/users. Using both the Extreme Programming- and Agile methodology the organizations managed to fulfil the core of what was required of the system. That together with narrow communication with the stakeholders facilitated the design work of the system. Arranging workshops, usability tests and delivering prototypes helped to achieve adjustments on the design before making further decisions in the progress.

Change Decision

In the Change Decision phase, change agents are supposed to take a step back and let the stakeholders consider their proposed designs. In this phase the change agents role is to act more as a mediator when needed. This is only needed when stakeholders require it; the goal of the change agent is to ensure that stakeholders understand the proposal. To meet that expectation the change agents make use of different communication channels and apply their mediation skills. The difference in communication between

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the *best and worst practice* scenarios is obvious in this phase. The fragmentary communication pattern is clearly not the one to choose; instead a mix of communication patterns is more suitable. Consider the scenario where two or more stakeholders are in a dispute about what solution to go with. Here, change agents' need to decide how to mediate between the opposites, and there is no specific template to follow for those kinds of situations. The situation is far away from trivial, and change agents with help from their experience and documented approaches together with their inspirational and creative abilities, have to pick the best-suited act.

Implementation

During the Implementation phase, change agents are supposed to switch from mediators to wise coaches. The change agent's role is to support, guide and teach the users of the system, who are the ones developing it and maintaining it in the future. This is where the CIO from the *worst-case* scenario failed to deliver, the system was done but there weren't that many users who understood it. In other words, the learning curve was extremely high. In both of the successful scenarios where the coaching was prioritized the users ended up being productive. By making use of their knowledge of methods the two organizations from the *best practice* case studies could fulfil the stakeholder's requirements, the assessment of the different parts of the system, the evaluation of prototypes etc. of the system.

10. Conclusions

The purpose of this work is to provide an understanding of the characteristics that makes a change agent successful in the different phases of organizational development.

We therefore asked the question:

> What are the most significant characteristics a change agent can posses to successfully implement organizational change?

We found that the proper environment of change agents is the migration from a known and undesirable environment to an unknown environment but promising future. This is the idea behind Einstein's thesis, namely "Without changing our pattern of thought, we will not be able to solve the problems we created with our current patterns of thought''.

We also found that the characteristics that conform to the ideal view of a change agent are:

- A person of great analytical skills

- A person who is a good listener

- A person with great mediator skills

- An excellent architect

- A person with good teacher skills

- A person who is a wise coach

- A person who has a good understanding of the goals to strive for

- A person who has a good understanding of the activities to perform

- A person who has a good understanding of the methods and the communications styles to use in a given phase of organizational development

This image of an excellent change agent is visible in two of our three case studies; the absence of it in the worst practice case scenario is also very noticeable. We can draw the conclusion that an unsuccessful change agent is a person that does not:

- Have a clear understanding of his roles in organizational development

- Have a clear understanding of the goal of the change process

- Have a clear understanding of what his activities should be in each phase of organizational development

- Have a clear understanding of the theoretical tools useful for promoting innovation and creativity

- Have a clear understanding of who the stakeholders to communicate with are or how it should be performed

10.1. Suggestions for Further Studies

In this thesis we have built a concrete platform, generating the questions of important characteristics of a change agent, the phases of organizational development and the relationship between them.

Having the phases of OD in mind, a way of improving this thesis is to collect primary data. Such an approach would have an impact on organizing the input data in a way that it suits the more holistic view of the phases of OD. For instance one could divide the questionnaire into four OD phases covered in this thesis.

Furthermore we have shown both theoretically and empirically that; working according to our model will lead to avoiding mistakes like shown in Case Study 1: An Insurance Organization. Furthermore future studies researchers can choose to immerse themselves in the different characteristics of a change agents e.g. the different roles a change agent must master and the other characteristics a change agent can posses.

As our delimitation excluded the cultural aspects of change agent's environment, future researches might come to different conclusions should they include them in their research.

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