



Insights for Sustainable (and Profitable) Change

We live in a business world which changes faster than our capacity to learn. This NewWorld™ forces us to cope with more and more complex situations, whilst leaving us with less and less chance to 'predict' or even 'imagine' our future. In such circumstances, the rational way forward doesn't consist of trying to foresee the future but in deciding which one you want and acting so that it becomes the most probable scenario.

In such complex and uncertain situations, people do not feel engaged, emotion often overcomes logic, traditional planning doesn't work anymore, budgeting processes are made obsolete, risk management becomes the main factor of success, rigid strategies do not make sense, leadership styles must be interchangeable, teams need to be seen as virtual entities, etc ...

More importantly for senior managers, "doing what we've always done" doesn't imply anymore to "get what we've always got". Organisations cannot operate efficiently anymore on the same basis as before in terms of hierarchy, management, decision making, teamwork, expertise, etc ...

This course helps senior managers to answer the fundamental business AND personal questions:

"What has really change in our world and what are the implications?"

"What can I do to shape our future?"

"Can I really manage innovation?"

"Can I make it profitable? Systematic?"

"How can I beat resistance to change?"

1- My "Experience" is downgrading my ability to manage change.



How many sales (or marketing) people pretend to "know the customer" because they have 20 years of experience, facing recurrent requests and situations. Does this experience really help dealing with changing and/or new expectations?

How many project managers have been, over the years, "formatted" to deal with certain situations in a certain way, and continue to do so even if the full context has changed? Challenging questions aren't they?

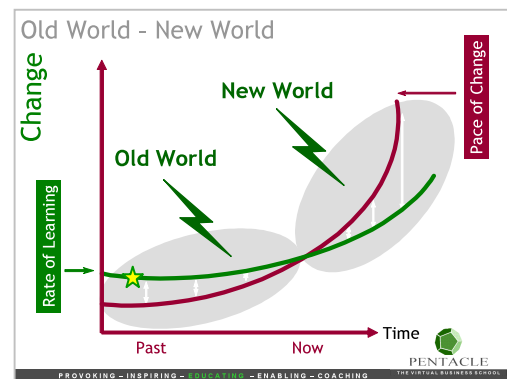


The human brain works with patterns, ie: comparing actual situations with previous ones that you've already memorised. This is the basis of what is usually called "experience": you recognise something that you've seen before and then draw the following conclusion: "this is the same!".

If you face several times a given situation, your brain creates an even stronger pattern. Thus, the older and more experienced you are, the more strong patterns you've developed. Unfortunately, the world is changing pretty quickly and what you are really observing, most of the time is NOT what you think it is. It means that your capability of simply detecting change decreases with the time if you do not care. (Without even talking about managing it!). Handling change starts with an individual and personal challenge to think differently, to avoid assumptions, to keep your mind open to provoking stimuli. Unlearning (especially in educated and experience-based communities) is the first key to successful change ...

2- I (we) live in a world which is changing quicker than my (our) capability to learn.

The change in our business world is permanent and continuous, that's why it is so difficult to be detected and understood by all. Several well known factors contribute to make this world permanently changing: information flows, globalisation, hyper competition, etc ... But have a look to our capability to learn and adapt. Did it grow at the speed as the pace of change in the world? Give it a second thought: Did your capability to learn, in the last say 20 years, grew as quickly as the speed at which the world has changed? No? Welcome to the New World™!



In a world which is changing quicker than our capability to learn, many good old learning has not only become obsolete but may even represent a major risk. Just think about a few of them: best practice, case studies, uniformisation, domination strategies, hierarchical (pyramidal) organisations, ... all these concepts that were making a lot of sense in a stable world where the older was the most experienced and thus the most knowledgeable, do they still makes such an obvious sense?

Quality is not controlled, it is created!

In such a world, success depends on other factors and behaviours. Companies are just at the beginning of their mutation to cope with this situation: transforming themselves into virtual organisations, promoting the idea of leadership, focusing on differentiation ("learning what others do not know yet"), developing strategies of innovation, promoting staff on criteria other than "Experience", etc ...

3- Innovation is not a funnel but a long survival journey

Recent research shows that only 1 idea out of 300.000 succeeds into the delivery of business benefits. We are not talking here about the sort of ideas we all exchange in front of the coffee machine but business ideas, that have been reasonably investigated. How can this happen? How can it be that for the last 30 years, most consultants have been presenting innovation as a sort of funnel, developing the false idea that the more ideas you put at the top, the more chances you have to get one right at the bottom of the funnel? This simply doesn't reflect the reality. The fact is that you have 1 chance out of 300.000 to get any innovation success if you follow the traditional innovation models. Kissing frogs and making wishes could be of better return! (15.000 books on Amazon.com on this topic!).

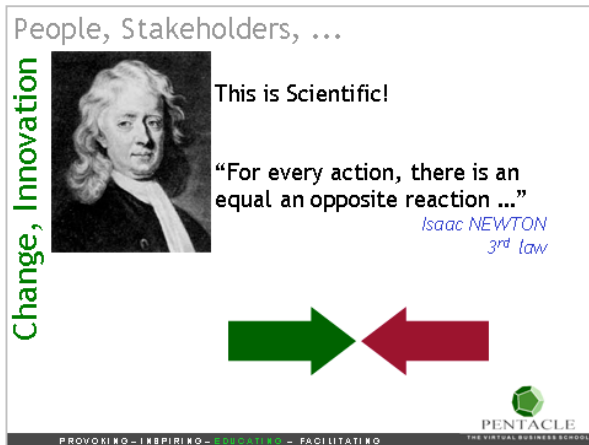


Fortunately, innovation in our New World™ follows some predictable patterns: bottlenecks and traps have been identified and located. We could say that in most cases, innovation is not anymore a matter of formulating good ideas but of selecting just a few of them and growing and protecting them along a long and tough journey, full of pitfalls. If you knew where they are? Would it help?

4- People create change, People constrain change

Imagine that you wake up one morning with a precise and very clear idea like, let's say "I know how to double our sales next year". How would you feel? Excited? You arrive at the office in the same morning and call for a meeting.

You explain you project (which makes a lot of sense since you are a great expert!). What do you observe? An enthusiastic HR director proposing some resources? Your colleagues volunteering to support you? The financial guys proposing a budget? No? Really? You just experienced the first of the Innovation pitfall, discovered by a certain Isaac Newton at the end of the 17th century and called "the third law" which says "Any action creates an opposite and equivalent reaction". Here we are: Resistance is a de-facto part of the game!



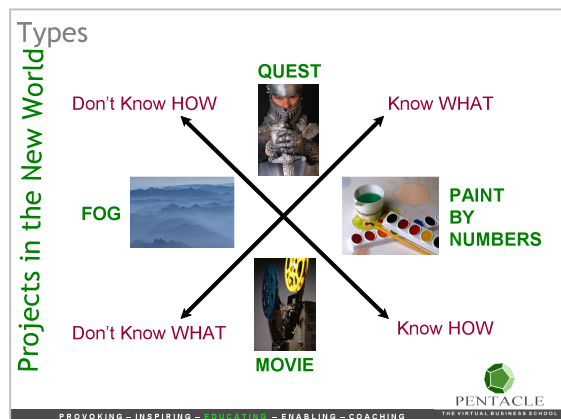
This should not surprise you! There is a very good reason to it: we are all reluctant to change! This is in our genes: we are creatures made of emotions and used to consider any change to our environment, even the simplest one, as a major threat (think about last time, when the facility manager asked you to move your office to another place). Now think about it: did you ever succeed fighting emotions with logic? Think again! No? So why do you present

innovative projects to your customers, your staff or your colleagues, using tons of - valid and legitimate - intellectual arguments ... subsequently and desperately observing their lack of buy-in?

It maybe the right time to seriously consider soft and emotional factors in your project management approach ...

5- A Project is not anymore just a Project

Have you ever seen these huge project planning documents produced by giant printers and full of little boxes and arrows linking them? And did you ever hear these strange people called *project managers* exchanging views on the compared benefits of "Prince2", "Rationale", or "MS Project"? That's very interesting because when you ask them, under certain circumstances, to tell you honestly "How long does it take before these planning documents become obsolete", the most common answer I've got is "They become obsolete



Often, the soft stuff is harder!

before the ink is dry". Now let's think about it from another angle: does creating a plan really help when the objectives of your project are changing ... or even unknown?

I was one day given a project which sounded like "Let's put our company (a large multinational) on internet". My first reaction, after a period of excitement was to try to understand a bit more about it. Was it about "eCommerce". "121 marketing", "CRM" ? silence! The feedback I got which was the closest to an answer was "We don't know but we have to do something all our competitors do that!". Objective: Unknown!

I then tried "But do we know how to do this? Did somebody do it already? and guess what? Means: Unknown!

Do you think that my old training as a project manager (a project planner actually) helped me a lot in this context?

In reality, in our New World™, it is often admitted that only 20% of all project have clear objectives (the What) and means (the How). Most projects today are facing a lack of "What", or "How", or even "What and How". In other words, there are different typologies of projects. Unfortunately, very few experts have been studying ways of dealing with such projects in which planning just play a secondary role, after many other tasks have been completed.

By the way, where do you think innovation projects stand? Where do you think the most beneficial projects stand? Clear "What" and "How"? Certainly not! So, why would you tackle innovation projects in the same way you've been doing with all other projects for the last 20 years? It's time to learn what the others do not know yet

PROVOKING
INSPIRING
EDUCATING
FACILITATING
ENABLING