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Understanding Innovation and change

Innovation, Creativity and Invention

Innovation

Organizations are changing their view on the definition of change. Innovation is increasingly seen as something that can help organizations work in new ways, enter new categories or channels and produce new products and services. This view on innovation makes the active and creative role of innovation very clear (Isaksen and Tidd, 2006). Innovation can be seen as the capacity to change that can help organizations define new things on different fronts. This capacity will only change reality though, when it enters the active phase of applicability.

Innovation can be called the capacity to change. Innovation without change has no true meaning for an organization. It would be innovation without a result (Carnall, 2007). Although innovation involves changes, not every change involves innovation (Boak, 2010). Innovation has to leave the theoretical phase to make change occur.

Process innovation is the challenge of using often scarce resources more effectively or becoming faster and more flexible in their response to a diverse environment. Product innovation is about using combinations of new and existing knowledge to deliver new or improved 'product concepts'. Discontinuous innovation is comparable with disruptive innovation in that it interrupts the normal way of doing things (Isaksen and Tidd, 2006). Opposite to disruptive innovation is routine innovation that is found where the market is familiar with the product class but the technology is new (Meyers and Tucker, 1989).

These different kinds of innovations all demand a different approach and use of it. Disruptive innovation should be managed differently from routine innovation. They demand different resources and organization. The most benefit for organizations comes from a combination of process and product innovation. This is when the innovation of products is done within optimized and innovative processes (Isaksen and Tidd, 2006).

Continuous improvement can be an element of organizational innovation. The delicate balance between risk and stability is important within organizational innovation. A key factor to organizational innovation is having a clear image of the desired results, a clear vision and a stable strategy and product innovation charter (Holbeche, 2006).

Incremental, safe and widespread innovation may be better for internal considerations. This can often be related to small changes. Novel and disruptive innovations may be better for market considerations (Isaksen and Tidd, 2006). When the business strategy is not well aligned to these different kinds of innovation, failure is almost unavoidable.

Creativity

Creativity has to do with coming up and expressing new ideas and perspectives. Creativity stands for creating outside the normal rules of convention or defined boundaries (Mackay, 2010). Besides artistic creativity there is business creativity. Business creativity can by definition be described as a pragmatic art. It creates environments in which innovative ideas can emerge. Creativity can be related with breaking rules, but it is not about breaking the business (Hall, 2010).

Due to these different aspects of creativity it is important to give it a rightful place within the organization. It needs to be placed within well-defined boundaries to be useful and safe. Creativity within organizations should be encouraged to make innovation happen. Leaders within organizations have an important role in the process of encouraging creativity. It is their attitude, personal qualities and skills that can make a difference (Adair, 2007).

Not all new ideas coming from inventive thinking are actually developed. In order for the ideas to be realized and put to work, the process of innovation has to occur. Inventing as a process of being creative is a passive process in the sense that it does not produce something on itself. Invention needs the active process of innovation to eventually be productive (Adair, 2007).

Change

Whatever their sector, today's organizations are operating in a fast-changing marketplace. Change is everywhere (Holbeche, 2006). Change happens at different paces and at different levels. Change involves dissolving existing patterns of behavior, establishing new behaviors and making them the norm (Hayes, 2010).

Incremental changes

There are 'varieties of change'. The first is 'smooth incremental change' which is change that evolves slowly in a systematic and predictable way. The second is 'bumpy incremental change' which is characterized by periods of relative tranquility punctuated by acceleration in the pace of change. The third is 'discontinuous change' which is defined as marked by rapid shifts in strategy, structure or culture or in all three (Senior and Fleming, 2006).

Revolutionary changes

Revolutionary changes tend to be more radical. Revolutionary changes are also known as frame-breaking because they usually make huge changes in existing structures. Transformational change is highly a political process that threatens different interest groups and is characterized by conflict. These changes have a radical character and are discontinuous in nature (Senior and Fleming, 2006).

Reactive and anticipatory changes

Reactive and anticipatory changes are changes that are made in direct response to some external event. Anticipatory changes can occur when organizations believe that change and anticipation of events still to come will generate greater competitive advantage (Dive, 2004). Planned change is a deliberate, intentional change. They take place in the form of improvement projects, such as development of a new product, purchase of new equipment or reorganization of formal structure (Yukl, 2002 and 2006).

Hard and soft changes

Hard changes concerns technical issues that can be analyzed to produce the right answer for the change. Soft changes are more complex because they tend to have more possible viewpoints. Hard changes such as corporate structure and systems should be carried out, while making 'soft' changes to the dynamic of the corporate workplace and its culture (Senior and Fleming, 2006).

Organizational development practitioners are increasingly working with organizations to facilitate system-wide planned change processes (Holbeche, 2006). These change processes are products of conscious reasoning and actions (Iles and Sutherland, 2001). Successful organizational transformation and managing change demand both leadership and management as well as creativity and innovation (Isaksen and Tidd, 2006).

Theory O and E

Two theories about change are Theory O and Theory E type of changes. Theory E has a focus on increasing shareholder value in the short run and Theory O change initiatives focus on transforming organizational culture. In practice Theory O is often more difficult to predict and less exact in nature than Theory E changes (Essentials, 2005).

Theory O is change based on organizational capabilities and can be related to the Soft changes. The goal is to develop corporate culture and human capability through individual and organizational learning (Holbeche, 2006). Theory O aims at incremental performance improvement through incremental changes to the organizational culture, capability and the promotion of organizational learning.

Theory E change pursues the maximization of shareholder value through financial incentives, downsizing and divestment. It is about tough choices driven by financial imperatives and financial performance (Carnall, 2007). These types of changes are often characterized as revolutionary or hard changes. It can also be related to structured and planned changes (Boak, 2010). When setting goals, an organization should embrace the paradox between economic value (Type E) and organizational capabilities (Type O).

Leading Change

Role of the leader

Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively. It is the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objectives. How effective the leader is depends in part on how the game is played to resolve role conflicts, cope with demands, recognize opportunities and overcome constraints (Yukl, 2002 and 2006).

New ways of leadership styles and skills are needed for future organizations. There are two broad conceptions of what leaders do – they motivate their followers and they design organizational context to enable their followers to function effectively (Munshi, 2005).

In the future hierarchical management structures will be less evident. Management of intellectual capital will require skills that nurture creativity and innovation in workforces rather than compliance in

the past. Regimes of control and command will no longer suffice. In a world of outsourcing and contract working, managers will need skills to plan and coordinate ‘associates’, who are working in different parts of the world (Senior and Fleming, 2006).

Change models

Change is about working together. It is unwise to act alone as a leader. Putting more executives at the top does not work either. It is better to build a coalition of people who have position power, expertise, credibility and leadership. The members of this “guiding coalition” need management and leadership qualities to make it work (Kotter, 1996).

There are two important models of change. The five staged model of Hayes (2010) and the eight step model of Kotter (1996). They see change as a process that goes through a series of stages. Their steps give us a guideline for handling change within organizations. Hayes talks about people management as an overall process guiding his steps. Kotter talks about the guiding coalition, the supporting team.

One of the elements of the people management of Hayes is communicating the change and this is strongly related to the communication of the vision in the steps of Kotter. Hayes talks about motivating others to change and this is what the guiding coalition of Kotter is all about. Hayes emphasize people management and place it as an umbrella over the steps, but the steps themselves are quite analytical. It would be better when the people part was integrated in the steps in the first place. That is where the steps of Kotter (1996) are stronger.

Lack in the models of change

The model of Kotter (1996) does miss some important aspects. The steps suggest that the need for change and the expected change are already known. This is not always the case. The model of Hayes (2010) does take this into account and address the issue of choosing the change to follow after recognizing the need for it. Sometimes the stage models are an over-simplification of the situation. Change processes in reality are messy and untidy, unfolding in an iterative fashion (Buchanan and Storey, 1997).

What appears to be cause and effect may actually be ‘coincidental’ symptoms (Carnall, 2007). Any organization is a balance of forces built up and refined over a period of time (Senior and Fleming, 2006). Consequently, proposed change of any significance will inevitably change this balance. Stage models often do not take these interwoven processes and relations of changes into account and are not useful for every change situation.

It is not always clear if all changes follow the stages of Kotter (1996) or Hayes (2010) for that matter. Different kind of opposition is also missing, for example the ‘nay sayers’. Kotter (1996) seems to talk about the visionary leadership style while there are other forms of leadership and maybe the model is difficult to use with other styles. Leadership is not the only success factor of change and other elements of success are difficult to find in the stage models (Boak, 2010).

Analyze change needed

It is important to first analyze which kind of change is needed. The stage models of Kotter (1996) and Hayes (2010) are based on a typical kind of leadership. The opposite is that it can be advantageous to start with an analyzing phase. Not all changes are worth the time and effort. Therefore the feasibility of the planned change should be analyzed (Isaksen and Tidd, 2006) .

When analyzing the change needed it is important to know how the organization handled change in the past or what the current changes are the organization faces. What kind of resources are needed for the change or how is the power divided when taking action are valuable questions. Analyzing the needed change before implementing or choosing a model for the implementation is important (Isaksen and Tidd, 2006).

Leadership Style

Leadership styles have a great influence on how the change is handled and indirectly how successful the change process will be. Three main leadership styles are important; autocratic, consultative and group oriented. These three styles can yield different levels of effectiveness based on the three criteria of quality of solution, time required to arrive at it and acceptance of it by subordinates (Isaksen and Tidd, 2006).

Another popular leadership model is an outwardly practical approach to Situational Leadership. The 'readiness' of followers is a key factor in deciding on an appropriate leadership style. The leader's task behavior (providing guidance and direction) and relationship behavior (team building, providing socio-emotional support) should accord with the readiness of followers (Carnall, 2007). This is definitely a more human oriented approach to leading change than the stage models described earlier (Hayes, 2010).

Relating styles

Theory E type of change has different leadership needs than the Theory O type of change. A top down, directive and coercive type of change is needed for Type E, which can be related to the more autocratic type of leadership. A participative, empowering and facilitative type of leadership is needed for Theory O type of change (Isaksen and Tidd, 2006).

Hard system changes concern the less complex changes which can be handled by effective analysis, planning and implementation. Soft system changes concern the more complex changes which require more participative approaches and a greater engagement in managing the views and expectations of these stakeholders (Boak, 2010).

There is a clear relationship between both the Theory E and Theory O Type of changes and the hard and soft system change. The Theory O Type of change can be related to the soft system changes because they both need a more participative, empowering and facilitative type of leadership and are more complex in nature than Theory E type of changes or the hard system changes (Boak, 2010).

Theory E type of changes can be related to the hard system type of changes that are more direct of nature and are a more top down, directive and coercive type of change which need a more autocratic

and hierarchical type of leadership. Theory E and O Type of changes are often related to organizational wide changes and the hard and soft system changes are related to smaller types of change (Boak, 2010).

Winning support for change

Winning support for change from stakeholders is important. For the adaptive, the supportive Theory O Type of change or the soft system changes, it is important to identify the key stakeholders. Once new concepts and ideas are developed, the next logical focus of attention is to prepare them for the marketplace and acceptance from key stakeholders (Isaksen and Tidd, 2006).

Important changes can be blocked by key stakeholders (Carnall, 2007). It is imperative to identify those key stakeholders to formulate a plan to get those stakeholders on board of acceptance. Identify stakeholders who will be affected by the change to neutralize or persuade those who could block it, and mobilize those with the power to make it happen (Hayes, 2010).

One way to identify key stakeholders is to map them in a matrix. Key stakeholders may include owners, executives, other members of the organization, customers, investors, joint venture partners, and labor unions. They all play their role and have different kinds of interests and influence on the change. Stakeholders can be internal and external (Yukl, 2002 and 2006).

It is important to get an insight on the power and interest of the stakeholders. Stakeholders can have a positive, neutral or negative interest in the change. Stakeholders differ in terms of their power. Managers may pay careful attention to some powerful stakeholders but they may completely overlook others (Hayes, 2010).

To make the change really successful, you have to align the change to as many stakeholders as possible. Proper stakeholder analysis in relation to the change is needed. Effective collaboration of employees/stakeholders is more likely if they are involved at all stages of the change process and not just its implementation (Senior and Fleming, 2006). Constantly analyze the state of the change and the role of the stakeholders during that specific state. Stakeholder analysis must be an ongoing process to be really successful.

The individual attitudes of key stakeholders should be assessed (or guessed at). Their communication preferences should be identified if possible. What are their formal and informal networks? What are their emotional needs, such as whether they would prefer to be involved, how they like to be 'handled'? All these aspects should be identified, along with any known personal agendas that might indicate that one type of communication may work better than another (Holbeche, 2006).

Recognizing the need for change

Before change can happen the need for change must be recognized. This stage can be related to the Unfreezing part of the three-stage model of change from Lewin (1947). In the unfreezing stage the people involved come to recognize that something must change. This is something else than implementing the change. It is important to know how ready the individuals, teams and organization are to take on the needed changes (Isaksen and Tidd, 2006). If they are not ready to accept the changes, then it is important to first create a sense of urgency for the needed change (Kotter, 1996).

There are factors that can help to indicate that change is needed. Regular interview may reveal a need to change. It can discover what behaviors to unfreeze or unlock. Identify unproductive current behavior and try to lift up the organization to a new level and then refreeze the new situation and behavior. Be aware of external forces and limits when evaluating your organizations need for change (Hayes, 2010).

One of the pitfalls of the trap of success is turning the focus inside the organization and forgetting the dynamic changing world outside the organization. Analyze the stage where your organization is in now (Kotter, 1996). Monitoring the environment is important to keep informed of competitors' activities, new legislation, change in the market and other factors. Fail to do so make the risk of missing the need for change higher (Mintzberg, 1980).

Needed change can still stall because of inwardly focused cultures, paralyzing bureaucracy, parochial politics, a low level of trust, lack of teamwork, arrogant attitudes, a lack of leadership in middle management, and the general human fear of the unknown. To be effective, a method designed to alter strategies, reengineer processes, or improve quality must address these barriers and address them well (Kotter, 1996).

People may fail to recognize the need for change because they were excluded from relevant discussion, were too busy with other things or were simply resistant to the notion of change for all kind of personal reasons. Often the latter happens when the change might threaten their own power base (Holbeche, 2006).

Management support is essential to innovation and change. But despite this support many blocking elements can occur. Some of these blocking elements can be divided into several areas. They are - perceptual blocks, we see what we want to see, - emotional blocks, our emotions dictated our reality, - cultural block, our culture learned us what we believe, - environmental blocks, something in our environment is blocking the change, and the cognitive blocks, when we do not try to see past the things we know the learning and change process will be seriously delayed (Carnall, 2007).

Single-loop learning can be used as a means of monitoring the performance of organizational systems and subsystems in relation to the objectives set for them (Senior and Fleming, 2006). If an organization fell into the trap of success then single-loop learning will be done without the needed view on the environment in which these systems must compete (Nadler, Shaw and Walton, 1994). Monitoring and evaluation are important means of following through with change seeking further improvement. When an organization does not monitor the right values, it risks missing important moments of change (Carnall, 2007).

Analyzing change required

Before choosing the type of change to implement, it is important to first analyze which type of change is needed. Often the first, quick-fix solutions are rarely the right ones. The cure can become worse than the disease. Repeated problems are often signs that the real solutions have not been found (Boak, 2010).

Reviewing the present state can help identify the required change by diagnosing the cause of the problem, identify current deficiencies or clarify opportunities. It can also help establish a baseline so

that it is clear what is changing and will be changed in the future and it can help define the future direction.

Although it depends on the kind of change needed to identify the future state, it can be of help to disconfirm the view of the people involved that all is well with the existing state of affairs and create a sense of urgency which could lead to recognizing the need to change (Kotter, 1996). It can also be of help to make a gap analysis between the current and future state which can be of help to identify the needed type of change to make the future state a reality.

If the required change is very complex and difficult to communicate, the initial style of influence might involve a high level of explanation and education. Once people understand the problem and what is required, other means of influence might be more effective. Similarly, a change that is compatible with the change target preferences and offers relative advantage over current practice might lend itself to a persuasive strategy. In other cases negotiation or high levels of involvement might be the most effective way forward. Where the change is divisible and where quick action is required it might be decided to direct a part of the organization to adopt a small-scale trial before making a decision about how to proceed (Hayes, 2010).

Skills of leaders of Change

There are three things a leaders should be good at. The first is business competence. They must know the business, its complexities and must stay on top of it. The second is personal effectiveness. They must keep themselves in shape with mind, body and spirit. The third is relationships; they must be good in the needed politics and invest in stakeholder relationships (Holbeche, 2006).

Different type of change and different context may require different styles and skills of leadership. Theory E Type of change for example demands a different kind of leader than a Theory O Type of change. Hard system changes prosper well in hierarchical organizations but this is not the case for soft system change. Incremental changes need a more managerial type of leadership where the bumpy changes, the more radical changes need more than just a managerial type of leadership (Boak, 2010).

There has been little research on the relative advantage of training, development and self-help activities for different types of leadership skills. Likewise, little is known about the best way to combine training, development, and self-help activities to maximize their mutual effects. There is need for a more systematic approach to the study of leadership development activities (Yukl, 2002 and 2006).

Change to systems and processes

Change has to do with altering systems and processes. There are several ways to make changes. Two largely dominant ways to treat changes are Total Quality Management (TQM) and Business Process Re-Engineering (BPR), which involves process Improvements.

TQM is an organization-wide, long-term change effort designed to orient all of an organization's activities around the concept of quality. It has also a relationship with increasing productivity, improving customer service, responsiveness and saving costs (Hayes, 2010).

BPR requires management to reorganize around horizontal processes including the institution of cross-functional and self-managed teams. Where TQM has a more hierarchical oriented approach to change, BPR is centered on the responsibilities of self-managed teams (Senior and Fleming, 2006). BPR places the customer at the center of the process, where TQM places the organizational culture, employees and inside quality at the center of the process.

BPR involves a fundamental rethink and radical redesign of business processes to achieve a step change in performance. TQM on the other hand involves more the theory O Type of change or soft systems change. Their focus is the real difference between the two. TQM is more focused on the culture and processes of the people in it. BPR is more focused on the self-managerial characteristics of smaller units of employees and focused on smaller processes (Hayes, 2010).

Successful change

Successful change is often a subjective experience. The subjective side of the success of change is often related to the soft system change where culture and politics play a key role. Subjectivity can also be related to the hard system changes, the Theory E Type of change. One of the characteristics of the hard system changes on the other hand is that it consists out of metrics, graphs and formulas that can be controlled and are hard facts. These hard facts seem to play a secondary role in changes that are more related to people, culture and politics (Holbeche, 2006).

Successful change has to take into account a wider range of stakeholder needs than was done in earlier times where short-term hard facts played the biggest part of the change focus. The focus went from redesigning, restructuring and re-engineering to getting the best out of the people who were left in the organization and on whose continued efforts the future success depended (Holbeche, 2006).

Identifying the key stakeholders early in the process should be a top priority. Who is involved in the change process, what is their role and what are their expectations? It is important to anticipate on these factors and make them part of the change strategy. The hard facts are still important, although in what way depends on the change at hand, but it is all driven by people and when the people are against the change, the change will not be successful after all (Kotter, 1996).

Successful change occurs when people are willingly to change their behavior in relation to the changed circumstances. Theorists debate whether it is necessary to stimulate people to change and they say that this can be done through articulating a crisis situation or through creating some other 'burning platform' as a way of mobilizing an organization to change (Holbeche, 2006). This is what is called creating a sense of urgency (Kotter, 1996). It is about recognizing the need and start the change process. It seems that these are important steps to create a fertile soil for successful change (Hayes, 2010).

Successful and Unsuccessful Change

The Successful Innovation and Change

I played a role during the successful implementation of a collaboration platform within an organization. This implementation changed the way people worked with each other and it changed the way this organization communicated internally and externally. For this change to happen hard skills and soft skills were analyzed. A combination was used of the Hard Systems and the Soft Systems Model of Change (Senior and Fleming, 2006).

Both forms of change were needed. The hard side was the infrastructure on which the collaboration platform had to be implemented and the soft sides were the views and the expectations of different groups of stakeholders which had to be analyzed. The hard system changes could be done with proper analyzing and planning. The soft system changes required a more participative approach. The hard system changes lent themselves to be planned and tracked where the soft system changes were difficult to predict, plan and track.

What played a role in the success?

A culture of sharing creates a better environment for successful change initiatives. It brings individuals together and helps relationships form and build. This change concerned the implementation of a collaboration platform. The essence of this kind of change is sharing and forming relationships between individuals. This is where the characteristics of the soft system changes and the theory O Type of changes were clear.

For Theory O Type of changes it is important to win support from the stakeholders. When new concepts and ideas were developed, our attention focused on preparing them for acceptance from key stakeholders (Isaksen and Tidd, 2006). The key stakeholders were identified early in the process. We formed a guiding coalition where key stakeholders formed the members (Kotter, 1996). This was a useful way to create a group of users who could 'infect' other users of the collaboration platform. This made the implementation and all the surrounding changes a success.

We created a clear vision and communicated this vision constantly. We combined this with creating short term wins. Because it was a huge system with a very long implementation time, it was important that some progression could be made visible. If a change has a long time span, then there is the risk of people getting unattached. Short term wins were therefore important (Kotter, 1996).

It was also important to sustain the change (Hayes, 2010). This new collaboration platform had to be anchored in the organization to make it part of the culture, to make it an element of 'how we do things around here' (Kotter, 1996). This proved to be a difficult step because it was tempting to call it a victory too early in the process. Every member of the guiding coalition had to be made aware of this. Even if one or two would declare it a success before it was anchored and sustained in the organization, we could risk total failure.

This implementation could be called a revolutionary change because it made a huge difference in existing structures and brought a fundamental new way of work to the floor. It was implemented like a smooth incremental change (Senior and Fleming, 2006). Therefore a potential radical change on different fronts was split up in pieces and those pieces in incremental loops. Small changes were implemented and those small changes became more acceptable. In the end people did not know that the overall change was radical and immense because they thought it was only a minor change.

It can be helpful to split up huge changes into smaller ones and communicate those small changes as if they are the only changes to be implemented. It makes people less alarmed and less offended because smaller changes do have less repellent characteristics than the bigger changes.

The Not Successful Innovation and Change

The implementation of an electronic patient dossier within a hospital was unsuccessful. The technical hard and software was there. The related technical employees were trained and focused. The lower management and middle management agreed and teams were ready to implement. We thought everything was in place. All material was analyzed thoroughly and the metrics to check were in place. Soon it became clear that we forgot the soft side of the change. Not all key stakeholders were properly informed and there was a lack in people guiding and supporting the change (Kotter, 1996).

Eventually it was discovered that the specialists and doctors did not want a system with full transparency. Upfront it was taken for granted that those specialists and doctors would want such a system because it was beneficial for the patients. Therefore it was not anticipated that not everyone would appreciate the transparency this new system offered. The stakeholder analysis was done improperly and with a narrow view. The final change was not popular among all the stakeholders, although it was beneficial for the organization and it improved on what was there before (Boak, 2010).

What played a role in the failure?

First the scope was defined as well as the problems and issues which had to be addressed. After this an object tree was formed with all the aspects that were desired by the people related to the change. The Hard Systems Model of Change was used. The assumption was made that the doctors and specialists were in need of a system that would give more inside information in the way they worked. This was not checked with them thoroughly. We assumed something without the proper data. We learned that assumptions are bad change drivers. (Senior and Fleming, 2006).

There was a lack in proper communication about plans and vision and the urgency for change was not formed (Kotter, 1996). This urgency was not formed at all places and for all important key stakeholders. True leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree what needs to be done and how it must be done effectively (Yukl, 2002 and 2006). A guiding coalition was formed but not all key stakeholders were represented (Kotter, 1996).

Interesting organizational questions are how the organization handled changes in the past and how the power is used in making decisions and taking action (Isaksen and Tidd, 2006). More analysis made it clear that implementations of other changes in the past concerning the work of the specialists and doctors, were made difficult to implement. The power of making decisions should lay with upper

management, the strategic partners of the hospital. Instead a lot of the decision making power was within the group of specialists and doctors. This was highly underestimated when implementing and defining the change.

A Hard Systems Change was used while a Soft Systems of Change was needed. Other factors like the organizational culture and power base played a more important role. This was hard to measure. These soft elements made the process of change more complex, diffuse and confused than appeared at first sight (Senior and Fleming, 2006). In future implementations it is advisable to pay more attention to the soft complexity of the problem and situation. The hard complexities played the most important role in our analysis and created a blind spot concerning key stakeholders that failed the implementation of the change.

Reflection and Introspection

Personal Performance as a Leader of Innovation and Change

Often I play a role during change events within organizations. My background with project management gives me tools to handle these changes. I use project management theories to lead project teams and projects during stages of change and innovation. Many project management techniques consist out of elements concerning the hard complexities of projects and changes. As a result it happens that I do not pay enough attention to the soft complexities of the situation. Then I approach projects and changes unilateral the hard way while many projects and changes are anything but unilateral.

From out my experience as a project manager I like stage models of change. Several project management theories consist also out of stages or levels. Every level has its own characteristics and every level asks for a certain approach. I prefer to make graphs, statistics, reports and other elements of hard complexity and the Hard Systems Model of Change. The idea of being in control of those hard elements gives me a secure feeling.

But it never gives me an overall satisfied feeling and it seems that I never am in total control. It was until I started the course Master of Leading Innovation and Change that I began to realize why I never was in full control of my projects and change processes. The main reasons for not being in control are the soft complexities of the projects. They are underestimated elements which I give very little attention. Those soft elements often do not lend themselves to be calculated the way I calculate the hard elements of the hard complexities of projects and changes.

Action plan to improve Leading Innovation

To improve my understanding of the soft elements of change, more knowledge concerning the soft complexities of projects and change processes is needed. The theories around the hard complexities and the Hard Systems Model of Change are better known to me. I do not have the proper knowledge to handle the soft complexities of projects and change processes. This must be improved because for being a good project manager or change agent it is necessary to be able to formulate theories around both sides; the hard complexities and the soft complexities. Therefore I should extend my knowledge on the

Soft Systems Model of Change or Theory O Type of Change. Otherwise my solutions to problems will be at risk of being incomplete and without proper foundation.

To become a good leader of Innovation and Change I must have a sensitive, clear and flexible goal setting. I must be able to do team building, networking and handling ambiguity. I must become experienced in communicating and dealing with people and meetings, enthusing and motivating people and groups. I must be able to do the selling and negotiating when needed. I need to train myself in dealing with the politics, influencing people in the background and communicate the broader view.

The coming modules of the course Master in Leading Innovation and Change offer enough material to form more insight in all these matters of being a good leader of innovation and change. As a structure I will relate the learning elements to the modules, residence and work related situations. This can be seen in the timetable in Appendix A, Table 1.

For a review and test of my progression I shall use the forums and my fellow students as well as the feedback of the tutors. The residence period will be used for reflection on the things I learned in the course. To check the validity of my assumptions I will use real life examples within the organizations where I do my projects and where I guide change processes. When done properly, this combination of theory and practice will improve my skills as a leader of innovation and change.

As a final means to train myself in thinking about change processes and theories I created a website around Sharepoint and change. Sharepoint is a Microsoft product for collaboration within large organizations. Many processes change when Sharepoint is implemented. The success or failure of these Sharepoint implementations depends on how these change processes around Sharepoint are interpreted and introduced. The site can help me in writing about change processes within organizations. I will write about the things I learned within the course Leading Innovation and Change and this can be helpful in making it a part of my reality. The address of the site is <http://www.sharepointchange.com> and it can guide organizations in getting a better grip on all the changes that come to existence when implementing Sharepoint.

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Appendix A

Table 1

Period	Situation	Learning Objective
Winter/Spring 2012	MOD017 The Essence of Leadership	Soft Complexities of change processes and what leadership style can be used
	Professional projects and change processes	<p>Practice the different theories of the soft complexities of change processes and projects in relation to the essence of leadership</p> <p>Practice the different theories of leading innovation and change in relation to the essence of leadership</p>
	http://www.sharepointchange.com	<p>Post at least one blog about soft complexities of change processes and projects in relation to the essence of leadership related to Sharepoint implementations.</p> <p>Post at least one blog about the essence of Leadership in relation to Sharepoint implementations</p> <p>Optional: post a blog about the different theories of leading innovation and change in relation to the essence of leadership</p>
Autumn 2012	MOD013: Strategic Thinking and Strategic Leadership	Soft complexities of change processes and how strategic thinking and strategic leadership can be used
	Professional projects and change processes	<p>Practice the different theories of soft complexities of change processes and projects in relation to strategic thinking and strategic leadership</p> <p>Practice the different theories of leading innovation and change in relation to strategic thinking and strategic leadership</p>
	http://www.sharepointchange.com	<p>Post at least one blog about soft complexities of change processes and projects in relation to strategic thinking and strategic leadership related to Sharepoint implementations</p> <p>Post at least one blog about strategic thinking and strategic leadership in relation to Sharepoint implementations</p>

		Optional: post a blog about the different theories of leading innovation and change in relation to strategic thinking and strategic leadership
Winter/Spring 2013	MOD060: Culture and Innovation in Organizations	Soft complexities of change processes and what culture and innovation in organizations are of influence
	Professional projects and change processes	Practice the different theories of soft complexities of change processes and projects in relation to culture and innovation and organizations
		Practice the different theories of leading innovation and change in relation to culture and innovation in organizations
	http://www.sharepointchange.com	Post at least one blog about soft complexities of change processes and projects in relation to culture and innovation in organization related to Sharepoint implementations
		Post at least one blog about culture and innovation in organizations in relation to Sharepoint implementations
		Optional: post a blog about the different theories of leading innovation and change in relation to culture and innovation in organizations
Autumn/Summer 2013	Residency in Zurich	Review and reflect the soft complexities of projects and change processes related to the modules MOD033, MOD070, MOD013 and MOD060 with other students and tutors where possible.
		Practice the different theories of soft complexities of change processes and projects in relation to the modules MOD033, MOD070, MOD013 and MOD060 with other students and tutors where possible.
		Optional: make a final report on the progression made concerning the personal development in leading innovation and change related to the soft complexities of change processes and projects
		Optional: make a final report on the progression made concerning the personal development in leading innovation and change related to the

		hard complexities of change processes and projects
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