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EPIC CHANGE

How to Lead Change in the Global Age

by Timothy R. Clark

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"Tim Clark has produced an indispensable, best-in-class road map for change leaders. Ignore this book at your peril."

-- Joseph A. Cannon, editor, Deseret News

**BUSINESS ADVISOR, SCHOLAR, AND FORMER CEO
TIMOTHY CLARK REWRITES THE RULES FOR
LEADING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE**

Change is not a choice. It's an imperative in today's high-speed, ultra-competitive, global environment. For his new book, **EPIC CHANGE: How To Lead Change in the Global Age** (Jossey-Bass, January 2008), business advisor, scholar, and former CEO Timothy R. Clark analyzed initiatives at fifty-three organizations – including businesses, schools, health care facilities, government agencies, and non-profits – to understand exactly what it takes to create effective, sustained, systemic change.

The change processes he studied covered a broad range of categories – institutional mission shifts, new business models, succession planning systems, mergers and acquisitions, business process redesigns, and more. He also interviewed three hundred executives who were either directly responsible for these efforts or were deeply involved in the process.

Clark discovered that all successful change efforts followed a sequence of four stages – **E**valuation, **P**reparation, **I**mplementation, and **C**onsolidation – hence

More

his resulting “**EPIC**” methodology. But equally as important, Clark determined that the secret to driving change forward always revolves around a leader’s ability to engage and energize an organization’s people during all four stages. Above all, leaders themselves must stay committed throughout the entire process, remaining focused from beginning to end.

The Four Stages Of A Successful Change Process

•**Evaluation** – During this first stage, the leader’s job is to evaluate competitive reality, internal performance, and various alternatives while the organization as a whole maintains its current systems. At this time of relative equilibrium, leaders must also take specific steps to build a workforce that is agile, flexible, and resilient. This is critical groundwork for overcoming people’s typical responses to change – uncertainty, anxiety, fear, and resistance – that will come later.

•**Preparation** – The preparation phase not only involves technical tasks such as organizing, budgeting, and scheduling, but also entails preparing and motivating employees for the monumental task ahead of them. Clark has found that there are four tools in the leader’s arsenal to achieve this. These include: creating a sense of urgency; relying on the leader’s own credibility to encourage employees to take risks; building a coalition of support; and creating a vision of the future.

Implementation – This is by far the most arduous stage, when the organization is most severely taxed and people’s resistance is typically the strongest. Leaders must focus on ensuring that some type of early results happen to give employees confidence that bigger, long-term results are achievable. Clark explains how to set the goals for these early wins – ones that are outwardly visible, easy to measure and communicate, and symbolically important.

Consolidation – If leaders don’t see the process through to the end, all that has

been achieved will unravel, before becoming an integral part of the organization's fabric. Leaders often make the mistake of believing that change will become self-executing at this stage, because there appears to be irreversible momentum, says Clark. Only with the leader's continued attention will people internalize and accept change – leading to sustained, not merely temporary, results.

The Human Factor Is Key

Ultimately, the success of any large or small effort comes down to the human factor, Clark found. While companies can usually control the technical aspects of change including capital, systems, technology, and time – people are a different matter. As free-willed beings who can choose to offer or withhold their support, they must be motivated to make change possible. Even leaders themselves can prove to be obstacles if they're not sufficiently dedicated. "Successful change demands slavish attention and rapt commitment from its leaders," argues Clark.

A Leader's Credibility Is Vital

A leader's credibility is absolutely vital for achieving lasting and meaningful change. "Every time you ask people to embrace change, you're asking them to go at risk," writes Clark. People will only take risks for those they trust. One of the biggest pitfalls is the well-intentioned leader who over-promises in an attempt to remove anxiety and assuage fear. Another stumbling block is the leader who lacks transparency. "The way you manifest openness can vary, but it must be present and discernable to others," writes Clark. A leader can be "an unassuming or introverted personality as long as he or she is able to express genuine concern for people, invite challenges, reveal personal motives, and demonstrate emotional control under pressure."

Being A Successful Change Leader Is Not A Choice

Faced with a need to achieve both steady, ongoing performance improvement as well periodic major changes – both of which have become critical in an era of

accelerating competitive forces – leaders today have no choice but to be equipped to manage change. “Unless you can learn how to lead change, the environment will expedite your ineptitude and push you out as a casualty of the Peter principle – a principle that says people rise to the level of their incompetence,” Clark warns.

In **EPIC CHANGE**, Clark provides a crystal-clear blueprint showing where leaders’ efforts must go and why, so they can win the battles with competitive forces that prey on every organization. A revolutionary and thought-provoking book, **EPIC CHANGE** provides answers to some of the most significant problems that confront leaders worldwide.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

TIMOTHY R. CLARK is founder and chairman of TR Clark & Associates, LLC, an international consulting and training organization that specializes in strategy, leadership development, and organizational change. He advises leaders around the world, helping them navigate change and develop the competencies they need to compete in the global age.

Clark earned a doctorate in politics and social science from Oxford University and was both a Fulbright and a British Research Scholar. He earned a master’s degree from the University of Utah and a bachelor’s degree from Brigham Young University, where he was named a first-team academic all-American football player.