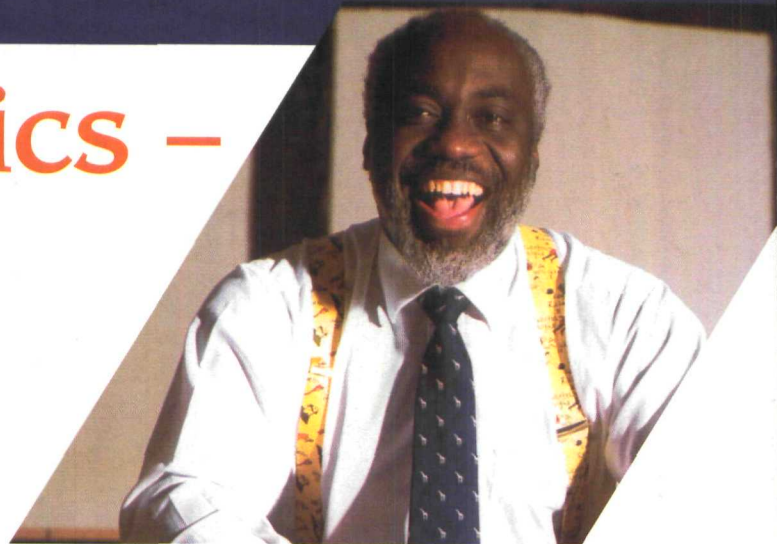


Back to basics – back to the future



Change is the cause and the effect of itself

The last decade has taken us on a whirlwind journey. Social and technological changes have provided opportunities for enterprise which have led to the explosion of communication, travel, trade and infrastructure changes such as the Internet. Each opportunity exploited simply creates another. For example, the availability of a graphical user interface allowed the development of browsers which in turn allowed the development of websites requiring better browsers with faster access than a modem to digital connections and so on, almost exponentially. And even when the market slows, the change accelerates and your workload and pressures go up! Large drops in share prices lead to opportunities for deals, acquisition and merger and synergies requiring retraining, re-organisation and so on, almost exponentially.

Unfortunately, organisations including yours are caught up in this buffeting. Buffeted by tides and changes greater than themselves. Most organisations are creatures of habit, preferring the industry sectors they understand to the business- sphere they don't. Preferring internally driven programs to those inspired from outside the organisation, say by customers. For many organisations their concession to their customers in a wired world is a website, developed by an out-source supplier which is simply an animated version of a corporate brochure or annual report. This leaves a real opportunity and advantage for any competitor who takes the time to carry out real change, big change, effectively and successfully.

Now, change feeds on change to the point where, for most organizations, the pace of change in their business-sphere has outstripped their ability to learn and change. This is the New World.

Big change tamed

Programmes and projects have taken over from processes and procedures

In the New World the opportunities for change are almost endless. In the 1990s the

focus of most enterprises was on change, but simultaneous change – the type found in operations, processes and procedures. Improving, redesigning and re-engineering them ran a close second to realigning functional reporting lines as a way of getting better, of getting change to happen.

After a long but unsuccessful innings enterprises began to realise that to alter anything at all in the organisation, from its structure to its supply chain, to its market access, required that they learnt how to tame change, how to deliver BIG change, how to deliver sequential, discontinuous change. They discovered the need to deliver very big change by breaking it into smaller chunks. They have begun to understand that in the New World with significant change it becomes effective to ensure that the projects (chunks of change) are aligned closely into programmes (big flocks of chunks which, like birds, fly in the same direction, close to each other) in order to have effective implementation. They have discovered the essential need in the New World

to manage projects and programmes of change.

This is the decade of the project and programme manager.

Predictable change

If you understand what type of change you're dealing with, the issues are about 95% predictable

Now we have begun to understand that projects go wrong, following common patterns. My now famous and widely published bubble diagram (below) summarises the typical ways in which projects go wrong and why.

We have begun to understand how to interface a project or programme and its organisation with the rest of the enterprise. Now we have begun to understand what tools to use, and when; the importance of stakeholders; the critical difference between open and closed change. We have begun to understand how in the New World projects exist against a backdrop of uncertainty. This means that often we cannot completely pre-

