

Managing for Change - the challenge of our time

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Credit

- To my brothers Sam Owarish and Jack Radifera for 'allowing me to stand on their shoulders and reach for the stars'

Change is an important part of modern life

Societies have been undergoing change albeit transformation over time, both in the public and private sectors

Enlightenment (classical)

- European politics, philosophy, science and communications were radically reoriented during the course of the “long 18th century” (1685-1815) as part of a movement referred to by its participants as the Age of Reason, or simply the Enlightenment
- *Source: www.history.com/topics/enlightenment*

Precursor

- The Age of Enlightenment was preceded by and closely associated with the scientific revolution
- Source: wikipedia

The 'earlier drivers'

- Earlier philosophers whose work influenced the Enlightenment included Francis Bacon, René Descartes, John Locke, and Baruch Spinoza
- Source: wikipedia

The key 'drivers'

- included Cesare Beccaria, Voltaire, Denis Diderot, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, David Hume, Adam Smith, and Immanuel Kant
- Source: wikipedia

Enlightenment

- Main factor: scientific investigation and reasoning as a key to human progress
- Since then, the efforts have been going on and on, even 'snowballing'

Fast forward to our time

- Tribute to Alvin Toffler, an incredible 'visionary', who foresaw our modern enlightenment

Alvin Toffler: Future Shock

- Prepare ourselves for incredible changes

Alvin Toffler: The Third Wave

The three waves of changes albeit revolutions:

First Wave (agricultural)

Second Wave (industrial)

Third Wave (informational)

Alvin Toffler: Power Shift

- The 'fasts' in regard to change: foster, bring about and benefit from changes
- The 'slows' in regard to change: clearly at a disadvantage

Change dynamics

- Public-private sector interaction: pull and push effect bringing about changes in each sector

Change dynamics

- Public sector fosters and facilitates change which benefit society at large including the private sector entities, example the Internet: DARPA and leading US universities started the movement; private sector entities contributing and benefiting

Change dynamics

- Private sector entities leading the change process: Facebook, with the so-called social media revolution benefiting society at large and its consumers; Apple iPhone revolutionizing modern communication

Managing for change

- Companies have been able to perfect the 'science' of managing for change, for their own benefits and for the benefits of the consumers and of society at large, at times with some negatives
- 'Consumerism'

Positive and negative aspects

- Change has positive and negative aspects both at the level of society at large and also at the level of sub-national entities

We also have to look at change at the level of the world

- Globalization has positive and negative aspects
- Back to Toffler's 'Fasts' and 'Slows'
- The rich gets richer and poor gets poorer: how to deal with this situation both in national and international contexts

Change dynamics

- Are there 'right' changes as compared to 'wrong' changes
- Religion as a factor
- Benefits from change
- Drawbacks from change

Change dynamics

- Are we moving too fast in some societies with some people struggling to keep up

Change dynamics

- Robotics and the loss of jobs
- Is this a new situation or does this happen whenever we have a major technological revolution such as the advent of the PCs (true the clerical jobs disappeared but new jobs emerged e.g. programming, system development etc)

Dire prediction

- Stephen Hawking predicts biggest event in human history: we've witnessed a perfect storm of technological advancement that brought us to this point heading to 'disaster'

On the other hand

- Incredible power of human ingenuity and creativity; admiration for what United Arab Emirates has done and is doing
- We just need to make sure that benefits are spread more 'fairly'; we need to consider a new 'utilitarianism' with the greatest good for the greatest number

New Enlightener: Thomas Friedman

- News analyst
- Through his books captured the essence of what is going on in the world and in society

Thomas Friedman new book

- Thank you for being late: An Optimist's Guide to Thriving in the Age of Accelerations (skillfully reviewed by Paul M. Barrett (Bloomberg Business Week))

On the one hand

- Disruptive time
- Age of accelerations (the negatives)
- Fragmentation
- Disorienting transformation
- Increase in economic activities with rising carbon levels feeding climate change that threatens civilization

On the other hand

- Accelerations as positives such as increase in computing power
- Positive digital change brought about by Apple, Google, Facebook, Twitter, Hadoop, GitHub, Palantir Technologies
...

Open source

- From relying on exclusively on in-house brain power, to:
- Exploiting the flow of knowledge from anywhere in the world

Key role of government

- Investing in improving physical infrastructure and computer superstructure (expanding bandwidth)
- Increasing funding for scientific research

Other significant changes: climate change

- We have exploited technologies which over time prove to be damaging to the environment leading to climate change with some in denial and others convinced not doing enough to counteract; Treaty of Paris is a major accomplishment, now we have to walk the talk

Peace in the Middle East

- Situation has changed from bad to worse; the solution may not be military but diplomatic, although there is the impression that the diplomats seem not able to remove the roadblocks

The Trump Way

- The establishment seems not to have done enough, 'triggering' a wind of change; bringing the business entrepreneurship to government could be good
- International business diplomacy complementing traditional diplomacy could be good too
- In societies which are prosperous, people are busy being constructive leaving little time for 'fighting'

Era of mega change

- Wireless communication
- Hacking
- Stock markets/financial markets
- Real estate markets
- Production

Conclusion 1

- New era of changes, many of them mega in nature, at the national and international levels, with hope and great expectations

Conclusion 2: what is the next big wave?

- Answer: "Perhaps there will be another wave after the waves of spectacular advances in all areas of technology, communication and knowledge. This wave will transform the human psyche itself. After all the technological and information waves, enhancing the human experience beyond the dreams of previous generations, the new psychological and ideological wave will convince every nations of the futility of nations going to war for selfish and flawed ideological reasons. This may well be the ultimate wave of change that will ensure the survival of mankind either on this planet or somewhere else in the universe." (Sam Owarish)