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# **The People Dimension of Change Management for Small-to-Medium Organisations in the New Zealand Business Environment**

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## Abstract

Change occurs recurrently in business organisation. Change Management (CM) is the instrument that guides how the organisation formulates, prepares and supports employees to effectively accept changes in order to drive organisational accomplishments and results. The aim of this research is to explore the people dimension of CM. This study took a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews with 10 employees from a small-to-medium enterprise (SME) and three employees from a large-sized organisation. Whilst there is a range of literature on CM, this research seeks to address gaps within that body of literature relating to the importance of including people when making changes within an organisation. It highlights the necessity of giving thought to people for any successful change implementation. People are at the core of an organisation and without them collectively on board with the change, the implementation of the new process could be put in risk of failing.

The key findings identified six major themes regarding the people dimension of CM: communication, culture, resistance, conflict, change leadership and empowerment. Communication is a key component in the change process. Many participants in the study reported that the change plan was communicated to them by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who they felt was open and transparent through the whole process. Organisational culture comes in the form of shared beliefs and values. It is the commonly accepted behaviours in an organisation and the way one behaves and conducts oneself. Some participants felt that the culture of the organisation has changed however, they felt that it still needs to progress to being one of change ready. Resistance can come in many forms and this brings with it a lot of emotional reactions to change. If left unchecked, resistance to the change process can put the whole programme at risk and therefore potentially damage the organisation. Conflict can happen when a person feels that they have not been heard or feel unsupported through the process. The idea around conflict is to not make it about personal issues and focus on what is best for all concerned. However, conflict can also be seen as being

important in that it is a pointer for detecting faulty processes and therefore become an indicator for corrective action to be taken by change leaders and senior management. Change Leadership findings were that managers were aware of the need to be supportive of employees and transition them into the change plan thereby valuing open and clear communications with everyone involved. Employee feedback is an integral part of the change process as employees can feel empowered in that they feel heard. It was also found that empowerment can come through social interactions at work situations and not just through the pay and reward systems.

This report focuses on how to successfully implement change, not only through leadership but also employee empowerment and targeting behaviours as an effective driver for reconfiguring the organisation. It will discuss the theoretical implications as well as the extent to which the study addresses some identified research questions. Then it will discuss workplace policy implications on CM and if there are any learning for CM and Human Resource (HR) professionals. These implications predominantly relate to an increased awareness to value people when designing and implementing a change process in today's SMEs in New Zealand (NZ). It also discusses the methodological implications arising from the semi-structured interview design used in this study. This report concludes with a summary of the people dimension of CM for SMEs in the NZ business environment.

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## Table of Acronyms

CA	Change Agent
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CM	Change Management
EA	Executive Officer
HR	Human Resource
HR(M)	Human Resource Manager
NZ	New Zealand
SME	Small-to-Medium Enterprise
UK	United Kingdom
VOIP	Voice Over Internet Protocol



## **1.0 Introduction**

Change is constant in business organisations. CM is the mechanism that guides how an organisation formulates, prepares and supports employees to effectively accept changes in order to drive organisational accomplishments and results (2016). While all changes and people are different, research demonstrates that there are activities we can take to inspire people in their specific transitions. CM provides an organised method for supporting the employees in the organisation to move from the current state to a new prescribed organisational state (Prosci, 2016; Tummers, Kruijven, Vijverberg, & Voesebeke, 2015).

When an organisation takes on a change initiative to improve performance, increase earnings, or develop its competitive edge, it requires employees to change their daily work processes, their job roles (including the use of new technology) and the structure of the organisation (Prosci, 2016). It is predominantly the employees of the organisation who have to change how they do their work. If they embrace the change and learn new ways, the change is likely to deliver the expected results. However, if the employees do not embrace the change and learn new behaviours, the initiative is in danger of failing (Dievernich, Tokarski, & Gong, 2015; Prosci, 2016).

Dynamic, effective employee progressions should be the dominant concentration of the CM actions according to Prosci (2016). These involve firstly identifying what the change should be and the employees who will be affected by the change process and how they will need to change. Organisational CM then needs to create a plan for ensuring impacted employees receive the communications, leadership, training and empowerment that they need to make the change process a success (Prosci, 2016; Skalik, 2016).

The first chapter of this report introduces the topic, aims and the purpose of the study. The second chapter reviews some of the current literature surrounding CM and discusses six key elements that can affect people through change implementations. The third chapter outlines and explains the rationale behind using a qualitative research methodology, the selection of participants, how the research was conducted, data analysis and management, ethical considerations, challenges of conducting this research and methodological implications. The fourth chapter presents the research findings in relation to communication, the culture of the organisation, resistance to change and conflict, change leadership and empowerment categories. The fifth chapter discusses the research findings in relation to relevant literature as well as workplace level policy implications. The final chapter will conclude this report.

### **1.1 Aims of the research**

The aim of this research is to explore the people dimension of CM so as to establish how people actually feel about change and how it affects them. This research seeks to close gaps within the literature of CM and to highlight how people need to be included when making changes within an organisation and the necessity for successful change to incorporate thinking about people.

### **1.2 The researcher**

My passion in this particular topic stems from my many years of work experience in office environments. During this time, I have come to see and be a part of the impacts of failed CM processes due to a lack of inclusiveness of employees. This can not only lead to an unsuccessful change implementation; it can also lead to demotivated and disruptive people, high absenteeism then leading to employees eventually leaving, and taking with them very important knowledge capital. This can become costly to the organisation and take the organisation many months from which to recover. Further, employees who do stay with the organisation may then be put under enormous strain in trying to keep the organisation 'alive'.

I feel that a change implementation can be handled more efficiently for the benefit of both the people and the organisation by taking into account the people within the business organisation.

### **1.3 The study**

This study will involve evaluating the people involvement of change. The six major themes that will be addressed are communication, culture, resistance, conflict, change leadership and empowerment as these appear to be the most prevalent when introducing a change plan within an organisation. Communication is a crucial driver of change, culture is the set of beliefs within the organisation, both resistance and conflict are issues that can significantly impact the implementation of new processes, change leadership has a commanding effect on employee behaviours and empowered employees will have the best attitude for a successful change implementation. This study will examine these themes by way of both a review of the current literature and a qualitative investigation using semi-structured interviews.

A Human Ethics Application is needed so that participants are not at risk and will ensure confidentiality and privacy for both the participants and the organisation. Participants of this study are given the appropriate documents advising them of the nature of this study and what will be expected of them should they agree to participate. They are advised that they can withdraw from the study at any time. All data gained from this study will be kept as per the ethical guidelines and kept in a locked drawer in the researcher's home and all soft copies will be password protected on the researcher's home personal computer. The data from the semi-structured interviews will then be thematically analysed and distinguished with other interview responses by using a colour coding procedure and then reported via this report.

### **1.4 Study contributions**

The major contributors to this study are the employees, managers and a Change Agent (CA) from a SME, a CA and a HR Manager (HR(M)) from two larger organisation. The number of

participants needed for this study is between 10-15 people who are employed in a SME in NZ and that the organisation had been through a change process in the last 12 months. Participants from a larger organisation are sought to give an overview of how change is managed in larger organisations as this type of organisation tend to have their own HR department to deal with change issues (Boxall, 2011).

All organisations for this study are based in NZ. The SME has a Head Office situated in Auckland with several branches in the North Island. They employ less than 40 people on both full and part time employment contracts. Both larger organisations have branches all over NZ, with Head Offices based in the major cities in NZ. They are a major player within their business sector and employ many thousands of employees on both full and part time employment contracts.

## **1.5 Summary**

CM guides change processes within an organisation. It organises how the organisation provides and formulates employees to accept changes within their job roles to competently drive the organisation forward to achieve the necessary goals. As change principally requires employees to change their job process, therefore, it is imperative that a successful CM plan be created for the affected employees so that they obtain the communications, leadership, training and empowerment that they need to make the change implementation an accomplished success for the organisation. The aim of this research is to explore the people's dimension of CM and to seek to close any gaps within the CM literature.

The researcher's passion for this particular topic comes from any years working in office environments where she has come to see many failed attempts of CM processes. This can be very harmful to organisations and people alike. Failed CM can be costly to organisation in the way of staff turnover, absenteeism and the loss of human capital. For employees, they can

become disruptive, demotivated and unproductive. This leads to a very good reason as to why organisations need to give thought to people when making changes within their organisation.

This study will evaluate the people involvement of change by way of six key themes; communication, culture, resistance, conflict, change leadership and empowerment. This will be done by way of both an assessment of the existing literature and a qualitative examination using semi-structured interviews. A Human Ethics Application was sought via the Massey University Human Ethics Committee to ensure all participants in this study will not be put at any risk and their privacy and confidentiality is assured throughout. All documents are kept within the ethical guidelines.

The major contributors to this study will be one SME with 10-15 employees being needed for interviews, also a CA and HR(M) from a large organisation. Both organisations need to have had a change process take place within the last 12 months for this study to be effective and based in NZ.

The next chapter will review some of the current literature in relation to CM and the surrounding themes identified within change implementation that can affect people.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### **2.0 Introduction**

Change occurs frequently in organisations. Regular inventiveness and developments are put into motion to improve performance, increase earnings, and develop the organisation's competitive edge. According to Skalik (2016), the progress and growth of organisations are closely associated to the necessity of implementing changes in their administrative structure. Benson (2015) states that understanding how to manage change in business organisations is critical to organisational strategy, growth and progress.

The objective of this research is to investigate the people dimension of CM in SMEs in the NZ business environment. Whilst there is a considerable body of research on CM, this study will focus on how change affects people in relation to communication, the culture of the business, resistance to change and how conflict and stress can be perceived for people actively involved in change. As certain elements need to be in place in an organisation for a change implementation to be successful, these six themes were identified as being a main point of focus and emerged as part of the empirical study. Communication is a key driver for successful change, creating a culture ready for change, dealing with resistance and conflict, effective leadership and empowering employees to adopt the change vision. It will then focus on how to successfully implement change not only through leadership but through using employee empowerment and targeting behaviours as an effective driver for reconfiguring the organisation.

Ravenswood (2013) advocates for the measurement of SMEs by the number of the full time staff that they employ. Cameron and Massey (1999) define that in NZ, a micro organisation has fewer than five full time employees, a small organisation has between six and 49 full time employees, a medium sized organisation has between 50 and 99 full time employees and a large organisation has more than 100 employees in full time employment. This measure is a

more consistent measure of organisation size as it is comparable over time and between different segments of the economy. Massey (2011) points out that there is no globally accepted definition of a small business organisation as businesses can adopt diverse spectrums of activities and legal formats. Most countries it seems, have taken a more pragmatic method in their classification of small business organisations and have defined them by the amount of people employed on a full time basis.

Ravenswood (2013) clarifies that NZ has a higher percentage of SMEs per population and that they make up the majority of employers. She notes however, that most people work in larger type organisations although there are fewer of them in NZ. Massey (2011) concludes that SMEs has both a progressively financial and social significance in that they create employment at relatively low cost, help to spread employment to provincial centres and help deliver competition to big businesses. SMEs is also known to contribute by providing a significant source of research and development, they are an entrance into the world for entrepreneurial individuals and they offer an effective form of business for those servicing specialised market demands. Massey (2011) reports that these organisations are not simply smaller large organisation, they have a different and separate part to perform in the business economy.

This research was specifically aimed at SMEs because in contrast to larger organisations, they do not tend to have their own HR Departments with trained people on board to navigate the way through the employment process as described by Boxall (2011).

The literature review will start by defining CM and then provide an argument, based on literature, that change is impossible without giving thought to people. Dievernich et al. (2015) discuss that people are the focus of change within the organisation and with that comes the need to understand what encourages people to change and how reluctance to change can be circumvented. This review will discuss how change communication, organisational culture, resistance to change and conflict can affect the successful implementation of change. The

scale of the effects of change in organisations emphasises the significance for organisations to direct the outcomes for all of their people, in turn increasing the likelihood of a successful CM implementation.

## **2.1 Change Management**

Erne (2016) expresses that in regard to CM, a number of models have been proposed to understand how to accomplish a planned organisational change (Blanchard, 2010; Kotter, 2008, 2012; Lewin & Cartwright, 1952). However, CM models all have one shared assumption: that the direction of change is communicated by senior management and that the scope of the change plan consists of the implementation. Dievernich et al. (2015) observe that humans are at the heart of organisations and that CM is impossible without them. People stand as a fundamental part, as both the subjects and objects of change. It is important to understand their purpose and actions in business organisations. Not only do we need to consider the management and leadership roles that people occupy but also the people who are in charge of change, those who are affected by change and those who initiate change. Tummers et al. (2015) explain that organisations are under endless pressure to acclimatise to changing situations such as new policies and procedures, differing client needs, new technologies and calls to reduce financial expenditure. Even if employees are inclined to change, the actual process can be stressful as daily routines are altered, new knowledge is usually required and intensive workloads can be experienced. With such situations this can ultimately lead to employee resistance, high levels of stress and employee turnover (Tummers et al., 2015).

To survive, organisations need their employees to be 'change ready'. Tummers et al. (2015) state that employees are more likely to facilitate change if they are involved in decision-making and that teamwork helps them both succeed and flourish with organisational change. They state that positive employees are very likely to become more creative and anticipate forthcoming events. High levels of proactivity are advantageous when working in new and



uncertain situations. Tummers et al. (2015) affirm that these types of employees can potentially deal better with organisational change.

## **2.2 Communication**

Communication is a critical driver of change implementation and is key to the success of organisational change (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993). It is considered significant on gaining change readiness within the organisation and can reduce any ambiguity among employees. It can also be seen as an important influence in gaining commitment as described by Armenakis et al. (1993) and Simoes and Esposito (2014). Caldwell (1993) and Simoes and Esposito (2014) state that communication within CM is perceived as a way to enlighten, include and encourage employees to contribute in the change process. Communication can be seen not only as a spoken expression, but also taken as signals, activities and behaviours from change leaders. Communication processes are inherently a significant part of change implementation activities and thus play an important role in change processes.

Caldwell (1993) explains that organisations can take either a product or process style of communications. The product style of communication is normally print-based and directed through formal lines of hierarchical channels whereas process communications are based on face-to-face meetings and thus more directed towards an active participation. This is where employees are encouraged to ask questions, offer comments and be involved around decision-making. The process style of communication supports changes to employees attitudes and behaviours making the change process more collaborative and more likely to succeed with employee 'buy-in' (Caldwell, 1993).

## **2.3 Culture**

Culture is defined by Cristian-Liviu (2013) as a system of shared beliefs and values. Organisational culture represents what is and how matters are dealt within the organisation and it is representative of the organisations most important elements. Culture shapes the

employees, the structure and the control processes (Cristian-Liviu, 2013). In turn, organisational culture encourages commonly-accepted behavioural norms and the way in which people's behaviour is seen as acceptable and meets the organisations core values and beliefs. Company culture is communicated to new employees as the correct way in which to behave and conduct oneself (Cristian-Liviu, 2013). Caldwell (1993) advises that it is essential for organisations to invest in an involvement culture. This is where initiatives are designed to encourage an active employee input for decision-making purposes. At a low level of involvement culture, this can include not only informing employees of matters that concern them but also consulting them on various issues that can and will most likely affect their everyday working life. However, a 'top end' involvement culture can imply larger employee ownership and commitment to the organisations mission statement, company standards and overall performance. The operating style in a high involvement culture is one of flexibility, and responsiveness to change and the culture is participative and informal (Caldwell, 1993). The communication is open, informal and flexible and the work pattern focuses on roles including skills and learning, and on what and how the work is delivered. The structure of the organisation is flat rather than hierarchical and that the rewards are performance-based (Caldwell, 1993). Organisations that exhibit progression play an inspirational role in the success of organisational change and that this particular creative culture can lead to positive implement of the changes initiating from cooperating employees (Skalik, 2016).

Marchington and Wilkinson (2002) state that the way in which employees are rewarded and paid has a major impact on business culture. Reward systems that provide benefits for long serving employees are more likely to form the existing culture into one in which is alleged as essential to the business philosophy. Cristian-Liviu (2013) explains that one of the biggest challenges faced by managers is trying to fit the new change process into an intangible element that has an organisational culture already present in the organisation. It is stated that they feel it is very important for managers to create a dynamic organisational culture in order

to influence employees to accept and implement the changes more readily (Cristian-Liviu, 2013). As Graetz, Rimmer, Smith and Lawrence (2011) note, organisational culture reflects not just the written rules of the organisation, but also the unwritten intangible subconscious assumptions that goes on within the business organisation and shapes the behaviour within.

## **2.4 Resistance**

People react to change in different ways. Often, a change process is blocked or confronted because one party sees difficulties that another has missed or because they anticipate that the change process will not distribute adequate benefits to themselves or others in the organisation to validate the costs involved (Hayes, 2007). However, as Hayes (2007) advises, fear is one of the most typical reasons for resisting change. This is based on fear of unfamiliar routines, the unknown, of failure and not living up to expectations. Change can bring about different levels of employee commitment as well as tensions and anxieties. Various people will be committed and enthusiastic while other employees will become negative and resistant to the change process (Edmonds, 2011). Simoes and Esposito (2014) explain that resistance to change is a substantial issue that can influence the outcomes for an organisational change process and is seen as a central reason for change process failures.

However, resistance to change can be seen and even understood as feedback and needs to be looked at as an important source for improving the value and clarity of the objectives to the change proposal. Hayes (2007) advises that properly used, resistance to change can be used to increase the prospects for a successful implementation. It can be said that the most frequently used ways to minimise resistance is to present balanced opinions and evidence the reason for change. Employees need to be educated and provided with a relatively unbiased presentation of the facts (Hayes, 2007). Zaltman and Duncan (1977) state that persuading people to make the required changes can be done by appealing to their feelings, thereby presenting enthusiastic arguments and biasing the communication to increase its appeal.

When the level of employee commitment is low, persuasive arguments and biasing the message will be more effective than the rational approach according to Hayes (2007). Employees are more likely to change their job processes if attention is focused on what they will lose by not changing rather than on what they will gain if they do adopt the change. Employees may feel unappreciated which affects their commitment to the organisation. This then leads to low enthusiasm and fulfilment, emotional withdrawal then the ultimate decision to leave the organisation (Hayes, 2007). Involving employees in the change process may excite and motivate them to adopt the change and help create a shared perception of the need to change (Nadler, 1993).

## **2.5 Conflict**

Chaudhry and Asif (2015) state that defining conflict can be difficult in that it can be given diverse subjective explanations. It can be perceived as a reflection of interpersonal aggression and resentment, or regarded as interpersonal dissimilarities arising from diverse and dissimilar selections or penchants. As noted by Chaudhry and Asif (2015, p. 239), a working definition of conflict can be derived as "a cohesive framework of behaviour and perception of organizational members, which is triggered (or maintained) by the feelings of being deprived with an awareness of incompatibility with others."

Raza and Standing (2011) declare that while change is a crucial issue for most business organisations, it can be most challenging to implement as the change process is often multifaceted relying on the commitment and involvement of employees. Raza and Standing (2011) advocate that implementing change within business organisations can lead to conflicts that in fact obstruct the change process. Resistance and conflict is often presented by employees not always in the actual change process, but the way in which they are considered and the connection they play in the business organisation (Raza & Standing, 2011).

Wood, Zeffane, and Morrison et al. (2016) describes that organisational conflict occurs when dissimilarities exist in situations whether between individuals or groups and that managers are known to spend a quarter of their time dealing with conflict which can include conflict that involves them directly. Managers also can act as intermediaries whose job it is to resolve the conflict and neutralize the situation and therefore need to be skilled in the subtleties of relational conflict as defined by Wood et al. (2016). D'Cruz, Noronha, and Beale (2014) go so far as to suggest that while the current economic climate ultimately triggers organisational change, workplace bullying can often be the precursor. Organisation wide change affects individual employees job design and the organisation of their daily work. It can affect the culture of the organisation and can eventually determine managers behaviours. With this in mind, organisational change can be a trigger for workplace bullying. However, as D'Cruz et al. (2014) explain, this is a speculative assertion (Salin, 2001).

Nevertheless, Chaudhry and Asif (2015) state that the organisational theory relating to conflict observes it to be unwanted and something to be eliminated, that most conflict in organisations can be mitigated through careful planning, specific relationships, careful selection of the right types of employees and proper training. Recently, however, there seems to have been research compiled, according to Chaudhry and Asif (2015) that views conflict as a pre-requisite for growth within organisations making differences of opinions a necessity for forward-thinking motivations. Chaudhry and Asif (2015) propose that the incidence of conflict within the organisation can actually benefit management in the identification of insufficient functioning and efficiencies of the processes or people. Conflict within the workplace can serve as a pointer, detecting faulty processes and notifying management to purposefully take the necessary steps to manage it effectively and successfully. To this end, conflict can be seen not as a dysfunctional part of organisational change but as an important part of the change process (Chaudhry & Asif, 2015).

## 2.6 Change leadership

Leadership is regarded as the main enabler of change process. However, it is widely debated as to what exactly is good leadership. As Hayes (2007, p. 167) notes, "leadership can be defined by a process that involves influencing others to achieve the organisations desired goals." However, as Kotter (1999) explains, what leaders do can have a powerful effect on employee behaviours and the success of change processes and implementations. Leadership is about creating a vision, then communicating and aligning employees to achieve this vision, and motivating and inspiring them by appealing to their own needs, values and beliefs. Higgs and Rowland (2011) suggest that there is increasing evidence that leaders play a significant role in the change process and implementation. Their mind-set and principles have been shown that it can affect their alignment of choices and styles to problem solving. Leaders who are described as being more facilitating and engaging are seen as more positively related to change success. These behaviours include creating the need for change and effectively engaging employees in pinpointing the necessity for change. Successful change leaders also engage employees in the whole change process which also includes implementing and sustaining change. They also facilitate and develop the capability of employees for the change process ensuring that people are challenged and supported throughout. In contrast, leaders who display a more leader-centric behaviour have a more adverse impact on change implementation. This is where the individual leader of the change is the focus of attention. Therefore, the more effective leader in CM situations is one who tends to enable his or her employees rather than shaping them (Higgs & Rowland, 2011). During times of change transformation, people will look to their change leader for prompts about their future state in the organisation. By embracing change and keeping a confident and enthusiastic attitude, change leadership can encourage others to follow.

## **2.7 Empowerment**

Siegel (2011) suggests that to manage change effectively, one must empower one's employees. He goes on to explain that change does not happen immediately; is a constant progression and takes time to undergo the whole change process. Organisations must allow for 'buy-in' from staff and the progressive implementation of new processes and structures. Equipped with clear goals, the aptitude to communicate directly and freely, empowered employees are the best drivers of change. Ways in which to empower employees can come in the form of asking for their suggestions, establishing team work, allowing employees to join decision-making consultations and provide training responsibilities (Siegel, 2011). Making sure employees have a direct and open communication connection with top management is extremely important. Also critical to the change process is that employees receive clear and realistic goals. This, in turn, not only helps employees cope with change but also equips them with the tools to embrace change and harness the opportunity it brings to them (Siegel, 2011). An empowered employee has self-assurance in communicating new ideas and strategies, taking ownership and then in turn, acting on them. They will likely behave more like leaders and involve others in the process of change as well. Empowering employees is an important step in effectively managing change (Siegel, 2011). The organisation as a whole can expect greater retention of creative, skilled and motivated employees.

## **2.8 Summary**

Organisations are frequently under pressure to reduce financial expenditure, cope with new technologies and face new requirements from ever-changing consumers. In these dynamic and turbulent times, organisations face the necessity of regularly reviewing policies and processes. As a result, change happens frequently in organisations.

CM has many models. However, it is difficult to enter into the change process without giving thought to the inclusion of people and how new processes and policies can affect them in

their day-to-day working lives. This review has noted how essential it is for people to be included in the CM process. It emphasises how communication within change is a key factor in undergoing a successful change. It also examined what the culture of a 'change ready' organisation needs to look like, how resistance to the change process can occur and how the people and the organisation can be affected by this. The review then discussed the conflict and stress that often accompany the change progression and, if left unchecked, can ultimately lead to workplace bullying and other outcomes. However, conflict and resistance are also an important part of the CM process in that they can signal to the organisation that a process is not working. This review also examined what type of leadership an organisation needs to drive change and lastly, clarified that when employees are empowered, this can lead people to have more self-assurance when communicating, taking ownership and becoming more motivated in driving a successful change process. CM implementation affects both the organisation and the people who work there alike. This research aims to address key gaps in knowledge regarding change process and investigate its people dimension in SMEs in the NZ business environment.

SMEs was chosen in this study as opposed to larger businesses as they tend to have their own in-house HR department who are equipped to deal with most employee and employment matters. While little of this empirical work has been undertaken in NZ, potentially this study helps to plug knowledge gaps, not only in respect to looking at a topic in a new way, but also by conducting the study in NZ.

The next chapter will outline the methodology for this research. This chapter will discuss the research method used, the selection of participants, conducting the research, the data analysis and management, ethical considerations, challenges around this research and finally the methodological implications to this research.



### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter will discuss the methodology chosen for this research. The aim of the research is to explore the people dimension of CM in SMEs in the NZ business environment. As described by Skalick (2016), change occurs frequently in organisations and the progress and growth of an organisation are closely associated with the necessity to implement changes within the business structure.

### **3.1 Qualitative research**

This research venture focuses on finding out what happens to employees when change processes occur in their organisation. A qualitative research method was used for this study as, according to Park and Park (2016), this type of research is subjective, the researcher associates with the research itself, it is value based, and it grasps an individual voice. Qualitative research uses an inductive process, it is unstructured, the accuracy and consistency is through corroboration and this particular research method progresses to a theory as described by Park and Park (2016).

Qualitative methods are used to allow for flexibility within the interviewing process to fully explore people's thoughts, feelings and experiences. Bryman and Bell (2011) explain that qualitative research takes an inductive reasoning, has a compassionate attitude towards people and uses small samples sizes. It frequently collects words as data, which are then analysed for themes (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Qualitative research keeps an open mind on the problem, collects the evidence and then uses it to construct a picture of what happened. Qualitative research uses a 'bottom-up' approach to research, has an idiosyncratic view of the world and collects information as descriptions of peoples experiences expressed in their own words from relatively small groups (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Qualitative research can be justified in this report as an appropriate means of seeking out the truth in regards to finding out about how employees feel when a change is taking place in their organisation that affects them. It focuses on grasping their individual voices and explores their thoughts, feelings and experiences. Interviewing through semi-structured interviews gives the flexibility to allow further questions to be asked and it allows people to be more forthcoming with their answers.

## **3.2 Selection of participants**

### 3.2.1 Small-to-Medium Enterprise participants

The criteria for the employee and manager participants were that they must be employed in a SME in NZ and have experience of a change process in the last 12 months.

The interview participants were recruited through a SME professional services business operating in NZ which has branches in Auckland, Kaitaia, Hamilton and Tauranga with the Head Office situated in Auckland. The researcher firstly gained permission from the CEO to conduct the research. Following this, an information sheet was forwarded to all staff via their internal email system in which they were invited to participate. The interested participants were then given a copy of the Information Sheet, the Consent Form and the Authority for Release of Transcripts Form (see Appendix A). The Executive Assistant (EA) then set up interview times by offering the participants either recorded face-to-face interviews, recorded Skype conversations or a recorded telephone conversation using a Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) phone system.

The number of participants being needed for this research was between 10-15 people. It was considered that for small-scale research, this number would allow for sufficient data to be collected and analysed for a point of 'data saturation' to be achieved (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Using qualitative research methodology, it permitted more flexibility within the interviewing process to fully explore the participant's thoughts, feelings and experiences as

discussed by Bryman and Bell (2011). The qualitative research method also endorsed the need for an exploratory study to be performed and focused on the context. As discussed by Marshall (2016), qualitative research is practical, interpretative and founded in the lived experiences of people.

### 3.2.2 Change Agent and Human Resource Manager Participants

As larger organisations are inclined to employ people in specialist departments, I looked for trained people in the CM and HR field to give an overview of how change is managed within a larger organisation in NZ. The criteria for inclusion in the study of the CA and the HR(M) participants were that they must be employed in a large organisation in NZ and have managed a change process in the last 12 months.

The interview participants were recruited through two large organisations operating in NZ. The researcher firstly gained permission and then sent the Information Sheet, the relevant Interview Questions, the Consent Form, and the Authority for Release of Transcripts Form via email (see Appendix A). Interview times were set up and the interviews were offered to be conducted by either recorded face-to-face meetings, recorded Skype conversations or a VOIP recorded telephone call. The number of participants being needed for this research was between one and four people for this small-scale research.

## **3.3 Conducting the research**

### 3.3.1 Small-to-Medium Enterprise

The researcher sent out an Information Sheet, a signed Confidentially Agreement, Consent Form, Authority for Release of Transcripts Form and the Interview questions to the EA of the organisation. For those employees who were happy to participate in the research, the EA at the organisation set up an interview schedule at a convenient time for them. They could

choose between recorded face-to-face meetings, recorded Skype conversations or recorded telephone conversation.

Savin-Baden and Major (2013) declare that interviewing is the widespread method of accumulating evidence for qualitative research. It is an essential part of the research method as interviews permit the researcher to gain intricate in-depth material from participants. They describe how semi-structured interviewing gives the participants some structure while allowing for various inventiveness and enables additional lines of questions and discussion of relevance to the interviewing parties to explore the topic area.

A series of open-ended questions was used to interview the participants (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This was advantageous as the researcher was then able to ask further questions if warranted. As Myers (2013) writes, the advantages of semi-structured interviews are such that it allows for the participants to talk easily and let them tell you their experience and what they consider to be significant. As this SME has branches in the North Island, the researcher offered to conduct recorded face-to-face, recorded Skype or recorded telephone interviews. This allowed the participants to choose what would work best for them. Four participants were interviewed by recorded face-to-face meetings at the premises of the organisation with the aid of a Samsung Android Smart Phone and lasted no more than 45 minutes held at the researcher's place of work in a private setting. Another six participants were interviewed by a recorded telephone conversation using a VOIP phone system. Interviews lasted no more than one hour and took place at the researcher's place of work in a private location. All participants were aware of the confidential nature of their involvement and that all comments or findings would not be identified with any individual.

Table 1: List of participants from the S-to-Medium Enterprise

Table of Participants - Small to Medium Organisation							
ID	Name	Date of Interview	Gender	Age		Employment Status	Interview Tool
				20-40	40-60		
P1	Kimberley	19th July	Female		✓	Employee	Telephone
P2	Faye	22nd July	Female		✓	Employee	Face-to-Face
P3	Sarah	3rd August	Female		✓	Employee	Face-to-Face
P4	David	3rd August	Male		✓	Change Agent	Face-to-Face
P5	Peter	8th September	Male		✓	Manager	Telephone
P6	Katie	28th July	Female	✓		Manager	Telephone
P7	Stephanie	18th August	Female	✓		Employee	Telephone
P8	Tia	22nd July	Female	✓		Employee	Telephone
P9	Kylie	22nd July	Female	✓		Employee	Face-to-Face
P10	Robyn	22nd July	Female		✓	Employee	Telephone

Table 1, as above, (see Appendix C) represents the list of participants in the SME that contributed in the interviews.

### 3.3.2 Change Agent and Human Resource Manager Participants

Larger organisations are inclined to employ their own CA and HR(M)'s whereas smaller type organisations do not and tend to employ people not suitably trained in this area as described by Boxall (2011). With this in mind, I sought trained people in these fields to give an overview of how change is managed in larger organisations.

The researcher sent out the same documentation as with the SME and the participants were then offered a choice between recorded face-to-face meetings, recorded Skype conversations or by a recorded telephone conversation. One participant chose a recorded face-to-face meeting. Meeting notes were taken and the meeting was recorded by a Samsung Android Smartphone. The meeting took no longer than one hour and was conducted at the participant's place of work in a private setting. The other two participants chose a recorded

telephone call via the VOIP phone system at the researcher's place of work in a private location. The interviews took no longer than one hour each. All participants were aware of the confidential nature of their involvement and that all comments or findings would not be identified with any individual.

Table 2: List of participants from larger organisations

<b>Table of Participants - Large Organisations</b>							
<b>ID</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Interview</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>		<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>Interview Tool</b>
				<b>20-40</b>	<b>40-60</b>		
P11	Samuel	29th June	Male		✓	Change Agent	Face-to-Face
P12	Olivia	8th July	Female	✓		Change Agent	Telephone
P13	Joshua	18th October	Male		✓	HR Manager	Telephone

Table 2 (see Appendix D) represents the list of participants in the larger organisations that contributed in the interviews.

The recordings of the interviews were transcribed by the interviewer. Then re-listened to when writing up the Findings section to fully comprehend the participant's actual feelings around their conversations. The audio recordings and edited transcripts were then kept in a locked cabinet and all electronic data was kept protected on the researcher's home personal computer, password protected for security.

### **3.4 Data analysis and management**

The data for this research were thematically analysed and these themes emerged largely from the empirical study as described by Myers (2013). According to Eriksson (2008, p. 309) thematic analysis is "a form of analysis which has the theme or category as its unit of analysis, and which looks across data from any different sources to identify themes".

The research data were themed into communication, the culture of the organisation, resistance to change and conflict, change leadership and empowerment categories. The data was then distinguished with other interview responses by using a colour coding procedure.

### **3.5 Ethical considerations**

A Human Ethics Application was submitted to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC) as a low-risk notification under the Massey University Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving human participants (2016). Ethics notification as low risk was given on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2016, Human Ethics Notification 4000016035 (see Appendix B).

Ethical considerations were aimed at ensuring that the participants were able to give informed consent, thereby minimising any risk of harm to the participants and the researcher, ensuring confidentiality and ensuring participant privacy by keeping these individuals and their organisations anonymous in the final report. The data was kept secure while conducting the research with all hard copies kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home and all soft copies password protected on the researcher's personal computer (also situated at the researcher's home).

When enlisting participants, they were given the above-mentioned forms to allow the participants to get an idea of what would be expected of them and what the research was about should they choose to participate. Participants were encouraged to contact the researcher if they had any further queries. All participants gave their consent to participate along with the signed Authority for the Release of Transcripts and were advised they could withdraw at any time.

It was important that the organisation, due to its particular standing in the community, and its employees knew that they would not be identified in the final research report. To ensure this, all participants were given pseudonyms in the final report. The data will be disposed of

by deleting all computer files and the hard copies will all be shredded two years after this report has been submitted. All care will be taken if the computer is to be sold or disposed of and the hard drive wiped when sold.

### **3.6 Challenges**

One challenge surrounding this research was finding suitable organisations that would agree to have their employees participate in the research as CM is all too familiar in contemporary business organisations within a turbulent context. On asking three business organisations, their answers were that they were 'too busy' with their ongoing change process to be involved in this research. These organisations were given all the above-mentioned forms and advised that they can ask any further questions if they so wish. In turn, they were advised of complete confidentiality during and after the collection of data (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Nevertheless, they were hesitant about letting me talk to their employees.

This challenge was circumvented by the researcher approaching a SME and two larger organisations from talking to mutual acquaintances. I was then able to go directly to the decision maker of the organisation and gain approval to carry out the necessary research. The CEO of the SME was very open to the research being undertaken as the organisation had recently gone through a change process in the last twelve months.

### **3.7 Methodological implications**

The methodology chosen for this report was qualitative. A qualitative research method was chosen because the study is exploratory in nature and subjective. It is value based, highlights the individual voices and associations are made by the researcher. As Park and Park (2016) discuss, this type of qualitative research seeks out the truth as was needed in this particular research topic as being of an exploratory nature. Bryman and Bell (2011) explain that the implications of using qualitative methods was that it allowed for flexibility within the



interviewing process in which to discover the individual's judgements, frame of mind and their involvements of being employed through a change process.

It was interesting to observe that the participants had a wide variety of answers to the questionnaire. Most were quite willing to talk about their feelings and experiences however, one participant in particular was quite hesitant to fully engage with the interview process until they were reminded that everything they say, even though it was recorded, that the whole process was indeed anonymous and in no way would they be identified.

I observed that all participants felt happy about the questions asked, and at the end of the questionnaire when asked 'if there was anything else you would like to add?', they added nothing new but just elaborated more on what they already had said. With this in mind, I feel that I asked the right kind of questions to be able to gain the information for this study.

### **3.8 Summary**

A qualitative research approach was utilised to discover what the people dimension of CM looked like in the NZ business setting. This type of methodology was chosen since qualitative research takes a more compassionate and sympathetic attitude to people and uses small samples sizes which suited this particular research topic. Qualitative research is subjective, value based and it holds the individual voice while also being an inductive process. This type of methodology often collects words which are then analysed for themes, drawing on the findings of the extant literature review and the interview data themselves. In qualitative research, the researcher associates with the research itself, often using an exploratory process in seeking out the truth.

A common set of open-ended semi-structured interview questions were used to interview the selected participants. Semi-structured interviews are considered to be the best way for participants to be more at ease and more forthcoming with their answers. The advantage was

that the researcher was able to ask further questions if needed for this exploratory study and for the participants to add any other discussions to the meeting.

A low risk Human Ethics notification was sought and granted in May 2016. Ethical issues were taken into considerations to ensure that participants felt safe within their interviews and study process, and the organisation and employees was assured of complete confidentiality throughout. It was important the organisation, due to their particular standing in the community, and their employees knew that they would not be identified in the final research report. To ensure this privacy and confidentiality, all participants were given pseudonyms in the final report and all data was protected to guarantee privacy and confidentiality.

The main challenge for this study concerned finding suitable organisations that would give interview access to their employees. While the organisations' management were assured of complete confidentiality, many companies were concerned about access because of the privacy issue, therefore refusing to participate. However, access was achieved in relation to the organisations in which I interviewed and obtained through mutual acquaintances. I was then able to go directly to the decision maker of the organisation and gained approval to carry out the research. I assured them that all computer files would be safely secured under password protection and that all hard copies of documents would be stored in a locked cabinet in my home.

The next chapter will outline the findings where it will introduce the participants and their current positions within the organisations. It will also present what the participants identified within the six key themes being communication, the culture of the organisation, resistance to change, conflict, change leadership and empowerment.

## **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the data gained from the semi-structured interviews which were thematically analysed. The first section of this chapter introduces the participants and their positions within both the SME and the large organisation. The second section presents what the participants identified within the communication, culture of the organisation, resistance to change, conflict, change leadership and empowerment categories.

### **4.1 The participants**

Ten participants from a SME were interviewed for this study, consisting of seven employees, two managers and one CA. Three participants from large organisations were also interviewed, consisting of two CA and one HR(M).

### **4.2 Communication**

#### 4.2.1 Employees

Employee participants identified how they were communicated with about the change process, their thoughts around the process and how it affected them.

Employee participants reported that, mostly they were satisfied with the level of communication around the change plan and it was generally agreed that the change was in fact credible and it aligned with the business strategy. They described that the change communication was delivered to them by the CEO of the organisation. This made them feel the CEO had clear goals within the change process and was transparent in his approach for implementation:

*"The change was communicated to me by the CEO of our organisation. I felt that it he communicated it well. Our CEO is very approachable as well, he listens, he has clear goals and it is just a matter of getting to the other end. I didn't see the need for the change until it*

*was communicated to me, but I loved the changes once it happened and feel that things are managed a whole lot better” – Sarah (female, 40-60, employee).*

*“I think the change process was communicated clearly to me. It was done by the CEO at the Annual meeting where all staff get together. I really like the transparency as I like to know what’s going on. We are now kept informed on what’s happening and what people are working on, it’s more like a team effort now” – Robyn (female, 40 to 60, employee).*

A range of employee participants felt that the change process was communicated to them via the CEO and this was backed up by the senior management team whereby necessary people were on hand to answer any questions that employees might have:

*“The CEO communicated the change process initially and then the Regional Director came back and reiterated the change and what it meant for us. I was mostly aware of the need for change. I haven’t always agreed with the changes, but being able to communicate and ask questions and get them answered has been great” – Tia (female, 20-40, employee).*

*“The change process was communicated to us by the CEO. the management team and the Regional Director. I did feel however, that the communication was good by maybe a little too early in the actual process of changing how things are done” - Stephanie (female, 20-40, employee).*

Several employee participants felt that the change communication was ‘okay’. However, they felt it could have been done better by way of being more precise about what the change exactly meant for them. They testified there was no clear map of the change process:

*“The change was communicated to us by the management team. It was communicated in a number of ways, verbal – memos – but I am still trying to understand the change and what it means for me. I think it hasn’t been thought out properly, no clear map” – Kylie (female, 20-40, manager).*

However, there were a few employees who felt rather differently and stated that they were not properly informed about the change process and just got told to 'get on with it'. For example;

*"It was communicated by the CEO of the organisation, but it wasn't communicated very well to me. In fact, when I got to hear about it the change, the decision had already been made and I have to just go along with it. I was not consulted, just told" – Kimberley (female, 40-60, employee).*

#### 4.2.2 Managers

Manager participants identified how they communicated the change process to the employees and explained the rationale around the change process. They testified that the CEO was the driver of the change and they felt supported by him. Most felt that the communication channel was around transparency and that it was a structured approach:

*"Our biggest change was looking at the structure of the agency, creating a whole new business structure and a really robust business plan" – Peter (male, 40-60, manager).*

*I feel the communication avenues have been and continue to be well done" – Peter (male, 40-60, manager).*

The managers conveyed that the CEO was the driver of the change initiative. They reported that the change occurred when the CEO started at the organisation and saw the need for the change to occur for financial and efficiency reasons:

*"Our CEO was a big driver of our change. Our CEO came in and realised that there was a lot of inefficiencies in the business side and he started by addressing those inefficiencies which happened to be mainly people inefficiencies. He was the main driver of the change and we all came on board with him" – Peter (male, 40-60, manager).*

Managers claimed they felt supported through the change initiative and were confident that when new change policies were to occur in the future, they would be in a position to inform staff early as to reduce any worries or anxieties that employees may have:

*"I was supported by the CEO and the Regional Director. It was a team effort. They supported me to communicate the rationale around the change and the proposed change process. If there are any impending changes, we like to inform the team early on as it keeps them updated and reduces their anxiety level" – Katie (female, 20-40, manager).*

However, some managers felt differently in that the change was not communicated well:

*"The change around the restructuring which resulted in redundancies, I believe was not communicated and conducted very well. The impact of this change was not planned for. It was not a good process" – Katie (female, 20-40, manager).*

#### 4.2.3 Change Agent

The CA participants identified how they communicated the change process and explain their view on the critical steps within a CM process. They reported they used a standard communication plan, which they considered effective, and that communication is the key to a successful change implementation. They conveyed that they used both informal and formal communication lines, change forums, sales and operational meetings to discuss any new change initiatives:

*"We have change forums for business change that meets weekly. We hold both sales and operational meetings to discuss processes and use a Team Briefing process which originates from the United Kingdom (UK). The content is of course, project dependant" – Samuel (male, 40-60, CA).*

*"My effective communication plan involves clear communications, organisational awareness, the management team and levels of productivity" – David (male, 40-60, CA).*

*"I use both informal and formal lines of communication. However, I predominantly focus on our Contact Centre which is accessible to our customer 24/7 in terms of customer impact as they are the first point of change" – Olivia (female, 20-40, CA).*

#### 4.2.4 Human Resource Manager

The HR(M) participant described the lines of communication and how it was vitally important that the HR department communicated a clear vision for change. The lines of communication need to be consistent, using common language. They reported that they supported supervisors and acted more in a supportive role. They are there to minimise the risk of misinterpretation:

*“The lines of communication are first through first line supervisors who did their bests to ensure communications went through to managers which in turn centralised communications” – Joshua (male, 40-60, HR).*

*“It is important to have a clear vision and to know what direction to take things. We tried to minimise the risk of misinterpretation and we supported written messages with management groups to give the context for the messages” – Joshua (male, 40-60, HR).*

### **4.3 Culture**

#### 4.3.1 Employees

Employee participants identified their thoughts around the company culture in relation to the change process. They felt there had been a shift in company culture toward a more positive feeling and how things are now done within the organisation:

*“The culture of the organisation is now more positive with a ‘can-do’ attitude. It used to be stuck in its ways. The company culture is more open to new ideas; I feel heard” – Robyn (female, 40-60, employee).*

*“The meeting shows a good company culture and that everyone is on the same page. It showed our values and what the business is about. I think it’s a great idea” – Faye (female, 40-60, employee).*

Employee participants stated that they felt the organisation was ready for a culture change.

*"I felt the organisation was ready for change. The culture now is more positive with a can-do attitude, but it did used to be stuck in its ways. The culture of this organisations is now more open to new ideas" – Robyn (female, 40-60, employee).*

However, various participants conveyed that they did not see a culture shift at all. They reported that it did not fit well with the business strategy and the change was not credible. They stated that the core values were not upheld within the organisation:

*"I felt that the change wasn't credible and didn't align with the business strategy at all, I felt the change was purely for financial reasons only. The organisations core values didn't even come into it" – Stephanie (female, 20-40, employee).*

*"I found it hard to see the change aligning itself to the company culture at all. Communication and involving people is not a strength in this organisation. I feel forgotten and isolated, in fact I had to wonder what or who the change was even serving" – Kimberley (female, 40-60, employee).*

#### 4.3.2 Managers

Manager participants identified their thoughts around the company culture in relation to the change process and several of them reported that they did not feel the organisation was in actual fact 'change ready' but merely 'change fit':

*"I think as an organisation, our culture is not 'change ready' as such, but we are certainly 'change fit' now. I hear people and see people saying 'I really like what's happening here, and I really like the management team. So I see the organisation as fit for change rather than being change ready" – Peter (male, 40-60, manager).*

*"I feel the organisation had to change but it is not in its culture to be ready. There have been numerous changes, too many in fact, but it seems a little more settled now" – Katie (female, 40-60, manager).*



Manager participants testified that they felt that their company had a transparent and open relationship with its employees as part of the embedded culture:

*"We have had a number of people leave the organisation. We are open and honest in a transparent way – its embedded in our company culture to be this way" – Peter (male, 40-60, manager).*

#### 4.3.3 Change Agent

CA participants identified their thoughts around the company culture in relation to change. They agreed that the culture of the organisation comes down to having a clear direction and awareness for change:

*"I feel the company culture is one of change orientated. However, there are always improvements needed. Generally, we are quite mature around the need and delivery of change" – Olivia (female, 20-40, CA).*

*"More so the company culture is one of change orientated. People seem more receptive to change" – David (male, 40-60, CA).*

Various CA participants felt the culture of the organisation comes down to the lines direction of the organisation:

*"I feel that the culture of the organisation comes down to the lines of direction, then people can cope with change. If they do not have any lines of direction, then they do not have any confidence in management and they can become resistant to the whole change process" – David (male, 40-60, CA).*

One felt they struggled to sell the value of change despite people being aware that the organisation's need to change:

*"There is a huge awareness in the company of the need for change, but we struggle to sell the value of CM. I see big organisations working at pace" – Samuel (male, 40-60, CA).*

#### 4.3.4 Human Resource Manager

The HR(M) participant identified his view on company culture in relation to change was that his particular organisation was not change ready because of the nature of the work involved. The organisation was against change therefore a change culture was not necessary at that particular time.

*"My organisation was not change ready. But only because of the nature of the organisation. At that time, employees enjoyed ongoing security of their jobs and it was a highly structured atmosphere with tight hierarchy. The organisation did not want change and did not have to change" – Joshua (male, 40-60, HR).*

### **4.4 Resistance**

#### 4.4.1 Employees

Employee participants identified their thoughts around resistance to change in relation to CM processes. They stated that there was resistance to the change and it was seen that the people who resisted either left the organisation, or felt that they just needed to get on with it. They felt they did not have a lot of choice:

*"I've seen resistance to change and I have personally resisted the change. I have felt sad for the old ways. I did argue the pros and cons, but, unfortunately I wasn't heard. I feel devalued due to loss of hours. I have looked for other job and now I work reluctantly – my heart has changed" – Kylie (female, 20-40, employee).*

*"I do not generally resist change; a new manager was a great idea. However, I would and do inwardly resist her. My motivation has long gone and my job satisfaction had decreased drastically because of this" – Kimberley (female, 40-60, employee).*

*"There were people who were grumpy and they withheld everything and didn't want to share the knowledge, thankfully they have now gone" – Robyn (female, 40-60, employee).*

One participant described an ultimatum for resisting change:

*"The change has been explained to us – buy in or get out" – Tia (female, 20-40, employee).*

#### 4.4.2 Managers

Manager participants identified their thoughts around resistance to change in relation to CM processes. They identified seeing resistance in the organisation mainly around the new change direction:

*‘Yes, I have noticed lots of emotional reactions to change. There was a lot of resentment, people feeling undervalued, lots of anxiety about what is going to happen to them. I saw and was involved with mood swings and most of all sadness’ – Katie (female, 40-60, manager).*

*‘Some of my staff resisted the change by going through the required paperwork a little too carefully. They took a lot longer to complete their work than was necessary’ – Katie (female, 40-60, manager).*

*‘I felt resistance within my staff to adopt the change. The staff that remained were now going to have to do a lot more work but in reduced hours, so yes, I saw a lot of resistance to change’ – Katie (female, 40-60, manager).*

One participant felt that they needed to deal with resistance quickly:

*‘The reality was that there were people who sabotaged and undermined everything we wanted to do. We dealt with resistance very frankly and precisely. Either you are on board or not, we do not muck around. There was mutiny on board and I had to deal with it quickly’ – Peter (male, 40-60, manager).*

#### 4.4.3 Change Agent

CA participants identified their thoughts around resistance to change in relation to CM processes. They testified that resistance can come from everyone and anyone, managers and employees alike and needs to be expected. Handling resistance comes down to helping people understand their role in the organisation and why the change has to happen:

*‘I give people the chance to express themselves in handling resistance to change as in my view silence is acceptance of the change plan. I listen to people’s concerns’ – David (male, 40-60, CA).*

*"I find that resistance comes from everyone, but mostly in my opinion from middle managers, from traditionalists and it comes from all roles within the organisation" – Olivia (female, 20-40, CA).*

The CA participants acknowledged that a certain amount of resistance does happen and it is to be expected:

*"We acknowledge that resistance to change does happen and that some people will struggle to accept change" – Samuel (male, 40-60, CA).*

*"Resistance is normal and expected - we should/need to recognise it proactively and do something about it so that it is managed correctly. Management have a right to be concerned about it so it needs to be addressed" – Olivia (female, 20-40, CA).*

They also reported that resistance to the change programme puts the whole change initiative at risk. With this in mind, the employees are also encouraged to look for opportunities elsewhere with another organisation:

*"Resistance to change puts the programme at dire risk so they can potentially damage the business. We help the particular people to understand their role in the organisation for the future. If all else fails, we work with them to help look for other opportunities out the organisation" – Olivia (female, 20-40, CA).*

#### 4.4.4 Human Resource Manager

The HR(M) participant identified his thoughts around resistance to change in relation to CM processes. He felt that his main role around resistance to change is one of being proactive in helping people understand why the change has to happen and why sometimes there is no choice in the matter. His role is to minimise any 'surprises':

*"It was just never an option to do nothing - the only really thing I could do was to minimise surprises and accept rumours as normal. Relevant people need to be advised of what was happening to minimise the risk of resistance to the change. Massaging people's egos seemed to be a day to day problem" – Joshua (male, 40-60, HR).*

The HR(M) worked with, and showed empathy towards, the employees and managers alike. This helped to keep the relationship undamaged:

*"The HR Department would always step in for a one to chat if needed. We would always talk to managers and advise them with strategies to resolve the problems, subtle manipulations, but helping keep the relationship intact" – Joshua (male, 40-60, HR).*

## **4.5 Conflict**

### 4.5.1 Employees

Employee participants identified their thoughts around conflict in relation to CM processes. Employees verified that they saw conflict as a result of the change process. Further, they found this to be their only defence to the changes and felt unsupported and not heard:

*"The conflict was felt in the atmosphere around here, mostly because any action took so long. I feel the conflict has been resolved now" – Stephanie (female, 20-40, employee).*

*"Conflict – Oh! I definitely saw it! I do not even think it's been resolved even now. I found the response was to become quite isolated and hide. Isolating themselves from the team and they made it obvious they didn't want to be here. They went a bit rogue" – Tia (female, 20-40, employee).*

*"No conflict with me, but within the agency - some people who didn't like the change have now left the organisation" – Robyn (female, 40-60, employee).*

One participant identified that they felt inner conflict with herself. However, she was unable to verbalise it:

*"I am experiencing inner conflict – I have been rather angry. I was told that one thing then the exact opposite happened, I was so angry – that's what caused the conflict for me. The process was handled very badly; I was handled very badly" – Kimberley (female, 40-60, employee).*

Another reported that she did not notice any signs of conflict in the organisation due to the impact of the change process:

*“I never saw any conflict within the organisation at all” – Sarah (female, 40-60, employee).*

One employee participant observed the conflict, but was happy to report that they felt the conflict in the organisation had been resolved and put to rest:

*“Yes, there is conflict within the organisation however I feel it has been resolved now. I saw lots of bitching and moaning, but a decision has been made and we have to get on with it” – Kylie (female, 20-40, employee).*

#### 4.5.2 Managers

Manager participants identified their thoughts around conflict in relation to CM processes. Conflict was seen by managers as employees feeling hurt by the changes and feeling very upset. According to one manager, there were lots of grizzling and grumblings heard throughout the organisation.

Managers felt they had to keep repeating the messages of change to navigate their way around the conflict. It was important to keep the lines of communication open and transparent:

*“For my employees there was lots of conflict. When I informed them of the impending changes, conflict was the result and basically I just had to wear it. I had to manage the fall out myself. They felt devalued and had no choice in the matter whatsoever” – Katie (female, 40-60, manager).*

*“There were lots of grizzling and grumblings. The management team had to reiterate what the change was about and why it was happening and to remind the staff that we were a team and in this together. Management kept repeating the messages however we also had to communicate the repercussions if we didn’t make the change and stick to them” – Peter (male, 40-60, manager).*

#### 4.5.3 Change Agent

CA participants identified their thoughts around conflict in relation to CM processes. They reported that conflict is about having discussions with staff and staying focused on what the

change implementation is about. The idea is not to make the conflict about personal issues, but rather to take it what it is in the best interests of the organisation as a whole:

*"I handle conflict by being open to others ideas. Having discussions and staying focused on the issues and not making it personal about the person, it has to be about the organisational needs" – David (male, 40-60, CA).*

*"I feel that we do not have actual open conflict to change, however we do have rather strong resistance" – Olivia (female, 20-40, CA).*

However, one CA felt that if the organisation experiences conflict due to the change process, the CA has failed their job in managing a change initiative:

*"If there is conflict in your change process you have failed your job as a CA. It's just going to happen if you have the managed the change badly" – Samuel (male, 40-60, CA).*

#### 4.5.4 Human Resource Manager

The HR(M) participant identified his thoughts around conflict in relation to CM processes. In his view, with conflict, one can never make everyone happy, but you need to make everyone aware of what is happening so that conflict can be reduced. He described that his role is to help the employees understand what is happening and why, empathise if necessary, but always focus on the change and why it needs to happen:

*"On a more individual and day-to-day basis we would help the person understand what was going on and why – empathise if necessary – we didn't want to just inject ourselves as a third party as that relationship would then be tainted – we would help the participants to the relationship manager the situation better. We would have a quiet work to the manager without the anyone knowing and give them some suggestions to help" – Joshua (male, 40-60, HR).*

*"Without bridging anyone's confidence, we would encourage the employee to talk to the manager and behind the scenes we would give the manager some suggestions on how to answer the questions. Some people might say it was a sort of manipulation, but really it was a way of keeping the relationship intact by helping the bigger problem" – Joshua (male, 40-60, HR).*

The HR(M) reports that while it is not his job to make everyone happy, he can make everyone aware of the what is happening around them and keep them up to date with the change process:

*"We couldn't make everyone happy, but we would make everyone aware of what's happening and why" – Joshua (male, 40-60, HR).*

While only one HR(M) participant was used in this study, he was thought of as an expert informant due to his many years of experience in this field.

## **4.6 Change Leadership**

### 4.6.1 Employees

Employee participants identified their thoughts around change leadership in relation to their organisation in the CM processes. They felt that their manager or supervisor was on board with the change but they received little or no training as support for the change implementation:

*"My supervisor keeps changing, my manager keeps changing, I just can't keep up. I feel forgotten as there was no support even offered" – Kimberley (female, 40-60, employee).*

*"The CEO helps us understand the change through way of company memos, but it's not face-to-face which I would prefer. I have to remember to work towards a common business goal" – Faye (female, 40-60, employee).*

*"I suppose I felt my manager was on board with the change, however the decision was made, we just had to get on with it. No support or training to cope with the change was ever offered" – Stephanie (female, 20-40, employee)*

*"I felt absolutely supported by the leadership of the company and my manager has been really helpful to me in understanding the change" – Sarah (female, 40-60, employee).*



One participant declared that she felt a little scared and intimidated by the new CEO. However, since then, she felt that things were coming together much better and for the good of the organisation:

*"I was a little bit scared of the new CEO starting but now I am seeing some positive outcomes with all the new staff. I am finding that I am now looking outside the box that I was put into"* – Stephanie (female, 20-40, employee).

One participant described that they felt that their manager did not quite know what they were doing and this led to having a negative view of management:

*"The change gave me a negative view of management. I felt the leaders didn't know what they were doing"* – Kylie (female, 20-40, employee).

#### 4.6.2 Managers

Manager participants identified their thoughts around change leadership in relation to their organisation in the CM processes. The change leadership came from being supportive of employees and transitioning them into the change plan and valuing open, clear communication with staff:

*"I feel that we managed the employees really well through the transition by being really supportive and being really engaged with them. We followed up the change process by being attentive and walking around talking to them"* – Peter (male, 40-60, manager).

Some managers reported that they value clear communications with their employees and felt that they looked after their staff at this time:

*"As a manager I value clear communications with my staff. I value being informed as things happen so that I can relate this to my employees. Clear communications are definitely the way to go so that my staff stay focused"* – Katie (female, 40-60, manager).

*"I really looked after my staff through the change, this was really important to me"* – Peter (male, 40-60, manager).

*“The change was managed through top end conversations – a structured approach” – Peter (male, 40-60, manager).*

#### 4.6.3 Change Agent

CA participants identified their thoughts around change leadership in relation to their organisation in the CM processes. All reported that change leadership is about being clear about the change process and having a clear scope and vision to develop staff. Gaining buy-in and giving staff the awareness of the consequences of what can happen if the change does not happen.

They felt that crucial steps in CM is being clear about the communications and having a defined scope of change:

*“I feel the crucial steps in CM is being clear, having scope, developing my staff, letting them know why we are changing and engaging people. I manage the change by engaging everyone, involving my staff and being consultative and I always make sure the change is deliverable, and also follow up with my employees in management discussions” – David (male, 40-60, CA).*

*“The most crucial steps in CM is getting people to understand the need for change, and the awareness of what will happen if we do not change. I find engaging and managing the change with managers and supervisors challenging. Leaders are key to driving the change so they need to be prepared to lead the change but sometimes they find out about the change when their employees do. We have to learn how to manage this differently” – Olivia (female, 20-40, CA).*

The CA participants reported that they felt they supported their employees by quantifying the impact of the change by using a particular CM models:

*“I support employees through the change process by quantifying the impact on their work. We measure and manage this by using data. We are made aware of and are taught the ADKAR model of CM – this does provide us the support to support our employees through the change process” – Olivia (female, 20-40, CA).*

*“Depending on the size of the change we use an audit process after the change has finished to determine if it has been a success. We use staff surveys – ‘how do you feel’ etc. and their managers use KPI’s to see how effective the change has been” – Samuel (male, 40-60, CA).*

*“We also use Management by Walking Around to see what’s going on at ground level. The key to being a successful change leader is to be a transformer not just a doer” – Samuel (male, 40-60, CA).*

They also testified that HR(M) support other managers through the change process by having structured course with mentors and coaches at their disposal:

*“Our HRs team supports our managers through the change process – we call it a ‘wellness team’. It has structured courses and it mentors and coaches them through the process” – Olivia (female, 20-40, CA).*

#### 4.6.4 Human Resource Manager

The HR(M) participant identified his thoughts around change leadership in relation to their organisation in the CM processes. His role in change implementation also supports the managers and gives them the knowledge and tools to support and encourage their employees.

The HR(M) reported that they use regional managers at their organisation to communicate messages of change process to their employees:

*“The HR department uses regional manager to transmit message of change and we are always actively involved. We make it non-negotiable that managers attend meetings with employees. We help people understand why we have to make changes and why, and we always keep people informed about what’s going on” – Joshua (male, 40-60, HR).*

The HR(M) participant testified that they use reinforcement methods to gain the type of behaviour in which they need to achieve the change process. They want to minimise and reduce any surprises that the employee might have as they are not going to be helpful for the delivery of the change:

*"We always used positive reinforcement of the behaviours we wanted. I find you need to be precise as a leader, people are not mind readers you know" – Joshua (male, 40-60, HR).*

*"Explain why it is important and the efficiencies to be gain. Minimise surprises ... people do not like surprises that much. As a leader, try to cover all the bases, reduce surprises and be consistent, and really you just cannot over communicate" – Joshua (male, 40-60, HR).*

The HR(M) participant stated that while top management delivers and leads the change, the HR department is there to break it down for employees to what the change means for them:

*"Top management has to lead the change in a sense that they have to figure out what has to happen but then someone along the line has to break it right down in the terms of 'what's in it for me' sort of approach. Good leadership needs to be precise in what they want the people to know – no ambiguity" – Joshua (male, 40-60, HR).*

## **4.7 Empowerment**

### 4.7.1 Employees

Employee participants identified their thoughts around employee empowerment in relation to their organisation in the CM processes. A diverse array of employees found that their job satisfaction had increased whereas a few found that it has decreased. This sentiment was founded around whether they felt they had been supported or not. Some participants felt that they were offered help by way of coping with the change:

*"My job satisfaction has increased since the change implementation. It's great around here to be working with like-minded people and I totally feel the organisation considered people at all levels" – Faye (female, 40-60, employee).*

*"I feel really positive around here and I feel really empowered to do a great job. I didn't really need help for the change but we did receive support from management. I have a real 'can-do' attitude now" – Tia (female, 20-40, employee).*

The majority of participants felt that they were not offered help by way of coping with the change and felt that their job satisfaction had decreased since the change implementation:

*"For me, it just feels a little disorganised now. Support that was offered was inconsistent, possibly because we are a branch of the organisation and not Head Office" – Kimberley (female, 40-60, employee).*

*"My job satisfaction has decreased dramatically. Because of the change there is just too much work for me, they need another person and they didn't factor this into the plan. The management is aware but nothing is done" – Faye (female, 40-60, employee).*

*"I was not offered any training or coaching for the change implementation. Again, I was never heard as such. I feel the organisation does not value my opinion at all" – Stephanie (female, 20-40, employee).*

*"I did need help to understand the change, but none was offered. My job satisfaction has totally decreased since the change. It desperately needed consultation with the people on the ground. This organisation needs to offer more support because support is at best very minimal" – Kylie (female, 20-40, employee).*

*I haven't felt supported at all. I've not had any experience with what I have to handle in my new role and I am finding the relationships to be somewhat difficult" – Robyn (female, 40-60, employee).*

Various participants felt indifferent about whether they were helped or not:

*"I think the change has been successful, I needed guidance for my new role and what it entailed. I think a lot more check in was needed but nothing happened" – Faye (female, 40-60, employee).*

*"I didn't receive much in the way of support, but the team meetings are really helpful. My job satisfaction has unfortunately decreased for me personally. The essence has been difficult to recapture and I find I now have isolation issues due to the lack of support" – Stephanie (female, 20-40, employee).*

*"My job satisfaction was quite high after the change, I had loads of enthusiasm, but it seemed more glamorous than it actually was. Now, I have only average job satisfaction as I feel*

*pushed into my current role and I haven't felt supported at all" –Tia (female, 20-40, employee).*

#### 4.7.2 Managers

Manager participants identified their thoughts around employee empowerment in relation to their organisation in the CM processes. The managers felt that in-house training and coaching was definitely the path for empowering their employees. However, they reported that they did not provide any in- house coaching or training. They admitted that training and coaching were areas that management needs to look at in terms of their current policies within the organisation:

*"No, we do not provide any coaching or in house training, but that's not to say the employees do not have the ability to change, because they do. This is definitely an area that management needs to look at, its sadly lacking in this organisation. We need to empower our employees not put them down" – Katie (female, 40-60, manager).*

In contrast however, other managers reported that they did indeed provide in-house coaching and that training was given. They specified that they took a structured approach to training and that people who engaged in outside training were encouraged to share their new knowledge with other staff:

*"Yeah, it seems to work well here, even people's personal training planning for their personal development – that's all being done in a really structured way so that we know that peoples individual learning and needs are being addressed and their interests are being addressed and making sure all that stuff ties back into the framework of what the organisation" – Peter (male, 40-60, manager).*

All Manager participants described that the change was not open to debate and that their employees were not considered in the decision-making process:

*“The change was definitely not open to any debate. Maybe at the start it was open to debate, but really it wasn’t. They had already decided” – Katie (female, 40-60, manager).*

*“No, the change was not up to debate. The change was done for the best of the organisation” – David (male, 40-60, CA).*

Manager participants reported that they now have regular updates and meetings in which to inform employees of what is happening within the organisation:

*“We have regular range of manager meetings that inform them of what we are doing and then they would go and farm out the training. We have regular updates of current best practice stuff” – Peter (male, 40-60, manager).*

#### 4.7.3 Change Agent

CA participants identified their thoughts around employee empowerment in relation to their organisation in the CM processes. They all felt strongly about asking for employee feedback as part of the change implementation. This way their employees could feel empowered in that they felt heard. This needed to be done on an anonymous level as they felt otherwise people would not be entirely honest in their feedback:

*“We provide in house training – expecting and managing resistance. We constantly need to remember the reason for change and something I need to be really blunt and people who really resist need to look for opportunities elsewhere” – Samuel (male, 40-60, CA).*

*“We do ask for employee feedback after the change has been implemented, we call it ‘Post Implementation Reviews’. We implement adjustments along the way and we respond to changes quickly. These reviews are of course anonymous or we would only see ‘what we wanted to see’ and not what employees really thought” – Olivia (male, 20-40, CA).*

One CA declared that he does not provide training and development around change, however it is a subject that is discussed at the individual's performance review time:

*"I do not provide training and development to the managers around change, instead we discuss them at Performance Review time. I also implement adjustments or any corrective action based on this as well" – David (male, 40-60, CA).*

#### 4.7.4 Human Resource Manager

The HR(M) participant identified thoughts around employee empowerment in relation to their organisation in the CM processes. He felt that motivation and empowering staff comes in many forms not just through the pay system and they found that social situations work just as well by having everyone together in gaining a team effect:

*"We motivated and supported our employees through social activities, not so much more pay but have celebratory functions to reinforce the good behaviour. People seemed to like that as they celebrated as a team" – Joshua (male, 40-60, HR).*

*"In hiring new people we now look for people who would work better in the new environment. People who are in more of a customer service environment who are more likely to know how to take care of our customers" – Joshua (male, 40-60, HR).*

### **4.8 Summary**

From the analysis of communication, culture, resistance, conflict, change leadership and empowerment emerged integral features of the people dimension of CM in a SME in the NZ business environment.

The employee participants highlighted that they felt that the change process was communicated well to them by the CEO. They felt that it was done in an open and transparent way. They also reported that senior management was on hand to answer any questions they might have about the implementation. All the CA participants and the HR(M) participant reported that to achieve a successful change process, the motivations for the change needs to be conveyed in both formal and informal channels.

The employee participants reported that they felt a shift in the company for the benefit of everyone involved, however manager participants reported that they felt the organisation was



more 'change fit' rather than 'change ready'. CA and HR(M) participants stated that if culture came down to lines of direction then people were more adaptable to change.

Employee participants reported that resistance to the change implementation was seen organisation wide and the manager participants saw a lot of emotional distress. However, manager participants reported that a lot of the disgruntled employees had left the organisation and found employment elsewhere. CA participants stated that resistance can come from anywhere and that some people will struggle with changes – its normal and expected. The HR(M) reported that their role is to minimize the risk and support the employees through times of change.

The employee participants reported that conflict was felt everywhere in the organisation, however they also felt it could in most cases be resolved. Manager participants found that there were lots of grizzling and grumblings and that it was up to them to keep communicating about the change and what the repercussions would be if they didn't make the necessary changes. The CA identified that they handled conflict by having discussions and staying on focus. One point made was to never make the conflict personal and to keep it on a business level. The HR(M) stated that their role is to empathise, however, and at the same time keep the change plan on track. They need to keep the relationship intact and keep aware of what is happening to reduce any anxiety.

The employee participants reported that some felt supported by the CEO and some did not. With senior management changes, they felt they could not keep up with who they were to report to therefore giving a negative view of the management in the organisation. Manager participants found that while they value clear communications with their staff, the change was managed by top end conversations and a hierarchical format. The CA participants reported that the most crucial part of the change plan is about the CM being clear and precise, developing the staff and communicating well with them about the need for change. The HR(M)

stated that they use managers to transmit the message of change and then help people understand why the changes have to be made. They need to reduce the element of surprise and use positive reinforcement to ensure the change plan is a success.

Various employees reported that their job satisfaction increased through the change implementation. They found that they were being kept well informed and that the organisation is now of a can-do attitude. They felt empowered to do a great job. However, some employees felt that their job satisfaction has in fact decreased because they didn't feel supported, nor was there any training or coaching offered in relation to the change implementation. Some Managers reported that the organisation offered training and support as empowerment, some managers did not. They did report however, that the change was not open to debate and they felt the processes were uncertain. The CA participants stated that they do ask for feedback after a change plan has been set in motion. They feel that this is one way in which to implement changes or corrective action. The HR(M) reported that to empower people, pay rewards is not the only answer and that people also enjoy social activities to celebrate as a team.

The next chapter will outline the discussions in conjunction with the current literature and the findings for this research in relation to the relevant literature. It will also discuss the theoretical implications, practical implications and then finally it will discuss workplace level policy implications around CM.

## **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter is structured thematically reflecting the key issues identified from both the literature and the research findings – communication, culture, resistance, conflict, change leadership and empowerment. It will firstly discuss the theoretical implications as to the extent to which the study addresses the initial research questions. Next, it will discuss the practical implications as to the learnings of the study for HR practitioners and change consultants. What can they do differently in light of the findings? Finally, it will discuss a workplace level policy implication around CM for organisations and if there are some learnings for policy makers.

## **5.1 Theoretical implications**

While there are many models of CM discussed in the literature (Blanchard, 2010; Kotter, 2008, 2012; Lewin & Cartwright, 1952), people play a central role in making the change actually happen. This is why people need to be considered first, as it is them who play the critical role of CA, the role of the HR department and the employees who are affected by the change implementation as described by Dievernich et al. (2015). As discussed by Tummers et al. (2015), change is a frequent occurrence in organisations today and CM is the instrument that gives guidance on how to correctly prepare and support people to accept their changed routines and roles in which to initiate organisational efficiencies.

### 5.1.1 Communication

This study has illustrated how communication around the change implementation needs to be clear and concise. It is a critical driver of the change plan and is paramount to the success of organisational change as discussed by Armenakis et al. (1993). Clear communications reduce any ambiguity and misinterpretation for people associated and affected by the change implementation.

In support of the literature as discussed by Caldwell (1993), the majority of the employee and manager participants reported that change implementation was communicated through formal lines of hierarchy channels including both the product and process lines of communications. The findings of this report show that the communication around change was driven and communicated to all staff by the CEO and then supported by the senior management team. It included face-to-face meetings and print based communications and it was reported that the CEO was an active participant of the change plan and the senior management were on hand to answer any questions that might arise due to any uncertainty. However, in contrast to good practice as promoted in the literature (Caldwell, 1993), all of the employee participants reported that they were not included in any of the decision-making processes. Some of them felt that the change plan was not communicated very well and they were told to 'just get on with it'. This led to unhappy employees and resulted in a reduction of staff. Caldwell (1993) states that involving employees in the decision-making process can lead to employees feeling supported which attributes to their attitudes and behaviours making the change process more collective and more likely to do well.

### 5.1.2 Culture

This study has highlighted that the culture of an organisation as described by Cristian-Liviu (2013) is one of a shared system of beliefs, rituals and values. It is representative of an organisations significant elements and with this, it profiles the organisations employees, the governing processes and the organisations foundation. It cultivates the commonly accepted behaviours and the way 'how things are done around here'. One of the biggest challenges in the change initiative relates to the fact that managers need to create a dynamic organisational culture so that employees accept and implement organisational change more willingly (Cristian-Liviu, 2013).

With a view to the current literature as discussed by Cristian-Liviu (2013), it was of interest that the findings found that both employee and manager participants felt that the organisation was ready for a culture change. Participants felt that with a recent change initiative, the culture of the organisation became more positive, fostered a 'can-do' attitude and more open to new ideas. These participants felt that the change was credible and was in line with the new business strategy and that the organisation now showed its core values and what they were actually about. However, in contrast to the current literature (Cristian-Liviu, 2013), both employee and manager participants agreed that while the organisation did have to change, they felt the organisation's culture was not one of being ready for change.

### 5.1.3 Resistance

This study exposes that resistance to the change procedure can be caused because people react to change in diverse ways. Fear of the unfamiliar is one of the most characteristic justifications for change as discussed by Hayes (2007), along with fear of differentiated practices and failure of not living up to expectations. Some employees will be seen to be dedicated and passionate while others can become adverse and resistant to the change initiative.

In keeping with the current literature as described by Hayes (2007) participants both seen and have personally resisted the implementation of the change process. They reported that they felt sad about the loss of the doing things the old way and hence resisted to do their job the 'new' way. There were reports that there was withholding of information along with feelings of being devalued due to the change and that there was a lot of emotional reaction to the change process including feelings of resentment, being devalued, anxiety, reluctance, mood swings and sadness.

#### 5.1.4 Conflict

This study spotlights that conflict occurs in change implementations and it can be recognised as an observation of interpersonal belligerence and bitterness arising from different perspectives as defined by Chaudhry and Asif (2015). Implementing change within professional organisations can lead to conflicts which, if left uncontrolled, can obstruct the change implementation (Raza & Standing, 2011). However, as Chaudhry and Asif (2015) explain, while conflict is typically thought to be undesirable and something to be eliminated, conflict can be eased through prudent planning, mindful relationships, accurate selections and proper training. It is also expressed by Chaudhry and Asif (2015) that conflict in organisations can be beneficial in the identification of inefficiencies of the change implementation detecting faulty processes which in turn notifies senior management to take the necessary steps in which to correct the situation. Therefore, we cannot always assume that conflict within a change process necessarily reflects a dissatisfactory situation and can actually play a vital part in the change implementation.

It was interesting to note that both employee and manager participants, as also discussed by Raza and Standing (2011), identified that they did indeed see conflict within the organisation as a result of the change process. Some employee participants reported they found this to be the only defence that they could adhere to in response to the change initiative. These participants described that they saw people were withdrawing and hiding. A manager reported that he felt some people went a bit 'rogue' with isolating themselves and had to spend time sorting of these problems and to neutralise the situation as discussed by Wood et al. (2016). They professed that the atmosphere was daunting sometimes even to the point where they felt that unresolved conflicts within the organisation still needed to be addressed.

### 5.1.5 Change Leadership

This study emphasises that change leadership is an integral part of the people dimension of CM and as Hayes (2007) explains, it is the main facilitator of the change process. Kotter (1999) states that leadership is about creating a vision, communicating and then aligning the employees to achieve the vision and goal of the change plan. Change leadership guides the employees by motivating and inspiring them to adopt the change and gain 'buy-in'. Higgs and Rowland (2011) explain that successful change leaders not only engage employees in the whole change process but also enable and develop their employees to ensure that people are challenged and supported throughout.

In support of the literature from Hayes (2007) and Higgs and Rowland (2011), both employee and manager participants felt that the CEO, being the driver of change enterprise helped them to understand the change process by having clear and open communications. Managers reported that they transitioned their staff particularly well by being supportive and engaged with them. They described that they followed up with their employees and that the management team is very open to listening to their employees. They stated that they place a high value on clear communications and that they looked after their staff well at this point in time in terms of listening to their concerns so that everyone stays focused on the job at hand. Manager participants testified that the change was managed through top end conversations and that they used a structured approach to managing the change process.

However, in contrast to the literature depicted by Higgs and Rowland (2011), employee participants reported that while they felt that their managers were on board with the change, they had little support and were offered no training during the implementation of the change process. They testified that decisions were made and that everyone just had to do what they were told. An employee participant reported that the change gave them a negative view of the senior management and said that they felt the leaders did not know what they were doing

as they felt that management was disorganised. The flow on affect they described was that it made it difficult for them to engage with their own clients.

#### 5.1.6 Empowerment

This study accentuates that employees need to be empowered. Empowerment during change implementation is crucial to allow for 'buy-in' from staff as stated by Siegel (2011). Empowered employees are the best technicians of change, they are prepared with clear goals, and an ability to communication directly and easily. Empowered employees are ones that establish team work, are part of the decision-making consultations and have training responsibilities. Employees need contact to straight and open communications with senior management and it is vitally important that employees must be the receivers of clear and realistic goals. Siegel (2011) declares that an empowered employee is one that has self-assurance in communicating new ideas and that they take ownership of their daily working lives acting more like leaders and involve and motivate others in the change process. This can be a seen as a significant step in successfully managing change. The organisation as a whole can then expect high rates of retaining of imaginative, accomplished and inspired employees (Siegel, 2011).

With a view to the current literature as discussed by Siegel (2011), several employee participants felt their motivation has increased from the change implementation due to feeling supported. Some participants experienced being more motivated and empowered with their positions within the organisation and they perceived that they didn't need any coaching or training. However, many employee participants felt differently and stated that they did not feel they were offered any training and support and therefore feel their job satisfaction has decreased with the change progression. One employee participant felt disconnected and that the change implementation needed more forward planning and consultation with the people who were most affected. They state that the organisation needs to offer more support as no



support was forthcoming and many employees are coping with isolation issues. It was also reported that many participants are finding the change difficult to come to terms with and are aware that they are now demotivated and have not felt empowered at all at any stage.

The connections between these main tranches of investigation (communication, culture, resistance, conflict, change leadership and empowerment) come about as it is primarily the employee who has to change their work process in a change execution. CM needs to ensure that the employees impacted by the change process receive the right kind of coaching regarding the change process for it to be a successful implementation.

## **5.2 Practical implications**

### 5.2.1 Communication

Both the CA and HR(M) participants felt that effective communication around change was imperative. They both discussed that they have informal and formal lines of communication (e.g. using emails, meetings, internet, questionnaires), training and reinforcement policies in place. They agree that it is important to have a clear vision of the change and that messages need to be consistent and supported by senior management.

In keeping with the literature, Hayes (2007) reports that the quality of communication has a significant effect on the success or failure of change implementation and whether people will be motivated to support and sustain the process. The literature also supports that the management of change is normally experienced as a top down process. However, Hayes (2007) expresses that effective communication needs to be more of a two-way communication path as it reduces employee hesitations. It also delivers CA with valuable material that can help them illuminate the need for the change initiatives and then help them advance and implement the change plan.

### 5.2.2 Culture

The culture of an organisation comes down to having clear direction and awareness for change as agreed by both the CA and HR(M) participants. The CA participants felt that organisations need to be 'change ready' so that they are more receptive to change. Having lines of direction in place made people more adaptable to change. If the employees of the organisation cannot see a clear direction, then they will not have any confidence in the management team and can become resistant to change.

In support of the literature as discussed by Cristian-Liviu (2013), the study found that when change occurs in an organisation it also involves a change in the organisations values, beliefs, assumptions, mission and strategy of the organisation. Cristian-Liviu (2013) states that this calls for senior management to lead and act in ways that elucidate the change and encourage others to act upon it. However, as Graetz et al. (2011) point out, CA need to work towards changing the common values held by the organisation members because goals that conflict with values can generate discontent between employees. Culture is an influential factor of shared behaviours and is valuable in understanding how certain changes affect different people. It is therefore significant to have a flexible approach when handling change within an organisation. Culturally-orientated CA work towards changing the shared values held by employees that they consider uncooperative in realising goals. Culture is an influential determinant of shared behaviour and as such its analysis is likely to be beneficial in understanding how certain changes will be established as stated by Graetz et al. (2011).

### 5.2.3 Resistance

Resisting the change implementation can come from everyone and anyone in the organisation, both managers and employees. However, as described by the CA and the HR(M) participants they feel that handling resistance comes down to helping people understand their role within the organisation and the reason for the change. They acknowledged that a certain amount of

resistance is normal and to be expected. However, resistance to the change implementation can put a programme at risk of failure and can potentially damage the organisation. The HR(M) states that his role is to minimise any surprises and massage any egos if necessary to keep the relationship intact. However, if all else fails, the organisation needs to work with the people to find other roles or opportunities elsewhere.

In keeping with the findings, the literature agrees that CA can use many avenues around employees who resist the change implementation as discussed by Wood et al. (2016). This can include education and communication, participation and involvement, facilitation and support, negotiation and agreement, manipulation and cooperation and finally explicit and implicit cohesion. However, as Wood et al. (2016) declare, it is critical for a good CA to appreciate that any one of these methods can lead to difficulties and they must understand that resistance to change is something to be recognised and constructively addressed instead of ignored. A CA can do well with attending to such comments and behaviours from the employees. Marchington and Wilkinson (2002) state that in an ideal situation, all the necessary information is shared except for highly sensitive matters. However, as Marchington and Wilkinson (2002) assert, the general rule to overcoming resistance to change is that good communication networks and feedback need to be established between the CA and those who are affected by change. In the long run, this establishes conviction within the organisation and people will feel heard and their problems recognised therefore smoothing the way for a successful change implementation.

#### 5.2.4 Conflict

Both CA participants and the HR(M) participant reported that handling conflict in organisations can be mitigated by having clear discussions with the people involved and staying focused on the task at hand. One CA participant reported that the main point is to never make it personal and focus on what is best for the organisation as a whole. Another CA participant reported

that, if conflict appears in an organisation due to a change process, the CA has, in fact, failed his or her job to deliver the change initiative. The HR(M) felt that his role in handling conflict situations is more around empathising and caring for the relationships within the organisation. This participant reported that they would encourage to open up the lines of communication to all involved to keep the relationship intact.

In light of the findings in this study and in keeping with the literature, Wood et al. (2016) explains that there are different types of conflict resolution styles and it can depend to a great extent on the personality characteristics of the managers handling the situation. The effectiveness of a particular style depends on the situation and for conflict to be resolved clear and concise conversations need to be had around particular issues. Chaudhry and Asif (2015) explain, however, that under certain conditions, conflict can be seen as valuable and tolerable. For example, they claim that conflict can support organisations to move towards growth development and even be positive advantageous. Conflict in organisations can help management to identify incidents of inadequate functioning of the change process or the people. With this in mind, both CA and HR professionals should not shy away from conflicts in their organisations, as it is not always a dysfunctional part of the CM plan and can actually aid with the success of implementation (Chaudhry & Asif, 2015).

#### 5.2.5 Change Leadership

CA and the HR(M) participants both agreed it is crucial that change leaders use clear and concise messages to convey the change process. Leaders are key to driving the change plan so they need to be prepared to gain the buy-in of all staff for it to be a success. The CA and HR(M) participants reported that making staff aware of the consequences of the change and what it could look like if the change did not go ahead is very important. Being a successful change leader includes supporting employees through the whole change process and measuring the impact on their work. The HR(M) participant declared that HR's role is to

support change leaders and gives them knowledge and the tools to support and motivate their employees.

As with the findings, the current literature finds that the role of leadership in CM is a significant enabler of the change process as described by Hayes (2007). In times of change, managerial work is progressively becoming a leadership task, and in order to ensure change success, Hayes (2007) declares leaders need to firstly identify the issues that require their attention and secondly identify what the change might look like and what needs to be done to achieve the change. Leaders are then in a position to communicate the change plan and attempt to influence the people that will be affected and translate the vision into a motivator for change. As discussed by Higgs and Rowland (2011), the change leader then communicates a common route so all people can work collectively to achieve the change implementation whereby removing any barriers that might appear for people in order to create the conditions that will motivate people to transport the necessary change. The leader then provides opportunities for discussion so that those affected can discover and comprehend what will be involved and the change leader can then help to address those anxieties. The change leader is also involved with maintaining momentum and sustaining the change as there is quite often pressure between keeping the change process going and presenting changes that will distribute the improved efficiencies over the long term (Hayes, 2007). It is essential that change leaders shape a vision which gives employees a reason that motivates them to achieve the desired effect.

#### 5.2.6 Empowerment

CA participants testified that empowering employees comes in the form of asking for employee feedback as part of the change implementation. They also stated that providing training and support where necessary also helps. However, one participant declared that they do not provide any training and support whatsoever around change however the change

implementation is only discussed around performance appraisal time. However, the HR(M) participant revealed that motivating and supporting staff should not just come from the pay and reward system, it should also come in the way of social situations (e.g. working towards a common team effort).

In light of these findings, the literature states as reviewed by Marchington and Wilkinson (2002) that employment involvement can take a number of forms in the way of downward communications from managers to employees. The main purpose of which is to update and illuminate staff so that they are more willing to accept senior management plans. This includes such methods as team meetings, informal communications, employee reports and organisational newsletters, all of which are used to transport messages to employees. These practices deliver employees with large amounts of information and the employees are more cultivated as to what is happening within the organisation. However, as Marchington and Wilkinson (2002) affirm, financial involvement operates under the assumption that employees with a monetary stake in the organisation will be more empowered and motivated to work harder for a successful outcome.

### **5.3 Workplace level policy implications**

On the basis of the findings in this study, I recommend that the HR professionals adopt new workplace level policies for organisations around CM implementation. Being that there are many models of CM within the current literature (Kotter, 1999, 2008, 2012; Lewin & Cartwright, 1952), the one shared assumption is that the direction of change is communicated by top management. However, as Dievernich et al. (2015) explain, people are the fundamental part of change and it is important to understand their purpose and actions. Policy makers not only need to consider the management and leadership roles; they also need to consider the people who will be affected by the change implementation. People are at the heart and core

of an organisation and therefore CM without giving thought to how it affects people is quite unthinkable (Dievernich et al., 2015).

Such future policies could include:

- Identifying those people who will be affected by the change implementation;
- Assessing staff wellbeing impact during the change implementation;
- Individual consultations with those affected by the change implementation;
- Training and support during and after the change implementation;
- Clarity of new processes;
- Anonymous employee evaluation surveys; and
- Appeal guidelines and procedures.

The findings have shown that people had a very different view on how the change was communicated to them, how the change affected them, how they felt about the change and how they reacted to the change. The participants expressed how they felt their manager had supported them through a change process and if their job satisfaction had increased or decreased since the change plan was implemented. They also expressed how they had coped personally through this change process.

Dievernich et al. (2015) explain that what makes people unique is that they all hold different observations, sensitivities and viewpoints about whether they felt supported at this time. This becomes pertinent when those viewpoints have an effect on organisations and their procedures and developments of change. People are characterised by their presentation of activities and practices that relate to others and communication becomes applicable as it generates points of reference that others can respond to, making it an expression of involvement. Understanding this involvement is the very substance in CM as people are not so much against change, but principally against being changed. Dievernich et al. (2015) go on to say that policy changes simply cannot be made without the people involved in any

modern day change implementation plan as human beings are at the very core of both organisations and society alike.

The final chapter will conclude with a summary of the research aims, the main findings, further areas of research, limitations and my recommendations for future investigation on this topic.



## **6.0 Introduction**

This study has examined the perspectives of employees and managers who have been involved with a change process within their organisation. The aim was to discover the people dimension of CM and thus to address a gap within the literature of CM relating to the question of how people need to be included when making changes within an organisation. However, further research still needs to be undertaken on a larger scale within the field of CM. This would be to highlight the necessity that successful change plans are virtually impossible without the buy-in from all people within the organisation.

## **6.1 Research aims**

The aim of this research was to explore the people dimension of CM in SMEs in the NZ business environment. Participants were invited to contribute in the research using a qualitative, semi-structured interview methodology via recorded telephone calls and recorded face-to-face meetings. The interview schedule comprised a range of questions around current roles within the organisation. The questions were structured around the topics communication, culture, resistance, conflict, change leadership and empowerment.

## **6.2 Main findings**

The main findings to this study identified six major themes in regards to the people dimension of CM for SMEs in the NZ. The themes identified in the interview data were communication, culture of the organisation, resistance to the change implementation, conflict, change leadership and empowerment of employees.

Participants in general reported that they felt satisfied with the level of communication in which the change plan was communicated to them by the current CEO and it was mostly agreed that the change was credible. They agreed that the change implementation aligned

with the business strategy and culture of the organisation. However, there was resistance to the change and it was seen that these people who did resist either left the organisation, or felt that they just needed to get on with it. Participants reported that they felt they did not have a lot of choice. All employee and manager participants testified that they saw conflict as a result of the change process. Employee participants reported that they felt this to be their only defence to the changes and felt unsupported and not heard. However, they did feel that their manager or supervisor was on board with the change but they did report that they received little or no training as support for the change implementation. Some employee participants found that their job satisfaction had increased, however quite a few found that it had decreased. This sentiment was founded around whether they feel they have been supported or not.

The CA and the HR(M) participants reported that they use a standard communication plan and that communication is the key to a successful change implementation. They agreed that the culture of the organisation comes down to having a clear direction for change. Both the CA and the HR participants conveyed that handling resistance comes down to helping people understand their role in the organisation and why the change has to happen. They described that managing conflict is around having discussions and staying focused on the issues and never making it personal. They stated that change leadership is about being clear about the change process, having a clear scope and vision to develop staff. Gaining 'buy-in' and giving them the awareness of the consequences of what can happen if the change does not happen. They felt strongly about asking for employee feedback as part of the change implementation. This way their employees can feel empowered in that they feel heard however, this needs to be done on an anonymous level as they feel people would not be entirely honest in their feedback. Motivation and empowering staff comes in many forms and not just through the wage and salary arrangement. It was found that social situations work just as well by having everyone together in gaining a team effect. This is particularly crucial for change

implementation when you are requiring buy-in from the employees, sometimes organisation wide.

Because it is predominantly the employee who has to change their work process in a change implementation, change leaders need to ensure that their impacted employees receive the right kind of communications, leadership, training and empowerment regarding the change plan for it to be a success. For future practices, this needs to be implemented in the organisational strategy to gain the buy-in from the collection of employees in the organisation. Therefore, CM needs to provide an organised method for supporting all impacted employees through the transitions in which to move them from the current organisational state to the new change implementation (Prosci, 2016; Tummers et al., 2015).

### **6.3 Further areas of research**

This research addressed a gap within the literature of CM regarding the questions of how essential it is that people are included when making changes within an organisation. Further research needs to be undertaken to highlight the necessity that successful change is practically impossible without giving thought to people and allowing employees a voice within change design and implementation. Further areas of research could extend the interview study on a larger scale involving more than one SME and could include different locations around NZ. It could also go more in-depth about what happens when change implementations goes wrong and what is the effect on the employees and organisations alike.

The rationale for this further research would be to gain more insight into having more organisations to compare and to fully explore to what extent CM is being done successfully or not. Further research could also look at why change implementations fail. The benefit of this would be to highlight the reasoning behind the failures so as to implement new workplace-level policies.

## **6.4 Limitations**

Although the research has reached its aims, a significant limitation of this research was finding SMEs that wanted to be involved with this study. As change happens frequently in these organisations, I found few organisations that were willing to let me talk with their employees and be actively involved in this study. I found that a large proportion of these organisations were concerned and had issues around privacy and therefore declined the chance for their business to be appraised for this research study.

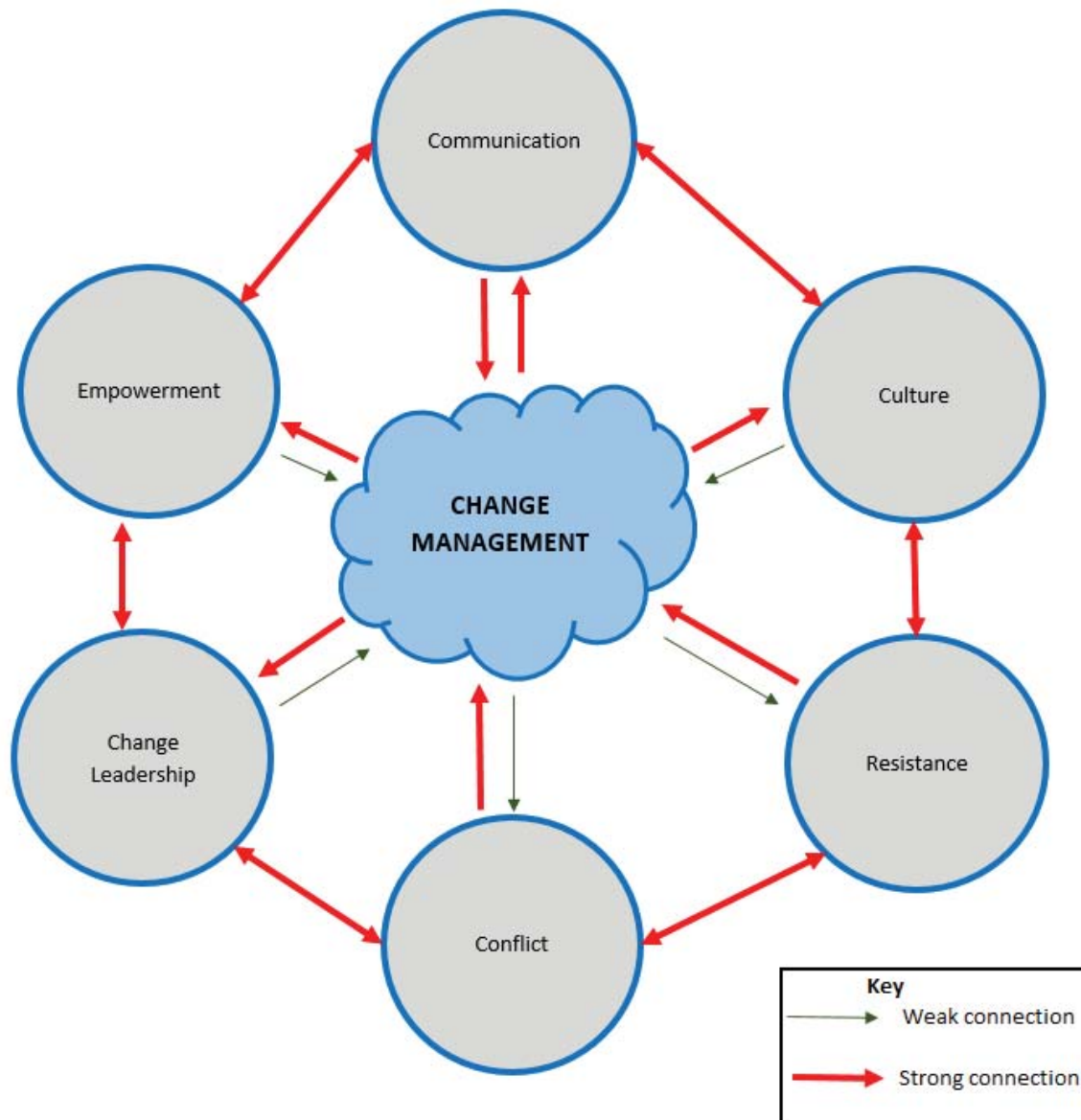
The small measure of this research also was a limitation in that generalisation from the research findings could not be completed. A larger scale research into the people dimension of CM may offer a wider representation if a comparable study was to be undertaken.

## **6.5 Summary**

This research was guided by the aim of exploring the people dimension of CM for SME in a NZ business environment. The participants were able to reflect on their experience of change process that had happened in the last 12 months in their particular place of employment. They were able to reflect on their experiences under the structure of communication, culture, resistance and conflict and was thematically analysed.

Via qualitative analysis, a number of key findings emerged that can help to inform methodological, practical, policy-orientated and theoretical developments as per the diagram below:

Diagram 1: Key findings for Change Management and the Small-to-Medium Enterprise



This diagram demonstrates the key themes displaying a strong linkage for the success of the change implementation process. Communication, culture, resistance, conflict, change leadership and empowerment are all major factors when implementing a CM process. Employees need a transparent communication pathway for them to know what is happening within the organisation and to keep them informed. It is a critical driver of CM and reduces

any ambiguity among the people concerned. The culture of the organisation plays an important part as it shapes and forms peoples behaviours as to whether the CM plan will be accepted and implemented creating positive, cooperative employees. People fear unfamiliar routines and therefore resistance is a common part of the CM process. Some people will be committed to changing processes while others are not. Resistance to change is an issue that can greatly influence the successful implementation of a change process. Implementing change in an organisations can lead to conflict within the organisation and this can be felt by employees by not being considered in the CM plan. However, conflict can also be seen as a pointer for fail points within the execution process. Change Leadership in CM how a powerful effect on employees behaviours. Leadership is about creating the vision and following through with it and that positive change leaders engage their employees in the whole change process thereby enabling successful implementation. Empowered employees are the best drivers of change, they will have the attitude and 'buy-in' necessary for the success of the CM plan. Empowering employees not only helps them handle with change but it also prepares them with the tools to embrace change and connect with the opportunity it brings to them

#### 6.5.1 Communication

Communication is a critical driver of change implementation and significant for gaining change readiness and it reduces ambiguity for all concerned. The organisation had many formal and informal transparent conversations with their employees. Communication was led by the CEO and then backed up by the senior management team. Therefore, there is a strong linkage both from the CM plan and the organisation.

#### 6.5.2 Culture

Culture is what shapes not only the employees but the structure of the organisation and the control process. However, it was felt that in the organisation there was a weak linkage being that it was not at a change ready state. Results also showed the organisation has a low

employee involvement and generally informed employees only. Nonetheless, some employees felt that there had been a culture shift in a positive way.

### 6.5.3 Resistance

Resistance was strongly felt by members of the organisation as change can bring about different levels of employee commitment, tensions and anxiety. Within the organisation, only some people were committed to the change, however, some resistance is to be expected within the organisational change implementation process and can be an important part of the feedback process and a source of improvement. Resistance by employees can influence the outcome of change implementations and be a reason for the change process failing.

### 6.5.4 Conflict

Conflict was also strongly felt throughout the organisation and can be seen as a reflection of interpersonal aggression and resentment. Ongoing conflict in organisations can obstruct the change process from happening. Nonetheless, conflict within the change implementation plan can also be a pointer as to where corrective action needs to be addressed by change leaders and senior management. It can be seen as a pre-requisite for growth within an organisation making differences of opinion necessary for forward-thinking motivations. Therefore, conflict can play a very important part in the change implementation process.

### 6.5.5 Change Leadership

Change Leadership is an integral part of the CM process and that leaders have a powerful effect on employees behaviour. Leaders who are more facilitating and engaging are seen more positively related to change success. They tend to develop the capability of the employee by which people are more challenged and supported. The results showed that some employees felt that while their managers were on board with the change process they felt they received

little or no support and no training or coaching was given in regards to the change implementation process.

#### 6.5.6 Empowerment

A strong linkage shows that empowering employees is a major part in the CM plan. However, the employees of the organisation felt that they had not been given the chance to be empowered. They felt that the change was not open to debate and neither were they involved in the decision-making process. There are now feelings of disorganisation and that their own job satisfaction has substantially decreased.

The key findings in this report shows that while there is a strong linkage between CM and communication, culture, resistance, culture, change leadership and empowerment the SME organisation had robust linkage with communication however, it had a poor linkage with culture, change leadership and empowerment. The findings also showed that the SME employees and managers saw signs of people's resistance and conflict. While this can be a good for feedback and pointing out the fail points, the root causes of this resistance and conflict will need to be investigated further and changes implemented. Failure to do this could expose the CM plan to being an unsuccessful implementation.

This research has highlighted the need for further studies to be done in relation to the people dimension of CM encompassing a larger type of research with more SME involved, NZ-wide. There is a clear need for change leaders in these types of organisations to be made aware to value and include people when designing a change plan and implementation and would be invaluable for the gaps within the CM literature.



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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Participant handouts



## ***A Change Management with HR Implications*** **INFORMATION SHEET**

I am an adult student with Massey University studying for a Masters of Business Studies (MBS) and currently working on my 90 Credit Thesis Research Report.

The topic of my research is CM and how HR Management (HRM) need to be involved in organisational change; the problems that can occur if they are not included; and how to promote change successfully in an organisation. The study will also consider CM in relations to organisational culture, communications and conflict resolution. As part of my research, I will be conducting interviews with management and employees.

I believe that there is value in this for your organisation as the study findings will help to highlight any gaps in and challenges for procedures, benefiting both the organisation and your employees through improved relationships and communications within your business.

My research will involve both management and employees in semi-structured interviews. The interviews taking no longer than 30 minutes each and conducted at a time and place that is most convenient to the interviewees. They can be arranged face-to-face, telephone or via Skype depending on what is most convenient for you and your organisation.

The data that are collected will be stored and kept confidential, analysed and then reported. They will be kept in a locked cabinet and all computer files/transcripts will be password protected. Key findings and results will be reporting in a short document that will be available to all informants as well as in my academic report.

Please note that you are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study at any time;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;

- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any stage of the interview; and be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

Confidentiality is assured for the names of both your company and its employees, and the project has received Massey University Human Ethics Committee notification. Informants will also need to sign relevant permission and confidentiality documents held by the contact/manager of your organisation before engaging in interviews.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding this and if you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [heather.stephens.1@uni.massey.ac.nz](mailto:heather.stephens.1@uni.massey.ac.nz). You may also contact my supervisors, Professor Jane Parker ([j.parker@massey.ac.nz](mailto:j.parker@massey.ac.nz)) and Dr Frieder Lempp ([f.lempp@massey.ac.nz](mailto:f.lempp@massey.ac.nz)) for further information about this project.

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director, Research Ethics, telephone 06 356 9099 x 86015, email [humanethics@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@massey.ac.nz).

## ***A Change Management – HRM Implications***

### **PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL**

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

**Signature:**

**Date:**

.....

**Full Name - printed**

.....

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director, Research Ethics, telephone 06 356 9099 x 86015, email [humanethics@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@massey.ac.nz)".

## ***A Change Management with HR Implications***

### **AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS**

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview(s) conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

**Date:**

**Signature:**

.....

**Full Name - printed**

.....

The data that are collected will be stored and kept confidential, analysed and then reported. They will be kept in a locked cabinet and all computer files/transcripts will be password protected. Key findings and results will be reported in a short document that will be available to all informants as well as in my academic report.

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director, Research Ethics, telephone 06 356 9099 x 86015, email [humanethics@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@massey.ac.nz)".

# ***A Change Management with HR Implications***

## **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### Employee questions

Starting with basic questions around their role in the organisation, time involved, work background etc.

1. Have you experienced a CM or a change process in your job / organisation in the last 12 months?
2. How did it/they affect you?
3. How did it/they affect your view of the organisation?
4. How and by whom was/were the change(s) communicated to you? Was it communicated clearly to you?
5. Were you made aware of the need for change before it occurred?
6. Did you agree with the change(s)? (prompt: Why is this?)
7. Do you feel that the change(s) was credible and did it/they align with the business strategy?
8. Did you already see the need for change(s) before it/they was/were communicated to you?
9. Were you offered training or coaching for change implementation?
10. Did or do you feel ready for change(s)? Why is this?
11. Did or do you feel your organisation is ready for change(s)? Why?
12. Did you need reinforcement/help for the change(s)? If so, what sort of support did you receive?
13. Do you feel that your manager/supervisor is on board with the change(s)?
14. Do you feel that you are adaptable to change(s) and was/were there any conflict as a result? If so, did you feel the conflict was resolved?
15. Did anyone help you understand the change(s) and what it meant for you?
16. Did you feel the change(s) was successful – why/not? (prompt: for you as an individual: for the organisation)
17. Has your job satisfaction increased or decreased after the change(s)?
18. Was there any resistance to the change(s) that you were involved with or observed within the organisation?
19. Is there anything else you would like to add?

## ***A Change Management with HR Implications***

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

#### Manager questions

Starting with basic questions around their role in the organisation, time involved, work background etc.

1. Have you experienced change(s) in your organisation? When/Over what period? What was the nature of the change(s)?
2. Who drove the change(s)?
3. How was the change(s) managed? Do you have a model of how change(s) is applied to your organisation?
4. How did you communicate the change(s) process to your employees? Did you explain the rationale behind the change(s)?
5. How were they made aware of the need for change?
6. Is your organisation change ready?
7. Was there any conflict(s) regarding the change(s)? If so, what was it and how did you deal with the conflict?
8. Was there any resistance regarding the change(s)? If so, what was it and how did you deal with the resistance?
9. How are you planning to prevent your employees from reverting to their old habits?
10. Do you feel your employees have the knowledge and ability to change? If not, do you provide coaching or in house training?
11. Have you noticed any emotional reaction to change(s)?
12. Did you have to dispel any rumours in regards to your employees before you were ready to communicate it?
13. Was/were the change(s) obvious to the employees?
14. Was/were the change(s) open to debate before /during/after it/they took place?
15. Did you feel that you managed the employees well through the transition of the change(s)?
16. Do you ask for employee feedback as change(s) is being implemented?
17. Do you implement corrective action based on this feedback?
18. Is there anything else you would like to add?



# ***A Change Management with HR Implications***

## **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### Change Agent questions

Starting with basic questions around their role in the organisation, time involved, work background etc.

1. What change model(s) of CM do you use?
2. Why have you chosen this model(s)?
3. Is your organisation 'change ready'?
4. Is the company culture one of change orientated?
5. How do you communicate change(s)? Informal – formal? Prior to, during, after change.
6. What do you feel are the crucial steps in CM?
7. Do you have an effective communication plan ready?
  - Analysis of the audience
  - Key messages
  - Timing
  - Building awareness
  - Creating a desire to change
8. Do you have a CM team?
9. How do you engage and manage the change(s) with managers and or supervisors?
10. How do you support employees through the process(es) of change(s) when it impacts on their day-to-day work?
11. Who provides feedback on how the change is being implemented to you?
12. Who identifies what resistance to change(s) looks like and where it is coming from? Do you have a plan for dealing with resistance? From whom does resistance tend to come from?
13. If so, what do you do to cover come this?
14. How do you handle conflict around change(s)?
15. Who supports managers and/or supervisors through the change process(es)?
16. Do you provide training and development to the managers and/or supervisors for change(s) and how to handle resistance to change(s)?
17. Do you ask for employee feedback, as and after (a) change(s) is/are being implemented?
18. Do you implement adjustments or corrective action based on this feedback?
19. What after-action reviews do you undertake after the change process has finished?
20. What was the most challenging change process you have managed?
21. Is there anything else you would like to add?

# ***A Change Management with HR Implications***

## **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### Human Resource Manager questions

Starting with basic questions around their role in the organisation, time involved, work background etc.

1. Are you involved with CM processes? and if so, what are the lines of communication for change?
2. What is the culture of the organisation in terms of being change ready?
3. Do you feel that the organisation is 'change ready'?
4. Does the HR department communicate a clear vision for change(s)? If so, how? Who communicates this vision for change(s)?
5. How does the HR department implement and monitor change(s) and Organisational development?
6. How do the HR department shape employee's attitudes and the way they behave?
7. How does the HR department introduce and reinforce the change?
8. What have been the emotional reactions to change? Who/which groups have reacted in this/these way(s)?
9. How do you motivate and support people affected by the change(s)?
10. What techniques have you used to manage political obstacles to change?
11. How does the HR department manage conflict?
12. How do you analyse the impact of change(s)?
13. How do you deal with employees that resist change(s)?
14. Who supports managers and/or supervisors through the change process?
15. How do you support employees through the process of change(s) when it impacts their day-to-day work?
16. Does the HR department take on the roles of leader, facilitator and specialist of change, or do you support who does this?
17. When employing people do you look for people that act as catalysts for change and who can motivate other employees to participate in change initiatives?
18. Is there anything else you would like to add?

## Appendix B: Ethics application



Date: 04 May 2016

Dear Heather Stephens

Re: Ethics Notification - 4000016035 - **A change management - the involvement of HR**

Thank you for your notification which you have assessed as Low Risk.

Your project has been recorded in our system which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

If situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your ethical analysis, please go to <http://rims.massey.ac.nz> and register the changes in order that they be assessed as safe to proceed.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

**A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:**

*"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research."*

*If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director - Ethics, telephone 06 3569099 ext 86015, email [humanethics@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@massey.ac.nz).*

Please note, if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to complete the application form again, answering "yes" to the publication question to provide more information for one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely

Appendix C: List of participants from the Small-to-Medium Enterprise

Table of Participants - Small to Medium Organisation							
ID	Name	Date of Interview	Gender	Age		Employment Status	Interview Tool
				20-40	40-60		
P1	Kimberley	19th July	Female		✓	Employee	Telephone
P2	Faye	22nd July	Female		✓	Employee	Face-to-Face
P3	Sarah	3rd August	Female		✓	Employee	Face-to-Face
P4	David	3rd August	Male		✓	Change Agent	Face-to-Face
P5	Peter	8th September	Male		✓	Manager	Telephone
P6	Katie	28th July	Female	✓		Manager	Telephone
P7	Stephanie	18th August	Female	✓		Employee	Telephone
P8	Tia	22nd July	Female	✓		Employee	Telephone
P9	Kylie	22nd July	Female	✓		Employee	Face-to-Face
P10	Robyn	22nd July	Female		✓	Employee	Telephone

Appendix D: List of participants from larger organisations

<b>Table of Participants - Large Organisations</b>							
<b>ID</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Interview</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>		<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>Interview Tool</b>
				<b>20-40</b>	<b>40-60</b>		
P11	Samuel	29th June	Male		✓	Change Agent	Face-to-Face
P12	Olivia	8th July	Female	✓		Change Agent	Telephone
P13	Joshua	18th October	Male		✓	HR Manager	Telephone