Guiding Principles for Ethical Change Management

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Change is omnipresent in business. Business must effect positive change to benefit itself in its mission to provide benefit to society; society must accept positive change to garner the benefits of change and to make possible the changes business prompts. Intensifying the need to understand the role of ethics in effective change management is the failure rate of effective change. Utilizing Aristotelian virtues and Kantian analysis, this article addresses issues related to change management and fills a void in the literature by developing a proposal of change management principles that incorporates the use of these well-established business ethics principles.

Keywords: Ethical change management, Aristotelian virtues, Kantian analysis.

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Introduction

With the almost unbelievable changes surrounding us and with the rapidity with which they occur, change is omnipresent in our personal and business lives. The benefits reaped as a result of change are enormous, but change is difficult at best; effective change is very difficult. Change, however, is also required in the world we live in: it is inevitable. "(C)hange has become more regular and pervasive over the past few years. The pressures of change today in organizations are formidable. The competitive landscape is ever changing. Economic conditions, labour markets, demographics, consumer preferences and especially technological changes affect how business is conducted and managed... (Coetzee, Visagie, & Ukpere, 2014, p. 827)." Jones, Aguirre, and Calderone (2004) also address the need for change, as represented in the virtual destruction of the status quo by virtue of increased market transparency, labor mobility, global capital flows and instantaneous communications. Indeed, they assert that firms are forced into changes as a result of this new dynamic. "…(H)eightened global competition has concentrated management's collective mind on something that, in the past, it happily avoided: change (p. 1)."

Such on-going development of culture in the face of change is the subject of this paper: we believe that the firm must adapt its culture to achieve positive, effective change. Inherent in this culture and continuous adaptation to the environment, the concept of business ethics is key (Boatright, 1991; Cohen, 1993): successful change can only occur with ethical change management.

Organisations have to move beyond general statements of ethics…and actually evaluate the ethical values of leaders and their actions and determine whether they are compatible with the wider interests of the organization and its stakeholders. This requires them to understand ethics both in policy and practical terms, and to be clear about the ethical basis of different approaches to leadership and change (Burnes & By, 2012, p. 248).

Burnes and By (2012, p. 248) state that the "leadership and change literature has demonstrated the symbiotic relationship" between the concepts of leadership and change; further, they assert that leadership and change are "underpinned by ethical values which influence the outcomes of these two processes." Burnes (2009) also notes the cooperative and social systems that constitute organizations. As both cooperative and social systems, businesses and society acting independently and/or dependently are connected and can be symbiotically benefited by effective change management. It is logical and reasonable that, while leadership in change management must be ethical for the organization to be successful, so should the organization's actions be ethical to fit their needs with society's needs, resulting in a mutually beneficial relationship between the two. Business must effect positive change to benefit itself in its mission to provide benefit to society; society must accept positive change to garner the benefits of change and to make possible the changes business prompts.

Intensifying the need to understand the role of ethics in effective change management is the failure rate of effective change. Antonellis (2014) reports that organizational change is only effective 25 to 35% of the time, while Balogun and Hope Hailey (2004) report that 70% of all change initiatives fail. In citing an approximately 30% failure rate for effective change, Burnes and By (2012, p. 240) assert that "(I)f the main task of leaders is to bring about change, then this (failure rate) implies that only a minority of leaders are successful in their job, which is what research has shown and the relatively high turnover in senior executives demonstrates."

This article addresses issues related to change management with ethics as the underlying foundation. Further, we develop a code of ethics designed to highlight and utilize ethical principles in the development of culture and change. Topics covered include theoretical foundation, signs that change is necessary, issues relative to dealing with resistance to change, measures that must be taken to affect effective change, and characteristics of the organizational culture that allow change. Within these topics, the existence, different types and different influences of leaders, power structures and communications networks are also addressed. It has been noted that there is little research on ethics in leadership and all the attendant issues, such as successful change management (Burnes & By, 2012; Schaubroeck et al., 2012). Ultimately, this article fills a void in the literature by developing a proposal of change management principles that incorporates the use of basic, well-established principles of business ethics.

Theoretical Foundation for Ethical Change Management

Before crafting a code of ethics that combines the best aspects of both basic change management principle and business ethics, it is well to present the metaethical background of change management. Stakeholders should be defined and identified, and the nature of culture and organizational culture and the types of culture one might find within an organization should be examined to provide a common base of reference for the ethical scheme later developed. This section introduces those concepts as we will use them in this effort.

Stakeholders

The purpose of change management using the stakeholder theory of management is to allow the organization to positively contribute to society (Parmer, Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Purnell, & de Colle, 2010; Armenakis, Brown, & Mehta, 2011). To do this, the firm must recognize its responsibilities to society and individual stakeholders and groups of stakeholders (Bowen & Power, 1993). An examination of the economic, legal, moral and philanthropic obligations owed to these stakeholders is required. The precursor to a review of these obligations requires the identification of pertinent stakeholders. "It is often the stakeholders…who will be able to provide the most insight" into the business environment ripe for change, as well as the possible alternative changes available (Antonellis, 2014, p. 81-82).

Stakeholders are those people and organizations which may be directly or indirectly affected by an action, in a positive or negative way (Raiborn & Payne, 1990). "A stakeholder is any individual, group, organization or institution that can affect, as well as be affected by an individual's, group's, organization's or institution's policy or policies (Wood-Harper, Corder, Wood, & Watson, 1996, p. 71)." In the area of change management, the identification of and care for stakeholders is immensely important (Long & Spurlock, 2008) and requires incorporation of stakeholder welfare into the firm's operation. Two noteworthy groups are more highly affected than any others: the leadership team that envisions the change and the members of the workforce who must implement and live/work with the change. Depending on the size, scope and intensity of the change anticipated, the number of stakeholders can be large. We define stakeholders in the management of change to include, but not be limited to: all levels of management, all workers/followers of the firm, shareholders, current and future creditors, customers, suppliers and competitors, pertinent government regulatory agencies, pertinent professional associations, society as a whole and the environments, physical, cultural, economic and competitive, in which the firm does business.

Ethics

Very simply, ethics is the ability to judge between right and wrong; it is closely associated with the concept of morals and the study of morality. "Ethics studies morality. Morality is a term used to cover those practices and activities that are considered importantly right and wrong; the rules that govern those activities; and the values that are embedded, fostered, or pursued by those activities and practices (DeGeorge, 2010, p. 12)." Velasquez (1998), another noted business ethicist, states that "(B)usiness ethics is a study of moral standards and how these apply to the systems and organizations through which modern societies produce and distribute goods and services, and to the people who work within these organizations (p. 15)."

A closely associated question arises about the nature of ethics versus the nature of law. Law is promulgated and is generally derived from what society believes as a whole is right or wrong: once the ethics have been determined, if that principle is sufficiently broadly and consistently held, the ethical principle develops into legally enforceable principle, i.e., a law. In the discussion of ethical change and ethical leadership, it is vital to understand the difference between this spirit of the law versus the letter of the law. Raiborn and Payne (1990) cite that the law and ethics are not necessarily the same, though sometimes they do intersect: again, the law is the prevailing sense of the ethical right. However, the spirit of the law speaks more to the ethical principle, rather than the legally mandated behavior of a statute. Burnes (2009) recognizes this difference relative to change management: effective change leaders must "move from doing the minimum the law requires to doing the right thing (p. 360)." In an article linking increased return on investment to ethical rather than legal measures, Jaeger (2013, p. 34) pits ethics against mere compliance: "…it is far better to build a structure where employees feel the need to do the right thing out of the emphasis on shared values rather than on a series of rules to follow." Thus, our presentation of a code of ethical change management is based on doing more than the legal minimum: we seek to establish practices that not only abide by the spirit of the law, but also that embrace the spirit of the law and all the ethical principle that that spirit encompasses.

Culture and Organizational Culture

Millman (2007) writes in the vernacular that culture is "the way we do things around here (p. 44)." More formally, "(C)ulture is a matter of what people believe deep down, and no one can force or buy such belief (Millman, 2007, p. 45)." Corporate culture is "the whole collection of assumptions, practices and norms that people in an organization adopt over time (p. 44)." He notes that one element of corporate culture is that immediately affected stakeholders, like employees, must accept the cultural characteristics such that they become unconsciously held and communicated to new stakeholders. It is in this way and over time that culture and corporate culture change and develop. Further, corporate culture is shaped to a large extent by those who began the company, "who expect the people they hire to comply with their way of doing things. If the company survives, prospers and grows, those processes get the credit, and people continue to do them because that arrangement works (p. 46)." Shieh and Wang (2010) define corporate or organizational culture as the set of leading common values and behaviors within the firm, formed by long-term managerial influence; it is recognized by all within the firm. They further note that corporate culture combines with corporate economic development to form the basis of corporate power: the power to enable the firm to adapt to new environments. The point of strengthening corporate culture is that it allows enhanced competitiveness, which, in the current, rapidly changing and challenging business environment, is equitable to enhanced competitive advantage.

In Schaubroeck et al's (2012) examination of ethical leadership across organization levels, the idea of culture and ethical culture were central. "(C)ulture (is) a system of shared assumptions that can have a strong influence in directing followers' behaviors and beliefs. Organizational culture is represented as varying in layers, with the deepest layer being a broad system of assumptions and deeply held shared meanings, and the surface layer representing more tangible, observable factors that reflect those assumptions (p. 1054)."

The ethical orientation of the firm is represented in cultural elements such as firm artifacts, espoused beliefs and values and the assumptions giving rise to the beliefs and values. This 'ethical culture' is the mark of an organizational culture that would be open to effective to change (Schein, 2004; Schaubroeck et al., 2012). "By influencing these surface elements, leaders can help others interpret their unit and organization's culture in terms of how it relates to their roles and expectations." Schaubroeck et al. (2012) also offer the concept of ethical culture: "ethical culture is 'a subset of organizational culture, representing a multidimensional interplay among various 'formal' and 'informal' systems of behavioral control that are capable of promoting either ethical or unethical behavior (p. 1054)." Important for the current effort is their presentation of formal and informal ethical culture systems. Formal ethical culture systems include enforceable codes of ethics, authority structures, reward systems and ethics training, while informal systems include peer behaviors, use of ethical history and story and the imposition of ethical norms. As we propose to develop a code of ethics for the ethical development and implementation of change, the concept of formal ethical culture systems is integral to the effort.

Change

Since we propose a code of ethics for change management, it is well to define change, in both basic terms and in terms related to the true management of change. Change can "involve a simple policy change, a procedural change, a personnel shift, an organizational change, or anything subject to change from a prior state (Antonellis, 2014, p. 81)." According to Moran and Brightman (2001), change management is "the process of continually renewing an organization's direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customer (p. 111)."

Litch (2005) offers the types of change that might occur in the workplace. She cites Evans and Schaefer (2001): "(c)hanging is the continuous process of an organization attempting to align itself with shifts in its marketplace and with the realities of its external financial, physical, social, political, and technological environment (p. 21)." She notes that this is what organizations actually do, rather than something that is done to them: organizations are organic, just as those who cause the organization to exist and act are organic, growing and changing in accord with and in response to the ever-changing physical and mental environment in which it and they operate. Change can be represented in employee motivation and morale, corresponding leadership styles, communications, timing, and perceptions of the necessity to change among those affected by the change. Jin, Drozdenko, and DeLoughy (2013) state that it is the organic firm that adopts a "humanistic, democratic, enabling, open and trusting organizational environment, rather than a mechanistic firm, which is characterized by authoritarianism, control, enclosure and coercive bureaucracy (p. 17)." The former, open to change and with an environment conducive to participative empowerment, is more representative of the ethical firm open to embracing organizational change. It is within that organizational context that our code of ethical change management is most likely to be well-received and effective.

Long and Spurlock (2008) assert that the nature of the change is also a factor in effective change management. "Change is the planned or unplanned response of an organization to some internal or external pressure (Long & Spurlock, 2008, p. 30)." They identify developmental, transitional and transformational changes. Developmental changes are those that merely refine existing managerial structures and styles, not prompting significant upheaval. Transitional and transformational change, however, involve greater levels of change and come with greater levels of uncertainty. Transitional change "involves the controlled introduction of new processes and technology. Transformational change is the emergence of an unknown from an old state (p. 30)." In each of these kinds of changes, there is a new-ness, a higher level of uncertainty and risk; these kinds of changes, therefore, require more careful management. Transformational change in particular "requires a 'leap of faith' and occurs when dramatic change is needed within the organization (p. 30)." Management must therefore develop the trust among their followers that will allow the changes to be developed and implemented: the trust comes in when convincing workers that the changes are needed and will ultimately be of benefit to the firm and, finally, to the stakeholders, including employees designing and implementing the changes.

As previously noted, the success rate of change is low (25-35%). By (2005) suggests a reason for this failure. "It may be suggested that this poor success rate indicates a fundamental lack of a valid framework of how to implement and manage organizational change as what is currently available to academics and practitioners is a wide range of contradictory and confusing theories and approaches (p. 370)." We add to that reason the element of ethics: those attempting to affect change may also lack a valid foundation in business. "Instead of attempting to change behavior by imposition and coercion, what is required is an approach to change which promotes ethical behavior and allows those concerned to change of their own free will (Burnes, 2009, p. 361)."

Leadership: the Change Leader

There are many definitions of leadership; leadership theory abounds, with as many questions about what leadership really is still remaining. A leader has several attributes that set him apart from a manager: one can be a good leader, but not necessarily a good manager or vice versa. Tucker and Russell (2004) and Ackoff (1999) offer the following definitions. Management is the accomplishment of the task as specified by the actor's superior, but in the manner specified by the manager; in this instance, there is a direct relationship between the person who wants the task done and the person actually doing the task. Leadership is a much more comprehensive concept, including in its realm the leader's ability to guide and encourage. Further, leadership is also marked by the ability of the leader to engage his followers by having them accomplish tasks the leader has set, but completing those tasks according to their own method(s) they have approved. These authors go on to define the transformational leader "as one who formulates an inspiring vision, facilitates the vision, encourages short-term sacrifices, and makes pursuing the vision a fulfilling venture (Tucker & Russell, 2004, p.104)."

Tucker and Russell (2004) further describe themes of transformational leadership, as well as characteristics of such leadership. Two themes were identified as being inherent to transformational leadership: transformational leadership questions assumptions and encourages creative thinking and it values subordinates. So, problem-solving and intellectual creativity are valued, as is the development of the whole worker into a leader in his own right. To accomplish these ends, the transformational leader must be able to generate a bond between himself and his subordinates through his own development as a transformational leader. Further, the transformational leader must have "self-confidence, inner integrity, honesty, and personal values (p. 104)." Tucker and Russell continue with the thought that the transformational leader must not only use his rational faculties, but also his empathic faculties to lead transformation. In this way, the leader can further engage his followers: he appeals to their minds and their hearts in leading them through positive change. "Such leaders attract internally motivated people, inspire them with a mission, and initiate new ways of thinking… The result is new influence on the culture of the organization (p. 105)."

As this article promotes ethical change management, the role of the leader as ethics proponent is clear. "(I)t is up to the leader…to determine what political and ethical impact the proposed change may have on the organization… (Antonellis, 2014, p. 82)." Further, "(t)he goal should be to bring about change that is effective and ethical; (the leader) must consider the politics, culture, and ethics as a system and know that he cannot totally control the system but can influence it by being an active participant (p. 87)."

Change Ready Cultures

Long and Spurlock (2008) also cite authority as having impact on acceptance of change: decisions can be made autocratically or through consultation with stakeholders or as a group. Additionally, they listed a number of variables within the organization's culture that would dictate which of these models to use in effecting change, including amounts of information possessed by stakeholders, the likelihood of acceptance of change, the levels of cooperation, disagreement and creativity to be expected, and the level of change acceptance to be achieved with or without participation. Long and Spurlock (2008) identify "change ready" cultures.

These cultures rest on the foundation of the vision of the leaders and the willingness of stakeholders to follow. They cite the issue of trust as of critical importance in the success of the change: the more trust the leader has, the more likely the changes will be designed and implemented successfully. "The stronger the level of change required, the more apparent the inherent trust (or distrust) of the employees for top management becomes (p. 30)."

Prokesch (2009) lists a set of attributes of innovative organizations: the characteristics of the culture that make it more amenable to change. Challenge/involvement is the trait that allows team members to feel a commitment to and to be challenged by their work, in which they take pride. Freedom and trust or openness represent the empowerment that team members feel when they know they are free to try something different, while trust allows them to feel safe in taking those risks, safe in sharing ideas and working with others. The attribute of idea time is connected to the concept of idea support: once the idea has been generated, it is important to foster an environment that supports the exploration and implementation of the idea. Idea time and playfulness/humor also seem to be closely connected. What he calls idea time is the time allotted to team members to think about and develop new ideas; the sense of humor is conducive to the workplace being a fun place to work, with easy going colleagues with whom one can relax. Conflict is his idea that team members may experience personal tension and interpersonal warfare: with change comes resistance and associated conflict. Two final attributes are risk taking and debate, both potentially related to conflict. Risk taking involves decision choice and implementation in uncertain conditions, a hallmark of change, while debate refers to the exploration of alternatives that could be chosen. These attributes of an innovative organization are such that allow a culture to be more amenable to change and more accepting of change when it happens.

Tucker and Russell (2004) raise the issue of knowing when it is time for organizational change. Citing Dess, Picken, and Lyon (1998), they assert that "(L)eaders must not only question the status quo of their organizations, but they must also engage in a process that yields transformational change (p. 105)." Long and Spurlock (2008) also note that there are indicators as to when it is time to change. They suggest that change is spurred by a response to a crisis situation, a more reactive stance, or, in a more proactive approach, the leaders precipitate change because they have anticipated changes in their environments in the future. In either of these situations ripe for change, "(T)iming is essential in the introduction and management of change. Supporting structures must be in place and communications plans must be well-developed prior to the adoption of change (p. 30)."

Obstacles to Change

We know that successful change is the exception, not the rule. Much research has been done to identify reasons for change management failure. These pressures threatening ethical, effective change management are summarized in Figure 1.

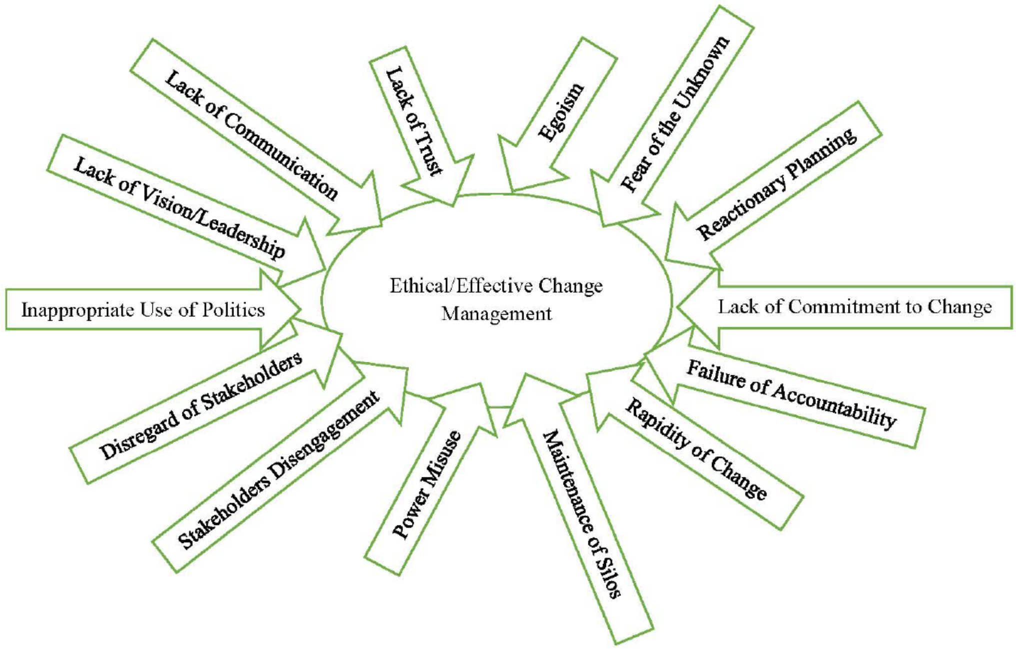

Figure 1. Pressures Threatening Ethical/Effective Change Management

Long (2014) lists the bunker mentality as a symptom of resistance to change. "The sense that 'this too shall pass' is pervasive and understandable given [the political process] (p. 19)." Zanko, Badham, Couchman, and Schubert (2008) also note silos "have acted to resist and restrict many 'best practice' cross-functional innovations such as total quality management, business process re-engineering, teamworking and concurrent engineering (p. 565)." Boscherini, Chiaroni, Chiesa, and Frattine (2010) identify inertia to change as an obstacle to change. Further, they cite the idea of "unfreezing" of the status quo as being essential in change management. Gebert, Piske, Baga, Lanwehr, & Kearney (2006) identified stress as a problem in implementing change. Viewing change as a threatening environment, they note that people then attempt to cope with the stress. This coping mechanism is itself, in a way, part of the problem of resistance to change: first, those threatened must assess the threat (i.e., the change) and then determine how to respond. These cognitive processes are time and energy intensive, thereby detracting time and energy from an effective change process. According to Armenakis et al. (2011), some people's personal characteristics may not be as conducive to change as others, i.e., there may be issues with locus of control or core self-evaluation. Further, the differences could be on a more social plane: engineers may be more amenable to change than non-engineers, for example, or union members may be more comfortable with change than less highly protected non-union workers.

Long and Spurlock (2008) also address the issue of managing resistance to change. They cite the deviation from long-standing organizational traditions (i.e., "we've always done it this way"), as well as the fear of corresponding disruption that accompanies change associated with the introduction of new technology or new management strategies, including possible new staffing patterns. "(T)here is a level of resistance due to the move outside the organizational norms and comfort zones (p. 31)." Long and Spurlock (2008) identify a number of factors that increase resistance to change: lack of trust, belief that change is not necessary or feasible, economic threat, potential expense, fear of personal failure, loss of personal status or power, values and ideals are threatened, and interference is resented.

Again, they suggest that trust and communication are critically important in dealing with these factors. The fullness of the communication and the level of participation among followers in designing and implementing change can be of tremendous influence: the better the communication and the more participation that is allowed/encouraged breeds trust in the process and in the changes themselves.

Change Management Guidelines

Tanasoaica (2008) offers eight phases to sustain change once the inertia associated with change has been overcome:

- Define the need and necessity for making improvements
- Create and communicate a unifying purpose
- Identify formal and informal work alliances and ensure their participation
- Create a plan for action
- Empower people to take action
- Create opportunities for small, meaningful accomplishments
- Expand the accomplishments and complete the unfinished change activities
- Reinforce the new approach

She also offers five steps designed to the change process. Initially, the change should be assessed and the changes approved and scheduled. Her third suggestion is that the change implementation be well-coordinated. Fourth, the change should actually occur: it should be prepared, disseminated and implemented. Finally, the changes should be reviewed and closed at the appropriate time. "Successful programs cross functional boundaries-people, processes, technology and physical infrastructure. Technology is an important consideration, but so are the people who operate the new system, the business process it supports and the work locations (p. 623)." Tanasoaica (2008) also emphasizes the importance of the employee: not only should they be communicated with appropriately, but also given the opportunity to provide their own ideas as to the change and how it should proceed.

Boscherini et al. (2010), also basing their thoughts in part on Lewin's work (1947), note that change is a process: "a sequence of interconnected phases or stages, which allows for 'encapsulating the essentials of the richness of processes in a simpler account of stepwise development or typical activities (p. 1070)." The stages of a pilot project are presented in a way that allows for transference from the changes merely associated with a pilot project to a general model of change management. They suggest that there are three steps a project goes through that are commensurate with organizational/culture change: conception of what needs to be changed and how, realization of the changes and a transfer of the changes into the organization as a whole. In the first two stages, what are called the ideation and realization stages, again we see that what needs to be changed should be identified, through environmental scans and an honest organizational assessment with regards to what needs to be done and that the changes should be folded into the firm's ongoing operations. The third stage, the transfer stage, is the point at which the entire organization feels the effect of the changes as they are subsumed into the everyday operations of the firm. This is a good progression in that an honest assessment of what is wrong must be the precursor to positive change and in that change should be incremental. This incremental introduction of significant change has the merit of potentially reducing the resistance to the change and making it more likely that the change will be accepted and implemented properly throughout the entire organization.

Building on Lewin's work (1947), Armenakis et al. (2011) tailor the three phase model of unfreezing, moving and freezing into two models: the readiness model and the adoption and institutionalization model of organizational change. The readiness model encompasses a wide array of ideas, including that the change leader must "sell" the change to the recipients. They identify global (upper level management) and local (lower level management/employees) change agents, as well as horizontal agents, also identified as opinion leaders. The latter type of change agents, the horizontal change agents, are characterized by their credibility: their honesty, competence, inspiration and vision. The credibility of the change agent is vitally important as a source of trusted communications, communications which can do much to overcome resistance to change. The horizontal change agent can influence employee beliefs: why the change is needed (discrepancy), why the change is right for the organization (appropriateness), why change recipients should have confidence in their knowledge, skills and abilities to successfully implement the change. Two other beliefs that can be influenced include the concept of principal support and valence. Principal support is the message that the change agents are themselves experiencing the change and all that goes with it, including senses of anxiety, doubt, perhaps hope and the attempt to discern goal achievement. Valence is the notion that change recipients should feel some connection to the change, i.e., how the change will affect them and whether the affect will be positive in nature or not.

In order to more effectively precipitate change, Armenakis et al. (2011) suggest that the message is of vital importance, not just the content of the message, i.e., what the change is or why it is needful, but the delivery and reception of the message, as well. They list numerous facets of a message that can impact its successful dissemination and acceptance. Persuasive communication is suggested: this includes multiple venues or paths down which the message can travel, such as scripted live speeches to groups, informal discussion among various stakeholders and written, formal communications. Active participation is the element of communication which allows the information recipient to be involved through self-discovery (vicarious learning, enactive mastery or participative problem-solving/decision-making). Such participation allows for the 'buy-in' noted by many authors as important for the change success: empower the employees in the success of the changes to give them a positive sense of ownership in the changes. The authors also suggest, relative to communications, that external information be well-managed: what the change recipients see in newspaper and on the Internet can have an impact on how they view the change, i.e., do they know about the changes, did management alert them to changes before it alerted others not immediately or personally connected with the changes, etc. Finally, in the readiness model, assessment was defined as "a measure (of the beliefs) of how ready the change recipients are to begin the implementation process (p. 301)." Once this assessment has been made, to determine how ready the organization is to receive the changes, the institutionalization model can be incorporated into change management.

The institutionalization model proposed by Armenakis et al. (2011) includes a number of the same ideas as the readiness model, namely the elements for the change agents and recipients and the message. The difference is in the issue of whether the changes will 'stick:' "(W)hereas the readiness strategies are intended to get change recipients to embrace the idea of the change, the seven institutionalization strategies are intended to reinforce [their emphasis] each belief comprising the change message transmitted in the readiness program during the implementation process (p. 311)." Their ideal of commitment, a key component of reinforcement, encapsulates the ideals of compliance to commitment (be rewarded for adoption of change or punished for failure to do so), identification of commitment (intensity and personal belief in change) and internalization of commitment (organizational values are internalized within the change recipient). The seven strategies of the institutionalization model are the use of persuasive communication and symbolism, the incorporation of diffusion practices, a formalization of activities associated with the changes, active participation, the management of internal and external information and the assessment piece similar to that found in the readiness model. Some of these strategies are similar to those described in the readiness model; the idea of diffusion practices, however, needs a bit of explanation. Diffusion practices include mechanisms by which the changes are actually made: organized sessions to discuss the changes, how to implement the changes, what effect the changes are hoped to have, etc. should be held.

In a presentation concerning corporate performance management (CPM) systems, Lawson, Hatch, and Desroches (2013) offered six elements necessary for effective change. They first suggest that the firm's mission and vision should be clear: "contributors (should) understand how their actions support or detract from them (p. 46)." The development of goals for both or either individual and organizational units can aid in those individual's and/or unit's alignment with the overall goals of the firm and aid in the achievement of those goals: it is easier to work towards a known goal than to work in a mission or vision vacuum. A second requirement to development and implementation of effective and ethical change is the requirement that among all stakeholders there is transparency and accountability. "This entails having full, accurate, and timely disclosure of information within each area and throughout the company. Accompanying this is the need for managers to report, explain, and be answerable for the consequences of their actions (p. 47)." This reflects the need to those involved in the proposed changes to be able to trust those in leadership positions and to know that their own as well as their leaders' actions will in fact be noted: they will be responsible for their successes and failures.

The third element Lawson et al. offer is that there are mechanisms for the management function of control. Information should be gathered and reviewed and actually used to improve performance. The authors assert that learning organizations are those that review pertinent information and act upon it appropriately in decision making. Conflict resolution is also an integral element of effective, ethical change management. This requires "the identification of issues, consideration of all factors involved, and the resolution of the conflict on a fair and reasonable basis (p. 48)." Not only do principles of good management abide here, but also basic principle of ethics: fairness and justice in the resolution of differences is an inherent process of good management by any definition.

The final two elements of an effective change management process are the establishment of trust in the data used to develop and implement the change, as well as the availability and currency of the information. Noting cynically that there may not be just one "truth" in the firm, the authors suggest that multiple, competing sources of data and the "lack of a single, consistent set of data can lead people to distrust it (p. 48)." The issue with a lack of trust, particularly in information, is that poor information leads to poor decisions being made, hardly a positive outcome for change management. Finally, the availability and currency of information was cited as being important: this was seen as "the ability to easily retrieve up-to-date information (p. 49)" when needed. Having good information in a timely fashion is key from a change management prospective.

Many of the elements offered here of successful plans for change management are similar across the research. They are also remarkably apt in terms of ethical application. Table 1 is a summary of the change management processes as described above. In our development of a code of ethical change management, we will use the ideals presented to tie change management processes to ethical principles.

Table 1. Change Management Guidelines (Tanasoaica, 2008; Boscherini et al., 2010; Armenakis et al., 2011; Lawson et al., 2013)

Principle	**Tanasoaica (2008)**	**Boscherini *et al.*(2010)**	**Armenakis *et al.*(2011)**	**Lawson *et al.* (2013)**
Planning	Design of plan	Conceptualization of what needs to change and how	Planning	Alignment with mission
Honest, credible, good faith trust	Communication of unifying purpose		Trust and Credibility	Common trust in data
Constant communication, transparency and accountability	Reinforcement of changes		Communication, symbolism, formalization	Transparency and accountability
Unification of workforce	Identification of work alliances		Support and camaraderie	
Empowerment, democratic participation	Empowerment and participation		Empowerment and active participation	Conflict resolution
Change implementation	Creation of opportunities for discreet change success, as well as expansion of changes	Change assimilation opportunities Implementation of changes	Incorporation of diffusion practices	Availability of information
Review, revision of change success	Necessity for change defined	Honest organizational assessment	Assessment	Action on insights

The Ethical Model

Jin, Drozdenko, and DeLoughy (2013) offer that mindset, or "persisting patterns of human value and action judgments," is pertinent to ethical change management (p. 15). "Organizations which were more socially responsible were also more ethical and more morally reflective (p. 16)." In writing about the financial markets crisis of 2008, those authors develop the theme that a fresh mindset is required, mandating ethical, independent thought that is greater than mere legal, economic or business models. Such a mindset should be grounded in "virtues, respect for human dignity, and the common good. This basic premise is consistent with a strong bent of social responsibility commitment (p. 16)." We offer our chosen "mindset" of ethics, embodied in a code of ethics that is commensurate with both the dictates of effective change management and good business ethics. To develop our code, we use two deontological analyses: the Aristotelian virtues and the Kantian analysis are most conducive to this effort, particularly in light of Jin et al.'s statement that virtue, respect and the common good are key elements to an ethical, effective change management strategy. We have reviewed the concept of ethics: the ability to judge between right and wrong. We now turn to the practical application of ethics; it can be applied as to a person's characteristics or to his actions. The virtues are relative to a person's, in this case a leader's, actions, while the Kantian analysis is particularly apt to the actions of leaders in change management initiatives.

Virtues are traits that are morally desirable (Barnes & Smith, 1984; Bragues, 2006). "A moral virtue is an acquired disposition that is valued as part of the character of a morally good human being and that is exhibited in the person's habitual behavior." Virtues are acquired in a similar way to the acquisition of culture in that virtues grow and develop within that person, in a reasoned and sought-out way. The moral virtues envisioned by Aristotle are the median ground of a continuum of extreme behaviors. Virtues that are particularly pertinent to change management include courage, self-control, generosity, magnificence, magnanimity, justice, and sociability.

Courage is the ability to regulate fear. Change takes a good deal of courage: this virtue, then, for both change leaders and followers, requires the strength of character to accept that change is necessary and the courage to proceed with development and implementation of change. Self-control reflects attitudes towards pleasure and self-gratification: the change leader should not 'seize power' for personal gain. The change leader should limit his ego and restrict the use of his power to appropriate venues and efforts. Commensurately, stakeholders involved in the change should control their reactions to change: they should exercise temperance in their measured responses. Generosity is related to the attainment of wealth. This too is pertinent to ethical change management: all stakeholders seek the best value for their efforts, in the provision of goods or services, in the use of goods and services or in the existence of goods and services in society; effective change management equates to better value.

Closely related to the idea of generosity is the concept of magnificence, the expenditure of large sums in the right way for a good reason. This reflects the idea that the firm should use its assets appropriately, usefully in effecting change management. In this way, not only the firm benefits from increased efficiency, for example, but so does society as a whole. Another virtue closely related to both magnificence and generosity is magnanimity: the idea that one should have value and respect for great honors, in this case, the receipt of trust from stakeholders involved in development and implementation of the changes envisioned.

Sociability and justice are the final two virtues we find relevant to the discussion of ethical change management. Sociability is the ideal that one should act pleasantly and professionally with others. Regardless of venue or circumstance, this virtue should be present in all interactions in person, in business, among all stakeholders. We find that this virtue could be especially important in change management given the obstacles to change that management must overcome, obstacles like fear of the unknown, lack of communication, lack of trust, inappropriate use of politics/power, etc. Lastly, justice is a virtue reflecting the allocation of goods exactly as they are deserved. "Aristotle wants people to value things at their real worth in their exchanges, but he recognizes the cultivation of proper tastes is the task of moral education (Bragues, 2006, p. 350)." Thus, one should consider in change management each stakeholder, how they are affected by the potential change and how to ameliorate negative consequences and heighten positive circumstances. It is our belief that the adoption of these virtues can counteract, if not obviate most, if not all, of the reasons for resistance to change. If one acts according to these virtues, one will, as a matter of course, act in an ethical, morally correct way – this is no less true for effective change management and leadership.

The use of virtues does require self-discipline of the stakeholders, actors and action recipients. The Kantian analysis also requires a type of self-discipline among actors. The Kantian analysis (Kant, 1964) can be simplified into three questions, which are deemed Kant's Categorical Imperatives. The Kantian analysis can be even further reduced to the simple statement that one should do unto others as they would have others do unto them. The three questions, the Categorical Imperatives, are the first order moral principles. Thus, we are categorically commanded to follow the moral law. The answers to these questions provide second order moral principles.

The decision maker must be in a rational state in order to appropriately utilize this moral decision-making model. All three moral rules prompted by the questions are absolutely required to be followed; the answers to the questions must all be positive for a moral duty to exist. First, the action should be universally consistent: it must be an action that one would accept being done to oneself and it must be an action that one would accept being done to anyone/everyone else, from a beloved family member to a sworn enemy. Second, the action must respect individuals as inherently valuable in and of themselves, apart from any benefit that they might provide the actor. Third, the action must acknowledge and respect the autonomy of all rational beings, their freedom of choice. If the answers to any one of the questions are negative, there is a moral obligation not to engage in the action. Like the Aristotelian virtues, the Kantian analysis represents a deontological approach to ethical decision making, that is, the approach that an action is right or wrong inherently, without regard to the consequences of the action.

A brief application of Kant to change management principles indicates that this approach to business ethics is an appropriate one. For example, good change management requires effective communication and the building of trust among stakeholders. If one were asked whether one would like to be effectively communicated with and whether one would accept others being effectively communicated with, the principle of communication meets Kant's first question positively. With regard to treatment of people as ends in and of themselves, the change management principle of communication is inherently important: stakeholders who will be affected by potential changes should be told so that they can arrange their actions in suitable response. Finally, ethical change management principles are commensurate with the idea of respecting people's freedom of choice: all stakeholders are free to work within the system that is changing or they are free to exit that system and find one that suits their skills, abilities and knowledge best.

Table 2 represents the streamlining of the ethical values found in the Aristotelian and Kantian analysis. We further compare those values to main principles of effective change management offered in Table 3. From these two tables, we construct a set of practices that reflect ethical change management, presented in Table 4.

Table 2. Ethical Principles Refined (Adapted from Payne, Lundberg, & Zingoni, 2014)

Concepts	**Aristotelian Virtues (Barnes & Smith, 1984; Bragues, 2006)**	**Kant (1964)**
Consistency	Self-control	Universally consistent actions
Respect individuals	Generosity	Respect individuals as inherently valuable
Autonomy for all	Sociability	Respect autonomy of all rational beings
Integrity	Courage	
Justice	Justice	
Utility	Magnificence	
Competence	Magnanimity	

Table 3. Ethical Principles Match Change Management Principles

Ethical Principle	**Change Management Principle**
Utility, competence	Planning
Consistency, respect, autonomy, integrity	Honest, credible, good faith trust
Consistency, respect, integrity, justice	Constant communication, transparency and accountability
Respect, justice, utility, competence	Unification of workforce
Respect, justice, utility, competence	Empowerment, democratic participation
Consistency, respect, autonomy, utility,	Change implementation

competence	
Consistency, integrity, utility, competence	Review, revision of change success

Table 4. Code of Ethical Change Management

Ethical Principle	**Change Management Principle**	**Ethical Practice**
Utility, competence	Planning	Understand and communicate to all stakeholders the reason for and goal of the proposed change; Align change with mission/vision of organization; Implement inclusive planning allowing an opportunity for stakeholders to participate if they so desire.
Consistency, respect, autonomy, integrity	Honest, credible, good faith, trust	Consider the short and long-term impact on all stakeholders; Commit to responding to questions and concerns regarding the proposed change with a mandate of providing consistent and truthful responses across all inquiries.
Consistency, respect, integrity, justice	Constant communication, transparency and accountability	Stakeholders should be informed throughout the process and channels for two-way flow of communication be provided and respected.
Respect, justice, utility, competence	Unification of workforce	Members of the workforce at all levels and across all departments should be involved in the process of change; Identify and eliminate silos and the "us versus them" mentality among discreet business units within the organization.
Respect, justice, utility, competence	Empowerment, democratic participation	The members mentioned above should have a meaningful role and voice in the process of change.
Consistency, respect, autonomy, utility, competence	Change implementation	As the change moves from the planning to implementation stage, the workforce should be informed, incentivized and motivated to participate.
Consistency, integrity, utility, competence	Review, revision of change success	Once implemented, the success/failure of the change should be assessed by all stakeholders with a goal towards continuous improvement.

Change managers are encouraged to adhere to these practices outlined in Table 4 to achieve the desirable results. During the process of change, managers must understand and communicate to all stakeholders the reason for and goal of the proposed change. In 2008, Grupo Santander acquired a number of established UK financial institutions and set about communicating to all stakeholders its reasons for doing so and the "value of shedding its old ways" (Arnold, 2015). Stakeholder buy-in was critical to this successful acquisition. In addition, change must align with the mission and vision of the organization. Texas Children's Hospital implemented an electronic medical records system as it aligned with its mission of continuous improvement of patient care and safety (Elam & Christensen, 2009). Further, the hospital implemented inclusive planning by forming a change management team and on-the-ground peer mentors.

Managers must consider the short and long-term impact on all stakeholders and should commit to responding truthfully and candidly to questions and concerns regarding the proposed change. Stakeholders should be informed throughout the process, and channels for two-way flow of communication should be provided and respected. Shell Oil implemented major change in 2004 as a result of the oil reserve crisis. The project, named Shell Downstream-One, included briefing all impacted stakeholders and listening to concerns. This allowed Shell to make adjustments early in the process, thus ensuring a successful implementation (Arnold, 2015). This also provided stakeholders with a meaningful role in the change and gave them a true voice in the process.

In addition to involving members of the workforce at all levels and across all departments in the process, management must identify and eliminate silos and the "us versus them" mentality in the organization. This may require management to engage in more targeted buy-in efforts amongst groups resisting change. A clear explanation of the resulting greater good and benefits for all should help overcome these silos.

The workforce should not only be involved in planning, but also in implementation. Motivating employees to participate in the change and incentivizing them to do so is critical. Punitive approaches in change management are cancerous, and it, therefore, is critical for managers to understand what the workforce values and leverage this value system (i.e., Chowdhury, 2007; Keller & Szilagyi, 1976; Locke, Latham, & Erez, 1988; Whitney, 2010). Lastly, once change is implemented, all stakeholders will be involved in the assessment of change and work towards continuous improvement.

Limitations and Future Research

This paper is limited in several ways which also form the opportunities to engage in continued research on this issue of the ethics of change management. One limitation is the qualitative focus of our assertions that good ethics equals good business equals good change management. The next step in addressing this limitation is to develop an instrument that could be used to empirically support our proposal. Thus, we can ask whether leaders and/or followers use good business ethics principles in effecting change management and whether such incorporation of good business ethics principles in change management actually make a positive difference in the management of the change.

Further, industry specific applications of our proposed scheme of ethical change management principles are encouraged and should prove fruitful for future researchers. For instance, higher education is undergoing tremendous change at this time in history and is thus ripe for the application of effective and ethical change management principle. A detailed case analysis such as this could provide support for our proposed code and be beneficial to academics and practitioners. Other industries such as healthcare and information technology are good targets for this form of investigation, too.

Finally, it is important to note that this proposed approach is only suitable for organizations that have developed a culture that values democratic and participative work environments. Given the heavy reliance on workforce and stakeholder participation, feedback and buy-in, organizations relying on autocratic leadership and unwilling to change would be not be open to this approach to ethical change.

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