# A new framework for managing change across cultures

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**ABSTRACT**  *A new paradigm for the management of change is proposed. Most existing frameworks tend to want to discard the current situation in favour of a new corporate culture, thus discarding the best of what already exists. The authors argue that changing an organisation's culture is a contradiction in terms. This is because cultures act to preserve themselves and to protect their own living existence. So rather than seeing change as a 'thing' opposing continuity, it is considered as a difference. The authors believe organisations seek change to preserve the company, profitability, market share and core competence. The reason for changing certain aspects is to avoid changing in other respects. In short, organisations must reconcile change with continuity in order to preserve an evolving identity. The new methodology is centred on diagnosing the tensions between the current and ideal corporate culture. These tensions manifest themselves as a series of dilemmas. The new approach for the management of change is to reconcile these dilemmas. Compromise alone is insufficient. The authors demonstrate with examples and offer a new conceptual framework on how seemingly opposing values deriving from the tensions arising from change imperatives can be integrated to achieve a 'win-win' outcome.*

## INTRODUCTION

Many researchers have suggested models for change which seek to embrace culture change within organisations (corporate culture), while others have alluded to issues of change across (national) cultural boundaries. Most models, however, can be criticised for two principal and recurring reasons: (i) they tend to underestimate the difficulty involved in achieving or sustaining the change, and (ii) they tend to want to discard the current situation in favour of a new future, thus throwing out the best of what already exists.

After an extended period of research over many years and developing dilemma theory with Hampden–Turner (1992), the authors have come to a different view based on extensive evidence collected

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across the world from a large number of diverse organisations. The authors believe that changing an organisation's culture is a contradiction in terms. This is because cultures act to preserve themselves and to protect their own living existence. So rather than seeing change as a 'thing' opposing continuity, the authors see it as a difference. The authors believe organisations seek change to preserve the company, profitability, market share and core competence. The reason for changing certain aspects is to avoid changing in other respects. In short, organisations must reconcile change with continuity in order to preserve an evolving identity.

Thus the authors offer a new approach to change. The overall core framework requires an assessment of the differences between the current corporate culture and some envisaged 'ideal' future corporate culture. But established models for change then develop a change strategy based on transforming the organisation from the current to an ideal culture. In contrast, this approach considers the contrast between these extremes. All organisations need stability and change, tradition and innovation, public and private interest, planning and *laissez-faire*, order and freedom, growth and decay. These are the opposites that leaders wrestle with and put tensions into their world, sharpen their sensitivities and increase their self-awareness. The problem of changing from the 'current' to the 'ideal' situation cannot be 'solved' in the sense of being eliminated but can be wisely transcended. Successful leaders get surges of energy from the fusing of these opposites.

Thus these differences that generate tensions are the source of a series of dilemmas. Managing change in this methodology is therefore about reconciling these dilemmas. In this way, the limitations of current change models can be overcome because this

methodology is neither simply throwing away the past nor seeking to change a well-embedded, resistant, self-preserving corporate culture.

## CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

As Senge (2001) noted, the word 'change' means several, often contradictory, things. Sometimes it refers to the external world of technology, customers, competitors and such like. Sometimes it refers to internal changes such as practices, styles and strategies. The authors will refer to change as the changes in shared assumptions, values and practices of organisational actors as they are stimulated by changes in the environment. Although executives often intervene because the pace of internal change is not keeping up with that of the external world, it will not be assumed that all change needs to be led from the top down. The authors strongly believe that change processes where leaders are not involved are like up-hill skiing: it is possible, but one needs to be a very good athlete. Because the focus is on cultural change, the role of the leader is crucial because he or she is symbolising the culture and is the main creator of culture. The authors believe, like Peter Senge, however, that cultural change is not simply the responsibility of the 'Hero–CEO'. It is striking how the Anglo–Saxon model of change has dominated the world of change management. It is based too often on a task–oriented culture and the idea that traditions need to be forgotten as soon as possible. What is the alternative? The approach needs to be amended from a 'what' and a 'why' process into a 'through' process which takes the existing culture to be reconciled with the new culture.

## A NEW UNIFIED MODEL FOR MANAGING CHANGE AS A 'THROUGH' PROCESS

Conventional approaches frame the change problem in terms of 'what', 'why' and/or 'how'. To focus solely on 'why' may not translate effectively to 'what' and/or 'how'. 'How' questions place the effort on means where diagnosis is assumed or not even undertaken at all and therefore the ends sought are not considered. To focus on ends requires the posing of 'what' questions. What is one trying to accomplish? What needs to be changed? What are the critical success factors? What measure of performance is one trying to achieve? Ends and means are relative, however, and whether something is an end or a means can only be considered in relation to something else. Thus often, the 'true' ends of a change effort may be different from those intended. In this regard, the 'why' questions are claimed to be useful.

According to Lewin's force-field theory, organisations are in dynamic tension between forces pushing for change and forces resistant to change. Established change management practice has interpreted this on the basis that it is management's task to reduce the resistance to change and increase the forces for change. But under the dilemma theory approach, this is only a compromise solution. It ignores the fact that increasing the force for change may increase people's resistance, for example. The authors therefore offer a new approach which requires a whole new logic. By applying an inductive analysis to the evidence and research data, they offer a 'through' question approach.

## CULTURAL CHANGE AS A THROUGH-THROUGH PROCESS

Basic to understanding cultural change is the understanding that culture is a series of rules and methods which a society or organisation has evolved to deal with the regular problems that face it.

Countries and organisations face dilemmas in dealing with the tension between the existing set of values and the desired ones. While cultures differ markedly in *how* they approach these dilemmas, they do not differ in needing to make some kind of response. They share the destiny to face up to different challenges of existence. Once the change leaders have become aware of the problem-solving process, they will reconcile dilemmas more effectively and therefore will be more successful.

All change processes have in common the need for a diagnosis of the values in use (the existing values system) and mapping the espoused and desired values (the ideal value system). The change process is energised by the tension between the two. Note again that it is not simply the replacement of the existing with the desired.

## THE PLACE OF CORPORATE CULTURE IN IMPLEMENTING A NEW DESIGN

It is becoming more frequently recognised that change initiatives have failed because aspects of (corporate) culture have been ignored. Simply 'adding' the culture component, however, does not suffice. This explains perhaps why culture is very often ignored. Values are not artefacts that can be added. They are continuously created by interactions between human actors and not 'just out there' as solid rocks. As such, culture is only meaningful in the context in which the change process unfolds.

This approach therefore seeks to integrate culture in all the steps that need to be taken in the change process. Even the sequence of steps is affected by the dominant culture at hand.

Much of the authors' inductive thinking has its origin firstly in their portfolio of effective diagnostic and analytical tools and models, and secondly in the large and reliable database established which was based on data collected from these. This enables them either to facilitate or let organisations themselves make a diagnosis of the tensions they are facing.

Structure is a concept that is frequently used in the analysis of organisations, and many definitions and approaches are to be found. The interest here is in examining the interpretations employees give to their relationships with each other and with the organisation as a whole. Culture is to the organisation what personality is to the individual — a hidden yet unifying theme that provides meaning, direction and mobilisation that can exert a decisive influence on the overall ability of the organisation to deal with the challenges it faces.

Just as individuals in a culture can have different personalities while sharing much in common, so too can groups and organisations. It is this pattern that is recognised as 'corporate culture'. The authors can distinguish three aspects of organisational relationships whose meaning is dependent on the larger culture in which they emerge:

1. the general relationships between employees in the organisation
2. the vertical or hierarchical relationships between employees and their superiors or subordinates in particular
3. the relationships of employees in the organisation as a whole, such as their views of what makes it tick and what are its goals.

This model identifies four competing organisational cultures that are derived

from two related dimensions:

— Task or Person (high versus low formalisation)
— Hierarchical or Egalitarian (high versus low centralisation).

Combining these dimensions gives four possible culture types.

While the authors could have categorised these orientations using Cameron and Quinn's (1998) competing values framework, or Charles Handy's (1993) early ideas on corporate culture, they found their adapted model more discriminating (see Table 1).

In their diagnostic phase, the authors sought to compare the current corporate culture, as perceived by an organisation's members, contrasted with what they each would consider to be the ideal corporate culture. Exhaustive data mining and correspondence analysis of 55,000 cases on corporate culture models reveals tensions derived from the following scenarios. (In Table 2, the top six are ranked from the most frequent to least frequent.) In fact, all combinations are found in the extensive database, but these are the most significant.

Following the proposed methodology, the management of change therefore involves answering:

1. What are the dilemmas that will be faced when seeking to change from the 'current' to the 'ideal' organisation?
2. How can these dilemmas be reconciled?

For each of the above scenarios, different dilemmas can be expected. Using Web-based 'interview' techniques (WebCue), the authors have also invited members of a large number of client organisations to elicit and delineate their dilemmas. Over 5,000 such responses

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**Table 1 The extreme stereotypes of corporate culture**

| *The Incubator* | *The Guided Missile* |
|---|---|

This culture is like a leaderless team. This person-oriented culture is characterised by a low degree of both centralisation and formalisation. In this culture, the individualisation of all related individuals is one of the most important features. The organisation exists only to serve the needs of its members.

 The organisation has no intrinsic values beyond these goals. The organisation is an instrument for the specific needs of the individuals in the organisation. Responsibilities and tasks within this type of organisation are assigned primarily according to the member's own preference and needs. Structure is loose and flexible control takes place through persuasion and mutual concern for the needs and values of other members.

Its main characteristics are:
— person oriented
— power of the individual
— self-realisation
— commitment to oneself
— professional recognition

This task-oriented culture has a low degree of centralisation and a high degree of formalisation. This rational culture is, in its ideal type, task and project oriented. 'Getting the job done' with 'the right man in the right place' are favourite expressions. Organisational relationships are very results oriented, based on rational/instrumental considerations and limited to specific functional aspects of the persons involved.

 Achievement and effectiveness are weighed above the demands of authority, procedures or people. Authority and responsibility are placed where the qualifications lie, and they may shift rapidly as the nature of the [task] changes. Everything in the Guided Missile culture is subordinated to an all-encompassing goal.

 The management of the organisation is predominantly seen as a continuous process of solving problems successfully. The manager is a team leader, the commander of a commando unit, in whose hands lie absolute authority. This [task] oriented culture, because of its flexibility and dynamism, is highly adaptive but at the same time is difficult to manage. Decentralised control and management contribute to the shortness of channels of communication. The task-oriented culture is designed for a rapid reaction to extreme changes. Therefore, matrix and project types of organisations are favourite designs for the Guided Missile.

Its main characteristics are:
— task orientation
— power of knowledge/expertise
— commitment to (tasks)
— management by objectives
— pay for performance

| *The Family Culture* | *The Eiffel Tower Culture* |
|---|---|

The Family Culture is characterised by a high degree of centralisation and a low degree of formalisation. It generally reflects a highly personalised organisation and is predominantly power oriented.

 Employees in the 'family' seem to interact

This role-oriented culture is characterised by a high degree of formalisation together with a high degree of centralisation and is symbolically represented by the Eiffel Tower. It is steep, stately and very robust. Control is exercised through systems of rules, legalistic procedures,

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## Table 1 The extreme stereotypes of corporate culture (continued)

| *The Family Culture* | *The Eiffel Tower Culture* |
|---|---|
| around the centralised power of father or mother. The power of the organisation is based on an autocratic leader who, like a spider in a web, directs the organisation.<br><br>There are not many rules and thus there is little bureaucracy. Organisational members tend to be as near to the centre as possible, as that is the source of power. Hence the climate inside the organisation is highly manipulative and full of intrigues. In this political system, the prime logic of vertical differentiation is hierarchical differentiation of power and status.<br>Its main characteristics are:<br>— power orientation<br>— personal relationships<br>— entrepreneurial<br>— affinity/trust<br>— power of person | assigned rights and responsibilities.<br><br>Bureaucracy and the high degree of formalisation make this organisation inflexible. Respect for authority is based on the respect for functional position and status. The bureau or desk has depersonalised authority.<br><br>In contrast to highly personalised Family, members in the Eiffel Tower are continuously subordinated to universally applicable rules and procedures. Employees are very precise and meticulous. Order and predictability are highly valued in the process of managing the organisation. Duty is an important concept for an employee in this role-oriented culture. It is duty one feels within oneself, rather than an obligation one feels towards a concrete individual.<br><br>Procedures for change tend to be cumbersome, and the role-oriented organisation is slow to adapt to change.<br>Its main characteristics are:<br>— role orientation<br>— power of position/role<br>— job description/evaluation<br>— rules and procedures<br>— order and predictability |

## Table 2 Top six ranked tension scenarios

| Current | Ideal | |
|---|---|---|
| Guided Missile | Incubator | Scenario 1 |
| Eiffel Tower | Guided Missile | Scenario 2 |
| Family | Guided Missile | Scenario 3 |
| Eiffel Tower | Incubator | Scenario 4 |
| Family | Incubator | Scenario 5 |
| Incubator | Guided Missile | Scenario 6 |

Figure 1 The change process
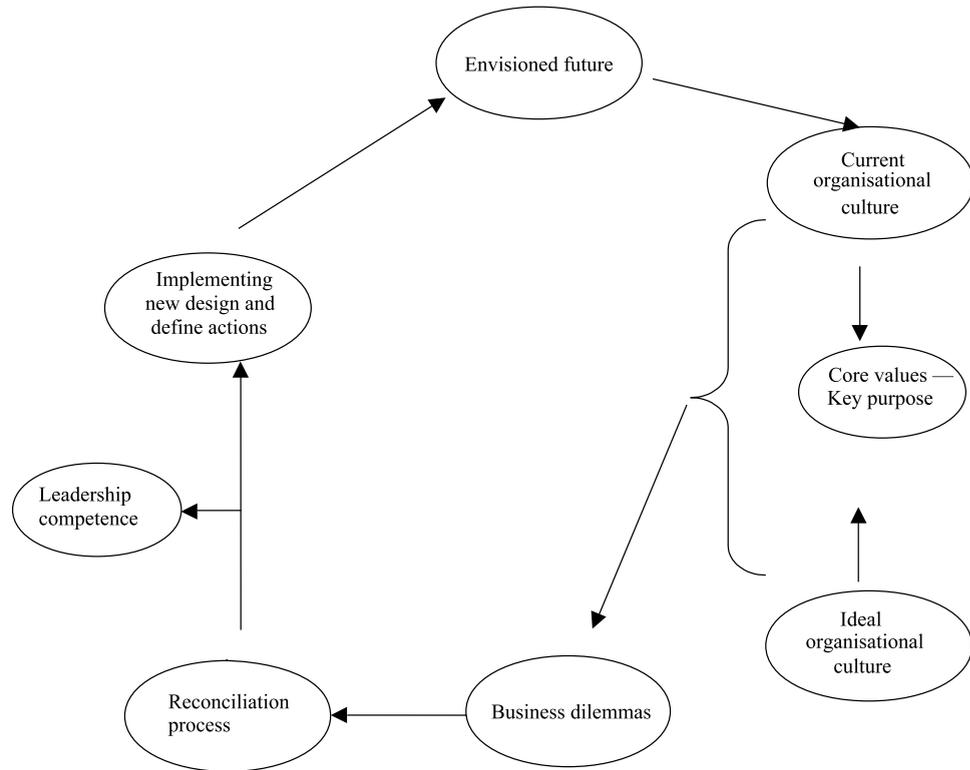


have been collected, but they can be clustered into a number of recurring dilemmas. The authors are therefore able to review these aspects of the change process based on what they have found with actual clients. Each of the model change scenarios discussed is an attempt to generalise from real change processes from these clients and avoid issues of confidence and ethics.

In each of the separate descriptions, particular steps are highlighted to provide a good sense of how this works in consulting practice. Figure 1 is a representation of the process, but the entry point one chooses is culturally dependent.

In some respects, the pervasive nature of implicit culture can make it difficult to change. Even at the explicit level, traditional practices become enshrined as 'sacred cows' that cannot

easily be challenged. In an ideal world, the authors would go back and challenge the implicit values behind each of these explicit constructs in order to check whether they were still the best way of delivering and reinforcing those values. When the products of culture become 'sacred cows', they can inhibit change. This is especially important when importing sacred cows to new cultures.

As the culture of an organisation is often 'owned' and lived at the highest level, managers can feel they have little ability to influence or change the real culture of the organisation in a material way without some top-down action.

These extremes might be summarised by saying:

'On the one hand, we need to change the corporate culture to be convergent with our

new business mission. Or, on the other hand, to develop a new business mission that is compatible with our existing corporate culture.'

In their research and work with clients, the authors have found that the change process of an organisation is the essence of a leader's *raison d'être* (discussed in Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2002). In the change process, a leader essentially is facing dilemmas he or she needs to reconcile in the areas of people, time and nature. Successful leaders do not change from one horn of the dilemma to its opposite horn. They are not trying to compromise between extremes of value orientations, from extreme individualism to teamwork, from universal rules to learning exceptions, from performance expectations to the respect for seniority. The leader with success tries to integrate seemingly opposing orientations into a process that changes the qualities of each of the orientations.

## TYPICAL DILEMMA ORIGINATING FROM THE QUEST FOR THE GUIDED MISSILE

It is striking how the Anglo-Saxon model of change has dominated the world of change management. A company formulates a set of new goals, preferably in the context of a clear vision, hires some managers for a marginal $300,000 a year (excluding the bonus obviously) and dumps the ones that do not believe in its clearly defined goals. In this Guided Missile-driven model, the organisation is interpreted as a task-oriented instrument at the disposal of shareholders (remember, people who never share) and where managers have an MBA and employees are called human resources. With that name brainwashing, it hurts less when one is kicked out: 'Gee, I was just a resource.'

## DEPARTURE FROM THE GUIDED MISSILE

The challenge is obviously what to do when the surrounding culture is not compatible with this type of change logic. The authors remember an American manager of Eastman Kodak who had launched a very successful change programme in Rochester, New York, and after launching the formula in Europe, he cried on their shoulders. In great despair, he said:

> 'These French and Germans are unbelievably inflexible. I have done a whole round in Europe and within each of the countries many seemed very much supporting our vision. Okay, the Germans had some problems with the process. They wanted to know all details of the procedures and how they were connected to the envisioned change. The French, in turn, were so much worried about the unions and how to keep their people motivated. But good, we as internal consultants and management have left with the idea that we agreed on the approach. When I came back some three months later to check how the implementation was going, I noticed in France and Germany nothing had started yet. Nothing! What a disappointment!'

Anyone with a little sensitivity for cross-cultural affairs would have predicted this.

The authors collected and analysed some 4,000 examples of such critical incidents. The principal findings are summarised in Table 3 in terms of the frequently repeating dilemmas for differing scenarios.

## THE NEW METHODOLOGY IN PRACTICE

Irrespective of where one chooses to start, the authors distinguish the following steps for a change intervention:

**Table 3 Repeating dilemmas found for the different scenarios**

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*Current: Guided Missile   Ideal: Incubator*

*Typical dilemmas*

| | |
|---|---|
| Leadership | Depersonalised authority versus development of creative individuals |
| *Reconciliation* | Attribute the highest authority to those managers who have innovation and learning as prime critera in their goals |
| Management | Consistent goal-orientation around task versus the power of learning |
| *Reconciliation* | Make learning and innovation part of the task description |
| Rewards | Extrinsic reward job done versus intrinsic reward self-development |
| *Reconciliation* | Describe task in terms of clearly stated innovation outputs |

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*Current: Guided Missile   Ideal: Family*

*Typical dilemmas*

| | |
|---|---|
| Leadership | Depersonalised authority versus authority is personally ascribed to the leader |
| *Reconciliation* | Attribute the highest authority to those managers who have made internalisation of subtle processes a prime criterion in their goals |
| Management | Consistent goal-orientation around task versus the power of politics and know–who |
| *Reconciliation* | Makes political sensitivity part of the task description |
| Rewards | Extrinsic reward job done versus reward long-term loyalty |
| *Reconciliation* | Describe task in terms of loosely stated long-term outputs |

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*Current: Guided Missile   Ideal: Eiffel Tower*

*Typical dilemmas*

| | |
|---|---|
| Leadership | Depersonalised authority versus authority ascribed to the role |
| *Reconciliation* | Attribute the highest authority to those managers who have made reliable application of expertise a prime criterion in their goals |
| Management | Consistent goal-orientation around task versus expertise and reliability |
| *Reconciliation* | Make reliable expertise and long-term commitment part of the task description |
| Rewards | Contribution to the bottom line versus increasing their expertise in doing a reliable job |
| *Reconciliation* | Describe task in terms of expertise and reliability in its application |

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1. developing an envisioned future in order to develop a sense of what to go for
2. diagnosing the current corporate culture with the cross–cultural assessment profiler (CCAP)
3. defining core values and key purpose to develop a sense of what one stands for
4. defining the ideal corporate culture with CCAP embedding core values and key purpose
5. defining major business dilemmas caused by the tensions between

**Table 3 Repeating dilemmas found for the different scenarios (continued)**

| *Current: Incubator* | *Ideal: Guided Missile* |
|---|---|
| **Typical dilemmas** | |
| Leadership | Development of creative individuals versus depersonalised authority |
| *Reconciliation* | Attribute the highest authority to those managers who have innovation and learning as prime criteria in their goals |
| Management | Versus consistent goal-orientation around task |
| *Reconciliation* | Make learning and innovation part of the task description |
| Rewards | Intrinsic reward self-development versus extrinsic reward job done |
| *Reconciliation* | Describe task in terms of clearly stated innovation outputs |

| *Current: Incubator* | *Ideal: Family* |
|---|---|
| **Typical dilemmas** | |
| Leadership | Negation of authority versus authority is personally ascribed to the leader |
| *Reconciliation* | Get the support of the leaders so they underline themselves the importance of learning and creativity; they become servant leaders of learning |
| Management | The power of learning around innovation versus the power of politics and know–who |
| *Reconciliation* | Celebrate the achievements of the present learning environment, to take the best practices from them, personalise them and make them historical events |
| Rewards | Intrinsic reward self-development versus reward long-term loyalty |
| *Reconciliation* | Members are personally held accountable for the long-term commitment to the company |

| *Current: Incubator* | *Ideal: Eiffel Tower* |
|---|---|
| **Typical dilemmas** | |
| Leadership | Negation of authority versus authority is ascribed to the role |
| *Reconciliation* | To hold the innovators responsible for the reliability of their output |
| Management | The power of learning around innovation versus power of expertise and reliability |
| *Reconciliation* | Decentralise the organisation into more learning centres where roles are described in a very sharp way and aimed at learning and innovation |
| Rewards | Intrinsic reward self-development versus increasing their expertise in doing a reliable job |
| *Reconciliation* | Use creativity and knowledge to build reliable systems and procedures enabling them to become even better in their creations |

## Table 3 Repeating dilemmas found for the different scenarios (continued)

| *Current: Family* | *Ideal: Incubator* |
| --- | --- |
| *Typical dilemmas* | |
| Leadership | Authority is personally ascribed to leader versus development of creative individuals |
| *Reconciliation* | To get the support of the leaders so they underline themselves the importance of learning and creativity; they become servant leaders of learning |
| Management | The power of politics and know-who versus the power of learning |
| *Reconciliation* | Take the best practices from the past, codify them, and apply them to the present learning environment |
| Rewards | Long-term loyalty versus intrinsic reward self-development |
| *Reconciliation* | Members are personally held accountable to motivate creative individuals and create learning environments |

| *Current: Family* | *Ideal: Guided Missile* |
| --- | --- |
| *Typical dilemmas* | |
| Leadership | Authority is personally ascribed to the leader versus depersonalised authority |
| *Reconciliation* | Attribute the highest authority to those managers who have made internalisation of subtle processes a prime criterion in their goals |
| Management | The power of politics and know-who versus consistent goal-orientation around task |
| *Reconciliation* | Makes political sensitivity part of the task description |
| Rewards | Reward long-term loyalty versus extrinsic reward job done |
| *Reconciliation* | Describe task in terms of loosely stated long-term outputs |

| *Current: Family* | *Ideal: Eiffel Tower* |
| --- | --- |
| *Typical dilemmas* | |
| Leadership | Authority is personally ascribed to the leader versus authority ascribed to the role |
| *Reconciliation* | Management needs to understand the technical aspects of the activities they manage; they become servant leaders of experts |
| Management | The power of politics and know-who versus expertise and reliability |
| *Reconciliation* | Get the support of management for the implementation of crucial systems and procedures |
| Rewards | Reward long-term loyalty versus increasing expertise in doing a reliable job |
| *Reconciliation* | Members apply their power to the advantage of increasing the expertise of their colleagues |

envisioned future and key purpose
and between current and ideal
corporate cultures
6. reconciling four or five major business
dilemmas
7. diagnosing the current leadership
competence to reconcile major value
dilemmas
8. implementing new design and
defining concrete action points to be
taken as defined by the change agents.

The fifth step is crucial because it
integrates business and cultural
challenges. The authors do not believe
that a change process can be genuine
if strategic business issues and cultural
values are disconnected. Unfortunately,
this is often the case in change
practice. But the key proposition is
that, from the inputs of the envisioned
future, core values and key purpose,
and between current and ideal
corporate cultures, all the ingredients
are available to stimulate management
to think about what basic dilemmas
they need to resolve from their actual
business to the desired one.

The dilemmas are best phrased as
'on the one hand … on the other …'.
Participants are often invited to phrase
the tensions they feel in actual business
life and then relate them to the
tensions they feel between current and
ideal cultures. So, for example, as an
actual business tension 'I feel that our
organization is so much focused on
next quarter results, we don't have
enough time to be creative and come
up with our next generation of
innovations'. This would be consistent
with the scenario in which the current
corporate culture is a Guided Missile
and the dominant espoused profile is
an Incubator.

It is often found that a certain
organisational culture has developed
because the context best suits the main

dilemmas their leader(s) are facing in
business. So an Incubator culture is
often the result of a leader who strives
for a core value of entrepreneurship
and innovation while having an
envisioned future of becoming the
most path-breaking organisation in the
field of cross-cultural management
thinking and consulting. A Guided
Missile culture is a much better-suited
context for leaders who want to help
clients gain the highest return on their
investments in the financial service
sector while holding a core value of
integrity and transparency.

But business environments and
challenges are changing continuously.
Once an organisational culture has
established itself, it creates new
dilemmas (or its changing environment
will) on a higher level. For example, a
dominant Incubator culture can create
a business environment where many
innovative ideas are born but where
the management and commercialisation
of these fails on aspects of a more
market-sensitive Guided Missile culture.
Conversely, a dominant Guided Missile
culture can lead to an environment
where employees are so much guided
by their market price that it needs a
Family culture to create a necessary
longer-term vision and commitment.

By asking leaders of organisations to
phrase the major tensions they feel as 'on
the one hand … on the other …', the
authors linguistically programme them to
see both sides of the equation. In order
to facilitate this balance in the approach,
as well as the link to business, a number
of pro-formas are used to elicit the basic
description of their current and ideal
organisational culture profiles,
components they want to retain and
discard, as in the basic framework shown
in Table 4.

It is ensured that the various lists
comprise those that are most crucial to

**Table 4   Basic pro-forma framework**

| *On the one hand, we want more and/or keep the following values and behaviour of our current organisation:* | *On the other hand, we need to develop the following values and behaviour for supporting our envisioned future and core values:* |
| --- | --- |
| 1. | 1. |
| 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. |
| 4. | 4. |
| 5. | 5. |

reconcile in view of the envisioned future. It is ensured that the formulation of the horns of the dilemma are both desirable and are linked to business issues. Examples are: 'on the one hand we need to focus on reliable technology (typical for a dominant Eiffel Tower culture) while on the other we need to be constantly informed by our main customers (typical for dominant Guided Missile)', or 'on the one hand we need to constantly mentor and coach our young graduates for constant learning (Incubator) while on the other hand we need to focus on the income of this quarter (Guided Missile)', or 'on the one hand we need to develop and sustain a loyal workforce and thrive on rapport (Family) while on the other hand we need to be able to judge their performance based on report (Guided Missile)'.

## RECONCILING THE CHANGE TENSIONS

The introductory and overview nature of this paper does not allow all the detailed steps of the reconciliation process to be covered, but Figure 2 shows the basic template used to represent the dilemma graphically.

Essentially, this template uses a dual axis in order to invite participants to have the current values and behaviour dialogue with the ideal ones. This dialogue is essentially stimulated by asking the question: 'How can we, through the current value or behaviour that we want to keep, get more of the ideal value or behaviour we want to strive for?'. To stick to the previous examples, the essence of reconciliation is achieved when one can answer the question: 'How can we, through focusing on our reliable technology, get better informed by our customers?' or 'How can we, through coaching our young graduates, increase the income of this quarter?'. Note that one needs to change the 'natural' mindset quite fundamentally. The traditional change processes often enquire about how one can change from one (current) value or behaviour to another (desired) set of values or behaviour. The creative juices that are flowing from the integration of seemingly opposing values is astonishing. But also from a process standpoint, resistance to change is often broken (at least conceptually) because of the need to keep and further develop the values that are positively graded about the existing state of the organisation. It is a process of enriching values through change rather than replacing one value or

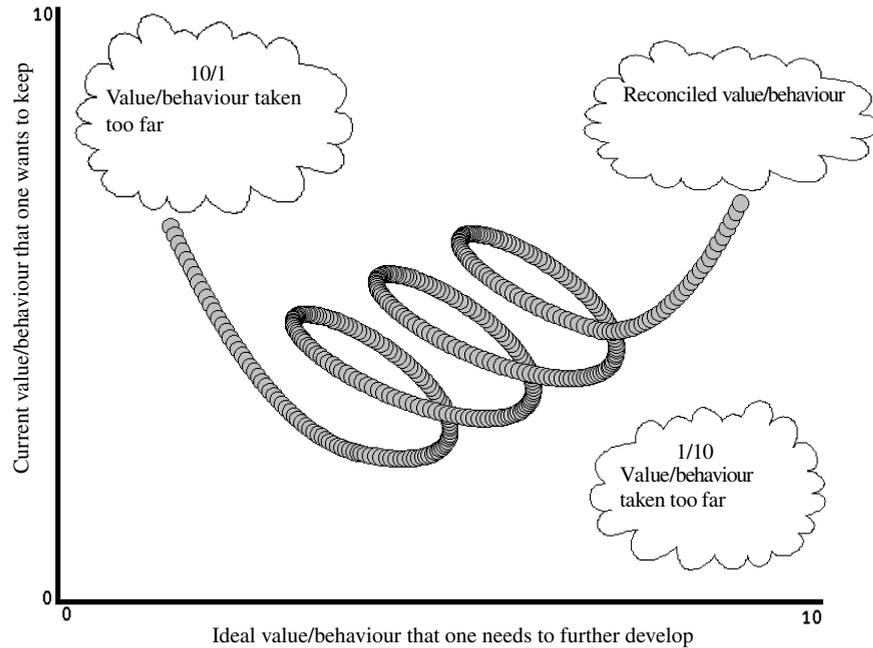*Figure 2   The basic dilemma template*



Table 5   Guidance template for action to be taken

*I. In order to reconcile the first dilemma we need to be taking the following steps in the following areas of attention:*

| | |
|---|---|
| *The Market* (think about what you could do in areas of customers, time-to-market response, flow of information from and to customers) | *Structure and design* (consider what could be done in areas of the design of your organisation, both formally and informally, basic flows of materials and information) |
| *Human Resources* (consider areas such as management development, staff planning, appraisal and rewards) | *Strategy and Envisioned Future* (review vision of leaders, mission statements, goals, objectives, business plans and the like) |
| *Business Systems* (what can you do in areas of IT systems, knowledge management, manufacturing information, quality systems etc) | *Core Values* (think about action points that could enhance the clarity of values, how to better translate them into behaviour and action etc) |
| *II. Who is taking action and carries responsibility (consider for each of the possible action points who is responsible for the outcome)* | *III. How to monitor the change process (consider milestones and qualitative and quantitative measures of genuine change)* |
| 1. | 1. |
| 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. |
| 4. | 4. |
| 5. | 5. |

behaviour by another. Be aware that the spiral starts at the side of the current value/behaviour axis and goes through the aspired value to an end somewhere at 10/10, where both values are integrated on a higher reconciled state. Once this position has been achieved conceptually, it is time for the final stages.

Once the leader or groups of relevant leaders are in agreement on the dilemmas that need to be reconciled, the action points to be taken evolve naturally. Very often, it is crucial to know the typical levers that need to be pulled in an organisation to increase the effective actions that need to be taken. This is very often dependent on the type of organisational culture that the organisation currently holds. In family-oriented cultures, the function of HR often plays a crucial role, while marketing and finance dominate in the Guided Missile cultures. The best levers to be pulled in the Incubator are often related to learning systems and intrinsic rewards, while, in the Eiffel Tower systems, procedures and manufacturing often play a crucial role. The template in Table 5 has been used to give some guidance for looking at the action points to be taken.

## METHODOLOGY

Throughout this research, a broadly inductive approach has been adopted — with both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. Data have been accumulated over time from consulting, as and when it arose based on client needs, but also the authors have sought to collect data

proactively to 'fill the gaps' in their enquiry. The extensive data from these multiple sources serve to provide triangulation to the evidence. The authors can claim high reliability from the volume quantitative questionnaire-based studies and high validity from in-depth interviewing, consulting and coaching.

## CONCLUSIONS

Through the above methodology, the authors have helped many client organisations to reconcile such dilemmas. Of course, as soon as one is removed, another pops up. But in today's rapidly changing ever oligopolistic world, it is the very essence of organisations. The aim has been to raise the debate for a new logic for the management of change.

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