
An Assessment of Change Management as an Organizational and Project Capability

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ABSTRACT

Change is a fundamental part of organizational project management and how change is managed impacts how successful a project will be. On this note, both project management and change management have a role to play in the management and delivery of organizational changes. At an interpersonal level, different skills are needed in the practice of change management and project management. While project management focused on supplier, budget, planning, resourcing, schedule, and risk related issues. By contrast, change management focuses on alignment, communication, reconciling viewpoints, politics, and training. These different areas of interest, the relatively small amount of time that these disciplines have been working together on organizational change projects, and a lack of commonly accepted guidelines on how these disciplines should cooperate, have contributed to the different opinions that practitioners of these disciplines hold regarding how they should relate to each other. Some level of integration between project management and change management is necessary if organizational project management is going to consider and address the whole organization during the conception, initiation, delivery, maintenance of organizational changes and response to some of the factors that are relevant to successful delivery. The study therefore concludes that effective organizational project management needs to find a balance between project management and change management.

KEYWORDS: change management, project capability

Introduction

Organizational project management can generally be considered to be the management of initiatives that contribute to the achievement of strategic objectives (Chia, 2013), involving the multilevel integration of portfolio management, strategic alignment, and governance issues (Aubry et al, 2007). It has also been described as an integration of project-related work throughout the hierarchy of an organization (Drouin et al, 2016). It can be argued that all projects involve an element of organizational change, as the larger organization expands and contracts around an internal temporary project organization. For example, Hornstein (2015) commented that “change is an inevitable consequence of project implementations, and how the change is ‘managed’ impacts how successful the project will be”. Söderlund (2010) identified that there are an increasing number of business projects that involve some element of change. Change is a fundamental part of organizational project management, and although in some cases the products

of a project may be effectively distinct from the delivering organization, this is rarely the case in organizational project management. Both project management and change management have a role to play in the management and delivery of organizational changes. Many authors have identified the potential ways in which these two management disciplines can potentially collaborate to deliver organizational changes (Leybourne, 2006; Boddy & Levasseur, 2010). Parker et al. (2013) have stated that using a project- based approach is a business imperative, as it increases the chances for the success of organizational changes, while Hornstein (2015) has made a case for change management to be a fundamental part of the training of project managers, commenting that they are complementary and mutually supportive disciplines that contribute to the successful.

Differences between the Disciplines

Although there are an increasing number of advocates for greater unity between project management and change management, they are traditionally perceived as separate ways of delivering organizational changes. Practitioners are commonly associated with one discipline or the other, with a minority crossing this professional boundary. Both of these disciplines are used to create change in organizations, but “project management and change management have been, and in most cases are, sold, practiced, and managed as two almost mutually exclusive project disciplines” (Jarocki, 2011).

This divide can be examined in terms of:

1. the theoretical underpinnings that support the disciplines;
2. the heritage and capabilities of the practitioners of these disciplines; and
3. the emphases that these disciplines bring to the management and delivery of organizational change.

The two fields are supported by significantly different academic literatures, and this has contributed to the different world views that are associated with proponents of these fields (Garfein & Sankaran, 2011), with some suggesting that these roles should be managed by different people in some cases (Crawford & Nahmias, 2010). Project management, and later developments such as portfolio management and program management, have been strongly influenced by early developments in the systems thinking movement, a branch of thinking that predominantly developed in the United Kingdom following the Second World War. In particular, Project management has been influenced by cybernetics. Morris (2002) has also stated that project management has been influenced by techniques from systems analysis and systems engineering.

All three (3) approaches are examples of hard systems thinking. Hard systems thinking is a branch of the broader systems movement that emphasized control, quantitative analysis, the assumption that problem definition is not fundamentally problematic, and the tendency to perceive problems as discrete from the broader environment. The early development of project management has also been influenced by the industries in which it was originally practiced, such as the aerospace industry (Morris, 2013), and later widespread application in construction. In these environments, problems are often of an engineering type, involving quantifiable questions related to tangible product and material performance. As a result of the clarity that comes with

more easily measurable outputs, contracts are often signed with a minimum of margin, leading to a focus on delivery efficiencies.

Crawford and Nahmias (2010) described the influence of organizational development, strategy, communication, and human relations in the development of the field. The field is arguably less clearly defined than project management, and there is a wide assortment of tools and techniques available to practitioners. A more detailed discussion of the development of change management as a discipline has been conducted by Cao and McHugh (2005). Change management has been developed exclusively within the context of creating change within organizations, focusing on strategic alignment, developing and communicating a vision, developing change ownership, and engaging leadership in a change effort. Unlike the focus on method and technique common in much of the project management literature, change management places a greater degree of emphasis on the organizational dynamics experienced during change (Lehmann, 2010). The field arguably does not bring disciplinary baggage to the practice of organizational project management that is not directly relevant to an organizational project management context.

At an interpersonal level, it has also been found that different skills are needed in the practice of change management and project management (Garfein & Sankaran, 2011). These disciplines have been found to require different competencies and skills (Crawford & Nahmias, 2010). Hornstein (2015, p. 295) has also identified that their "... respective proponents arise out of different parts of the organization and have different functional and educational backgrounds." Practitioners of these two disciplines have found that they have significantly different areas of emphasis (Pollack & Algeo, 2016), with project management focusing on supplier, budget, planning, resourcing, schedule, and risk related issues. By contrast, change management was found to focus on alignment, communication, reconciling viewpoints, politics, and training. These different areas of interest, the relatively small amount of time that these disciplines have been working together on organizational change projects, and a lack of commonly accepted guidelines on how these disciplines should cooperate, have contributed to the different opinions that practitioners of these disciplines hold regarding how they should relate to each other (Pollack & Algeo, 2016). In addition, while project management was seen as an operational activity, change management was perceived as strategic. This is consistent with the normative project management literature, with PMI (2013) implying that change management functions should report to project or portfolio management.

In summary, project management and change management appear to view the management of organizational change projects significantly differently. The disciplines have developed based on significantly different intellectual heritages, which have shaped their respective views on what organizational change is, and how it should be managed. Inevitably, this has translated into practitioners of these disciplines working in different ways, with disparate suites of tools and techniques.

The Roles of Change Managers and Project Managers

There are strong similarities between the roles that change managers and project managers play in organizations. This can partly be explained through the common emphasis in the disciplines on delivering specific, defined changes, within a set time frame. In addition, there is some evidence that the fields are converging. For example, it has been found that there is an

increasing emphasis in the project management literature on topics that could be considered more typically indicative of change management. Similar findings were echoed in Pollack and Adler's (2015) research. There has been an increase in the emphasis that can be seen in the project management literature on topics such as teams, motivation, and leadership (Kloppenborg & Opfer, 2002), and an increasing emphasis on people over process (Leybourne, 2007). A shift is also apparent when specific topics within project management are examined. For example, Lehmann (2010) examined the ways that communication was discussed in the project management literature and found that there was a growing convergence in how the literatures discussed communication.

The study by Pádár et al. (2011) produced comparable results when examining the ways in which stakeholder roles are discussed in the respective literatures. The publication of the Project Management Institute's *Managing Change in Organizations: A Practice Guide* (PMI, 2013a), and the reissue of the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMI, 2013b), which is arguably the world's most recognizable text on project management practice, including a key knowledge area on stakeholder management, suggest a further shift in the discipline. The intellectual convergence of the disciplines, and the tendency for practitioners of both to be singly, or jointly, given responsibility for the delivery of organizational change projects, has led to some crossover between the two. Jarocki (2011) described an "obvious overlap between the two disciplines" leading to a lack of clarity about the boundary between them. Perhaps as a result of this lack of clarity about the boundary and working relationship between the disciplines, it has been identified that "there is evidence of a degree of rivalry between Project Managers and Change Managers concerning who should be managing business change" (Crawford & Nahmias, 2010). Review of the literature indicates that there is a lack of consensus, and perhaps some conflict, regarding the forms that cooperation between these disciplines should take (Jarocki, 2011)

The Need for Integration

Some level of integration between project management and change management is necessary if organizational project management is going to consider and address the whole organization during the conception, initiation, delivery, and maintenance of any organizational change. Project management and change management each only respond to some of the factors that are relevant to successful delivery. The Project Management Institute has identified that "Project management, in terms of simply focusing on scope, time, and budget, is not sufficient for managing the scale and rate of change that is the norm in most organizations" (PMI, 2013a). Using either approach to the exclusion of the other seems, not necessarily doomed to failure, but leaves a greater proportion of success to chance than would otherwise be the case. The divide between these disciplines, and the ways in which they can play a complementary role will be discussed in terms of focus on: • the project output versus the context the output will occupy; and delivery to a goal versus a response to strategy. Project management is fundamentally focused on the product to be delivered.

Although there is argument that some aspects of project management are shifting towards a service-dominant logic (see Sankaran & Agarwal, 2012), the majority of tools and techniques used in traditional project management start with the assumption that there is a clearly definable product that will be the central output of the project. If the product cannot be clearly defined, then comprehensive deconstruction of a product into work packages becomes problematic. Early

definition of project goals is typically seen as a positive factor. In project management, a reductionist perspective presupposes that goals can be clearly defined. The centrality of the tendency towards reductionism can be seen in the pivotal role that work breakdown structures play in the standard project management process. The most commonly used scheduling techniques are based on the breakdown of work into smaller packages. Contracts for subcontractors are often based on a work breakdown structure, with the prime.

Accordingly, budgets are typically monitored on a component-by-component basis. Testing and commissioning processes progress from lower levels in the breakdown structure, up the hierarchy, until properties can be tested that are only present at the level of the whole system. Abstract organizational qualities do not lend themselves to breakdown, and a consequence of this focus on the tangible product of a project is that the product can be seen as an end in itself. The original need, which the product was designed to satisfy, may become lost during the development process. This is not an issue if the success of the project remains contingent on its ability to satisfy the original need, but it is significantly simpler to assess a product's compliance to specification than a project's satiation of a need, and the latter may readily become lost. Change management does not have a suite of practitioner tools and techniques that are as universally accepted and consistently applied as project management does. This makes discussion of the norm in change management more open to question. However, it is safe to say that a reductionist definition of any products associated with a change does not play a central role in approaches to change management. The scope of work of change is usually significantly different to that of project management, focusing on increasing support for a change, rather than directly implementing the change. For example, a common change management technique, the change readiness survey, will provide information about the current organizational climate, knowledge, and acceptance of a change. It can be used to highlight divisions in an organization where dissent may be forming, or topics that have not received effective communication or training. Change management focuses on developing stakeholder engagement and support, removing roadblocks to change, and harnessing and aligning leader support. The context is created in which change can happen. This can be a very effective approach, but it implies a different approach to control. Change is not directed. The conditions under which change can occur are created. The embodiment of the actual change often relies on the staff in the organization who are the subject of the change initiative, rather than staff assigned to a change management team. The contrast is that while project management focuses attention on delivery of the product, it does not emphasize the context the product will occupy.

Change Management

Change management emphasizes creating the conditions under which change can occur, but does not directly create the change. Contracting, scheduling, budgeting, and delivery are not a core focus of change

Change management might be used to create a climate where change can occur, but without management of the delivery or control of the complicated outputs that might be needed to create the change. Both approaches together could be used to assist in efficient delivery and in acceptance and uptake. The difference between the disciplines can also be understood through reference to the roles they traditionally play in the process, from initial conception of an idea to organizational-benefits realization. At the opposite end of the life cycle, although the length of a project manager's involvement with a project varies, it typically concludes with, or soon after, a

product is accepted at practical completion. The process of capturing the lessons that have been learned on a project is often an afterthought, given a fraction of the attention that consideration for organizational learning would require. In addition, project evaluation typically occurs at, or soon after, the product of the project has been delivered. Projects are typically assessed in terms of the iron triangle of the time taken to completion, the cost of the project, and the quality (or scope) of what has been produced. These are important metrics, but should surely take a subordinate position to consideration of the contribution that the project has made to the client's and supplier's organizational strategies (Fahri et al, 2015).

Alternatively, change management may be coupled to the end of a project management process as a way of increasing uptake or transitioning to business as usual. PMI (2013a, p. 27) describes this process as: "Change management requires undertaking activities that align projects and programs with the strategy of the organization as well as activities that transition project results into operations to realize benefits." A consequence of this approach is the maintenance of clear links to strategy, but a lessened emphasis on direct control over the actual products that are developed to enable or create a change. Project management and change management have different foci, and this provides great opportunities for complementarity. Project management focuses on the product, while change management focuses on the context in which a change will take place. Together, they can ensure that a product is delivered efficiently and effectively, and that the climate and context are ripe to receive it. Project management focuses on delivery to predetermined goals, while change management focuses on the expression and communication of a vision for change. Together, they could help to bridge the divide between strategy and project goals, at both the front- and back end of projects. "Key factors for successfully building a competitive advantage with the strategy execution framework of organizational project management are embedded with change management" (PMI, 2013a).

However, obstacles stand in the path of the complementary use of these approaches. One obstacle relates to the way in which change management is portrayed within the project management normative literature.

Differing Perspectives on Change Management

To understand how these two approaches can complement each other, the remainder of this chapter will first discuss how change management is represented in the project management literature, and contrast this with how change management represents itself. The chapter will then argue that a reconceptualization of change management within the project management literature is needed, if the benefits of change management are to be realized for organizational programs and stand-alone projects begin with the formulation of the change and its planning; change is then implemented through one or more projects that produce tangible deliverables (products, services, and results) for the business (PMI, 2013a).

The interpretation of change management shares many of the emphases present in these earlier publications. The guide has a strong emphasis on process, particularly focusing on documents that should be prepared at various stages of an organizational change. A hard systems thinking approach is also apparent in the guide, particularly in the use of a repeated discussion of the inputs to, and outputs of, processes. Although the guide takes an interesting approach in discussing change management in the context of portfolio, program, and project management, the imposition of this framework seems to have been more limiting than illuminating. It reads as

if the authors were trying to incorporate change management, while making a minimum of alterations to an established, organizationally embedded, and socially accepted hierarchy between portfolios, programs, and projects.

Change Management in Leading Change

There is a broad selection of models and processes for the management of organizational change (Pillay et al., 2012, Smith, 2011, Stewart and Kringas, 2003).

Readers who are interested in a comprehensive comparison of these models are referred to Brisson-Banks (2010) and Stewart and Kringas (2003). Of the many models available, *Leading Change* is one of the most widely recognized texts on change management. It is far from the only approach to change management, but is arguably one of the most influential. In addition, there has been chosen as representative as it has adopted a process-based approach to change. This is more comparable with the approach to change management adopted by the Project Management Institute than many other change models, such as the critical success factor approach adopted by Hiatt's (2006) ADKAR. Eight-stage process of creating a major change has been recognized.

Kotter's model has gained significant popularity with organizational leaders looking to implement changes to their organizations (Brisson-Banks, 2010). This approach to change 'became an instantaneous success at the time it was advocated and it remains a key reference in the field of change management' (Appelbaum et al., 2012). Kotter's eight-stage process of creating a major change is summarized as the follows in *Leading Change* (1996) and his subsequent publications:

1. Establishing a sense of urgency
2. Creating the guiding coalition
3. Developing a vision and strategy
4. Communicating the change vision
5. Empowering broad-based change
6. Generating short-term wins
7. Consolidating gains and producing more change
8. Anchoring new approaches in the culture

The eight-stage process describes a set of steps that can be taken to implement a top-down mandated change in an organization. It has been described "as a vision for the change process", that emphasizes the role of leadership in the change process (Raineri, 2011).

A review of Kotter's process shows no clear divisions between the aspects which relate to the portfolio, program, and portfolio levels of an organization. Kotter's process is a whole-of-organization approach to change management – a single process that can be used to guide change, rather than a set of different processes at separate organizational levels. Research has suggested that this process can be used in an iterative way, replicating the process with different management and stakeholder groups throughout an organization, but the process remains broadly unchanged at different levels of the organization (Pollack & Pollack, 2015). This is a significantly different approach to change management to that presented in PMI (2013a).

Kotter's Model of Change Management

In Kotter's model, a vision is created, groups are formed to lead and represent the change, key messages are communicated, successes are reinforced, obstacles are removed, and effort is invested into embedding and sustaining the change process. The model is applicable to small management groups, whole-of-organization initiatives, or to iterative application cascading throughout an organization. Comments within PMI's guide to change management suggest that it was intended that their model for change management should be a whole-of-organization response. "The change process spans all levels of a business" (PMI, 2013a, p. 29). However, their discussion of change management remains limited to the hierarchical separation between portfolios, programs, and projects, with different processes and activities mandated at each level, focusing on a cascading system of control throughout the organizational hierarchy. Fitting Change into a Project Management Mould A central issue associated with trying to fit change management into a structure predetermined by project management has to do with compatibility between the paradigms that have informed these two disciplines. Control at a micro level, delivery to a predetermined and detailed plan, and minimization of variation, are key themes within project management. This emphasis on control is barely present in change management. Control is only exercised at a macro level in leader-led approaches like the Kotter process and is almost entirely absent in approaches that take an emergent or consensual approach to change.

This guide comments that "Project management tools such as change control processes for adjusting scope or requirements are not sufficient to address the types of change needed" (PMI, 2013). As mentioned above, hard systems thinking has influenced the development of project management. Systems theories and cybernetics models both emphasize the maintenance of order, and where change is allowed, it occurs as small adjustments that are allowed as they increase or stabilize a larger order of control. These approaches "... have generally given an impoverished account of change". The text of PMI (2013a) can be taken as simplying that some project managers may not be comfortable with the levels of ambiguity found in organizational change. The techniques of traditional project management are not designed for high levels of ambiguity, and thus the training that many project managers receive is less likely to prepare them for such situations. Project managers are typically trained to work within the hard systems thinking paradigm. Being able to move comfortably between a traditional project management paradigm and one that takes a fundamentally different view of the virtue of control would involve a level of pluralism that many practitioners would find difficult to achieve. Psychologically, barriers to adoption relate, in various ways, to the "problems of an individual agent moving easily from one paradigm to another".

To apply change management tools with a project management mindset risks losing many of the advantages that change management could otherwise provide. Using change management, but maintaining project management's emphasis on control and deviation minimization would entail a form of imperialism that would mean that many of the benefits of the second paradigmatic perspective would be lost. However, it is just this way of combining project management with change management that is suggested by PMI (2013a).

Models of the Relationship between Project Management and Change Management

In this model, there is a simple hierarchical progression from strategic management to portfolio management processes. The parts of change management that are relevant to portfolio

management help at this level of the organization. Portfolio decisions are then passed down to program management processes, and the parts of change management that are relevant to program management help at this level of an organization. A similar process happens at the project level, before the results of the project are handed over to operations.

However, change management, as discussed in the change management literature, makes little reference to the levels of portfolio, program, or project management. Change management is one activity, used to manage the delivery of organizational change across the whole of an organization. It can, and is, used to deliver change projects without reference to portfolio, program, or project management. Restructuring it to suit a portfolio, program, and project management framework distorts its intent, and arguably reduces its efficacy. PMI (2013a) provides a useful framework for introducing change management into organizations with a mature approach to portfolio, program, and project management, but is simultaneously restrictive in how change management is described.

Change management sits alongside these areas, working with them to achieve shared organizational project management objectives. Change management will take direction from senior leaders about organizational objectives, but will also work with them to develop and communicate the vision for change, form and coordinate guiding coalitions, and set the context for change. Change managers will work with project and program delivery to communicate early wins and build momentum around a change.

They will also work with operations to make sure that the context in which a change will be created is ripe to receive it. Some of this activity may involve building awareness and removing barriers to adoption or uptake, or empowering actions that support the change. Some might involve lower levels of an organization, such as users of project outputs, but it could equally involve work with senior management to make sure that organizational communication, senior management behavior, and organizational structural mechanisms are consistent with the change intent. A simple hierarchical progression from the top of an organization down is not consistent with change management. For a change manager to be effective, they must operate at a variety of different organizational levels at once. Many practitioners will not be comfortable operating from a traditional project management perspective and a change management perspective at once, and it is suggested that in many cases a joint project management and change management response to organizational project management will require separate specialists, each taking responsibility for the change.

Conclusion

It has been argued that effective organizational project management needs to find a balance between project management and change management. Each of these approaches can be used to deliver organizational change projects independent of the other. However, using one to the exclusion of the other risks losing opportunities that a combined approach could provide. It was argued that although project management and change management are based on significantly different intellectual heritages, and are supported by different techniques, they provide complementary perspectives that can be of benefit in providing a more effective response to the challenges of organizational project management. Project management and change management share macrolevel goals; namely, the achievement of specific, unique organizational goals, within time constraints.

However, they interpret the best actions to take to achieve these objectives in significantly different ways. PMI (2013a) is an important text because it raises the awareness of change management within the project management community. In addition, it acknowledges the strategic role of change management. However, superimposing change management onto a portfolio, program, and project management framework risks diluting some of the existing strengths of change management. It risks representing change management as an optional extra to established portfolio, program, and project management approaches.

Recommendation

From the result of this research, it was recommended that to measure the quality of one's work in the same field, it is better to calculate the number of citations a person receives rather than just considering the impact

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