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An Exploration of the Causes of Success and Failure of Managed Change

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Abstract

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MBA, University of Central Florida, 1985

BSBA, State University of New York, 1982

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Change management (CM) and organizational development are mature industries with decades of research and development. Yet, failure rates stated for organizational change initiatives remain high at 70%. This failure rate suggests that 30% of change initiatives were successful, but no reports of these successes were found in the literature. The overarching question considered the experiences of change leaders of successful CM initiatives. The conceptual framework for this research consisted of change models defined by Burke, Kotter, Schein, and others. The primary purpose of this study was to identify the strategies used by successful change leaders. 10 phone interviews with senior employee change leaders in education, pharmaceuticals, and industrial manufacturing companies across the United States provided the data for this empirical phenomenological study. Data were collected using open, conversational interviews. A modified van Kaam method was used to analyze the data. The most important themes identified were collaborative leadership and open communication. The results indicated how these strategies were used without relying on the literature to guide them. Leaders relied on intuition and independently, aligned to aspects suggested by the framework authors, but differed in their applications. Using the results of this study may improve the implementation of change projects and success rates, thus reducing organizational costs and improving organizational performance. This may have a positive social change effect on the surrounding community, as project successes may lead to reduced employee job losses and reduced concomitant job losses and the associated economic decline.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to all those leaders and managers who have, like me, struggled with the concepts of change management. At times, that work was a struggle with a level of feeling unsure because so much of the work of change leadership is spontaneous activity, reactive to situational dynamics. Change leaders respond to problems and must maintain a level of authority while I believe that the following work is important to those senior leaders who must lead change and are limited to working with external resources to do this. Successful change is possible and is more probable when the people responsible understand what successful change leaders do differently. The probability of failure in change is close to negligible if the change initiative were well thought out, structured, planned, and executed. This research is a start toward improving the ability to do that. I hope that those change leaders who want success see the value in what this research presents.

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I want to thank committee members, Dr. Karla Phlypo and Dr. Robert Levasseur, for their ongoing support during the process of completing this dissertation. Dr. Phlypo has been an encouragement and a force for getting this work done in a timely way. Not only is she knowledgeable in research methods, but is extremely helpful and a pleasure to work with. She is knowledgeable in business systems, particularly for the types that drive projects in business organizations that require transformational change leadership. Dr. Levasseur is a true expert in change management. He has decades of experience as an academic, a researcher, an author, and a business leader who specializes in change management. He was a wealth of information and support for this research. Additionally, he was an amazing editor and accomplished writer. I learned a lot from his reviews and suggestions.

I also want to add special recognition for Dr. John Nirenberg, who mentored my work over 5 years as I completed the specialized research this study required and the writing effort that it took to deliver the findings in this dissertation. He spent hours with me, in discussion, and was an effective sounding board as I completed and interpreted the research. His contribution has been invaluable.

Finally, I wish to thank my family and especially my wife, Susan, for her patience while I worked on this project. There have been many lonely days for her while I was ensconced in the study of change management, and not as available as I would like to have been. To all of you, thank you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Change management (CM) is an increasingly important leadership discipline in organizations (Dobbs, Ramaswamy, Stephenson, & Viguerie, 2014; Kotter, 2014). Despite extensive research and development in CM, reported failure rates have ranged between 20-92%. The particular rate reported vary based on who reported the failures and the change activity's context (Beer & Nohria, 2010; Jorgensen, Owen, & Neus, 2008; Keller & Aiken, 2008; Kotter, 1996/2010, 2008, 2014; Messinger & Havely, 2013). These rates are significant and have held constant over many decades (Isern & Pung, 2007; Jorgensen et al., 2008; Keller & Aiken, 2008). CM industry beliefs are that change initiatives fail at a rate of 70% (Conner, 2012; Jorgensen et al., 2008; Keller & Aiken, 2008; Kotter, 2014). The magnitude of these failure rates calls into question why an organization's leaders would attempt to undertake transformational CM.

CM scholars suggested that because change is inevitable, it must be undertaken and managed, regardless of its potential for failure. If an organization is to remain competitive and viable (Bradford & Burke, 2005a; Burke, 2014), they must keep up with changes that affect their operations and continued existence. Some researchers have suggested that the change failure rates are deceptive (Hughes, 2011; Frahm, 2013; Little, 2013). Others (Barends, Janssen, ten Have & ten Have, 2013; Hayes, 2014; Hughes, 2011) argued that researchers have not provided credible evidence to show the seeming inevitability of change failure. These researchers recognized that the change process is more complex than CM theories suggest. Indeed, organizational leaders not only saw this

need for CM, they saw it as a growing and accelerating requirement (Dobbs et al., 2014).

Nevertheless, experiences of organizational change leaders were not reported or included

in the literature, except as case point examples to support scholarly and professional

resource reporting.

This chapter begins with a broad overview of CM to frame the problems that,

according to researchers, result in CM failure, whether functional or social. The problem

statement will identify the breadth and depth of this issue in organizations. An outline of

the conceptual foundation for and nature of the study, the research questions, the

significance of this work, and a summary of the study follows.

Background

This section includes a review of selected works related to organizational change,

the organizational change failure rate, and its significance. It includes the rationale for

considering past research as fragmented, disjointed, and haphazard, resulting in a paucity

of credible fundamental research in CM. The described works encompass a multifaceted

perspective for organizational CM and show that the study of CM is not a simple,

straightforward endeavor.

Burke's Review of Change Management Research

Burke (2014) studied and wrote extensively about CM and was among those who

recognized that successful large-scale, organizational change was rare. Burke used the

term *transformational change* to describe this type of change, with a recommendation to

change strategy, structure, and culture before changing the organization. Burke posited that change initiatives have three components:

1. A framework representing the context of the change.

2. A process, sequential activities and events that when exercised in order over time, result in reaching a changed state.

3. Culture, the behavioral component where the change is to modify the behavior of organizational members.

This three-part approach was unique in Burke's work. Most scholars included one or another of these three elements, only developing one as their primary focus. They might have implied the other two elements in their presentation but did not address them to any extent.

Burke (2014) stated that CM knowledge was limited because what was known was not effective in changing organizations. He further suggested that organizational change theory barely existed, recommending that change facilitators were better off using other scientific and social theory approaches as the basis for their work. Burke's suggestions included theories such as nonlinear complex systems theory and more fundamental psychological theories such as the James-Lange theory of emotions, Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's (1966) two-factor motivation-hygiene theory, and so on. According to Burke, these theories would contribute better to leading change initiatives than the existing theories for CM, which were limited in their strategies for shaping participant behavior.

Burke (2014) offered several examples of organizational development (OD) authors who found that research did not address change completely. Friedlander and Brown (1974), for example, framed their research for targeted interventions to focus on people and technology leading to outcomes. Their people interventions focused on processes such as communication, decision-making, and problem-solving while their technology interventions focused more on structures such as task methods, job design, and organizational design. At the time of Friedlander and Brown's writing, there was evidence that OD interventions had some impact, albeit an unclear one, with no overall guiding theory. Alderfer (1977) concluded that the quality of research was improving but did not include a framework for the what-and-how of change.

In subsequent studies, Fauchaux, Amado, and Laurent (1982) reported a paucity of credible fundamental research contradicting Alderfer (1977) as well as Friedlander and Brown (1974). Fauchaux et al. recognized that changed processes resulted in changed outcomes, giving rise to the complexity of change. They called for stronger links between the social and technical approaches to change, which Burke (2014) saw as not substantiating Friedlander and Brown's findings. Burke reviewed several other authors, including Beer and Walton (1987), Argyris, Putnam, and Smith (1985), Carnall (1982), Legge (1984), Morgan (1983), Weick and Quinn (1999), Oreg, Vakola, and Armenkis (2011), and Ford and Ford (2012). As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2, Burke found a lack of clarity and fundamental research that supported findings. The few studies found by Ford and Ford (2012) that met their research criteria noted a lack of relationship

between change approaches, leader behavior, and leader change activity. Significant findings of both Oreg et al. (2011) and Ford and Ford were the absence of longitudinal study. Burke observed that normal science had moved on to other methods, such as chaos theory, nonlinear systems theory, and related concepts such as fractals. He suggested that this had precipitated changes in research methods.

Svyantek and Brown (2000) and Svyantek and DeShon (1993) suggested that organizational research needed to move in the same direction as those other sciences. Svyantek and Brown referred to this as a complex systems approach, meaning that organizational behavior was unexplained by analysis alone. Complex systems behavior required understanding (a) the variables in systems behavior, (b) the interconnections between these variables, (c) the patterns of interconnection, and (d) that the strengths associated with each are timescale relevant. Burke (2014) noted two concepts that Svyantek and Brown brought to bear, from the works of Liebovitch (1998) and Richter (1986), the phase space and the attractor. The phase space relies on multiple measurements over time. The attractor had two characteristics; (a) sensitivity to initial conditions and (b) stability. Initial conditions derived from organization history and stability is analogous to sensitivity to organization culture.

Burke (2014) noted the work of Porras and Robertson (1992) and Porras and Silvers (1991), who developed concepts of planned versus unplanned change, and first-order versus second-order change. Planned change was deliberate, consciously executed change, and unplanned change was the ad hoc response to unanticipated environmental

change. He described first-order change as incremental change, such as continuous improvement programs, and second-order change as revolutionary or transformational change, the kind of change that affects fundamental restructuring and was paradigmatic change. Friedlander and Brown (1974) provided a framework for understanding organizational change. Porras (1987) provided a model anchored in open-systems theory. Burke's concern was that the bulk of the literature failed to address the complexities noted by Porras and Robertson or Porras and Silvers, nor did it include fundamental research, even in its latest iterations, as mentioned by the earlier authors.

Professional Practitioners on Change Management

As will be discussed in the literature review, many authors have written extensively about CM (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001; Jorgensen et al., 2008; Keller & Aiken, 2008; Kotter, 1996/2010, 2014). These authors were examples of CM professional practitioners, scholars, and researchers. The work of academics and the work of practitioners serving organizations overlapped. Kotter, for example, developed his theory as a consultant with over 100 companies while working as a professor at Harvard. Peters and Waterman (1982/2012), like many practitioners, are frequently cited by scholars, among them Burke (2014), Bradford and Burke, (2005a), and Schein (2010). Peters and Waterman worked for a consulting company that delivered CM services to organizations. They were consultants employed at McKinsey & Company (McKinsey), a management consulting firm with a CM practice. CM seemed most commonly executed by larger private commercial organizations and

government agencies. When these types of organizations plan and execute change, they solicit support from professional consulting firms like McKinsey. This approach was apparent in both scholarly and professional publications. Professional practitioners offer valuable contributions to the definition and execution of CM.

Chapter 2 of this dissertation offers Burke's (2014) rationale for including professional and trade literature in the research, but for now, it is important to note that professional and trade literature add significant value to the body of knowledge in CM by telling stories of CM client engagements. In that way, it helps scholars broaden the practical knowledge associated with applying CM theory.

Organizational Development

OD is considered a separate technology from CM. Bradford and Burke (2005a) presented an edited text containing the work of several authors in the OD field who, in turn, addressed the humanistic aspects of managing change. Bradford and Burke suggested that OD was a subset of organizational change that, while still practiced in organizations, was waning because of its absorption into other disciplines. For example, human resource practitioners, strategic planners, or information technology offices might lead CM. These professions recognized the importance of culture change and incorporated practices for that process from OD into their respective approaches.

As CM diffused into other branches of organizations, CM professionals evolved into more of a middle-management specialist rather than the senior leadership generalists. Bradford and Burke (2005b) suggested that as OD declined and CM grew, its

requirement in organizations changed as other disciplines responded to environmental change. OD authors presented organizational change as a cultural and human resource development phenomenon, rather than as a business structure or process redevelopment problem. Many authors cited by Bradford and Burke observed and reported on the relative success of organizational change over time, noting the high failure rate, and proposing nonprocedural approaches for reducing failure probability. They observed the evolution of OD into organizational change and questioned whether the two disciplines might eventually merge.

The Disputed Failure Rate of Organizational Change

CM service providers often claimed the failure rate for change initiatives was 70%. Chapter 2 will better define this perceived failure rate. A common source for the 70% statistic came from consulting firms, and, in earlier times, scholars and researchers. Those consulting firms are not impartial. They typically conducted their surveys among their clients, a small and potentially nonrepresentative portion of changing organizations. Their interest might have been for marketing purposes rather than objective analysis; thus, they are suspect for accuracy and objectivity. At a minimum, their reports might have been worded carefully to present a skewed picture, serving some purpose other than objective reporting. Additionally, their concept of failure might represent inconsistent logic. The consultants had a clear failure definition, but that definition might have been too restrictive. Consultants see failure as (a) not completing a project on time, (b) not completing the work within the planned budget, and (c) not delivering all the outcomes

originally planned (Jorgensen et al., 2008; Keller & Aiken, 2008). Change initiatives typically take two or three years to complete (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Burke, 2014) and during that period the change process can be dynamic and fluid, affected by other contextual or environmental characteristics. While invoking change, the environment might also be changing, other segments of the organization may change, and even the objectives of the change initiative itself might change. The original goals of the plan might change because of other occurrences during the execution process.

Burke (2014) recognized the high failure rates for CM, noting that in the field of mergers and acquisitions this rate was about 75% and in culture change initiatives it was as high as 90%. He anchored his approach to addressing change in cultural and behavioral change theory, recognizing that those constructs must be dealt with before structural and procedural change can occur. Kotter (1996/2010, 2008, 2014), Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001), and Duck (2001) rooted their theories in structural and procedural change first. Lewin (1997/2010) and Schein (2010) worked exclusively in social dynamics and rooted their theories in cultural and behavioral change. Others presented processes and practices for organizational change and recognized or expressed concern about the high failure rates. These authors are notable CM authorities based on their status as primary references in the organizational change literature. They have suggested that, by following their respective methods, organizational change practitioners can successfully effect change. Among these authors, Kotter (2014) recognized the 70% failure rate outright. However, all focused organizational change approaches to ensure

successful CM initiatives, implying the significance or presence of a probability of CM failure. They all suggested that following their respective processes would mitigate such an outcome.

Hughes (2011) was among a different class of researchers who questioned the legitimacy of the claimed failure rates. This group of authors saw, for a variety of reasons, that the quoted failure rates were unrealistic. The purported failure rates suggested that CM is complicated, dynamic, and not easily reduced to statistics. As will be discussed further in Chapter 2, Hughes suggested that while a popular 70% narrative existed, empirical evidence supporting that narrative did not. He noted that the change process was more complex than existing theory allowed and cannot be summed up so simply by authors whose theories hinged on high failure rates.

Dobbs et al. (2014) represented a category of researchers who recognized that regardless of success or failure, change was an inevitable constant and will continue as such into the foreseeable future. Addressing the noted failure rates might be credible, but that exercise is moot. Dobbs et al. identified an ongoing need for CM, regardless of the change failure narrative. As Dobbs et al. suggested, economic power shifting to emerging markets, the aging population, and advancing technology was driving more change at increasing rates. Organizations must learn to manage change. If the perceived failure rate was true, they need to learn how to overcome the difficulties and manage change successfully. Change was occurring whether they managed it or not. At best, CM was a

way of directing the organization to best respond to its environment while remaining focused on organizational objectives.

Organizational Change and Social Change

Some scholars saw organizational change as a vehicle for fostering social change. For example, Pana (2013) viewed organizational change to grow social effectiveness. Muja, Appelbaum, Walker, Ramadan, and Sodeyi (2014a, 2014b) addressed how sustainability and the concept of corporate social responsibility emerged as a strategic response to reducing resource dependency, securing existence as an ongoing concern while demonstrating corporate citizenship.

These authors showed that CM is a broad subject area with a variety of perspectives and overlaps. Scholars and practitioners saw change differently. Given the variety of viewpoints, it was conceivable to understand how the existing models have not addressed all that is important in CM. Shortcomings in the research included little fundamental research validating conceptual frameworks. There was also little significant contribution from practitioners responsible for leading successful change initiatives—that is, from employee change leaders, accountable for achieving the results intended in planned, transformational CM initiatives. This lack of input was a significant shortcoming in the body of knowledge surrounding CM. A study was needed to explore employee change leader experiences to compare them to what scholars and consultants reported as causing success or failure before fundamental research is possible.

Problem Statement

Despite extensive CM research, change initiative success rates have not improved in organizations (Ackerman Anderson and Anderson, 2010; Burke, 2014; Schein, 2010). The bulk of the literature, derived from case studies presenting case-point analyses, were not generalizable to the field of CM (Burke, 2014). In the interim, organizational leaders are involved in ever accelerating and increasing CM activity. These increasing leadership dynamics are expected to continue to accelerate in the foreseeable future (Burke, 2014; Kotter, 2014).

The general problem of lacking improvement in success rates was exacerbated by the fact that little fundamental research and knowledge existed about how employee leaders of CM viewed or perceived the credibility, dependability, and usability of the prescribed approaches to CM intervention. Leaders responsible for achieving results in CM initiatives cannot rely on the presented solutions as conclusive (Burke, 2014), and are prone to approach every change as a new initiative, every time they begin. Employee change leaders, those people charged with delivering the results of planned change in their employer organizations, cannot ensure that by following recommended approaches for executing change they can achieve success. They do not know if they are safe in the knowledge that their change efforts will equal the outcomes of other successful change leaders. Lacking this knowledge could culminate in significant personal and organizational risk, as the organization's social system deals with the consequences and frequency of failure.

The specific problem was that change leaders do not appear to have reliable knowledge of what other successful employee change leaders do to achieve success or avoid failure. Consequently, those other change leader efforts were not duplicative. Change leaders begin every project as a new endeavor without the benefit of prior experience except in those instances when they are starting a new project, had led other projects before the new one began, and the new initiative included similar social and operational dynamics of the earlier projects. Most change managers never have more than that of one or two transformational change initiative experiences in their careers. Their ability to have developed a skillset was limited.

Scholars and consultants who are professional change leaders have recognized that change is increasing in speed, frequency, and significance. These professionals provided background with recommended procedures for executing change (Kotter, 2014; Jorgensen et al., 2008). However, those authors included little fundamental research substantiating their recommendations for managing change (Burke, 2014). The literature contained few generalizable findings supported by fundamental research. Scholars, researchers, and consultants presented most of the literature. These people were external resources to the organizations that engaged them. As a result, commonly cited statistics for failure and success rates of CM efforts vary widely with little empirical evidence presenting corroborate solutions. I found no indication of CM strategies and tactics used by working change practitioners. That is, no working strategies and tactics the organizational leaders assigned to lead and effect change used, specifically, how they

defined and ensured success, how they identified the actions needed to succeed, and how they continued to manage them through day-to-day activity to completion of the change event. This study was intended to help close that gap by focusing on employee organizational change leaders to determine the lessons they learned while managing transformational change successfully.

Purpose of the Study

Because of their detachment, researchers might have misunderstood the culture and politics of the organizations they studied, and their findings might differ from the perspectives of organization employees, including employee change leaders. The purpose of this empirical phenomenological study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Moustakas, 1994) was to explore the lived experiences of employee change leaders to understand how they effected that change to achieve planned results. The paradigm of these leaders is the day-to-day inner workings of the organization from the position of an employee. It is different from that of the external resources, such as consultants or scholars. Employees, including senior executives, share ongoing day-to-day responsibility and social group membership. They have a culture they belong to and behaviors they exercise that keeps them relevant as members of the group. They know how to stay within social boundaries while interacting with other members of the group and directing their work efforts. I gathered data and information, containing descriptions of these lived experiences from employee change leaders. This data collection was analyzed to go beyond their understanding and descriptions, to deduce the shared essence of their experiences, turning them into the

common experiences that expose the leadership strategies and tactics that led to successful CM.

Research Questions

The overaching reseach questions is: How do employee change leaders, responsible for delivering results in CM initiatives, live their experiences of CM success, specifically, to be held accountable for achieving the results of planned change, to experience the culture of change, and accomplish the results forecasted in planning the change process?

Subquestions derived from this research focus include:

1. What behaviors and other practices do internal change leaders seem to exercise, what do they do differently from what external change practitioners suggest, that results in CM success?

2. What meaning do employee change leaders attribute to the high failure rates in CM and how do these leaders show through their lived experiences to avoid them?

3. How, given the extraordinarily high potential for failure, do these leaders continue to exercise CM practices successfully in their organizations?

Conceptual Framework

This study's underlying conceptual framework used Burke's (2014) model for change, as well as the frameworks and processes suggested by Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010), Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001), Kotter (1996/2010, 2014)

and Peters and Waterman (1982/2012). Burke suggested that CM can be explained using either life-cycle, teleological, dialectical, or evolutionary discourses. He stressed that CM theory itself was, for all intents and purposes, nonexistent. He noted that the known change principles tended to be procedural approaches that fit within Lewin's (1997/2010) model for behavioral change but were incomplete. According to Burke, these principles addressed transitions from some current *as-is* state to a future *to-be* state, following and embellishing Lewin's three-phase process of unfreezing, changing, then refreezing. However, Burke also noted that the principles tended to oversimplify actual change and failed to recognize the ambiguity and dynamic complexity of effecting behavioral or cultural change. He suggested that change is rooted in psychological and behavioral theories such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs or Chin and Benne's strategies for social change (Burke, 2014, p. 194). The areas covered by the most widely accepted CM theories addressed only lightly if at all, the aspects presented by behavioral scholars such as these. Because of this failure to address behavioral and psychological dynamics, Burke believed that the change theories submitted by others were incomplete.

Kotter's (1996/2010) model was a source of Burke's (2014) criticism. Kotter presented a logical, sequential approach for organizational change, stressing change as more of a procedural activity, transitioning from an as-is to a to-be state. Kotter addressed humanistic and behavioral aspects of change but not as critical or primary objectives of his approach. He did not emphasize behavioral aspects, except by demonstration in case examples throughout his writing.

Nystrom, Hoog, Garvare, Weinehall, and Ivarsson (2013) noted that most of the widely accepted theories of change were similar and seemed incomplete or oversimplified. The authors of such theories recognized sociological elements but treated them as secondary to mechanically structuring change as a sequential process. Kotter's (1996/2010) theory is relevant because of its status as the second most cited theory in CM and one of the more commonly known in organizations (the most cited was E. H. Schein's (2010) model addressing organizational psychology). Appelbaum, Habashy, Malo, and Shafiq (2012) noted that Kotter's (1996/2010) book was cited more than 4,000 times in Google Scholar, and many academic texts include his model. Appelbaum et al. (2012) called Kotter's book a key reference in CM but noted that the work lacked empirical evidence, which is consistent with most works in CM. Appelbaum et al. reviewed the literature for the efficacy of Kotter's (1996/2010) eight-step process for CM and found that while the literature supported the steps in Kotter's model, there were limitations in how the process was applied. These included an overly rigid approach to CM and recognizing that some measures were unnecessary in certain contexts. The model also did not address important aspects noted by others and added difficulty in dealing with the complexity of change.

Beyond showing that they exist, Kotter (1996/2010) did not emphasize the importance of humanistic and sociological concepts. He demonstrated without describing the behavioral characteristics exhibited by actors in his cases as they responded to change. Other authors have treated these aspects similarly (Dobbs et al., 2014; Duck,

2001; Kotter, 2014; Peters & Waterman, 1982/2012). Such characteristics, which may be idiosyncratic or reflective of good leadership practices assumed by these authors, may be most crucial in determining success or failure of any organizational change effort. Kotter (1996/2010) suggested an eight-stage process for managing change. While he did not relate those stages to Lewin's (1997/2010) model, it is possible to align these two theories in a comparative model. The same goes for Burke's (2014) approach, as well as that of Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010). Lewin wrote about the sociology of change at the individual behavioral level. By aligning Lewin's phases with Kotter's eight stages, the parallels between their concepts become evident while adding the sociological insight of Lewin.

In another example, Duck (2001) presented a procedure in five phases, similar to Kotter's (1996/2010) eight stages. These phases can be aligned to show the parallels between Kotter's and Duck's approaches. Duck's process recognized human issues surrounding change, presenting what others saw as resistance, as normal behavior in the evolving change event. Aligning Duck's phases with Kotter's stages shows insight into the human issues that Duck saw in Kotter's activity.

Thus, it is feasible to align the aspects of CM presented by others with the procedural logic suggested by Burke (2014) or Kotter (1996/2010) and see a more comprehensive description of an effective CM process. Testing the usefulness of such an approach, while possible as a secondary objective of this research, was beyond the scope of this study. However, such a consolidation could enhance future research.

Nature of the Study

Because of their detachment, external researchers and consultants may have misunderstood the culture and politics of the organizations with which they consulted. Their findings might differ from the perspectives of organization employees, particularly those of employee change leaders. The purpose of this empirical phenomenological study is to explore the lived experiences of these employee change leaders—those charged with bringing about change—to understand the essence of how internal change leaders, as employees of changing organizations, successfully lead change. It is to explain how this differed from what researchers and scholars described as the mechanics of successful change. The perspective was the day-to-day inner workings of the organization from the viewpoint of an employee, which differs from that of the external resource. I gathered data and information that showed how these leaders led change initiatives to fruition, by bracketing and reducing their lived stories to the essence of their practices as successful change leaders. This data collection was structured to go beyond understanding the behaviors, leadership, findings, actions, and results of employee change leaders. Instead, I sought fundamental understanding of what these practices were in their purest sense and how they created success.

The nature of this study was qualitative using an empirical phenomenological approach (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015). This method explored CM practices, gathering the lived experiences of employee change leaders as they confronted the underlying phenomena that caused the success or failure of planned

change initiatives in organizations. These experiences were bracketed and deduced from the stories of lived experiences told by CM leaders within changing organizations, the people charged with executing change plans and achieving the results expected in the change initiative.

Organizations were selected based on their inclusion in targeted industries for this study because of a perception that they experience higher or more frequent change rates than most other industries. The actual essences of change initiative success and failure were expected to be credible and dependable. The approach to this study was to interview organizational senior change leaders to learn how they considered these phenomena, how they described them occurring within their organization, and through comparative analysis to reduce their explanations to their purest form, the essence of their underlying character without the filter of participant interpretation. The study participant group consisted of 10 people, which was what was needed to achieve data saturation. Data saturation occurred when additional interviews did not change the key findings and when any additional data was redundant compared to earlier collected information (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). These analysis results expressed the essence of transformational change that actual employee change leaders considered being the causes of success or failure, how they explained the high failure rates reported for this sort of activity, and why they continued to exercise CM, given the high failure rates reported in the CM industry.

Operational Definitions

Change framework: Some change leaders recognized that change occurs within a framework (Isern & Pung, 2006; Jorgensen, Bruehl, & Franke, 2014; Keller & Aiken, 2008; Peters & Waterman, 1982/2012). Organizations have a structure which are abstractly defined frameworks that surround their operations. These frameworks define the scope of organizational elements and the organization as a whole. Many change leaders considered change occurring within such frameworks. For example, McKinsey did not consider change processes possible and suggested that all change happens within a framework (Rasiel, 1999). I discuss the framework in greater detail in Chapter 2.

CM success (or failure): Jorgensen et al. (2008) defined CM success, as did several others, as (a) completing a project on time, (b) completing the work within the planned budget, and (c) delivering all of the outcomes planned at the beginning of the initiative. Others have significantly contradicted this definition. For example, Hughes (2011) indicated that change is more complex than this simple definition allowed. Dobbs et al. (2014) also said that managing change is more macroeconomic than existing theory allowed, noting that change is a constant, an inevitability, and learning to manage it is a requirement, regardless of how simplistically stated control definitions were. Thus, CM success (or failure) is undefined and may become a secondary outcome of this research.

CM: Burke (2014) defined CM as the integration of aspects of management consulting, such as business strategy, modifying information systems, or organizational design and structure services, with organization change methods, based on applied

behavioral science and organizational psychology. Ackerman Anderson and Anderson

(2010) preferred the term *change leadership,* noting that management focuses more on

standardization, maximizing consistency and eliminating variation while leadership

focuses more on transcending the management paradigm, applying creative solutions to

transformational change. Exercising leadership goes beyond management.

Change manager: The organization employee assigned leadership responsibility

for directing a transformational change initiative. If the entire organization was changing,

that leader might be the CEO or another member of the senior staff assigned that

responsibility. In larger organizations, it might be a senior director, vice president,

division or department leader, or specialist who reported to the C-level, empowered with

the authority of the Chief Executive to complete the change initiative.

Change process: Many authors viewed CM as a process (Duck, 2001; Kotter,

1996/2010, 2014; Schein, 2010). Part of managing change entails defining a sequential

process, designed to execute a logical chain of steps that when completed, should result

in an orderly change. These are typically done using project management techniques that

organize tasks, activities, and events to occur in sequentially with goals, milestones,

tasks, dependencies, and so on, using the tools of the project management discipline.

Cultural change: Many authors suggested that change was a function of

individual behavior and organizational psychology (Bradford & Burke, 2005a; Burke,

2014; Schein, 2010). Their premise was that every organization has a unique culture that

must change to effect transformations. Without culture change, transformational change was not possible.

External and internal resources: Full-time employees of organizations and members of the culture, the social group that makes up the organization. External resources are consultants, scholars, and researchers brought in by organizations under contract, to work in support of the organization, but who are not employees and not members of the culture or social group of the organization.

Organization change: Daft (2010) defined organization change as the strategic innovation exercised by organizations to stay aligned with their changing environment.

Organization: Jones (2010) defined an organization as an intangible tool used to coordinate action toward achieving a goal. Daft (2010) defined the organization as a goal-directed social entity, a deliberately structured, coordinated activity system linked to an external environment. Daft said that the organization is an assemblage of people and their relationships with each other. These relationships exist to perform essential functions to attain goals.

Transformational change: Burke (2014) defined organization change as planned or unplanned evolutionary or revolutionary change. Most change is unplanned, evolutionary change that occurs spontaneously in the organization. Occasionally, the organization undertakes planned, revolutionary change that results in most or all of a simultaneously modified or new vision, mission, strategies, leadership, products and

services, structure, business processes, and culture. This type of change, a rare occurrence in organizations, is transformational change.

Assumptions

The public postsecondary education (education), pharmaceutical, and manufacturing industries appeared positioned for higher instances of transformational change. The way they approached and managed this change is similar. Growth and decline were both presumed to be indicators of high rates of change, given that growth and decline both tend to cause or bring about reorganization, which in turn leads to changed vision, mission, strategy, leadership, and culture. The fastest growth industries reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015) were in the sectors of health care and social assistance, professional and business services, information, financial activities, state and local government, and mining. Pharmaceuticals are a subset of healthcare, education is a function of state and local government, and manufacturing has been declining as the U. S. transitions from an industrial based to a knowledge-based economy. I sought participants in these sectors. CM is a general management and leadership philosophy versus a technical, structural, or functional discipline of operations. The techniques used to manage change cross boundaries from one industry to another. Transformational change occurs in all industries and organizational structures but is more prevalent in high growth and rapidly declining environments. When a transformational change requirement occurs, organization survival requires leadership to address the demand it creates.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study was transformational change initiatives conducted in small to large business organizations in the education, pharmaceutical, and manufacturing sectors as defined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. These organizations were sought throughout the United States (U.S.) and found primarily through referrals. This focus facilitated discovery of change initiatives more readily than others and provided ample potential participants with recent change experiences that were more easily accessible and representative. There was a large population of recently experienced change leaders found in these sectors, and the study took advantage of that. Education has undergone significant change over the past 15 to 20 years and has exercised transformational change in keeping with that trend. The pharmaceutical industry, a subset of Healthcare, is a major industry in the Northeastern U.S. that has also been undergoing significant change. Manufacturing has also undergone significant change recently as the U.S. economy evolves from an industrial to more of a knowledge-based economy. As for CM, the research contained a more generic concept, more related to leadership, general management, and organization development in a broader sense than to some unique aspect of any one industry. CM concepts were applicable across industries and organizations of all types. The management of change in education organizations was conducted in the same manner as in any other organization. The literature showed that CM leadership is not unique to any one industry. For example, Kotter (1996/2010) said he conducted his research while working at over 100 companies. He did not indicate any

particular industry where his findings were more prevalent. Likewise, while Burke (2014) offered extensive examples, he did not place them in any industry. Burke's work cited others extensively, for example, Porras and Silvers (1991) and Weisbord (1976), Nadler and Tushman (1977), and Tichy (1983). None of these suggested any one industry stood out over another as when experiencing transformational change. The same concepts seem to apply across industries, regardless of where they existed.

Delimitations

The delimitations for this study included, first, a limitation to transformational change. I sought participants whose change initiatives were to modify or change the mission, strategy, leadership, culture, and design of an organization, simultaneously. Participant representatives were senior executives, general managers, and directors responsible for leading transformational change initiatives. The research conduct was primarily through one-on-one telephone interviews with these change leaders. This approach facilitated comfortable communication between the researcher and participants and fostered candor in the discussions. Participants were inclined to speak more openly and fluidly in the telephone interview setting and established a relationship with the investigator. That was easiest for them in one-on-one telephone interviews. This approach also enabled the researcher to reach a higher level participant as part of the interview process, thereby improving the depth of data in what the participants expressed. Video conferencing was considered for this. However, most participants were unable to participate in that manner.

Limitations

Conducting the study in a natural setting made it difficult to replicate in other contexts. While organizations are similar in a macro sense, the nuances of structure, culture, and process in one organization can differ substantially from others. Findings in one organization may be unique and not duplicable. The placement of change leaders in many organizations may be at wrong levels or in wrong departments to empower them with directing change. Their focus during CM may be too specialized in one discipline or another. When effecting change, research has shown that change leaders should be the most senior officials of the organization or a direct report, empowered as if they were the organization leader. As Burke (2014) and Bradford and Burke (2005a) pointed out, most evolutionary change occurred gradually, in isolated actions in one department or another, or in various smaller, more specialized projects that do not necessarily impact the entire organization. Many organizations have relegated CM to a middle management function in one department or another that is more focused on functional change than on organization or culture change. This study needed to ensure that the example change initiatives of a participating organization were representative of transformational change rather than of the typical functional changes that occur at lower organization levels. Focusing on the credibility of the change initiative, its transferability, its dependability and confirmability, should facilitate limiting the research to change.

Significance of the Study

Change will continue into the foreseeable future, more pronounced and significant as time goes on (Burke, 2014; Dobbs et al., 2014; Kotter, 2014). Dobbs et al. (2014) noted how the forces of change over the past 50 years have disrupted industries and changed societies and, given the shifts in social systems and technology, particularly in emerging markets, will continue to do so with greater impact. Dobbs et al. suggested that organizational change approaches will necessarily continue for the foreseeable future. Increasingly efficient organizational change processes are needed to facilitate it. These authors noted that, despite advances in organizational change, the reported high failure rates have remained relatively constant over the past 55 years. They suggested that the organizational change improvement claims might not be conclusive. Dobbs et al. noted that for all the effort in defining organizational change, the lack of reduction in the failure rate for this type of initiative suggested a need for more research, or, at the least, a redefinition of change success. Perhaps failure is a step that should be anticipated and integrated into the designs of change efforts, an argument also supported by Burnes (2011), Hughes (2011), Nystrom et al. (2013), among others.

Significance to Practice

Contemporary theorists have not yet established the criteria needed to demonstrate success or failure in CM initiatives empirically. It seemed that little data presented internal change leader experiences and how they accomplished change successfully. Professional and trade practitioners have developed established criteria for

managing change, but that criteria may not have accounted for group dynamics and cultural issues while changing. Their approaches seemed more mechanistic or procedural. They addressed culture but only at theoretical levels. They prescribed success for project completion (Jorgensen et al., 2008; Keller & Aiken, 2008) without addressing the leadership tactics and social influences that got them there. Consultants and scholars tended to have an arm's length perspective regarding organizational change. They demonstrated processes for and claimed or implied success using CM models. They might not have been as familiar with other organizational dynamics such as culture, politics, and personalities, which tend to significantly influence outcomes (Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001; Burke, 2014; Burnes & By, 2012; Marshak, 2005; Pasmore, 2014). While high failure rates persisted, the consequences of failure were less significant for scholars and consultants than for employees of changing organizations. The authors cited in this study were primarily scholars, consultants, and other external resource organizational change proponents. This study strove to understand the behaviors and practices exercised by employee change leaders and present them in a way that is generalizable and transferable to other organizations. This understanding could significantly expand the practices of CM, could lead to reductions in the failure rates for CM initiatives, and show positive contributions to improving success in CM activities.

Significance to Theory

While the goal of this project was gathering insight into why change failure rates remain high, one aim was to broaden understanding of CM viability instead of accepting

the high failure rates at face value. This research explored change initiatives led by employee change leaders, who unlike consultants, are paid to direct change initiatives from start to finish, are socially connected to the organization where they need to retain a level of trust, respect, and appreciation. The study was designed to find these leaders' success stories and the essence of their understanding of the causes of this phenomenon. I studied how these leaders behave in their organizations, how that participation translates to motivating success or failure, and how that precipitated social stability within the organization. This study compared these findings with those of the scholars and practitioners in the literature, to understand what working change leaders do differently to achieve success. Publishing these results will document an important addition to knowledge of CM theory and practice.

Significance to Positive Social Change

The literature showed that most reporting in CM came from scholars, scholar-practitioners, and external consultants. These are external resources to the working organizations that exercise CM as a matter of course of their continued operations. Their perspectives were different. There was little direct reporting from actual working change leaders, those people responsible for effecting change in their respective employer organizations, by implementing the recommendations of scholars, scholar-practitioners, consultants, or others professing CM knowledge. On-the-job CM practitioner experiences differ significantly from what researchers, scholar-practitioners, and consultants observed cause CM success or failure. The stress applied in conducting this study was to focus on

the knowledge of the on-the-job change leader. Scholars, scholar-practitioners, and consultants report findings based on their involvement in CM efforts as external resources. They are inclined to attend, observe, and report observations but may not have been participants in the social structures or political interactions of the organizations they observed. That participation differs from the experience of working change leaders, responsible for executing the recommendations of the consultants and authors who wrote about CM while maintaining credible work and social relationships with organization members. The employee experience may have been affected by the need to negotiate terms and tactics to obtain trust, respect, and cooperation. Indeed, change efforts or OD interventions may have been undertaken by these practitioners without knowledge of academic theory or the benefit of consulting with other successful CM professionals. This anomaly was a unique difficulty sometimes expressed as the *knowing-doing gap* (Pfeffer & Sutton, 1999).

This study was conducted to gain an understanding of the causes of CM success from the unique perspective of the on-the-job employee CM practitioner, compared to that of scholar-practitioners and consultants. Employee change leaders are a unique subset of change practitioners. At a minimum, the change practitioner profession includes academics, consultants, and organizational employees who lead change initiatives. Scholars include professors, researchers, and instructors who study CM as a concept. Consultants include both independent specialists and representatives of management consulting firms offering CM services to organizations. These individuals, while

influential, do not lose credibility in a failure, the way an employee does. The employee

leader is more heavily invested in the success of the change and stands to lose more than

other practitioners in the event of failure. They tend to have a narrower, more hands-on

range of experience. They are more politically and socially connected inside the

organization, and they might have their entire career defined by this one success or

failure; a failure that could permanently disrupt career advancement. Academics and

consultants, by the nature of their work, are more likely to maintain a sense of distance

and neutrality. They are less liable to be threatened by failure than is the employee leader.

Consequently, the employee outlook for, and actual dynamics of, CM success or failure

might significantly differ from that of the external consultant who gives advice and

guidance, or the academic who conducts a study of change and views each failure as an

expansion of knowledge rather than a loss of credibility. The on-the-job leader remains at

risk for immediate, irreversible career damage, lost credibility, and diminished trust and

respect. Such failure not only affects the employee change leader, but it may also affect

the welfare of the entire organization and possibly their surrounding community. Failure

can lead to layoffs, which in turn, lead to less demand for goods and services afforded by

the community. This is Calibresi's (2016) perfect vicious circle, that in worst case

scenarios could lead to economic and social recession or depression.

Summary

This chapter included a review of selected works in CM and explored the

literature for a better understanding of the causes of transformational CM success or

failure. Exacerbated by the fact that the literature is incomplete in reporting how CM failure occurs, the research problem was to discover how organizational employee change leaders affected changes successfully. This qualitative phenomenological study is designed to distill the essence of their activity, thereby developing a more generalized finding from their experiences. The purpose of this research was to identify the behaviors and tactics that cause transformational change success or contributed to reducing the failure potential. I explored how employee change leaders defined success and failure, what strategies and tactics they applied to achieve success, how they applied them, and the why, what, and way they did this to avoid failure.

This chapter has been an overview leading into Chapter 2, offering a synthesis of the work already completed in CM. The review in Chapter 2 will stress the state of the existing literature, elaborate on why this research is necessary, and demonstrate how this work will result in the expansion of knowledge in CM.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The study problem noted in Chapter 1 is two-fold. First, there was little knowledge about how employee leaders of CM viewed or perceived the credibility, dependability, and usability of the prescribed approaches to CM intervention found in the literature. Leaders responsible for delivering results in CM initiatives cannot rely on the presented solutions as compelling (Burke, 2014). Those leaders are prone to approach every change as a completely new initiative every time they begin. Employee change leaders, the personnel charged with delivering the results of planned change in their employer organizations, cannot ensure that by following the recommended approaches for executing change, they can succeed. They do not know if they are safe in the knowledge that their change efforts will equal the outcomes of other successful change leaders. Second, change leaders do not appear to have reliable knowledge of what other successful employee change leaders do to achieve success or avoid failure. Consequently, those other efforts cannot be duplicated. Change leaders begin projects without the benefit of prior experience except when previous projects have included similar social and operational dynamics.

The extensive research in CM consisted predominantly of case studies. Findings and recommendations tended to be descriptions of isolated solutions for observed, pointed incidents than based on learned generalizable or transferable experiences. These findings and recommendations were mostly from interviewing and working with multiple participants who actively led change projects through to completion. In the literature

review that follows, although numerous scholars have described strategies and tactics that led to change failure, in no books or articles, have authors described direct experiences of managing change. This shortcoming is particularly true as it relates to encountering and addressing conflicts and problems while guiding a change initiative from the perspective of a line manager or senior executive, the people primarily accountable for success in leading a change initiative.

This chapter contains the approach used to explore the literature for successful CM initiatives and includes a presentation of the conceptual framework underlying this study. Many authors recommended tactics and techniques for managing change, summarized in the following chapter. They recognized three areas of concentration: (a) the cultural and behavioral aspects of change, (b) the frameworks within which change occurs, and (c) the procedural aspects of organizing and managing change projects from start to finish.

The review began with the definitions of success and failure offered by CM practitioners and reported from organizations undergoing planned change. The search included a review of the models underlying major CM approaches and how successful change leaders achieved their success or avoided failure. Finally, the literature review addressed why knowing what leads to success has not translated into a reducing the failure rates for CM efforts.

Literature Search Strategy

This section includes a description of the approaches taken to review CM success and failure. Relevant information found in peer-reviewed literature from academic journals, trade and professional books, articles from reputable business and management publications, and literature from management consulting firms that offered the CM services underlying these searches. The section relied on Burke's (2014) argument for the inclusion of trade and professional literature in this sort of review. Burke suggested that trade and professional publications were needed to ensure adequate coverage of the subject due to the breadth of literature available from CM executives, consultants, and experienced practitioners. The trade and professional publications included in this search were reputable publications. Many of the trade and professional articles from these publications were found in academic databases such as ABI/INFORM Complete and Business Source Complete and were often cited in peer-reviewed literature. Burke noted that professional publications contributed knowledge beyond that of academic journals. He cautioned that a narrower scope of vision on the part of these authors might limit their efficacy since they tended not to include reference citations or independent verification and validation of their findings. However, these authors, whether academics, consultants, executives, or other practitioners, were experienced professionals. They invested the integrity of their professional status in seeing CM represented fairly, and their contributions led to a broader understanding of the phenomenon.

The academic sources searched returned peer-reviewed articles from the ABI/INFORM Complete, Academic Source Complete, Business Source Complete, Google Scholar, ProQuest, and Thoreau databases. Examples of the non-academic sources searched included *The McKinsey Quarterly, Bain & Company Insights, International Business Machines (IBM) Systems Magazine, American Management Review, Bloomberg Business Week, Inc. Magazine, Forbes,* and *the Houston Chronicle*. Additionally, relevant material was sought from the websites of McKinsey, Bain & Company, IBM, Boston Consulting (BCG), and several smaller consulting companies.

This literature review process began with studying academic, trade, and professional texts for CM. A significant number of scholars and consultants who practice CM as advisors authored most of these books and articles. For example, John Kotter, professor emeritus at Harvard University, also appeared to work to assist organizations with CM. His book, *Leading Change*, was based on over 10 years of consulting experience with over 100 organizations (Kotter, 1996/2010). While his text outlined his consulting experiences, that outline seemed more of an example of what appeared to be standard practices; not citing references, not enabling independent verification, or not providing any corroboration for his claims. For this reason, Burke (2014) classified Kotter's works as trade and professional publications, even though most of it was written during his tenure as a professor at Harvard and published by the Harvard Business Review Press. The significance of this fact was that Kotter's (1996/2010) *Leading Change* was the second most cited academic source in the ABI/INFORM and Business

Source Complete databases. In another example, Hammer and Champy (2002), a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and a management consultant, respectively, wrote about re-engineering corporations. Hammer and Champy recognized change was a dynamic of business process redesign and reorganization but focused more on re-engineering processes than on CM. As discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, they also stated their unscientific estimate was that 50% to 70% of re-engineering efforts did not achieve their intended results. Claims like these are significant because so many other authors cite them, making them part of the management canon.

OD and CM are mature disciplines with an extensive literature. A cursory search of Amazon.com showed almost 104,000 titles listed for CM. A search of the databases at Walden University revealed 38,000 articles on the topic, and Google Scholar returned about 341,000 titles. Several searches were conducted to refine the review and limit the search to literature pertinent to understanding CM success and failure rates. Each had a unique context derived from the study's preliminary research. These included the following:

- Where the authors seemed to concur with or support the existence of the high failure rates suggested in the initial studies.

- Where the authors seemed to question, disagree with, or contradict the failure rates proposed in the studies that suggest them.

- That is presenting CM models and solutions.

- That explicitly defined change success and failure.

- That listed or suggested causes of success and failure in CM initiatives.

- That recognized a distinction between OD and CM.

- That conflated OD and CM.

- That perceived change as a constant, regardless of success or failure.

- That addressed the failure to effect failure rate change in CM. or

- That recognized the potential for social change, and the influence CM had in this context.

The approach to this study began with a review of professional and trade literature for CM. I examined academic research relevant to organizational theory, including organizational theory textbooks that included chapters or sections on CM. Next was a search in academic library databases for research addressing one or more of each of the perspectives previously mentioned. The search concluded with a review of nonacademic professional and trade literature for relevant articles and publications that contributed knowledge in CM, recognizing Burke's (2014) observation that this research is significant. This non-academic search followed the same perspectives, searching for professional and trade literature for research addressing one or more of the perspectives listed above.

Although I made every effort to limit results to peer-reviewed literature, this subject has been studied and written about extensively by consultant CM professionals and practitioners outside the academic world in non-academic papers, magazines, online resources, and non-peer-reviewed journals that address change. Many academic scholars

also published this way (Burke, 2014). Burke stressed that the broadest research basis should include non-peer-reviewed publications with any comprehensive literature review in CM.

The difficulty with using nonacademic literature was that its authors tend not to cite references or to independently verify their findings and recommendations. Therefore, as Burke (2014) cautioned, these works, while significant, may tend toward the anecdotal and are limited in generalizability. Concerning that scope, they can be helpful, contributing to CM knowledge. Thus, expanding the search breadth to include these works broadened the efficacy of this review.

Conceptual Framework

The phenomenon studied in this research was managing transformational change in structured organizations. Planned transformational change affects the organization system to such an extent that the system is modified in its entirety and supports an entirely new and different mission. It involves changing strategies, systems, leadership, and culture (Burke, 2014). The organization that emerges from transformational change is something different from when the organization identified the change needed and planning for that change started.

The three elements of change in organizations were (a) the behavioral and cultural, (b) the organizational framework, and (c) the change processes. What follows represents how the various researchers defined these elements.

Behavioral and Cultural Change

Behavioral and cultural changes were those social and individual behaviors that organization members exercised to complete their work, to interact with each other, with leadership, and with the external environment. Effecting behavioral and cultural change was manipulating social and cultural programs in a way that organizational members, both as individuals and as groups, change their behaviors in concert with organizational changes. Schein (2010) identified these best in his *Stages of Learning/Change* (p. 300). His first stage involved disconfirmation of what is, the creation of survival anxiety, and the creation of psychological safety to overcome learning anxiety. His second and third stages were similar, and together, they comprised the seven steps of his approach to cultural change. These were behavior change techniques Schein expected as part of a change initiative. Schein was unique in that he was focused completely on cultural and behavioral change.

Organizational Frameworks

Frameworks are the structural elements that the group operates within, including the artifacts that support that structure. Burke (2014) referred to the framework as the organizational model, as a representation of the organization. He considered the framework as the *what* to change. Behavioral and cultural change defined how the change leader changes the behavior of the organization by changing the behavior of the individuals, the groups, and the micro-cultures within the organization. Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010) viewed frameworks differently. They defined them as the

"static depictions of types of change activity requiring attention, such as business case, communications, training, and work redesign" (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010, "Leading Transformation Requires," para. 4). Peters and Waterman (1982/2012) developed the McKinsey 7-S Framework while employed at McKinsey. Figure 1 depicts that framework.
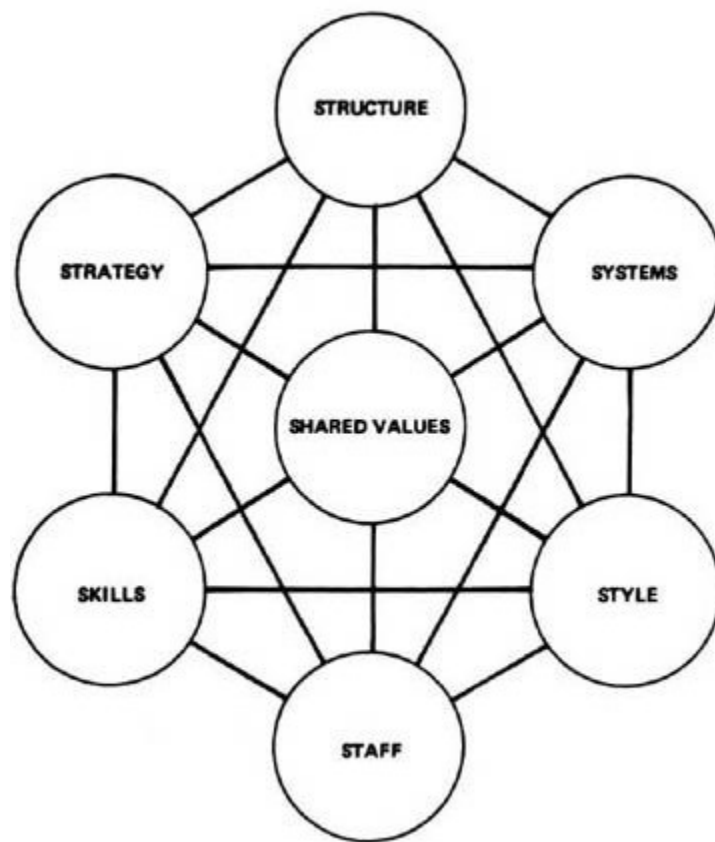
Figure 1. McKinsey 7-S framework. Adapted from "Criteria for Success," by T. J. Peters and R. H. Waterman, Jr., 1982/2012, p. 11, *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies* (Collins Business Essentials edition), Used with permission.

As shown in Figure 1, Peters and Waterman (1982/2012) depicted structural elements as static artifacts of organization structure. They noted that change occurred within the bounds of a framework such as this. Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010) also recognized, in addition to the framework, the importance of a change process for guiding the change in conjunction with a change framework to frame the scope of the work.

Change Processes

A change process is a linear sequence of planned activities and events, executed to move an organization from a current state to some future state (Burke, 2014). Burke defined the change process as the how, the implementation, and adoption of change. Burke's approach prescribed how a change is planned, launched, implemented, and sustained. This approach is the application of project management techniques such as planning a series of activities and events along a timeline, with milestones toward completion, assignments of tasks to responsible individuals and tracking progress to ensure achievement of task completions with both interim and end-state goals.

Most approaches to change were either process models or combinations of process models and frameworks. Kotter's (1996/2010) eight steps were sequential, although as Kotter indicated the steps did not need implementation in the order given, if the organization addressed all eight steps. Duck (2001) called her approach a framework but displayed it in a conventional timeline configuration with a sequential order. Peters and Waterman (1982/2012) and Rasiel (1999) suggested that McKinsey did not have a

process for CM. They worked from the 7-S model. However, the first thing they do when engaging with a client is to prepare a process plan jointly. Every process plan is a custom development at the beginning of every project. There were some confused definitions in the literature for frameworks and processes, covered in more detail in the next section.

Framework, Process, Behavioral and Cultural Model Confusion

The research examples found in this study seemed based mostly on work where external change agents had conducted programs to help bring about change at client sites. The observations of those external resources served as the basis for their change models. Those studies did not include contributions from working CM leaders, who were employees of changing organizations. While overall change failure rates have not declined, whatever internal change leaders do in those organizations that were successful, must work. If 70% of change initiatives fail, as an industry mantra seemed to suggest, then 30% are successful. How those 30% organizations do that, how they achieve success, was not documented in the literature.

An example of reporting change success rates without describing what successful CM leaders did was Jorgensen et al. (2014). Jorgensen et al., employees of IBM, conducted surveys among IBM clients and found that change initiatives managed by experienced change leaders were 92% successful. Compared to the generalized 70% failure rate, the 8% failure rate found by Jorgensen et al. suggested that what was reported by others might be incomplete or erroneous. However, Jorgensen et al. also found that novice change leaders were only 8% successful, implying a 92% failure rate in

this category. Across the board, these authors found that on average, only 41% of survey participants were considered successful. What these authors suggested was that successful change leaders exercised different strategies. However, Jorgensen et al. did not report on or validate what these successful leaders did to ensure success. That element, the activity of successful, experienced change leaders, seemed missing from the data reported in the literature.

Descriptions of the working hypotheses of the major theorists in CM follow. No single theorist framed a generalizable model for transformational change. The change model derived from comparing the literature review authors works showed three parts to a change plan, as discussed above the three parts were a framework, a process, and a behavioral and cultural element. Each part required attention or the likelihood of change initiative failure increased. For example, Duck (2001), Kotter (1996/2010), and Schein (2010) all represented change as a process. Duck graphically displayed a process timeline from start to finish, elaborating behavioral reactions that typically occur during that process. She pointed out behavioral elements considered by most as resistance, is normal behavior and part of the learning, doing, accepting mind-shift that a change participant must go through. Kotter listed eight steps that he said must happen organizationally for a change initiative to succeed. Each of those steps was a process in itself. When he described causes of failure at each step, those descriptions were behaviorally oriented. However, Kotter did not offer any explanation as to how successful companies dealt with behavioral issues. For example, Kotter's first step, create a sense of urgency, suggested

involving a large segment of the staff in adopting that sense of urgency. Each of his steps takes a similar approach for engaging personnel in that respective step, and each is intended to effect behavioral change as part of the organizational change. Each theory addressed a part of what would be a comprehensive model while more or less either vaguely referring to the other parts or not addressing them at all. None of the theorists found in this research recognized s complete transformational change model with appropriate emphasis in all its parts, although Burke (2014) came closest, emphasizing the importance of cultural change along with his framework.

Schein (2010) focused on cultural change and listed 10 steps to give leaders a quick way to decipher cultural issues. He meant these steps as tools to assess their relevance to a change program. His actions were similar to the framework suggested by Jorgensen et al. (2014). Schein's first step was "obtaining leadership commitment" (p. 317). Jorgensen et al.'s strongest critical factor for success was "top management sponsorship" (p. 6). Jorgensen et al. proposed a framework for managing change, not a process. However, what Jorgensen et al. presented as a framework was a process. This difference is an example of the overlapping logic that seems to permeate the CM industry. Many authors seemed to offer processes that were frameworks. Others seemed to offer frameworks as processes, and a few offered both.

The framework defined by Burke (2014), Peters and Waterman (1982/2012), Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010), and others, was the combination of structures, processes, resources, hierarchy, and so on, found in an organization. Kotter (2014)

defined the framework as any strategic, innovative, hierarchical, or change related

activity that consumed inputs and converted them to outputs by throughput within the

constraints of the organization. Burke (2014) defined a framework as a model that

simplifies the structures and dynamics surrounding the change that represented reality.

This depiction of the relevant organization makes sense to the people who work there and

helps organize the facts in ways that promote understanding and activity. Frameworks are

grounded in open systems theory. Thus, a framework is the scope of activity, assets, and

people that exercise the processes to result in change. For CM, those elements of these

features applied to change, recognizing whether the entire organization was involved in

the change or not. If some part of the organization does not participate in the change, that

becomes part of the external environment of the part that remains involved in the change.

The framework is what changes.

Burke (2014) went on to say that without the concurrence and cooperation of the

people who worked within the framework, change became impossible, or at least

extraordinarily difficult. Behavioral change was the activity required to change the

understanding and beliefs held by the organization members, needed to support the

change initiative. Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010) stressed the importance of

changing the mindset of the organization leadership before attempting to implement or

invoke change. Burke (2014) commented that to foster change the leadership must alter

the attitude of the organization. This alteration required a focus on invoking behavior

change.

These differences demonstrated the different perspectives from each author. Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010) provided a conceptual overview of transformational change and what was required to lead it successfully, and Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001) described a change process methodology. The two works, together, provided Anderson and Ackerman Anderson's understanding and approaches to managing transformational change. They suggested that most change process models were too general or only partially reflected what was needed to lead transformational change. Burke's (2014) position was that most change models were drawn from case studies and were not generalizable to the problems affecting transformations. He advocated reverting to earlier, more generalizable, theories. For example, he noted that when Drucker (1954/2010) espoused his *Theory of the Business,* he addressed transformational change, as Senge (2006) did when he proposed the *thinking organization,* or as Argyris and Schön (1978) did when they suggested *feedback loops*. Burke further noted that When Audia, Locke, and Smith (2000) wrote about the paradox of success, they were addressing change. Burke presented conceptual and integrated models, focused on leading and managing change. He noted that change is a continuous inevitability, a linear process of phases and stages that these types of models help to understand and enable management progress toward an eventual future state defined in a change plan.

Duck (2001) called her model a process but showed that it grew from a starting framework. Her process addressed organizational and individual behavior as the

organization recognized and progressed through a series of stages. These steps led a transition to a more focused and responsive organization, more aligned with the environmental changes that drove the need for change. While her model presented a process, that process functioned within the context of an implied organizational framework and achieved change by following a process-oriented timeline.

Kotter (1996/2010) referred to his model as an eight-stage framework but described a process. He did not present a conceptual framework in the manner that Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010) or Schein (2010) described. Kotter described contexts for findings at a higher level by giving excerpted case examples, describing each with the actions the case participants took to deal with them. He seemed aware of underlying frameworks for organizations, giving recommendations in familiar structural terms, showing examples of various cases that demonstrated his eight findings and how they were worked out in each respective case. However, these cases occurred within an implied framework without explicitly describing it. The reader is left to imagine the context.

Lewin (1997/2010) focused on individual and societal conflict, involving conceptual and methodological tools for understanding behavioral change. Lewin's theories stimulated the works of Lippitt, Watson, and Westley (1958), Maslow and Frager (1987), McGregor (2006), Argyris (2010), and Bradford and Burke (2005a), among many others. Lewin co-founded the NTL, a non-profit behavioral psychology center, in 1946. The NTL survived his passing and over time, developed his theories,

strategies, and tactics for use in OD. Lewin's preferred method for publication was in journal articles. Harper and Row compiled his articles into two books, published in 1948 and 1951, respectively. These books were recently reissued by the American Psychological Association (APA), who considered Lewin's intellectual contributions significant to contemporary social psychology. Since Lewin's death, the NTL has refined his works in field theory while developing them further in the area of OD. The NTL recognized that organization culture existed as a unique construct. They specialized in OD, human relationships and personal development particularly in the organization setting, and in organizational change. Field theory was used as a framework for observing the individual behavior within a group setting, how individuals related to the group, and how the group relates to them.

Schein (2010) offered a conceptual model for culture change. He spoke of categories that exist to facilitate shared understanding and meaning between organization members. These categories included a common language and conceptual understanding, recognizing group boundaries, defining the distribution of power and authority, developing norms of trust and intimacy, defining reward and punishment, and creating an approach for explaining the unexplainable. While all of the theorists used frameworks, Duck (2001) and Kotter (1996/2010) did not recognize them, leaving the reader to assume that a framework existed. They both presented processes. In reading their works, an underlying framework is visible, but neither author recognized or described it. The reader is left to conjecture, to develop an assumed framework from the reader's

experience. Others presented frameworks but not processes. However, reviewing their presentations suggests that they relied on processes in addition to their frameworks. Peters and Waterman (1982/2012) and Rasiel (1999) demonstrated this in their descriptions of McKinsey's approach to client engagement, as did Jorgensen et al. (2008). They defined a framework, listed causes of change failure, planned actions to take during change execution to ensure success, but did not give processes to follow.

Some authors either directly or indirectly listed causes for change initiative success, recognizing that they also implied the causes of failure. Others listed reasons for failure, thereby suggesting causes for success. For example, Jorgensen et al. (2008) indicated that the factors for success included top management sponsorship, employee involvement, honest and timely communication, and a corporate culture that motivates and promotes change. Jorgensen et al. also included having change agents, the changes supported by the culture, efficient training programs, adjustment of performance measures, effective organization structure, and monetary and non-monetary incentives.

Each success factor implied a failure factor. For example, top management sponsorship being essential to success suggested that a lack of senior management support could cause failure. This logic held true for all of the proposed contributors to success. The same was true for those authors who touted causes for failure. For example, Kotter (1996/2010) indicated that those organizations that failed at CM committed one or more of eight errors that led to the failure. These errors included allowing too much complacency, failing to create a sufficiently powerful guiding coalition, and not

underestimating the power of vision. They also included under-communicating the vision, permitting obstacles to block the new vision, failing to create short-term wins, declaring victory too soon, and neglecting to anchor changes firmly in the corporate culture. Again, each factor implies, in this case, a success factor. In fact, Kotter's eight steps were detailed recommendations for how to exercise the opposites of these eight errors. For example, Kotter said that instead of allowing too much complacency, the organization should establish a sense of urgency and strive to spread the angst over that urgency throughout the organization. Kotter indicated alternative steps for each of his errors.

The Description of Theories section presented three fundamental truths regarding CM. First, CM was a process that began in a past or current state that needed to change, involved a linear or sequential series of activities that ultimately concluded with the realization of change in some present or future state. Second, the conduct of this work occurred within a framework, a structure that included both physical and abstract aspects such as an organizational hierarchy or a set of operational processes. Third, CM was as much or more about changing behavior and culture as about changing operational functionality. Change comes about as a result of influencing people to act and behave differently. When these three truths are applied equally, organizational change will ensue and is more likely to succeed. A fundamental shift toward a new vision, a new future will happen. However, given that context, the application of CM is in reality, a fragmented discipline. Every theorist has a different approach; every organization has a different

need and a different response to CM intervention. Consequently, what worked in one place might not work in another. These facts might explain why, as a change agent gets deeper into these three elements of change and starts invoking the tactics that cause success or avoid failure, the change might be more likely to succeed.

Worley (2005) recognized a loss of distinction between OD and CM where OD has become defined as CM. He noted that many misunderstood OD as synonymous with CM. Because of how OD had evolved, it's tools and techniques could not easily define it. Comparing and contrasting CM and OD with each other enhances how they are understood. Worley addressed how organization change from the OD perspective is more concerned with development, growth, learning, and effectiveness, whereas CM is more concerned with implementation, control, performance, and efficiency. Worley wrote,

> Good change in a global economy cannot be defined only by amounts and
> levels of participation, by costs (or people) reduced or profits achieved or
> increases in organization size. . . . Good change is more often participatory
> than dictated, more dependent on behavioral sciences than on economics.
> (p. xvi)

Business leadership and OD were thus disconnected. Leaders were more focused on performance and economics, and while they accepted that participation and social activity was necessary, their attitudes set performance and economic criteria as their priority.

High Failure Rates for Change Management

Many authors recognized extraordinarily high failure rates for CM initiatives (Burke, 2014; Foster & Kaplan, 2001; Isern & Pung, 2007; Jorgensen et al., 2014; Kotter, 2008, 1996/2010, 2014). This section relies heavily on Burke (2014), who came closest to describing a model for change and to recognizing the requirements underlying the failure rates. Burke reported that in the world of mergers and acquisitions, 75% of the efforts to change organizations fail. Kotter noted that over 50% of the cases he had observed failed as a result of failure to address the first of his eight findings, to create a sense of urgency. Hammer and Champy (2002) noted that some 50 to 70% of re-engineering efforts failed but qualified this statement by calling it an unscientific estimate. Senge (2006) talked extensively about failure in systems thinking but did not quantify it, suggesting that failure in this concept is a problem. Neither Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001) nor Duck (2001) quantified the failures they noted beyond stating that a majority of the change efforts they saw failed. Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010) indicated that what the research literature showed is that a majority of change efforts failed to produce their needed return-on-investment and failed to produce their intended outcomes. Duck stated, "The majority of change efforts fail or achieve only partial results" (Duck, 2001, Preface, para. 4). The Association of CM Professionals (ACMP) recognized a potential for change failure but neither quantified nor attributed significance to it.

A commonly found theme in CM was that a majority of change initiatives fail. There are hundreds of books on leadership and management that recommend changes in structure, processes, systems, culture, communication, or other dynamics. For example, Cameron and Green (2015), Hiatt and Creasey (2012), Pugh and Mayle (2009) suggested that a majority of change initiatives fail. Isern and Pung (2007), reporting on a survey by McKinsey, which found that only 38% of global executives surveyed indicated a change effort they had been close to or involved in was entirely or mostly successful. Jorgensen et al. (2014) reported that 59% of their study participants fell short of desired objectives for on-time, within budget, meeting quality standards, and delivering business value. Of these, 44% missed, at least, on time, budget, or quality goal, and 15% either missed all objectives or management stopped them before completion. Hundreds of books and thousands of articles have addressed CM and noted a high failure rate, offering that failure rate as exemplary of one or another position on change. These publications may be, for the most part, correct in what they claimed or stated. The problem is that they keep citing each other, and they all seem to trace back to very few articles that were inadequately supported with fundamental research or were not generalizable to CM.

Conner (2012) noted that the CM failure rate has held at 70%, even though CM services have grown to become accepted as part of corporate functioning. He attributed this, in part, as resulting from change leaders and consultants using the 70% failure rate number as a tool to engage with organization leadership while not fixing the causes of or reducing the failure rate. Ashkenas (2013) also addressed the need for change, noting that

most studies showed a 60-70% failure rate. Ashkenas stated, "The content of CM is reasonably correct" (para. 3) and suggested that managerial capacity to implement CM is underdeveloped. Ashkenas claimed that managers had been permitted to outsource CM to human resource specialists and consultants instead of assuming responsibility themselves. Maurer indicated; "Changes in organizations still fail 70 percent of the time" (Maurer, 2010, p. 37; Maurer, 2011, p. 33), citing Keller and Aiken (2008), who in turn cited Isern and Pung (2007). Keller and Aiken stated, "Conventional CM approaches have done little to alter the fact that most change programs fail" (p. 1). They went on to critique Price and Lawson's suggestions that four basic conditions must be met before employees will change, and recommended Isern and Pung as additional reading. These authors are typical of those who write for trade and professional publications.

None of these authors, except for Burke (2014), supported their claims with objective or empirical research, and Burke did not do that well. Burke reviewed the work of Foster and Kaplan (2001), who in turn had searched for fundamental research in organization change. From that analysis, Burke concluded that organization change theory barely existed, and concluded that other theory should apply in a way that an organizational change theory emerges. For example, Burke suggested nonlinear complex systems theory, chaos theory, and some of the more fundamental psychological theories such as the James-Lange theory of emotion. The James-Lange theory was an earlier theory that suggested that witnessing an external stimulus leads to a physiological response (James & Lange, 1967). Burke also suggested applying Maslow's (1954)

hierarchy of needs, a philosophy that suggests that people grow through a hierarchy of reward levels until they achieve self-actualization at the top, and Herzberg's (1966) two-factor theory, which measured job satisfaction on one scale and dissatisfaction on another. Burke reviewed the literature from the 30 years preceding his study and uncovered a consensus that little fundamental research about CM existed. Most research was technologically or structurally oriented and needed stronger social linkages. Burke noted that the research did not include the following:

- Researchers attempted to determine causation, working to identify the effects of some change intervention such as team building, structure change, surveys, and so on.

- Most research on organization change was a snapshot and not longitudinal.

- Research methodology and instrumentation were precise, but the meaning and interpretation of the data were not. It often ignored historical and environmental contexts.

- The findings reported in the research often did not meet user needs. Results could be highly technical and make research outcomes so complicated that managers might not understand them. Researchers also tended to hedge the results, introducing ambiguity and making them seem uncertain. Managers tended to dismiss the findings when that occurred.

Burke (2014) noted that, although the outcomes of change did not always produce the expected or measurable results hoped for, change may have occurred. Burke defined

two kinds of change: beta and gamma. The beta change represented a recalibration along some dimension of reality, where some dynamic might be viewed differently along some continuum. Change may have occurred but was not major in the sense that it caused a realignment, redefinition, or reconceptualization of some domain. Burke referred to this as evolutionary change. The gamma change brings about that latter effect: realignment, redefinition, or reconceptualization of some domain. The changed organization is something different from what it was before entering into the change program. This change was a revolutionary or transformational event. It is transformational change.

Burke (2014) discussed more recent research by Oreg et al. (2011), which appeared to review the change of recipients' reaction and how they felt about what was happening to them. Oreg et al.'s research covered 60 years beginning with 1948. They found about 700 quantitative studies out of the approximately 142,000 publications mentioned earlier. Using the scientific method Oreg et al. were able to reduce the 700 articles to 79 that could provide a framework to show, quantitatively, causes of organizational member reaction to change. These included (a) individual characteristics, (b) a degree of participation in the change process, and (c) a primary focus of the change (Burke, 2014, p. 143). Oreg et al. (2011) concluded that (a) trust of leaders, (b) involvement in decisions that affect the recipients, and (c) selection of change leaders with positive dispositions, are critical factors in the change process. While these findings were interesting, they were neither conclusive nor validating. Seventy-nine out of

142,000 is too small a sample when considering how fragmented the themes and research

bases were.

In summary, Burke (2014) pointed out that measuring organization change was

not straightforward. Following a scientific method might be possible, but the results

could be inconclusive. Determining cause and effect in change initiatives is difficult

because of the many uncontrollable variables in CM. Any attempt to measure change

must identify the beneficiary of the research. Using a scientific method is appropriate for

other researchers, but if the research users are members of the organization under study,

an action science approach, rather than following a scientific method, might be more

appropriate. For all of the effort that has gone into studying CM, there still is no real

definition of success and failure, beyond the seemingly overly simplistic, budgetary

criteria defined by consultants: Achieving change objectives on-time, within budget,

while delivering all of the results specified as goals in the original change plan.

Of note, many researchers were critical of the failure to effect a reduction in

change failure rates, for example, Conner (2012), Ashkenas (2013), were critical of

failures but did not explain them. Barends et al., (2013), who searched the literature for

articles on CM that supported a concept of evidence-based CM. Their search came as a

result of an address to the Academy of Management by Rousseau (2006), who wondered

whether evidence-based management existed, as it does in medicine, education, criminal

justice, and social work. Rousseau had been critical of the failure to effect a change in the

failure rates for CM, and Barends et al. worked to review the literature for evidence of

efficient CM. These authors noted a prevalence of one-shot studies with low internal validity. They searched the ABI/INFORM database and found more than 20,000 articles on organizational CM, but could find only 563 that provided any reliable and valid, evidence-based practices of CM. Barends et al. concluded that confidence in whether findings that clarify how CM works were questionable, and there is no accepted definition of organizational CM. They suggested that the quality of evidence, despite the growing volume of literature, is inferior and getting worse.

Problems with Published Causes of Change Management Failure

Many academic, trade, and practitioner authors suggested reasons for CM failure but offered little validation for those reasons with their presentations. Most authors seemed quick to offer solutions without demonstrating how research and experience led to their conclusions. While they offered descriptions of some underlying factors, they did not present the actual behaviors and performance of the causes they suggested led to failure. Kotter (1996/2010) did not explain as to how or why his findings caused failure, nor did he offer any corroborating evidence that proved those particular results were valid beyond his rumination. As previously noted, he attributed a failure to create a sense of urgency as the foremost cause of CM failure, followed by his seven other causes. He did not rank those causes beyond suggesting that the first cause, failure to create a sense of urgency, was the foremost cause noted. In another example, Jorgensen et al. (2008) surveyed over 1,500 chief executive officers (CEO) worldwide. They concluded from that survey that the two primary causes of failure were employee resistance to change and

insufficient senior executive leadership support; findings that were entirely different from Kotter's. Again, they gave no details that could substantiate their claims. Their survey results were merely the summation of what they heard in the survey, with no validation beyond the fact that they asked the question and the respondents answered. Duck (2001) defined failure as a result of not recognizing and, therefore, resisting the behaviors that demonstrated that change was occurring. In her method, the peak of the feelings of angst and frustration among the affected group was usually reached sometime during her determination phase. She suggested that these were normal reactions and signify approaching a tipping point where change is becoming accepted. However, she did not explain these behaviors in a way that was confirmable or transferable. She did not validate how she knew this beyond her own observations.

Dea (2013) supported Ackerman Anderson's and Anderson's (2010) *roadmap*. Dea concurred with Ackerman Anderson's and Anderson's assessment that CM fails for three reasons: (a) Change consultants were inadequately prepared for personal development and came to the effort without understanding the larger organization at a level that they understand change; (b) Most change models were incomplete in the sense that they did not allow for the nonlinear nature of change; (c) Capacity for dedicated personnel with time in their normal working hours to design, plan, and coordinate change, was widely overlooked. According to Dea, the agents leading the change initiative needed to develop into the higher levels of *action logic*, describe by Rooke and Torbert (2005). Rooke and Torbert defined seven levels of action logic, seven leadership

styles, representing how leaders interpret their surroundings and react when challenged in

their power and safety. The higher levels exercise powers of mutual inquiry, diligence,

and allow vulnerability in how they react. The lower levels foster or avoid conflict, ruling

by applying logic and expertise. The highest levels integrate strategy and performance,

collaborate, and remain open and vulnerable. The very highest level leaders blend

material, spiritual, and societal transformations in a way that makes them stand out as

social leaders. Dea's meaning regarding incomplete change models was to suggest that

each change agent must embody the higher levels of leadership, and the organization

must provide for nonlinear, complex transformation. Her reason was that the organization

must allow time for development and change. Capacity meant providing the additional

workforce and resources needed to effect change. Organizations must allow for these

resources if they expect to achieve their change goals. Dea's stance was unique in the

sense that it recognized peripheral issues, not commonly expressed, that affect the change

process. These may be alternative reasons as to why change initiatives fail or may offer

alternative explanations that contradict others in defining causes of the failure rate. In

either case, neither Dea nor Ackerman Anderson's and Anderson's, like the others,

provided supporting objective evidence that these alternate causes are valid.

 Pascale, Milleman and Gioja (2000) proposed a significantly different scenario

for managing change. These authors suggested that organizations were more like living

systems than rigid or defined structures. According to Pascale et al., a business

organization is more a complex adaptive system than a structured hierarchy, although the

defined underlying structure is a significant part of the organizational framework. The structured organization served as a context for the complex adaptive system. The ongoing dynamic interactivity between the various elements of the system, working collectively in concert, acted as a vehicle for driving both evolution and revolution in the survival and advancement of the organization. A complex adaptive system is a system of independent agents. These agents act in parallel, developing models for how things work in their respective environments. The authors refined those models through shared learning and adaption (Pascale et al., 2000, Chapter 1, "Of Colonies," para. 7).

Pascale et al. (2000) referred to the science of complexity when describing four principles, applicable to living systems. These included equilibrium, movement toward the edge of chaos, Self-organization and emergence, and direction and disturbance. By playing on these principles, the organization as a living system can thrive and evolve into a new system under certain conditions. This evolution becomes a self-organizing process where the elements of the system bring themselves together in a new direction. Change occurred when the organization was allowed to destabilize to a point where it verged on chaos but did not lose control. The most creative change ideas happened at this point, were accepted, and then implemented faster than at any other level of operation.

The theories of Pascale et al. (2000) were similar to and possibly a precursor of Gladwell (2002), who suggested that to understand the construct of consensus, some seemingly harmless element of social interaction, suddenly grew into a primary focus. The study of epidemiology or how epidemics spread is an appropriate model of how this

growth occurs. According to Gladwell, every epidemic has a tipping point, triggered by some combination of simultaneous happenings or the convergences of seemingly unrelated memes. The fronting of this combination pushes a static reality to the forefront with characteristically explosive growth. Gladwell's example was Hush Puppies shoes, which had been a relatively obscure product for decades until a social group in East Greenwich Village of New York City chose them as their preferred shoes. A clothing designer noticed this and included the shoes in a forthcoming collection for a New York Fashion week exhibit, not as a designer item but as an accessory used to offset their design presentation. From there, many other designers adopted the shoes in the same way as part of their respective collections. The net effect was that the shoe's sales went from fewer than 30,000 pairs per year to well over 300,000 pairs in the year this design change was adopted. Almost overnight, Hush Puppies shoes became a fad. Gladwell saw successful changes as following this same sort of growth pattern for rolling out requirements in organizations. He considered it possible to manage change toward success by fostering the interest in the change across a broad base of the organization staff. As interest grew, confidence in success for the change grew with it. Once change acceptance passed its tipping point, general acceptance was assured, and the change would succeed. He suggested that organizational leadership could inspire popular acceptance of memes related to organizational objectives and inspire general acceptance of change in the same way that modern movements grow through cultural change. The adoption of change could manifest, as in the way epidemics spread. While these three

paragraphs proposed a significantly different understanding of change, which dovetailed well with explanations of change processes by other authors, once again Pascale et al. did not present valid evidence of their findings that demonstrated credible, transferable, dependable, confirmable findings underlying their recommendations.

Literature Review

Historical Perspective

This study was initiated to explore the activities of employee change leaders within organizations—those charged with bringing about change—to understand the essence of how internal change leaders successfully led change. Burke (2014) noted that extensive research in CM began with the work of the Center for Group Dynamics at MIT in 1947 and the follow-on work, at the National Training Labs Institute (NTL). This work has expanded over the years, far beyond the scope of these originating organizations, into two distinct professions: OD and CM.

During the years since CM began as an application of technique, many authors, and theorists, studying and writing about CM, did so as OD practitioners. Burke's (2014) examples included Herbert Shepard and Harry Kolb of Exxon, Leland Bradford and Robert Blake of NTL, Paul Buchanan of the U. S. Navy, and Douglas McGregor and Richard Beckhard of MIT Sloan School of Management. These were early change leaders were recognized as key influencers of the emergent OD profession who defined theory focused on organizational change.

Despite all that has gone into CM research since its recognition as a leadership discipline, failure rates for CM initiatives remained high and relatively unchanged (Burnes, 2011; Jorgensen et al., 2008; Isern & Pung, 2007; Kotter, 2008, 1996/2010, 2014). While many researchers claimed knowledge of the causes of CM success, or more specifically, the organizational traps that led to failure, most appeared not to have validated these causes or supported their findings with quantitative or other empirical evidence. This study explored CM practices from the perspective of on-the-job employee change leaders to determine if their perspectives might explain success or failure in the CM process. The literature did not appear to include CM knowledge from the perspective of working practitioners—those individuals employed by organizations and held accountable for CM results. This study was meant to determine whether the causes of CM success and failure experienced by working change leaders align with those reported by theorists, or if understanding practitioners' perspective can contribute to increasing the success of CM, thereby reducing the reported failure rates.

The Commonly Cited 70% Failure Rate of Change Initiatives

Before reviewing the work of theorists, a commonly cited but dubious statistic should be noted. That statistic, found in both academic and popular literature, is that 70% of change initiatives fail. For example, Burke (2014) identified no failure statistic but implied that the 70% figure is a given and proposed that his approach to transformational change might reduce the possibility of the over 70% failure rate. Burke recommended an increased focus on culture change, loosely coupled systems, employee resistance, leader

selection and development, learning ability, and trust (p. 374). He was recommending

solutions without substantiating the statistic.

Conner (2012), like Burke (2014), used the 70% as if it were common knowledge.

Hammer and Champy (1993) called their reference to the 70% an unscientific estimate.

In a 2002 article, being sensitive to the fact that so many people indicated this number

and tracing back through their references led to Hammer and Champy's work, these

authors wrote a disclaimer about the number, included as an appendix in the kindle

version of *Re-engineering the corporation.* Citing several authors (Champy, 1995;

Garvin, 1995; Hammer & Stanton, 1995; Womack, 1995), Pfeffer and Sutton (1999)

noted that "re-engineering efforts had failure rates as high as 70 percent" (Pfeffer &

Sutton, 1999, Ch. 4, How Fear and Distrust section, para. 6). In 2001 Anderson and

Ackerman Anderson noted that research shows that a majority of change efforts failed;

however, they did not quantify that observation. Later, Ackerman Anderson and

Anderson (2010) stated that 60% of change initiatives failed but gave no source for the

statistic. They reasoned that most executives, having engaged in change for most of their

careers, assume they know how to lead change initiatives when they do not. None of

these other authors substantiated their findings.

Other researchers who recognized but did not substantiate a 70% failure rate

included Beer and Nohria (2010), Blanchard (2010), Burnes and Jackson (2011), and

Senturia Flees, and Maceda (2008). This tendency to cite the 70% without substantiation

seemed a common practice. Professional and trade organizations also recognized the 70%

failure rate. Bain & Company (Senturia et al., 2008), IBM (Jorgensen et al., 2008), and McKinsey (Isern & Pung, 2007; Keller & Aiken, 2008; Maurer, 2010, 2011) all cited this statistic without support. Some of these professional organizations cited surveys they conducted but did not include descriptions beyond stating numbers of clients participating in those studies. Many authors cited other authors as sources but did not verify those citations. For example, Lawrence, Ruppel, and Tworoger (2014) cited Maurer (2010), who stated that approximately 70% of organizational change efforts fail. Maurer cited Keller and Aiken (2008), who cited both Isern and Pung (2007) and Miller (2002). In a 2006 study that is no longer available in either academic or McKinsey databases, Isern and Pung indicated that only 38% of the respondents in a McKinsey survey of executives stated that change efforts they knew about were entirely or mostly successful. Thus, Maurer's assertion was untraceable to its research source. Miller cited several sources, including a *Business Intelligence* study from 1998 and a *Gartner Group* report from the year 2000. Neither study could be found in libraries or at those organization's websites. Thus, most citations of the 70% rate appeared lost in a web of complex, unreliable tracings.

Executives were inclined to assume control and manage change without outside resources, and their success or failure remained unnoticed. Duck (2001) merely noted that most fundamental change efforts failed to accomplish what they set out to achieve but did not quantify that statement. Appelbaum, Habashy, Malo, and Shafiq (2012) cited several authors, suggesting that research showed failures ranged from one-third to 80% of change

initiatives undertaken. Their observations were based solely on citations of other writers.

These generalizations also included writers who, while not quantifying change initiative

failures, offered a failure statistic for one discipline or another. For example, Burnes and

Jackson (2011) noted that culture change initiatives failed at a rate of 90%, citing Rogers,

Meehan, and Tanner (2006). Atkinson (2005) also mentioned this 90% figure for culture

change. Burke (2014) noted that change failure was found in mergers and acquisitions,

where 75% of these initiatives failed (p. 9). While authors indicated a variety of failure

rates in a variety of ways, what was important was that the 70% failure rate was

commonly used, so much so that it seems an assumed given without verification or

validation. Many authors presented this statistic without support or source identification.

Still, others did not recognize the 70% failure rate at all, suggesting that those that

do have oversimplified the issue or problem. Hayes (2014) presented a complete process

for change without any mention of failure rates or other statistics. He made no mention of

the potential for breakdown or failure at any particular point in the process. Hughes

(2011) questioned the validity of the claimed failure rates and argued that while there was

a popular narrative of a 70% change failure rate, empirical evidence supporting that

narrative did not exist. He also noted that the process of change was more complex than

existing theories suggest.

Together, these observations suggested that while many authors support a

narrative of high failure rates for CM initiatives, the existence of fundamental research

demonstrating that as fact may not exist. As such, quoting a high statistic for failure rates

in CM seemed more a device than fact. CM appeared to be much more complex an undertaking than the commonly stated failure rates implied.

Introduction to Change Theorists

Among the better-known CM theorists are scholar-practitioners such as Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010), Burke (2014), Conner (2012), Duck (2001), Kotter (1996/2010), Lewin (1997/2010), and Schein (2010), and many others. Additionally, Bradford and Burke (2005a) included works of 12 OD scholars in their edited text. Burke, Lake, and Waymire Paine (2009) brought together 52 works of CM and OD authors in their book addressing CM. The literature is replete with works of scholar-practitioners suggesting strategies and tactics for managing change.

Several professional organizations have practices dedicated to delivering CM services to clients. Examples include Accenture, Bain & Company, Booz Allen Hamilton, BCG, Deloitte, Ernst & Young, IBM, KPMG, McKinsey, Price Waterhouse Coopers, PROSCI, and Towers Watson. Educational groups, associations, and nonprofit organizations, in addition to the NTL and ACMP also exist. These include the Project Management Institute (PMI), the CM Foundation, the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research, the MIT System Dynamics Group, and the Tavistock Institute, among others. These groups and associations all have memberships, instructors, and consultants supporting organizational change as part of their larger management consulting offerings or as independent consultants. Many regional and local management

consulting and public accounting firms also offer CM services, as well as scores of independent experts work in this field.

As noted earlier, consulting firms and individual practitioners suggested the CM failure rates, albeit their prognostications were unreliable. For example, Isern and Pung (2007) worked for McKinsey when surveying McKinsey clients for reports of failed change initiatives. Jorgensen et al. (2008), who surveyed IBM clients, categorized change failures based on where organizations they surveyed fell on a continuum between novice and expert change leaders. These organizations were IBM clients using IBM methods. McKinsey, IBM, and other firms like them, did not demonstrate how their work ensured objectivity, validity, or generalizability, and did not provide enough information to allow their work to be duplicable. Nevertheless, other researchers and organizations refer to these kinds of reports for informational and marketing purposes as if they were valid and reliable.

Many scholars and academics also worked as consultants, either in parallel with academic careers or as some may have preferred, as their primary career with academics secondary. For example, while working as a professor at Harvard University, Kotter (1996/2010) based his writing on consulting experience with "dozens of initiatives" (Kotter, 1996/2010, Preface, para 2) over a 15-year period, leading to the publication of his book, *Leading Change*. This publication was significant because Kotter's method has become one of the most common models for leading change in organizations. *Leading Change* is a Harvard Business Review best seller. Burke (2014) based his work on

academic research and 40 years of experience as a consultant. He prioritized neither academics nor consulting, instead, simply presenting his model. Schein (2010) worked from the research perspective of mid-level theory and translated that model into a practical application. This translation came from helping organizations solve cultural process problems found while he was a professor at the University of Chicago.

Background of Change as an Organizational Discipline

Interest in change began with Lewin's (1997/2010) studies in social psychology. That work led to the establishment of the NTL, which grew as a nonprofit institute for learning and development, including OD. This group was a focal point of the growth and maturation of OD as an industry and integrated with most of the academic institutions offering an OD curriculum. The main focus of the NTL was training, education, and consulting in OD. The organization worked with many major public, business, and government agencies as it developed Lewin's concepts of field research, training groups (T-groups), and sensitivity training into skills for leaders and managers of organizations. This growth remained faithful to Lewin's (1997/2010) principles that individual behavior change was necessary to achieve group change, and that individual and group behavior were interrelated and affected each other.

Many noted scholars in OD associated with the NTL over the years. Other nonprofit and otherwise similar organizations also developed. For example, Argyris (2010), Bennis (2009), Bradford and Burke (2005a), Burke (2014), McGregor (2006), Schein (2010), and many others were members of or associated with the NTL. In this

capacity, they taught and consulted with clients in addition to their academic activity.

Many other groups developed programs in OD and CM. These include top schools and

universities such as MIT, Harvard, Stanford, and Columbia Universities, the University

of Michigan, and many others. They also include premier management consulting firms

such as BCG, Deloitte, IBM, McKinsey, and others. These two disciplines; OD and CM,

are now generally accepted in most business school curricula, particularly in graduate

business education programs. The NTL is unique in that it focuses on individual

interaction with group behavior in an organizational setting.

One of Lewin's (1997/2010) principles was that he preferred to research

behavioral psychology in healthy subjects. Lewin studied healthy individual interactions

within the social groups where they belonged. Most behavioral and social psychology

centers are medically oriented, focused on aberrant behavior that interfered with social

acceptance. The work of the NTL and their proponents were apparently more useful to

organizations than to others professing behavioral psychology because of the NTL

approach to studying this phenomenon.

Change Defined

  Burke on evolutionary change. Burke (2014) stated that planned organizational

change on a large scale is unusual. Most change is evolutionary, a gradual shift that

occurs in bits and pieces as one part or another of the organization encounters change

needed to keep up with an evolving internal or external environment. Large-scale change

is revolutionary, transformational, resulting in a major overhaul or modification of an

organization. This kind of change typically results in new missions, strategies, leadership, and culture. It can and often does include new products and services, new ways of doing business. CM, according to Burke, refers to planned organizational change on a large scale. This type of change is a shift away from the past purpose of the organization, which was to pursue a vision and maintain continuity, a systematic process designed to achieve organizational goals drawn from a strategy, toward a purpose. Transformational change shifts to a new purpose, driven by new strategy, with new structure and systems for achieving new goals. Transformational change is comprehensive as compared to evolutionary or incremental, which requires leadership or management focus as transformational change. Burke saw management as paying more attention to the maintenance and turnover of resources, brought together to systematically achieve the goals or outputs defined in strategic or other operational plans. He suggested that when not undergoing significant change, organizations manage for continuity and survival. This management includes exercising change as necessary, to sustain operations in light of a changing environment. The difference in transformational change, according to Burke, is that large-scale, revolutionary change changes everything. Continuity is intentionally interrupted and destroyed. A complete new vision, organization, and culture arise from the remnants of the old. This change is done to ensure continuity, most likely because the former organization could not have otherwise survived.

Schein on a change in culture. Over the years since its inception, many scholars have been engaged by or involved with the NTL. Schein (2010) was unique because of

his close involvement with the NTL during its start-up and early growth in the 1950s and 1960s. Decades later Schein is still focused on research and publishing about CM. Schein (2010) stressed that change was about culture change, which drew themes from anthropology, sociology, social psychology, and cognitive psychology. He recognized that the explosion of new tools in communication and information technology had made cultural phenomena more accessible. However, these advancements had also accelerated potential danger in all organizational technology. This acceleration exposed the cultural development of groups to an instability that changes their sense of structure and could cause conflict. Schein noted the spread of research and consulting services in organizational culture and leadership. He argued that leadership and culture are intertwined. Leaders are the principal architects of culture; as the culture grows, leaders influence the kinds of leadership possible, and if the culture becomes dysfunctional leaders must induce what is needed to effect culture change.

As technology advanced, the leadership task evolved into networks and away from the traditional hierarchy of organizations. Schein's (2010) position was typical of OD and might conflict with the other more technology-oriented scholars that suggested that change was more a function of changing structure and processes to create efficiencies that achieved goals. However, Schein pointed out how the cultural focus was critical and saw the role of leadership, distinct from management, as creating and embedding culture in a group. Those leaders who concentrate on managing mechanical or structural approaches to change missed the cultural focus.

Schein's (2010) work was important for understanding the transition from the industrial-organizational psychology of the 20th century to the rapid growth, decentralization, and globalization of organizations of the 21st century. In this sense, he maintained the premise that managing change is more than managing projects and task lists: It involves managing people. Schein was instrumental in the shift away from focusing on social psychology to the discipline of OD in organizational leadership.

Process-oriented approaches. A strong orientation toward a sequential, process-oriented approach has existed throughout the history of modern CM, as demonstrated by Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010), Association of CM Professionals (2014), Burke (2014), Kotter (2014), and Schein (2010), among others. For example, Schein defined Lewin's stages sequentially as:

- Stage 1: Unfreezing: Creating the motivation to change through disconfirmation, the creation of survival anxiety or guilt, and the creation of psychological safety to overcome learning anxiety.

- Stage 2: Changing: Learning new concepts, new meanings for old concepts, and new standards for judgment through imitation and identification with role models and scanning for solutions and trial-and-error learning.

- Stage 3: Refreezing: Internalizing new ideas, meanings, and standards by integration into self-concept and identity and incorporation into ongoing relationships (Schein, 2010).

Kotter (1996/2010) proposed an eight-step process, based on eight faults he consistently found in unsuccessful change initiatives. Kotter (1996/2010) indicated that while the eight steps did not necessarily need execution in the order he listed, they needed to address them all if the company were to ensure a successful transition. The steps included establishing a sense of urgency, creating a guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, communicating the change vision, empowering employees for broad-based action, generating short-term wins, consolidating gains and producing more change, and anchoring the new approaches in the culture.

Kotter's (1996/2010) approach deemphasized the socio-psychological aspect of change, although his case examples showed attention to behavioral responses beyond the procedural. This concentration existed at the highest levels in his first two and last steps. Creating a sense of urgency required changing the collective understanding of what was important, creating a guiding coalition was not possible without building a consensus among the members of that group, and anchoring new approaches in the culture was only possible with attention to the psychosocial relationships and behavior within the workgroup. However, Kotter treated changing behavior as almost incidental, tactics embedded in his procedural presentation, without explaining how to affect these aspects of change. At one point, Kotter suggested building a false sense of urgency if no real urgency existed, to convince the group that change was necessary. Kotter claimed that his work is the most read CM approach, although consulting firms such as IBM or McKinsey (Jorgensen et al., 2014; Keller & Aiken, 2008) proposed similar methods. Where these

companies differed was in their propensity to introduce change as working within a framework. Otherwise, they also focused more on procedures and results than they did on the socio-psychological responses to change.

Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010) developed a process for CM. Although strikingly similar to Duck's (2001), Kotter's (1996/2010), or Schein's (2010), Anderson and Ackerman Anderson used the McKinsey 7-S framework, or something similar, when appropriate for their planning purposes (see Figure 2). They offered a limited discussion of behavioral change—restricted in the sense that they only stressed the importance of organization leadership changing their mindset to succeed. However, they wrote extensively about that issue, devoting a full chapter to that one behavioral control dynamic.
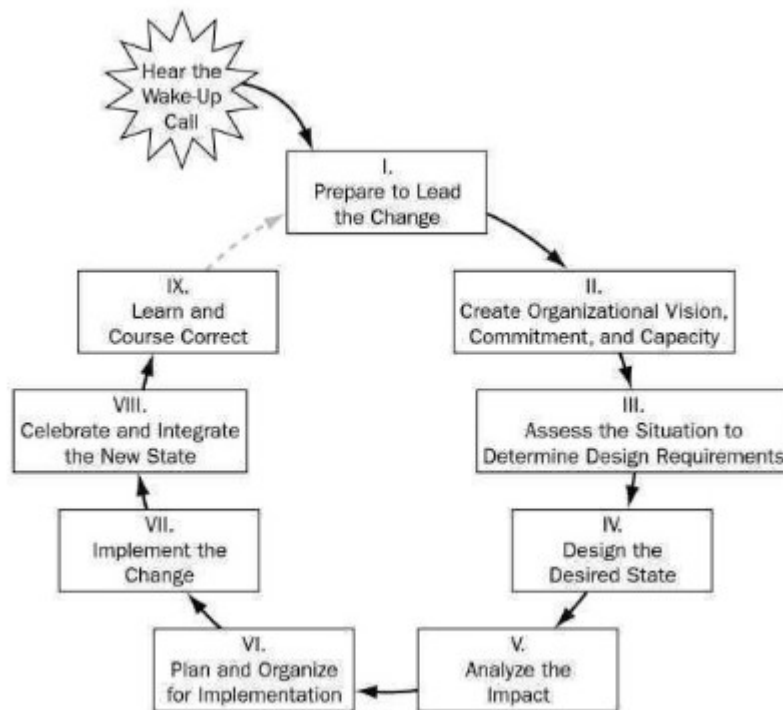
Figure 2. The nine-phase change process model. Adapted from Chapter 7, the nine-phase change process model, by D. Anderson and L. Ackerman Anderson, 2001, *Beyond CM: Advanced Strategies for Today's Transformational Leaders.* Copyright 2001 by D. Anderson and L. Ackerman Anderson. Reprinted with permission.

The similarities between Anderson and Ackerman Anderson's (2001) and Kotter's (1996/2010) models were apparent. Anderson and Ackerman Anderson's Phases 1–3 were equivalent to Kotter's Steps 1 and 2. Further, Kotter's Steps 1 and 2, as well as Anderson and Ackerman's Phases 1–3, paralleled Schein's (2010) steps for Lewin's (1997/2010) Stage 1. The most significant differences are that Schein, and to some degree, Anderson and Ackerman Anderson advocated addressing group behavior. Kotter only implied that concept. Kotter addressed the more tangible, manageable artifacts, as opposed to addressing behavior.

In a sequential process for managing change, Duck (2001) divided the process into five phases: stagnation, preparation, implementation, determination, and fruition. Duck noted that any process description was inclined to be an oversimplification, an observation that holds equally true for the other processes previously mentioned here. While one section, department, division, or other segmentation, might struggle with one part of the process, others might move on to the next phase. This struggle offers scenarios where different subdivisions might progress at different rates, and activities might not align while executing change. However, all groups will go through all of the phases, and the change is not complete they are all complete (Duck, 2001). Kotter (1996/2010) made

this same point, albeit differently. He wrote that some activities might result in ordering the steps differently or spending more time on one or more steps than others. Various activities may be at different places during the process, but that all activities must complete all of the steps to achieve success.

Duck (2001) was unique in that her primary focus was on behavioral issues but within the structure of a process plan. Duck's premise was that groups had set behavioral patterns that are comfortable. Change is difficult due to those patterns but necessary when their performance cannot achieve the goals of the organization, regardless of how hard they try. That was the essence of her stagnation phase. The group reached a comfort zone that interfered with progress and needed change. The organization was stagnant, atrophying, and defeating itself. In planning and executing change, there are behavioral reactions that are normal and expected. As implementation proceeds, discomfort throughout the group increases until it reaches a point where something must happen to relieve the stress. At this point, most managers consider the group reaction as resistance, but Duck pointed to this as an emotional but regular part of the acceptance process. The group reaction reaches a crisis level. At that point, the determination phase in Duck's process, something happens, a turn, where the group begins to accept the change. The group adopts a new paradigm and behavior, and performance normalizes at some new level. The organization continues in a new maintenance mode until the next stagnation occurs.

Duck (2001) focused more on group behavior than process step completion. She suggested that the flux that took place when asking a group to do something new and unfamiliar was natural. The swelling of discontent, struggle, and what seemed like resistance was a routine part of group behavior while adapting to new requirements. Some people may fall out, but most would eventually see the wisdom of the change, or, at least, accept the new. At that point, normal operations with improved behavior would resume. Duck also noted, as did Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010), that change was cyclical. Once a change was implemented, and normal operations reoccurred, the organization would operate in a maintenance mode or steady state until it again stagnated. That would be when normal operations were no longer able to achieve reasonable performance goals or otherwise perform adequately within their environment. At that time, the change process started over.

This orientation toward a process approach in CM may have been because organizations tended to maintain their existence in a time-sequenced manner, conducting themselves in a maintenance mode for operations, aimed at consistency and uniformity. Burke (2014) noted that unless organizations were involved in change, they strove to avoid variability in operations. A lack of deviation was preferred. This consistency ran counter to the objectives of transformational change.

Additionally, most managers focused on managing tangible artifacts rather than providing leadership for behavioral or social issues. They conducted day-to-day operations so that they maintained consistency and continuity. Managers thought in terms

of stability and targeted achievement and avoided the flux that came with revolutionary change. Process-oriented approaches seemed to fit this context, where the goal was to keep the status quo stable. This thought process was good business, to play to the expectations of managers, even when the intent was to upset the process. However, there is more to CM than the process. Many practitioners, particularly those from consulting companies that supported CM, have proposed to effect change by working within a framework. Some, like McKinsey, did not even suggest a predefined process; they just offered a framework to work within. The next section reviews these frameworks and how they fit CM.

Framework-oriented approaches. Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010) stressed the importance of managing change within a framework, citing Peters and Waterman's (1982/2012) description of the 7-S framework as an example. Ackerman Anderson and Anderson listed several frameworks other than Peters and Waterman's, including Weisbord's (1978) six-box model, Nadler and Tushman's (1977) congruence model, and their own earlier three-element model. Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010) used the 7-S model as their example in describing how frameworks differ from processes, noting that all of these models were equally good examples. Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2010) suggested that these frameworks served as organizing constructs that set the boundaries of where attention was focused while executing change. Their position was that the framework depicted the static, interconnected elements of the organization that surround the change process. These items are the critically affected

areas requiring redesign. A change process worked within a framework that did not include those items not touched or affected by the change. They were outside the context of the modification.

Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2010) noted that, while process models provided a roadmap for action and a path to follow to complete change, they often were too general and missed elements requiring attention. They found that process models had a tendency to focus on either behavioral transformation or business content, but seldom did that well on both. As a result, process models without a framework tended to overlook critical aspects of change requirements. Conversely, change frameworks without process models lost the dynamic of sequencing actions in a logical order that produced orderly results. Anderson and Ackerman Anderson saw the orchestration of transformational change as a complex undertaking that required a conceptual, pragmatic approach, achieved by combining frameworks with process models.

Peters and Waterman (1982/2012) developed the 7-S framework while employed at McKinsey (Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001). McKinsey relied on the 7-S framework to structure their engagements with clients while consulting on how to execute transformational change. Rasiel (1999) showed that at McKinsey, each engagement was separate and unique. Consequently, they considered each process plan an individual development at the start of each engagement, prepared by the assigned consultants in conjunction with and as part of their preparation to assist the client. Their project plans were completely customized. As Rasiel described it, an approach to

building group cohesion among the assigned consultants used a process plan

development process, where the advisers and clients collaboratively defined a process

plan. By training for and developing the plan together, the consultants and customers

built a mutual understanding and a level of trust they might not have otherwise gained.

This approach suggested that McKinsey lacked a defined process plan for

transformational change, such as found in Kotter's (1996/2010) or Schein's (2010) work.

However, as Kotter (2014) noted, McKinsey developed their interest in CM consulting

after observing the success of the BCG in providing those services. Both companies;

McKinsey and BCG, offered similar management advisory services.

Defining CM approaches within a framework rather than as a process seemed

more prevalent among consulting companies. For example, IBM referred to its *IBM*

Better Change Methodology as a framework, although it contained elements that were

process oriented (Abouzaglo & Kirschen, 2014). This framework identified a distinction

between transformation and change, indicating that change is what Burke (2014)

considered evolutionary, incremental change. Transformation Abouzaglo and Kirschen

defined extensive change that improves the future landscape of an organization, which

Burke called revolutionary, transformational change. Jorgensen, Bruehl, and Franke

(2014) extended the definition by assuming that CM focused on technology change.

Their discussion was limited to technology change in organizations, as might be expected

from IBM consultants given their heritage in technology consulting.

The process presented by Duck (2001) was the approach used by BCG to manage change. Duck (2001) called her presentation of the *Change Curve* a framework, not a process; yet it featured a sequential series of phases, with steps within each phase, organized as a process plan. Kotter (1996/2010) used the words framework and process more or less interchangeably. Moreover, the expectation that OD practitioners would consider their methods as frameworks seemed likely if they read or applied Lewin's (1997/2010) work in field theory and experimentation. Lewin's work in social psychology presented a framework of constructs that in his day became accepted as dynamic properties, types of reactions and influences. Change from the OD perspective was more of a group behavior than process type of study, which leads to the third category of research in CM, behavioral approaches.

Behavioral approaches. As previously noted, OD began with Lewin's (1997/2010) work in social psychology. Lewin's first focus was not on OD but instead was interested in individual and group behavior interaction in a social setting. He developed the concepts of social psychology, field theory, and training groups (or T-groups), concepts developed into modern OD by the NTL. Lewin suggested that individuals grounded their behavior and identities in their association with the social group to which they belonged, and Allport (2010, para. 3) proposed that this interdependence and influence is inescapable in the growth of the organization.

Bradford and Burke (2005a) presented CM from the perspective of the OD scholar-practitioner and questioned the future viability of OD. Burke and Bradford (2005)

noted that OD had once been a critical philosophy sought by senior organization executives. OD practitioners, at one point, were considered part of the senior team, responsible for driving the strategic directions of organizations. However, that status had declined, and OD practitioners had been relegated to lower level positions, if kept at all, within organizations. They were, for the most part, no longer considered strategic contributors, except when group behavioral issues might impede performance. At the same time, Burke and Bradford noted the ascendance of CM, a discipline promoted by major management consulting companies like Accenture, BearingPoint, Cap Gemini Ernst and Young, and IBM. This type of organization was inclined to focus more on organization structure or mechanics, using project planning and management techniques, managing artifacts and processes as opposed to behavior and culture. These practitioners tended to use participative processes to secure buy-in and cooperation rather than to influence behavior and culture. Burke and Bradford questioned whether OD was relevant if OD was synonymous with change, and if managing change is the core task of leaders, then why has OD not been seen as relevant by those leaders?

Bradford and Burke (2005b) suggested that OD had evolved to where it was relegated to lower ranks in organizations, if it existed at all, and was devoted to individual personal development rather than OD. The exception was the periodic need to fix organizational problems. The skillset then elevated to where needed to foster change. Harvey (2005) believed that OD has declined and should be allowed to fade gracefully. Bradford and Porras (2005) suggested, "OD is everything and, as a result, OD is nothing"

(p. 51). Their point was that whatever OD consultants were doing at the time became the definition of OD. OD had become a meaningless label for the discipline, and what happened in the name of OD was not necessarily organizational. Marshak (2005) pointed to the influence of general management consultants and the growth of CM practices, replacing organizational psychologists in the decision-making processes. This influence occurred concurrently with the fragmentation of OD. General management consultants focused more on re-engineering and efficiency with less consideration of humanistic needs. Greiner and Cummings (2005) noted, "OD has virtually disappeared as the title of departments in many organizations…. It is rarely taught as a primary field in universities, except by a small number of longtime adherents" (p. 87). Together, those holding these positions recognize the decline of OD concurrent with the elevation of CM as the practices underlying the leadership of change in organizations.

Other approaches. The authors discussed to this point were primarily academics and consultants devoted to CM. Many others who, while not presenting theories as CM, have described processes that required CM to work. For example, Senge's (2006) systems thinking was to view the organization as a system, recognizing how an impact at one point resulted in outcomes at others. Creating a mindset of systems thinking in an organization requires a change initiative. Goldratt and Cox's and Cox's (2004) goal-oriented management was a systems-oriented model that sought to identify organizational bottlenecks or chokepoints. Goldratt and Cox and Cox suggested managing those bottlenecks first. Organizations that invoke this approach would, in the process, create a

CM requirement. Change appeared to be a constant that exists, regardless of whether managed or not.

Most researchers in management, leadership, or organizational theory were, in fact, advocating change when they advocated adopting their concepts. For example, when Argyris and Schön (1978) presented their theory on single- and double-loop learning, they recommended that, if implemented, represented a change initiative. In these and many other examples (Bennis, 2009; Chowdhury, 2003; Drucker, 1954/2010; Goldratt and Cox & Cox, 2004; Hammer & Champy, 2002; McGregor, 2006; Pascale et al., 2000; Peters & Waterman, 2012; Senge, 2006), the authors were not recommending CM. However, adopting what they presented, logically required it. Many scholars and researchers over the years, from Lewin (1997/2010) through Burke (2014), have introduced theories and practices in CM, either directly or indirectly. Authors, over the years wrote about management, leadership, organization structure, systems, processes, culture, or behavior, but following their suggestions and recommendations requires CM. In that sense, most business theories, whether directly or not, required CM to invoke the practices they recommended to achieve the outcomes they proposed.

Summary of theoretical approaches. All approaches to change seemed to contain a tendency toward a process orientation. They began with the past or current state and ended with a current or future state. Lewin's (1997/2010) three steps, Burke's (2014) or Schein's (2010) seven steps in three stages, Kotter's (1996/2010) eight-stage process, or Duck's (2001) five phases of change, were all similar when viewed as processes.

Kotter's eight stages were similar to Burke's seven steps. Duck presented an approach more like Kotter's: It was procedural yet similar to Schein's, which focused on behavior rather than frameworks and processes. When viewed together against all of the processes, frameworks, behavioral, and culture modification approaches, this process orientation seemed most common.

Duck's (2001) process was unique in the emphasis on identifying the circular nature of change, meaning that once completed, the new level of fruition for change eventually became stagnated, and the first phase of the next change cycle began. The process perpetually repeated itself in this way. However, Duck's observation was not unique in the sense that she alone recognized this cyclical nature, as Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010) and Schein (2010) also recognized it. Ackerman Anderson and Anderson noted a distinction between change frameworks and change processes after addressing the importance of the leadership mindset. They showed that both behavioral change and frameworks were present in achieving change before centering on a process approach, similar to the others, such as Schein's (2010), Burke's (2014), Kotter's, (1996/2010), and so on. McKinsey only recognized a need for frameworks (Peters & Waterman, 1982/2012). By their definition, frameworks were those structures of interrelated concepts that surrounded the initiative, within which change occurred. McKinsey's 7-S model was one framework used to recognize the structures needing attention as static or continuous elements of an organization. CM attended to these items while working through the change process. Inside the 7-S framework, change mapped as

a sequential process moving from a current to future state. McKinsey consultants, as noted by Rasiel (1999), considered processes unique in every case, and did not believe that a generalized process model was possible. According to Rasiel, they developed a unique process each time they engaged with a new client, using this development process as a mechanism for building relationships with team members and client representatives.

In their essence, these models for CM contained three elements: The behavioral adjustment, the framework, and the procedural approaches. Different authors assigned different weights or priorities to each, but at some level, they all recognized a need to address all three elements in a change initiative. The social element addressed organizational acceptance and behavior change; the framework defined the scope of organizational structure within which the change occurs, and the process laid out the stepwise approach from a start to a future end state.

How Theory Has Informed the Literature

The theorists established that CM is a process, managed within the framework of organization structure (Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001; Peters & Waterman, 1982/2012). That process is a sequence of steps, stages, or phases that occur in a logical order (Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001; Duck, 2001; Kotter, 1996/2010, 2008, 2014). Some authors described CM as the transition or transformation from a current state to a future state (Burke, 2014; Duck, 2001; Kotter, 1996/2010, 2008, 2014; Schein, 2010). Others indicated that it was about behavior and culture change as much as about a process (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Burke, 2014; Schein, 2010; Duck,

2001). Other authors found change more about changing structures, business processes, and other more tangible framework artifacts (Jorgensen et al., 2008; Senturia et al., 2008). Management strategies are about the mechanics of designing organization processes to deliver expected results. CM focuses on changing those models because of the changed environment or context of the organization. This change is about providing leadership and getting people to understand, accept, and act on new expectations dictated by the change rather than continue with their old structure. Theorists defined change as a manageable process. They recognized that leading an organization through behavioral change within the construct of a framework is necessary for any success.

Validating Theory

Creswell (2013) wrote that while opinions about validation of findings in qualitative research vary, the most important task was to establish that reported results are valid, at least for the environment studied, and this validity should compare to some standard. These standards vary, whether the study perspective is procedural, interpretive, emancipatory, or postmodern. Some viewed qualitative validation like that of quantitative studies while others resisted validation, suggesting that qualitative research is incongruent with the quantitative perspective. Many used alternative, more naturalistic terms such as *credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability,* and *confirmability*, words meant to serve as equivalents for *internal validation, external validation, reliability,* and *objectivity*. Creswell cited Eisner's constructs for structural corroboration, consensual validation, and referential adequacy.

Most scholars quoted by Creswell (2013) agreed that some form or nature of validation should occur. Creswell recognized that some authors did not consider validation necessary. They considered it noncontributory and distracting. He noted that Whittemore, Chase, and Mandle (2001) organized validation into four primary criteria: credibility, authenticity, criticality, and integrity. These tests depended on the skill of the researcher to surface the fullest, most accurate sense of the narrative possible. Whittemore et al. also noted secondary criteria including explicitness, vividness, creativity, thoroughness, congruence, and sensitivity. Creswell considered validation an attempt to assess the accuracy of the findings as described by researchers and participants. He saw validation as a strength of qualitative research. It was, to him, a process rather than a verification, and authors needed to choose the types and terms of validation with which they were comfortable. Researchers should employ accepted strategies to document the accuracy of their studies.

Patton (2015) wrote differently about validation. He respected the concept of validity in his opening example and his presentation on quality and credibility and included an example of validity as part of his overview discussion of the nature of qualitative inquiry. Patton directed his presentation for evaluating qualitative research more toward quality and credibility, but that evaluation included various forms of validation. Patton identified five evaluative criteria: (a) Traditional scientific research criteria, (b) social construction and constructivist criteria, (c) artistic and evocative criteria, (d) critical change criteria, and (e) evaluation standards and principles. Patton

identified several evaluation criteria for quality and credibility under each of these labels, including internal validation (credibility), external validation (transferability), reliability (dependability), and objectivity (confirmability) as subsets under these headings. In all, he included 45 criteria for assessing quality and credibility, although there was some overlap in the criteria, repeated under different headings.

Creswell (2013) and Patton (2015) represented the importance of validation. However, theorists in CM did not seem to support evidence of their findings, whether as validation, quality, or credibility. Some admitted they had not included this evidence, as Kotter (1996/2010, 2008, 2014) did. Others, while less open about including evidence, did not offer corroboration that what they presented was valid (Duck, 2001; Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001; Peters & Waterman, 1982/2012). This lack of corroboration is not to say their theories were not credible, noting that cross-referential comparisons demonstrate their findings are similar, and if their research were independent the similarities themselves would suggest some level of credibility. The literature did not suggest this. These authors did not suggest that each set of findings were unique. What was unclear was whether their findings were merely applying each other's theories and then adapting their own, or if they researched their work independently and found that their findings closely simulated others.

Schein (2010) limited his evidence to face validity—the concept that if it looked valid, then most likely it is. No author provided sufficient descriptive information to enable replication of their work or to demonstrate that their processes were generalizable

outcomes that would apply in any change situation. Indeed, it may be that none of the

theories studied in this review were generalizable at all, as demonstrated in the Little

Rock Board of Education case (Nitta, Wrobel, Howard, & Jimmerson-Eddings, 2009).

None of these authors' examples demonstrated that if another leader or consultant

independently applied them; the outcome would be the same. Each author appeared to

execute their research independently, using his or her approach to researching change.

They then seemed to arrive at more or less the same conclusions, which is that managing

change was, or at least included, a linear process that managed within an organizational

framework and that affected change by altering culture and behavior. The leadership of

people through cultural change was equally or more important than applying the

mechanics of the change process in the artifacts of the organization. Most of that research

was qualitative, without sufficient data included to support an independent study that

validates same or similar results. Reliance was restricted to the credibility of the

researchers and was the extent of validation available in the literature.

The findings of the theorists had some credibility, given that all have arrived at

similar conclusions. This study was not proposed to question that credibility. The work of

the theorists did not appear to include knowledge from working practitioners, those

permanent employees charged with managing change. In that sense, the body of

knowledge in CM remained incomplete. These employee-practitioners were the front-line

participants responsible for results and may have had different experiences that led to

success or failure in CM. Those experiences should be explored, documented, and

validated. The experiences of the scholar-practitioners did not demonstrate that they came from repeated experiences with repeated results, beyond the personal claims of those scholars. The theorists may have had these data, but they neither offered them as findings nor published them in a form that demonstrated validity. This study should expand knowledge by exposing contributions to success and failure in CM from the perspective of employee-practitioners charged with facilitating change.

Conclusion of Descriptions of Theory

In this section, I covered the theories of better-known authors in OD and CM. OD evolved in academia while CM was more rooted in management consulting practices. Many of the OD authors cited here were somehow involved with the NTL. Other groups were key contributors to OD and the influences that top management consulting firms have had. Change in this study referred to transformational change. OD was focused more on cultural and behavioral change while CM stressed procedural and structural change within organizations. I reviewed the works of several authors, noting that most presented procedural approaches to change. Some also addressed the frameworks within which change occurs while others also addressed the importance of cultural and behavioral change in conjunction with organizational change. Frameworks were more prevalent in the CM discipline than in OD while OD addressed behavioral change more than CM. Schein (2010) dealt exclusively with behavioral change while Peters and Waterman (1982/2012) dealt only with frameworks. Others confused the concepts of process, frameworks, and behavioral change. For example, IBM (Jorgensen et al., 2008;

Jorgensen et al., 2014) called their approach a framework, then presented a process-oriented approach. McKinsey (Keller & Aiken, 2008) did the same. Through all of this, it became apparent that there are three elements of managing change; the first element was the process, the second was the framework, and the third was provision for cultural and behavioral change.

Burke (2014) was the only author who fairly represented this troika of approaches with equal weight given to each. Kotter (1996/2010), who presented a process-oriented approach, showed behavioral requirements by giving case examples at various stages where outcomes depended on behavioral change. Another example was Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010), who in addressing behavioral change, limited their recommendation to adjusting the mindset of the organization leadership before commencing a change initiative. McKinsey (Rasiel, 1999) stressed that a procedural approach could not be specified outside the change initiative, suggesting that each effort is so unique that it would be impossible to define a process before starting work with a client. After comparing their respective approaches, I concluded, as Burke noted, three aspects or elements of change must be equally addressed for a change initiative to succeed.

Several other authors, such as Argyris and Schön (1978), Bennis (2009), Drucker (1954/2010), Goldratt and Cox and Cox (2004), Senge (2006), and others, proposed management and leadership approaches or organization and structure that represented implied calls for change. These were management and leadership authors who developed

a variety of theories and methods for management and leadership practices. These theories suggested changed results from organizational expectations expected from implementing their proposals. These authors, and others like them, envisioned that their recommendations would stimulate change activities. Thus, CM is more pervasive than most people realize. Knowing this background led to the development of the next section, the conceptual framework for this research.

Importance of This Study

Although there was extensive research and development in CM, the high ratio of failed programs to projects has not declined. This lack of decline raises questions whether the causes of CM failure indicated unaccounted, missing aspects of the change process, or that the research did not include some form of validation for the underlying causes of CM failure proposed by the scholars and consultants in the industry. Moreover, organizational leaders may not have been aware of and able to execute change plans based on the research findings. Academic, trade, and professional publications were written mostly by scholars and consultants who worked as change agents rather than by workers, on-the-job practitioners, senior- or middle-managers. Employee Practitioner accountability left little room for failure as the employee was subject to immediate and irreversible political and professional harm if a change initiative failed. This study filled a gap in the literature by exploring the employee change leader perspectives that offered a better understanding of CM success and failure and improved the success potential for future change leaders.

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter, I reviewed the literature regarding CM, particularly about the failure rates and factors contributing to success or failure of a change effort. Although many theorists have reached similar conclusions about managing change, these scholars have offered little consensus on what caused success or failure or how to effect change successfully. Theorists have differed on the nature of OD, of change, and of CM. Leadership is not a simple process or activity; leading change appeared more complicated than expected. CM was unique to the need, the context, the change, the culture, and the organization (Burke, 2014).

The literature suggested three constructs for managing change be addressed simultaneously: the cultural, structural, and procedural. Failing to address any of these increased the potential for failure (Burke, 2014; Pascale et al., 2000; Peters & Waterman, 1982/2012). Kotter (1996/2010), although labeling his approach a framework, presented an example of the procedural construct by introducing CM as an eight-step process, an approach highly acceptable to organization leaders, as evidenced by the popularity of his articles in the *Harvard Business Review.* Kotter stressed that a changing organization must address each of these steps and allow time for them to complete if they expected to change successfully. Many other authors also suggested process-oriented approaches— some recognizing the structural aspect, others recognizing the cultural and behavioral developmental aspects, and a few who credited two of the three, or all three constructs. Peters and Waterman (1982/2012) presented McKinsey's 7-S framework, an example of

the structural framing needed to focus on change. Framing change helped keep superfluous work out of the process by focusing the change activity only where it was important. Burke (2014), Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001) and Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010) also mentioned this framework. Anderson and Ackerman Anderson referred to the importance of having the right leadership mindset before starting a change initiative and emphasized the concept of resetting leadership values and styles before beginning. After setting the leadership mindset and addressing the framework of the change, Anderson and Ackerman Anderson then proposed a process for managing change that has worked for them. Burke recognized the same framework as needed to define the context of the change before addressing cultural and behavioral issues.

Like some scholars and many independent consultants, the major consulting firms with CM practices discounted the academic theorists to some degree, instead, inventing their own proprietary methods for dealing with change (Foster & Kaplan, 2001; Jorgensen et al., 2008; Peters & Waterman, 1982/2012; Rasiel, 1999). Consulting companies such as IBM, McKinsey, Bain & Company, and others who provided CM consulting services, were likely to be the first choice for many organizations looking for outside help to effect change. These organizations differ from scholar-practitioners or OD consultants by focusing more on structure and process than on behavioral or cultural change. Many of the scholars and academics who studied CM have done so in conjunction with these firms and others like them. For example, Kotter (1996/2010)

completed much of his research while partnering with BCG and McKinsey. Burke (2014) partnered with McKinsey and the NTL. Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001) and Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010), while consultants in CM, collaborated with Stanford University. Dean Anderson was on the faculty there at one point, while, continuing to work as a consultant. After addressing mindset and framework, these authors used Schein's (2010) process, developed in conjunction with the NTL. A value of more overlap between academic researchers and professional practitioners seems plausible.

A common finding reported by consulting firms was that employee resistance and lack of leadership support were top causes of change failure (Foster & Kaplan, 2001; Jorgensen et al., 2008; Peters & Waterman, 1982/2012). These findings were different from the causes reported by change theorists such as Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001), Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010), Burke (2014), Duck (2001), and Kotter (1996/2010). Scholars reported different causes for CM failure. They recognized that resistance and leadership difficulty occurred but did not present them as primary causes of change failure. Anderson and Ackerman Anderson found that an inability to establish the right mindset among leadership was a leading cause of failure. Among eight reasons for failure, Kotter noted that failure to create a sense of urgency was first and most significant; for Burke, it was a failure to conduct behavioral and cultural change within the framework defining the organization. Finally, Duck attributed failure to not recognizing normal behavioral symptoms of a successful change initiative as the change

occurred, resulting in premature discontinuance of leadership, and guidance of the

turmoil that was normal throughout the change process. Duck stressed that behavior

viewed as symptomatic of failure might signify success. For example, a workforce that

crescendos to a new level of disturbance might appear to offer major resistance, when, in

reality, the group was accepting the change and struggling to adapt and accommodate.

The change may appear to be complete, but work is discontinued too soon, resulting in

apathy instead of continued forward drive, eventually leading to failure due to lack of

interest.

One major shortcoming of CM research was insufficient empirical evidence for

the findings that researchers presented beyond anecdotal examples and case studies.

Whether the CM approach was academic or professional, every model suggested primary

causes for failure, but none gave independent or empirical evidence of credible,

transferable, confirmable examples that substantiated the researchers' conclusions.

Whether scholarly or professional researchers, none were clear about causes of failure as

understood by employee practitioners. Scholars and consultants, while engaged, were

observers; the anecdotal stories and cases seemed to neglect or minimized the viewpoints

of employee change leaders who were members of a group and part of the culture where

changes occurred. In most cases, the employee change leader was held up as an example

of how not to do it.

The theorist or external consultants were temporary resources who, at most,

joined the organization on a short-term basis. They wrote and delivered reports with

recommendations, then departed, leaving the employee change leader to achieve the suggested results. Theoreticians and consultants, while knowledgeable, did not feel the constraints of social and political responsibility in the culture of the organization. They were outsiders as far as the organization was concerned. This difference may partially explain the persistence of the failure rates for formal organizational change efforts. The works of Kotter (1996/2010), Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001, 2010), Duck (2001), Lewin (1997/2010), and Burke (2014) need validation to substantiate their claims. Thus, the gap noted in the literature review was a lack of contributions from working employee change leaders within organizations. Although conducted by highly involved and extensively experienced academics and practitioners, their empirical studies focused on isolated elements of one theory or another or one problem or another for demonstration purposes, rather than showing generalized findings. The opinions of organizational members, subject to the whims of politics and the social responsibilities of membership, might have been closer to the action of effecting change and may show that something different led to success or failure.

The work of scholars and consultants dominated the research. Organization employees as change leaders may have had different perspectives on CM success, not considered by the scholars and consultants, that might have been more correct. Those views could include negotiating action with and getting support from other staff, dealing with ad hoc flux and crisis during the change initiative, maintaining leadership, and organization political interaction from within the context of the change programs. This

segment of the profession was an important population that apparently had little voice in the existing research. The knowledge held by employee change leaders should represent unique data for defining success or failure.

This study is designed to collect that knowledge and compare to the presentations of the scholars and consultants in the literature review. These scholars and consultants were external resources, invited to make recommendations, who may also have stayed on to participate in the change execution, but who were not part of the organization staff or culture and might not have had the same experience as a permanent employee would. Analysis of data from employee change leaders may confirm what scholars and practitioners suggest caused success or failure or offer alternatives. Those alternatives would come from people held accountable for leading change, ensuring results, and achieving success within their respective organizations.

A realistic phenomenological approach, as noted in Chapter 1, is intended to generate a broader narrative of these success factors than other research designs. Chapter 3 details this design for use in studying this problem.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The research paradigm of CM has been predominantly drawn from the perspective of external personnel. Mainly scholars and consultants have reviewed CM activities in organizations and recommend courses of action that might reduce the possibility of failure. As they consult with CM personnel, researchers have observed how leaders address change, reported these observations and noted how leaders approach managing change procedurally within a framework. Some scholars have examined behavioral and cultural issues in conjunction with their research. Others have addressed the framework that CM happens within, noting that while the operation of change is fluid and flexible. CM occurs within a framework or context that limits the worldview and scope of the change.

This external and detached resource perspective have led to an incomplete body of research lacking, for example, a researcher's familiarity with the culture and politics of the organization. Studies conducted by external researchers, at a minimum, have excluded the contributions of actual employee change leaders. The contributions of employee change leaders to the success of CM were not reported in ways that supported credibility, transferability, dependability, or confirmability. Thus, the purpose of this study, to explore the lived experiences of those employee change leaders—those charged with bringing about change— to understand how they do that and successfully achieve results. The goal is to understand what it is they do, what behaviors they exercise, to effect change.

The phenomenon of interest in this study is the essence of how internal change leaders, employees of changing organizations, successfully achieve change. The study is designed to seek data and information absent from the CM literature, as demonstrated in Chapter 2. Data collection activities were designed to discover the practices and behaviors of these specialized employees and define how they succeed or fail when leading and managing transformational change initiatives.

This chapter begins with a discussion of a phenomenological research design for gathering the reflections of transformational change success and failure as understood by change leaders employed by organizations, and the rationale for choosing this research method rather than a different approach. The next section contains a definition of the unique role of the phenomenological researcher. That section leads to a detailed description of the method used to gather data and conduct the research, including a description of the target population, the participant group, and the participant selection method. A description of the instrumentation and a pilot study design follows, as well as procedures for recruiting participants, data collection, and follow-up procedures. The method section will conclude with a process for analyzing and interpreting the data. The chapter contains the requirements needed to establish the criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of the findings regarding credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, and concludes with a summary of the chapter's contents.

Research Methodology and Rationale

This empirical phenomenological research design was intended to serve as a framework for gathering the reflections of change leaders employed by organizations—those leaders held accountable for day-to-day leadership to drive change through the organization until they achieve the intended results of invoking change. The following section restates the research questions from Chapter 1.

Research Questions

How do employee change leaders, responsible for delivering results in CM initiatives, live their experiences of CM success, specifically, to be held accountable for achieving the results of planned change, to experience the culture of change, and accomplish the results forecasted in planning the change process?

1. What behaviors and other practices do internal change leaders seem to exercise, what do they do differently from what external change practitioners suggest, that results in CM success?

2. What meaning do employee change leaders attribute to the high failure rates in CM and how do these leaders show through their lived experiences to avoid them?

3. How, given the extraordinarily high potential for failure, do these leaders continue to exercise CM practices successfully in their organizations?

Central Phenomenon of the Study

The central phenomenon of this study is CM success as understood by successful organization CM leaders. This unique subset of CM practitioners, typically employees of a transforming organization, is assigned to lead change initiatives to fruition. The CM industry has reported extraordinarily high failure rates for change (see, e.g., Jorgensen et al., 2008; Keller & Aiken, 2008; Kotter, 2014). These rates range between 20% and 92%, depending upon who reported them and in what context the failure occurred. The approaches that organizations continue to undertake for CM are almost exclusively the product of scholars and consultants who studied organizations and recommended actions they predict will lead to change success (Jorgensen et al., 2008; Keller & Aiken, 2008). While these consultants may have engaged extensively in change initiatives, their involvement is advisory. They are less likely to encounter the consequences of failure that organization employees might experience. If the failure was attributed to consultants, the consequences are probably less impactful than for organization employees. The employee change leader, as noted in the preceding chapter, has a different relationship with the organization than the consultant, may act differently, and may view the causes of success and failure differently from what scholars and consultants write about in the literature.

Research Tradition

The research tradition of this study is empirical phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994). Empirical Phenomenology is unique in how it goes beyond the beliefs and biases

of researchers and participants to investigate, summarize, and understand the essence of experiencing phenomena. It was empirical because it was intended to compare the research results to the theoretical presentations about change management and to the universal processes of organization workings. The objective in phenomenology is to understand the underlying essences of the phenomenon and to rise above or go beyond the preferences and beliefs brought out in the data (Vagle, 2014). By the researcher's bracketing of his or her experiences and beliefs —that is, suspending all judgment about the causes of success or failure and focusing on the analysis of the lived experiences of research participants—the essence of the phenomenon represented in the data, without any personification or evaluative opinion, becomes discernible.

Moustakas (1994), in turn, based his interpretation on the work of Descartes (1977/1909), who separated the concepts of mind and body and created the distinction between objects that are not material, that are abstractions of thought but that are also objects of consciousness and reliable representations of lived experiences. These objects are real truths representing phenomena although they are ideas found in the mind rather than in nature. Kant (1966) suggested three sources of knowledge; the sensory, the imaginative, and the apperceptive. Moustakas (1994) related these sources to phenomena, showing the connection between the physical, its perception in the mind, and the conscious evaluation of it as an aspect worth study. Moustakas cited how van Kaam (1966) operationalized the method: "to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide a basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience" (p.

12). The researcher determines the underlying structures of experience by interpreting the original descriptions.

Moustakas (1994) stated that this type of research is intended to capture the underlying nature of phenomena regardless of who experienced it, how they experienced it, or who was interpreting the observations. Smith (2013) defined phenomenology as

the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. The central structure of an experience is its intentionality; it's being directed toward something, as it is an experience of or about some object. An experience is directed toward an object by virtue of its content or meaning (which represents the object) together with appropriate enabling conditions. (para. 1)

Moustakas (1994) based his philosophy in part on Hegel, an eighteenth-century philosopher, who was first to offer a precise description of phenomenology, calling it knowledge as it appears in consciousness. Hegel, according to Moustakas, presented phenomenology as the science of describing perception, feeling, and knowledge of immediate awareness and experience. Moustakas developed transcendental phenomenology from empirical phenomenology, beginning with a description of the empirical approach, recognizing the influence of Giorgi, Knowles, and Smith (1979). Moustakas noted Descartes's (1977/1909) distinction that experiences of the mind do not always extend to material objects (phenomena). He saw the application of Husserl's concept of *epoché,* the process of avoiding presupposition in analyzing data, as blending what was present and what was possible, the transformation of empirical experience into

insights through a process of ideation. The concept in the mind mingles with the phenomena in a way that creates meaning and extends knowledge.

Although not a heuristic inquiry per se, some of the tactics of heuristic inquiry added value to this study. Patton (2015) wrote that heuristics refers to connectedness and relationship, depicting essential meanings and portrayal of intrigue and personal significance, and developing a creative synthesis that includes the researcher's intuition and understanding while distilling the structures of experience. As a necessity in a heuristic inquiry (Patton, 2015), to obtain the best results, the researcher must suspend his or her beliefs and be open to new concepts that change any preconceptions when the data do not align with them. As in heuristic inquiry, the data collection should be under a paradigm of maximum structural variation of perspectives. Where this approach differs from empirical phenomenology is that the topic of research does not change; the topic is CM success (or failure).

Rationale for a Phenomenological Study

As noted in the literature review, there has been little fundamental research to support past findings on managing change. Further, researchers have largely ignored the knowledge and contributions of actual change leaders, those employees of organizations charged with achieving the outcomes of CM initiatives. Phenomenology was selected as the underlying methodology for this study with its focus on the conscious experience of everyday life and social activity, with the intent of reducing those experiences to their essences, their core meanings, mutually understood through commonly experienced

phenomena within the population (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Phenomenology focuses on the basic structure of experience, putting aside the prior beliefs of researchers and participants (Patton, 2015). This approach isolates the essence of a phenomenon as it exists in life, attempting to do so without the influence of interpretation inherent in the explanation of researchers or participants. While phenomenology may use bracketing, coding, and other forms of data analysis, the objective is not the analysis as much as it is to distill the essence of the phenomenon to its purest underlying form without subjective interpretation by the people who experienced it (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Among other forms of qualitative research, I considered were a basic interpretive study, a qualitative case study, a grounded theory study, or a narrative inquiry. All four were less optimal than phenomenology because of their analytical nature. While the basic interpretive study might offer similar structure and flexibility, an analytical approach seeks to categorize, simplify, and reduce understanding to a generic or interpretive explanation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The method focuses on how people interpret their experience, construct their world, and attribute meaning. Phenomenology, on the other hand, reduces the findings to their pure underlying essence, the characteristics that make the phenomenon what it is regardless of its interpretation. The narrative inquiry is similar to phenomenology but stops with the collection and interpretation of stories. Stories told by participants are the data and include those interpretations in their analysis. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), those stories are more about how a participant makes sense of an experience, how they communicate with others, and how they

understand the world around them than they are about the phenomenon that is the basis of the study. The narrative inquiry does not distill the essence of a phenomenon, leaving the story as told by the participant rather than reducing it to the pure essence of the phenomenon.

Grounded theory, which focuses on building a theory from the analysis of the research data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), was another potential method for this study. Most of the approaches mentioned in this proposal, such as Kotter's (1996/2010) eight-step method, Burke's (2014) three components, and Schein's (2010) seven-step approach were essentially grounded theories. More theory was not needed, just evidence of existing theory. This study did not focus on defining more theory or methods about how to manage change but why failure rates remain so high despite all the work already completed in CM.

Before settling on phenomenology as the best approach, I considered conducting multiple case studies to build a consensus of understanding from a broader perspective than one pointed solution. The case study method was not selected because of its focus on the analysis of bounded systems (Merriam &Tisdell, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell indicated that the defining characteristic of a case study was this focus on a bounded system. The phenomenon of CM success is not a bounded system so much as it is a universal maxim. CM success is a phenomenon that occurs regardless of its context or who led that success. A single case would only give a pointed example. Multiple case

studies would only give multiple pointed examples. This study needed to demonstrate a

broader consensus of the underlying philosophy of CM success.

After considering these other methods, and what the objectives of the study

included, it was apparent that phenomenology was the most appropriate approach to

understanding CM success. Data collection for this study was fieldwork in the form of

open-ended conversations about CM strategies and tactics. Employee change leader

participants shared their lived experiences, stated in their words, and thereby contribute to

understanding the essence of CM success. While those stories depicted valid causes of

change success, they articulated opinions of those leaders without filtering or any form of

codification. Phenomenological reduction provided for understanding the essence of CM

success or failure. The method entails bracketing and coding those stories in a way that

distills the underlying essence of the actual causes of success or failure. The method also

enabled data collection from a broad range of participants and provided for consolidation

of the various stories into summary statements that articulate the pure essence of the

phenomenon. The method filtered out the personalities of the participants through this

coding and bracketing process. These tactics masked the interpretations offered by the

participant inputs and drew out the underlying absolute essences of CM success, the pure

character of the phenomenon without influence by how a participant told the story of

their experience. This approach provided insight into the experiences of employee change

leaders in organizations. Restating their experiences in the essential architecture of

phenomenological reduction protects them from any sense of traceability.

Role of the Researcher

As an experienced observer and member of the targeted population for data collection, I needed to avoid researcher bias carefully. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) noted that the researcher "usually explores his or her experiences, in part to examine dimensions of that experience and to become aware of personal prejudices, viewpoints, and assumptions" (p. 27). Patton (2015) noted that the method also allows the researcher to assume a role of heuristic inquiry. These descriptions suggested that bracketing is a process of reducing the description of a lived experience relevant to a phenomenon, to its purest representation, without bias, of the essence of that experience, regardless of who experienced it or under what circumstances or in what context that experience occurred.

To limit researcher bias, I considered my potential biases. I have worked as a change leader in many organizations as an internal resource, an employee change leader, and an external resource; a consultant working for companies that provide CM services to clients. This background included experience as a program or project manager from start to finish in 18 significant change initiatives and as a consultant and subject matter expert on many more. This level of experience is not meant to suggest complete knowledge. A participant's experiences might have been significantly different yet worked equally as well as mine in achieving results in change initiatives. Leadership is cultural, behavioral, and situational. What worked at one place or with one group might not work at another. What worked on one occasion might not work at another time, even though the place or group is the same. I realize that my experience, while successful, represented only one

approach to managing change. As the researcher, I needed to ensure that the biases that existed in my background do not show, to guard against giving opinions, advice, or recommendations while interviewing participants. Still, I need to establish rapport and credibility as a peer, to build a level of comfort and trust to where the subject felt comfortable talking about their experiences openly, candidly, and honestly. Enough background needed to be presented to facilitate this understanding.

I conducted field research in organizations where I might be known but not through any personal relationships or past engagements. My qualifications for conducting this research are available in public information and might be sought by the participants if they chose to examine it. I would not provide my qualifications beyond the minimum necessary to establish rapport and to build a researcher-participant relationship.

The relationship-building activity needed for this study was possible by recognizing that everyone has an opinion, shaded by his or her background and experience. This recognition suggested that fundamental aspects of CM success exist, regardless of the approach, the leadership, the structure and culture, the expected outcomes, and the context of the change. To foster healthy interactions with participants, I took care to avoid appearing aloof, subservient, or somehow outside a peer relationship. Because most change leaders are likely to have only one or two change initiative management experiences, I shared my background only in broad terms.

Another issue that arose was how participation in the research or my presence might influence the story told by the participant. For this, I remained intentionally

conversationally vague and noncommittal while conversing enthusiastically with the participant, encouraging them to expand their stories. Thus, my presence did not influence the participants.

Research Design

Giorgi (1997) suggested that empirical phenomenology employ (a) description (b) within an attitude of phenomenological reduction, and (c) seek the most consistent meanings for the context. Giorgi listed five basic steps in a phenomenological study. These include

1. collecting verbal data, a process of interviewing participants for their "natural description" of the phenomenon;

2. reading the data for understanding at a macro level;

3. breaking the data into parts (in Giorgi's terms, "meaning units");

4. organizing and expressing the data from a disciplinary perspective (bracketing); and

5. synthesizing or summarizing the data for communication or publication to the scientific community (Giorgi, 1997, "The Concrete Steps," para. 1).

These steps were followed using a constant comparative method (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), which suggested interviewing each participant and then beginning the analysis immediately. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) recommended that the analysis begins with the interview, taking notes of observations, and including them among the data for the analysis process. Each subsequent interview was conducted and analyzed in the same

way and compared to the earlier interviews for consistencies that might represent commonalities depicting essences of the phenomenon. When these comparisons find no new meaning units, saturation had been achieved, and further interviews were unnecessary for establishing research findings.

Using Giorgi's (1997) method, I began by interviewing senior executives and change leaders who have recently been through and completed transformational organizational change initiatives, to gather their descriptions of lived experiences of change leadership that culminated in their success. I read through the data from start to finish to get a sense of its scope and context, breaking the data apart into meaning units, then removing all meaning units not consistent with the discipline of CM. I then examined the remaining meaning units and re-described them more explicitly, transforming the descriptions from everyday life stories into the technical characterizations used within the scientific discipline of CM. I then synthesized these characterizations into a set of themes that describes the essential fabric of the lived experience of success or failure from the perspective of the discipline of CM.

Participant Selection Logic

The target population for this study was executives, change leaders, and managers in education, pharmaceuticals, and industrial manufacturing companies across the U.S. who have been through a recent transformational change initiative and succeeded. Potential sites included education institutions with schools and programs that supported organizations in these industries. Jorgensen et al. (2014) documented an example process

IBM uses with all of the company's clients. Jorgensen et al. demonstrated how CM in organizations was essentially the same for planning, execution, and getting results, although the strategies, tactics, and structures of the changing organizations might vary widely. The basis of the differences were the products and services organizations offered or the markets they served, not how they approached systematizing their selling, marketing, and operations to create efficiency and control in their inputs and outputs. By that definition, any organization that manages major change initiatives was an appropriate target for this study. However, as suggested in the literature review, these industries, education, pharmaceuticals, and industrial manufacturing, seemed to do this CM more frequently and thus may have more experience at it. They are better targets for finding the type of change leaders in their employ that might serve as participants in this study.

Sampling

Sampling occurred through a purposeful strategy. Patton (2015) described purposeful sampling as derived from an emphasis on the in-depth understanding of the population and identifying a representative participant group that is "selected purposefully to permit inquiry into and understanding of a phenomenon in depth" (Patton, 2015, p. 52). Because of my prior knowledge of change leadership in high-technology businesses I focused on a few industries that are known for frequent ongoing significant change. These included education, pharmaceutical production and distribution, and industrial manufacturing. I focused on firms that had recently undergone transformational change. Participants were leaders in those organizations charged with

managing the changes to fruition. With those limitations, participants were randomly selected based on their willingness to participate. I contacted chief executives, other chief officers, general managers, and directors for participation or referrals. Additionally, I spoke with consulting firms that supported them. In many cases, the participants may have been the senior executives themselves. Depending on the size and complexity of the organization, the senior executive may have been the change leader. In larger, more complex organizations, that responsibility might have been delegated to some other senior leader or a specialist within the organization. Whomever the change leader was, whether the senior executive or delegate, that person was invited to participate on behalf of their organization. I administered the selection process, recognizing that senior executives are also members of the population and potentially peers. Transformational change initiatives typically start at the chief officer level in business organizations, and at an equivalent leadership level in other types of organizations (for example, a chancellor or president in a university). Regardless of whomever the responsible individual was in a participating organization, for leading the change initiative, that person was responsible for achieving results for the change initiative and should have had a controlling say in CM results.

These change leaders needed to be an employee of a small to large-sized organization (100 to 1,000+ employees) and a leader of a recent transformational change. Such companies must have been big enough to have internally grown a culture, structure, and bureaucracy before initiating a change project, such that they needed to apply

formalized management strategies and tactics to the change process. The unit of analysis was the organization that had relatively recently undergone a transformational or major change and is far enough from its completion to evaluate success or failure. The participant was the employee who led the change initiative, the executive who directed it.

Participants were self-selecting. I contacted senior executives in organizations fitting the participant profile to share the participation criteria. If they were qualified and wished to participate, they could identify themselves as a change leader assigned to lead the initiative on which they based their eligibility assessment. Otherwise they could refer me to that person in the organization. A reasonable expectation was that senior executives would identify themselves as the change leader and organization representative, a specialist, charged with carrying out their change initiative execution. An equally realistic expectation is that the top executive delegated the activity to a senior manager or some other specialist, someone charged with day-to-day leadership of a change program, empowered to act on behalf of the most senior executive as if they were that person. If the change leader identified to participate was not empowered to act on behalf of the most senior executives as if that delegate was the senior executive, then that change leader was not qualified to participate.

Participant Group Size

The participant solicitation used standard tactics similar to those used in consulting services marketing and sales activities for identifying and contacting potential prospects. Contacted organizations included branches of major organizations and smaller

independent companies. Thousands of these groups exist throughout the U.S. that fit the participant profile outlined above.

A search of public records for education, pharmaceutical, and manufacturing firms gathered information to identify organizations that fit the participant profile. Representatives from those organizations that met these criteria were contacted and invited to participate. These contacts continued until no new data in the form of *meaning units* were identified. Although Polkinghorne's (1989) suggestion of five to 25 participants set expected boundaries for participants in this study, Giorgi's (1997) approach suggested that the number of subjects could exceed that. Creswell (2013), while not suggesting a participant group size for phenomenology, noted other researchers having used group sizes ranging from one to 325 participants. O'Reilly and Parker (2012) pointed out that group size is more dependent upon the quality of the data obtained than a function of some number of participants. They indicated that "… an adequate sample size is one that sufficiently answers the research question" (O'Reilly and Parker, 2012, p. 192). More importantly, O'Reilly and Parker stressed the importance of *group adequacy* over group size. O'Reilly and Parker further emphasized the concept of saturation, noting that data collection should continue until there are no new meaning units, or additions to existing data, found. The participant group size for this study was within the range suggested by Polkinghorne—10 participants. Enough leaders participated to establish a consensus for the meaning units derived from their interviews. These meaning units represented the essence of the participant's understanding of success or failure in CM.

Ten participants were the quantity where data saturation was achieved, thus fulfilling

O'Reilly and Parker's concept of saturation. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) defined data

saturation as that point where it was apparent that additional interviews neither generated

new findings or changed those already found. Patton (2015) noted that there had been

phenomenological studies with only one participant and such a small participant group

was not significant by itself. Transformational change in small to large organizations

involved a significant proportion of the organization to execute the change, but the

change leadership was frequently only one person. Burke (2014) noted that change

requires a protracted process of behavioral and cultural modification and can take months

to years to complete. Burke saw CM as a complicated endeavor, occurring over an

extended period, more about culture change that organization change. Burke suggested

that change is more than likely to exercise lists of strategies and tactics to achieve

successful outcomes. The research continued until the meaning units were a complete set

of strategies, or meaning units, as defined by O'Reilly and Parker, and Merriam and

Tisdell. That is additional interviews would not generate additional data.

Patton (2015) noted that an aspect of the data collection process might be anxiety

over participation in the research. Participants will be made aware that their involvement

is voluntary, anonymous, and that they can decline further participation at any time

during the process. This awareness will be mentioned several times throughout the

participation process, beginning with the initial contact introductory script (Appendix B).

I will discuss expected contributions of the participant, the guarantees provided to the

participant regarding privacy and confidentiality, and what the participant can expect in return for taking part in the study. The comfort and ease of the participant are paramount.

Once identified as group members, the interview process began. Collecting interview data started the reduction process. Giorgi (1997) recommended that this process continue until additional data seems redundant, and the reduction process no longer expands understanding of the fundamental underlying structures of CM success. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) noted that the constant comparative method allows for identifying this lack of further expansion of understanding as quickly as completing the analysis of the latest interview.

Instrumentation

According to Patton (2015), the researcher is the instrument in qualitative research. Patton based this claim on the assumption that data collection, analysis, and interpretation is conducted by the researcher through fieldwork as an observer-participant. Patton noted that the researcher is, by default, also a participant and the reporting is experiential. However, the researcher must also exercise tactics that support conformity and objectivity in the data. The researcher must retain a sense of impartiality, accomplishing this through the informal interview process where open-ended questioning occurs. The researcher intentionally avoids interjecting opinions and recommendations, or otherwise implying a stance regarding change management while guiding the conversations between the researcher and participants. Patton referred to this as the "informal, conversational interview" or "unstructured interview" (p. 342) in which the

conversation is guided by study criteria, rather than using more structured approaches such as found in more standardized interviews. Giorgi (1997) also recommended conducting phenomenological research in a way that encourages participants to describe their experiences as they lived them.

Giorgi (1997) noted that in informal, conversational interviews there are no predetermined sets of questions, as they are expected to flow spontaneously from the context of the discussion. This approach is difficult to do without some framework that at least keeps each interview focused in the same area. The questions in Appendix D were developed to serve as this sort of framework. Their use was not meant as done in question and answer sessions, so much as prompters to guide the underlying conversational direction for the investigator to lead the discussion. Data gathered this way are likely to be different from one participant to the next. Interview questions may change over time, and contacts with some or all participants might involve more than one interview session. Interviews would be flexible, spontaneous, and responsive to individual and situational differences. Questions can be personalized, making use of the immediate situation to increase the immediacy and concreteness of the responses. To accomplish this, the list of questions in Appendix D was used to frame the interview direction. These questions were designed to frame a direction and boundaries for the interview conversation, thereby keeping the focus on the phenomenon of CM success.

The data collection process involved identifying companies that were likely to have high rates of change in their operations and inviting their most senior change leaders

to participate in this study. As previously noted, that person might be the CEO or an equivalent, or some other senior officer delegated to lead change initiatives, delivering the results that drove the need for change. What follows describes the process of contacting and engaging participants in the study, including the artifacts used to support this activity. The reader should note that this process was spread over several contacts from the initial introduction, to follow-up interviews, to study result reviews. Spreading these touches over multiple contacts allowed time for thought between conversations. The process included:

1. Initial contact occurred using referrals from my professional network. My contacts identified senior executives in organizations presumed to have high rates of change. I contacted each executive by telephone and invited them to participate. These contacts were asked to commit to an introductory conversation. Initial emails were sent after that initial conversation to confirm their participation. That email included a copy of a welcome letter (Appendix A), including a consent to participate, statement of scope and process, and other information pertinent to the participant.

2. The introductory conversation was scheduled during the initial contact from a referral. A telephone script for managing this conversation appears in Appendix B. This script served as a guide to the initial conversation between the potential participant and me. It was not read verbatim. The script guided a short, mutual introduction, a brief description of the research, a request to

schedule a later time for a second, longer, interview conversation, and to briefly qualify the potential participant and their organization.

3. Those contacts that agreed to participate moved to the interview process. During the first contact the participant was asked to schedule time for an interview, and to complete a questionnaire (Appendix C) as part of that registration process. The questionnaire asked for basic administrative information to help frame the interview conversation. This questionnaire included preliminary demographic and descriptive data, needed for follow-up after the interview. For participants who registered during the initial contact phone call, the option to register verbally during that call was available. All of the participants who made it past this screening process did this. I collected the survey data and recorded it on their behalf, then sent them the welcome letter (Appendix A) and Consent Form via email.

4. Upon completion of the registration process and survey, participants received a Consent Form that included additional information about the conduct of the research. These inclusions were confidentiality information (Appendix E), rights to privacy, and the right to quit the project at any time. The confidentiality agreement was included as an attachment to this second letter, asking the participant to sign and return it.

5. I met with each participant at their scheduled time and conducted telephone interviews. All of the participants elected to interview by telephone. Face-to-

face interviews and online video conferencing were infeasible for all of the

participants due to their schedules and other commitments.

6. The list of questions in Appendix D was the framework for the interview.

These questions were not used in a question and answer session, but more as a

checklist to ensure coverage of all the intended topics. The format of the

interview was an informal conversation, and that conversation was conducted

to lead the discussion toward answering these questions.

Content validity. This concept, while important, is not normally a function of

phenomenology. The concept applies to the instrumentation used in qualitative research

and phenomenology often does not use instrumentation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Merriam and Tisdell noted that the focus of phenomenology is the experience itself and

transformation of that experience into consciousness. Phenomenology seeks to translates

the essences of these experiences into the core meanings, mutually understood through a

commonly experienced phenomenon. The task of this study was to depict the essence or

basic experience of obtaining successful outcomes in a CM initiative by querying the

lived stories of those who experienced this phenomenon.

Phenomenology does not apply to the concept of content validity easily, an aspect

that is different from most other research methods. Content validity is more applicable to

quantitative methods. Qualitative methods strive more for credibility, relying on the skill,

competence, and rigor of the researcher (Patton, 2015). As a science, phenomenology

investigates knowledge of objects and artifacts as opposed to the study of material things

(Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology is more an exploration of concepts to determine the perceptions of experiencing phenomena than it is to test those experiences. Phenomenology does not use instruments, instead, relying on the researcher to deliver credibly by self-bracketing before engaging participants (Patton, 2015). Phenomenology intentionally uses unstructured or conversational interviews. This data collection method is where the researcher guides the conversation, encouraging a free-flowing openness while striving not to influence the participant discussion. Instruments are of limited value in this process. The most important aspect to ensure validity is the interviewer bracketing before participating in the interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The investigator should obsess over not influencing the participant stories, avoiding the interjection of interviewer experience in a way that might change the free-flowing openness of the participant.

Measuring instruments that demonstrate content validity are difficult to establish. Each experience in phenomenology is considered unique. The process of reduction, the rigorous analysis of the stories told by participants, reducing them to common elements of experience, delivers a textured description of the phenomenon, the experiences that exist in consciousness (Patton, 2015). Thus, the participants, by sharing their experiences, are the source of validity. Validity comes from the consensus of meaning and truth found in reducing the experiences. The study begins intentionally without precognitions or preconditions. trustworthiness is when the participants agree that what they perceived and believed about the phenomenon is true. If during the interview process, participants collectively say it is valid, then it is.

Procedures for a pilot study. A pilot study with one change leader participating tested the process and enabled adjustments before the remainder of the research occurred. The purpose of this pilot was to verify that the data collection and analysis approach would work effectively and produce the sort of findings expected in an empirical phenomenological study. Because there was little research applying phenomenology to CM, drawing from prior studies was not feasible. The conceptual framework for the pilot was the same as for the study. Using this approach, I tested the process for viability with a CM leader to show any flaws in the design before beginning the actual research. This approach to framing the pilot allowed checking the question premises in Appendix D. This pilot study could have been expanded to more than one participant if it showed that changes were necessary for the study process. This approach allowed for finding flaws or shortcomings in the research design before commencing the actual research.

The themes that seemed absent from the literature and in discussions with the dissertation committee framed the interview discussions. Although the questions listed in Appendix D were open to change based on discussion and feedback from the pilot study and earlier participant interviews, changes were minimal. The concepts that the questions represented formed the framework for additional or replacement questions. These questions were left intentionally vague as their use was to foster conversation and discussion about the lived experiences of the participants as they led the initiative they presented, rather than to elicit direct answers to the questions. As Giorgi (1997) suggested, the interview discussions determined many of the questions used in the data

collection. The initial issues were merely meant to focus those talks in a particular direction.

Data Collection

Data for this study were primarily the transcripts of these interviews, although participants could have elected to submit other documentation in support of their discussion during the interview. The preferred interview setting was face-to-face at a comfortable location where neither the participants nor I would be subject to workday interruptions, and our respective power positions were equal. This setting was expected to lead to candid exchanges. In this manner, I would be able to capture body language and other unspoken cues to the meanings expressed by the participants. Data collection ideally was to occur at a mutually agreed offsite location accessible by both the participant and me. If that were not possible, the next best option would be utilizing online resources such as GoToMeeting, YouTube Live, Google Hangouts, or similar tools, and if that were not possible, to conduct the interview telephonically. Realistically, most interviews occurred through the last approach. The initial expectation was one interview per participant, but participants might have wanted to provide a complete story to support the study in more than one interview. I expected each interview to last 1 hour or less, but they might have extended beyond that at the discretion of the participant. Data was recorded using a digital voice recorder. If the interview was online, it could have been recorded directly to a computer. If the interview was face-to-face or over the phone, a voice recorder, such as an Olympus VN7200, was used. Follow-up procedures were to

include scheduling additional meetings, if needed, before ending the interview process. Participants were asked to review the results of the analysis before considering their participation complete and were offered a copy of the results after completing the study. Delivery of the results was considered their exit from the study.

Data Analysis Plan

Moustakas (1994) suggested that data analysis is the reduction and bracketing of interview data into relevant meaning units, stated as the practices or science of the phenomenon under study, in this case, CM success. Moustakas presented an approach to data analysis, modified from van Kaam's (1959, 1966) method for phenomenological data analysis. This approach included:

1. listing and preliminary grouping,

2. reduction and elimination,

3. clustering and thematically developing the invariant constituents,

4. identifying and validating the invariant constituents and themes,

5. constructing an individual textural description of the experience for each participant,

6. constructing an individual structural description for each participant, and

7. constructing a textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience for each participant. (Moustakas, 1994, p. 120)

This last construct is the reduced and bracketed findings for all participants. The data analysis is then completed by developing according to Moustakas (1994) "a

composite description of the meanings and essences of the experience, representing the group" (pp. 120–121). Tesch (1990) detailed the comparison process and described how to reduce the raw data from interviews to common themes from all participants. Tesch's approach was to absorb each dataset, delineate meaning units, restate each meaning unit in terms of a theme, and restate that theme in a professional or abstract representation devoid of participant interpretation. As more participant interviews occurred, cluster the respective themes together, tie the essential nonredundant themes together into general descriptions representative of the trans-situational structure of the phenomena. The approach suggested by Tesch was more analytical whereas the approach by Moustakas's was more about collecting data.

The approaches presented by Moustakas (1994) and Tesch (1990) combined with the constant comparative method presented by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) for data analysis. This approach called for analyzing while simultaneously conducting the interviews. The first analysis began during the first interview by noting and documenting observations during the interview conversation. The analysis steps suggested by Moustakas for bracketing and distillation of meanings and essences of experience were started immediately at the end of each interview. This approach enabled comparison of later interviews to earlier interviews, thus developing more robust findings more quickly while exercising the interview process.

The questions listed in Appendix D were meant to frame and foster free-flowing conversations that exposed the participant viewpoints, feelings, and interpretations. An

objective was to learn how they made sense of CM success while at the same time

staying focused. Those views may relate directly to the issues listed in their discussions

or may surface new and unconsidered issues. As the bracketing occurred, there were

instances of redundancies in the data. These occurrences were consolidated and coded to

eliminate redundancy and duplication. Some meaning units were outliers to the

participant consensus. These represented one or another participant's real experiences not

encountered by most other participants. The significance of these was identified in the

overall study but reported separately. The analysis was complete when the interviews

were reduced and bracketed to meaning units that represent the collective experiences in

CM success. Upon completion of the analysis, A separate report of findings was prepared

and distributed, as a courtesy to the participants. This report showed the findings

presented in Chapters 4 and 5.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Loh (2013) described several criteria that, when met, enhance the trustworthiness

of the research. These included credibility, transferability, dependability, and

confirmability. Trochim (2006) defined credibility as the concept that the results of the

study are credible or believable from the perspective of the participants. He indicated that

transferability is represented by how easily the product of the study adapted in another

context or setting. Dependability was the concept that if the findings of this study were

exercised in another setting or context, the outcomes would be the same or similar.

Confirmability was whether the results of this study could be confirmed or corroborated

by others. Together, these criteria enhance the trustworthiness of the research (Loh, 2013). Loh noted that given these tests; they are at best, only useful as a guide. The nature of qualitative study is such that these four criteria may be constructive and helpful in enhancing trustworthiness, but they can never be perfect. The nature of qualitative research is such that every study, every context, is different, and those differences affect the research outcomes.

Credibility

Trochim (2006) suggested that credibility is the concept that the results of the study are only credible or believable from the perspective of the participants. Trochim suggested that the only way to test credibility is through reviews by participants. There was an expectation that several interviews would occur for each participant. Triangulation began in those meetings, beginning with the first one-hour full interview. The first interview might have extended longer than initially expected, either by extending the initial meeting at that interview or scheduling subsequent meetings until the participant's story, their lived experience, was recorded completely. Comparing those stories with the accounts of other participants was the intent of identifying meaning units. Over time, the stories generated common experiences although each participant had unique, outlier experiences included in their respective story. The shared experiences became the generalized description, not identifiable to one participant or another. Reviewing the list of generalized experiences with each participant verified accuracy and

credibility. This review confirmed the study results. Chapter 4 contains the results of those reviews.

For credibility, I planned for at least two additional meetings. These meetings were elective after providing participants with a synopsis of the interview meeting. The first reviewed each participant's contribution individually, their story as it appeared after bracketing. The second meeting was to review the total outcome of the research, to ensure that the participants agreed with the results of the reduction and bracketing. This review was a confirmation of the study results. Chapter 4 contains the results of those studies.

Transferability

Transferability was a concept of the degree to which the results of the research could be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings (Trochim, 2006). Loh (2013) noted that in *Narrative Studies* descriptions could add to the trustworthiness of the research. While this study was not a narrative study per se, it used many of the techniques of narrative studies to collect data. This study included collecting stories in sufficient detail to support *thick descriptions* of their representation and impact. The guiding process for these interviews was to obtain thick descriptions of the stories from participants. This approach enhanced the trustworthiness, and hence the transferability of the findings. The process used in this research sought to understand the circumstances of each participant during data collection, and through analysis and bracketing of these conditions, reduce those stories to their essence of practices and behaviors that affected

the outcomes of their leadership. These were the meaning unit equivalents as defined by Moustakas (1994). Participants reviewed these meaning units during the second review meetings. This review included their estimates of transferability of the findings. Typically, it is very difficult to transfer findings of a small subset into a larger population of change initiatives. Though it may be possible for some transferability might selectively apply aspects identified. Participant reviews, particularly their comments on transferability, were summarized in Chapter 4.

Dependability

Trochim (2006) defined dependability as based on the assumption of repeatability, expecting the possibility of achieving the same results, given the same context for the phenomenon (Trochim, 2006). During the bracketing process, only those meaning units that surfaced as general practices and behaviors, used by most or all participants, were considered meaning units for the final report. This discipline provided a level of triangulation by only accepting those story elements that are standard practices and behaviors leading to change initiatives success. Verification of this occurred during the review process. Participant responses in this review process constituted the equivalence of a peer review.

The review process delivered an estimation of significance for each meaning unit derived from the reduction and confirmed them in the participant reviews. If the study subjects agreed that similar results would occur in similar circumstances to that of the meaning unit context, that sufficed to support an estimation of dependability. The

agreement among participants was an indication that, given the same or similar context, the result would be the same.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results of the analysis can be confirmed or corroborated by others (Trochim, 2006). The study participants, in this case, were peers to the researcher and qualified to estimate the confirmability of the findings. Participant questioning during the review process confirmed whether they believed that the list of meaning units deduced from the stories were representative of their understanding of what works in leading CM initiatives to success. This aspect of trustworthiness goes together with the concept of dependability. As part of the participant review, participants were asked to estimate the level to which they agreed that the findings could be confirmed. Their concurrence resulted in determining a relative degree of confirmability.

Loh (2013) noted that Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended, in addition to addressing the preceding four criteria for trustworthiness, the importance of maintaining a journal. The researcher recorded daily activity regarding self and method. This record keeping coincided with Patton's (2015) observation that in qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument. This journal includes, in addition to daily and personal observations, a log of the application of methodology described here. As this study progressed, I adhered to this discipline and retained this journal as supporting documentation for the finished study.

In summary, while it was important to recognize that the results of research must be more than just the results of work, they needed to offer some sense of validity and generalizability, concepts beyond the notion that these findings were just subjectively valid because the researcher says they were. This level of validity can be difficult to accomplish in qualitative research. Success in addressing these four aspects, coupled with a comprehensive journal of conducting the research process, may improve the quality of the resulting contribution to the CM discipline.

Ethical Procedures

Appendices A and D included several ethical concerns. These included recognition that participation in this study was voluntary, noting several risks they might encounter by participating in this study. These appendices addressed participant awareness of complete confidentiality, including protection of their anonymity from any requests outside the study. Additionally, a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix E) ensured that disclosure of proprietary information held by me or any participant during or after the study would not occur outside the study group.

The appendices cited in this section were meant to frame the research in a way that maintained focus on the phenomenon of CM success and to ensure meeting the administrative and ethical requirements while recruiting study participants. Each potential participants agreed to the terms of agreement established to take part in or to receive reports of study results. Additional terms for participation were considered and added where feasible. While these arrangements were necessary for the protection of all

participants, the objective was to recognize that they were peers in the pursuit of successful CM.

Summary

This chapter began with a presentation of a phenomenological research design. The intent was to gather the reflections of transformational change success patterns as understood by change leaders. These leaders were employed by organizations for guiding the transformational change efforts of their respective employers. Participants were permanent employees of the organizations where they worked rather than external change practitioners. That is, they were not scholars and consultants that management hired to review, report, and advise the organization on CM. The chapter continued with a definition of my role as researcher, acknowledging that I am a peer of the study participants. I presented a detailed description of the method used to gather and analyze data. Other details covered in this chapter included a definition of the population of study participants and a description of a pilot study. The pilot study validated the process, questions, and issues that were the starting framework for data collection. Procedures for recruiting participants, for data collection, and for follow-up with participants followed. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the measures taken to ensure the work was credible, transferable, dependable, confirmable, and ethical. The next chapter in this work presents the results of this research.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of organizational change leaders to understand how they brought about change and successfully achieved planned results. Their expertise is the day-to-day inner workings of the organization. This perspective is different from that of consultants and scholars, the influential authors in CM, but necessary to understand how change happens in practice. I gathered data and information describing these lived experiences from change leaders of medium and large organizations. Data analysis led to the discovery of the shared essences of their experiences to determine if their strategies led to successful CM and whether it aligned with the prevailing CM literature.

Most of the writers in CM theory lacked the experience of conducting an organizational change effort. There is much research about what causes change initiatives to fail and what a change manager should do to avoid failure, but little describing the activities and behaviors of successful change leaders who, as employees are responsible for ensuring successful change. Employee leaders invest heavily in these successes, much more so than the typical consultant or researcher. Their survival as a member of the organization, their critical performance, and their sense of career progression relies on the success of their change efforts. They may, in fact, be more successful than scholars and consultants suggest, who claim that upwards of 70% of change efforts fail; but demonstrating that fact remains elusive.

The overarching research question was:

How do employee change leaders, responsible for delivering results in CM initiatives, live their experiences of CM success, specifically, to be held accountable for achieving the results of planned change, to experience the culture of change, and accomplish the results forecasted in planning the change process?

Subquestions derived from this research focus include:

4. What behaviors and other practices do internal change leaders seem to exercise, what do they do differently from what external change practitioners suggest, that results in CM success?

5. What meaning do employee change leaders attribute to the high failure rates in CM and how do these leaders show through their lived experiences to avoid them?

6. How, given the extraordinarily high potential for failure, do these leaders continue to exercise CM practices successfully in their organizations?

This chapter includes the results of a phenomenological study designed to extract the strategies, tactics, behaviors, and practices used by senior executives to achieve successful change leadership in their organizations. The chapter begins with a description of a pilot study, conducted to test the research questions, followed by a description of the research regarding the setting demographics of participants. After describing the data collection process, a presentation of a data analysis follows, followed by a discussion of evidence of trustworthiness. The chapter finishes with a brief statement of results of the research and a chapter summary.

Pilot Study

A pilot study with one change leader preceded the research. The pilot study showed that the research process and instruments worked as designed without needing modifications. This pilot was to test the process and enable adjustments before starting the research. The interview occurred in a face-to-face meeting with the Associate Comptroller at a major University. This pilot was conducted to verify that the data collection and analysis approach worked effectively, to test the mechanics of the process, and validate that it would produce the sort of data expected in an empirical phenomenological study. The pilot study tested the research design to find any design flaws before beginning the actual research. This test also allowed checking the premise of the interview questions (Appendix D) for whether they elicited the data expected from the study. Application of the pilot would have gone on to more than one participant if it demonstrated changes were necessary for the investigation.

The research design worked as defined in Chapter 3. The interview questions were open-ended, meant to foster conversation and free-flowing discussion about the participants' lived experiences while leading change initiatives. The intent underlying the interview questions was to keep the interview focused, more than they were to elicit specific information on a particular point of discussion. As Giorgi (1997) noted, the interview discussion results in the actual data collection. The initial questions were merely meant to lead the talks to reveal the actual CM experience of the participants. I

encouraged the participants to speak openly and freely, without restriction, in describing how they achieved transformational change successfully.

The conceptual framework for the pilot was the same as for the actual study; to conduct a conversational interview with one or two senior executives who had been responsible for delivering results in transformational change. The pilot used the same interview questions, the same Consent Form, and same approach as designed for the actual interviews in the data collection process. The process called for an interpretation of the interview results to a set of strategies, tactics, behaviors, and practices that led to success. Restatement of these strategies, tactics, behaviors, and practices would occur without subjective opinion or interpretation and presented as what a participant indicated effected change. This analysis demonstrated in the pilot interview that reducing the conversation to a list of strategies, tactics, behaviors, and practices was a straightforward process. The data from the pilot interview validated the process by reflecting the fact that many strategies, tactics, behaviors, and practices noted in the pilot matched what study participants expressed.

Research Setting

Most study participants chose telephone interviews to participate. All participants were director-level employees or above at their respective organizations. Modern work requirements made it difficult for these people to leave their workplaces to attend meetings and they were inclined not to participate if they could only do so in a face-to-face interview. The participants were all executives in small to large business

organizations or educational institutions. Telephone interviews also enabled many people from distant locations to participate. Allowing meetings in this manner led to more senior levels of participation from larger organizations than were locally accessible.

The entire interview process included two contacts and the exchange of correspondence in the verification process required by the institutional review board (Walden University IRB approval number for this study is 10-04-16-0074278 and it expired October 3, 2017). There were provisions for follow-up interaction, but no participant chose to take advantage of the additional time. The first contact was an initial telephone call to invite participation and to explain the Consent Form requirement. During this call, the participant qualified as fitting the participant profile and agreed to participate. The Consent Form contained a detailed description of the research design, expectations of the participants, and their rights and protections while involved in the study. Participants indicated agreement and consent by returning a signed copy of the Consent Form before inclusion in the study. In some cases, after reading the design and participation requirements, potential participants declined further participation. Those that declined did so because they felt unqualified at the executive level indicated in the Consent form. Most who made it to the point of receiving the Consent Form agreed to participate by signing a copy of the consent.

The second contact was the actual interview where participants told their stories. These meetings held to the one-hour limit suggested in the research design. Recordings and transcriptions came from those meetings, which are the basis of the analysis

contained here. Each participant reviewed their respective transcription to evaluate, correct, or modify as they saw fit. None made any changes. What follows here is an analysis of the interviews and summation of what they described that led to their success.

Demographics

Participants selection occurred based on their capacities as senior executives, director level or above who have been responsible for major change efforts and were payroll employees in the organization where they led change initiatives. Several used examples from places of prior employment but all met the criteria outlined in Chapter 3. Job titles included Chief Executive Officers (CEO), Chief Operations Officers (COO), Chief Information Officers (CIO), Program Directors, Program/Project Management Office Directors (PMO), and Comptrollers. The change initiatives discussed included acquisitions, divestitures, reorganizations to meet changing markets, redirection to comply with changing legal environments, business process re-engineering (BPR) activities, and enterprise resource planning (ERP) system implementations.

The organizations represented were for-profit businesses and education institutions. The most extensive organization was a pharmaceutical manufacturer with over 16,000 employees, with multiple plants around the world. The most substantial education institution was a university school with staffing of over 7,000 and a student body of over 46,000. Conversely, the smallest organization was a high growth services company that had a staff of just over 30 people. That group was a subsidiary of a petroleum industry support distributor. Most organizations ranged between 100 and 1,000

employees. The industries represented included pharmaceutical production, petroleum services, financial services, and both private and public education institutions. Businesses ranged from small startup enterprises to multinational manufacturing and distribution concerns. Table 1 shows the participants:

Table 1

Participant Identifications and Backgrounds

Participant[1]	Title and Responsibility
P01	CIO for three ERP transitions at $1 billion-plus pharmaceutical companies, currently working as a consultant.
P02	P02 was CIO of a $1.6 billion pharmaceutical manufacturer, hired to lead a transition from decentralized to centralized technology operations.
P03	P03 was a Director of Internal Audit for an international manufacturer and distributor of automotive parts. He led their U. S. operations out of a failed ERP implementation, through a recovery process. Several annual audit material failures demonstrated business process design weaknesses resulting from ERP failure.
P04	CEO, brought into a startup company, established to be grown and sold. P04 had just left the company as part of the sale agreement.
P05	Interim Assistant Vice Chancellor at a large West Coast University. This position is equivalent to CFO of larger business organizations.

[1] Coded numbers used to ensure confidentiality guaranteed to participants.

Table 1

Participant Identifications and Backgrounds

Participant[1]	Title and Responsibility
P06	P06 was Director of Executive Education at a University business school with an academic staff of 452 and student body of over 4,600 (the University, respectively, had an academic staff of 7,145 and student body of close to 47,900 thousand). P06 had general management and Profit and Loss responsibility for the Executive Education program (EEP).
P07	CEO of a specialty candy manufacturer. P07 was brought in to turn the company around from trending flat operations performance to high growth, a particular management skill he possessed.
P08	P08 was Corporate Council and COO for a $100 million online marketing company. He led a sales and marketing operations transition from a set of questionable to unquestionably compliant practices.
P09	P09 was CEO and President of a large manufacturing concern with seven, regionally located, plants across the U.S. He was responsible for standardizing products and services across these plants, changing them from more custom job-shop producers.
P10	P10 was Director of Reporting, under the CIO of a major West Coast University, with a faculty and staff of close to 2,700 personnel and student body of over 31.5 thousand. She was responsible for leading the transition from paper-based reporting to real-time online reporting in a University Information Technology Operations Center

Note. Participant identification uses coded numbers. Each participant was guaranteed confidentiality. Identification using coded numbers works to ensure that guarantee.

The study required that each participant be primarily responsible for achieving the intended results of a transformational change program or project in an organization where they worked as a payroll employee and was the senior executive in charge, primarily responsible for achieving change initiative results. Transformational change is effecting change in the strategies, structures, business processes, markets, or culture of the organization either outright simultaneously or close to it (Burke, 2014). This sort of change is disruptive change that affects the performance, and often the very make-up of the organization as a whole. The study focused on senior employee executives to ensure that the mindset, the paradigm of those participants, was that of an employee rather than of an external resource such as a consultant, educator, or researcher.

The employee perspective reflects a unique approach to goal achievement. Employees tend to become committed to their work at that one employer. A single failure could easily lead to permanent, irreversible damage to continuation in their chosen careers. At a minimum, they would become identified with the failure, an identification not experienced by external resources. The external person, a consultant or researcher, moves on to another project with relatively little recognition in the failure, even though they might have been primarily responsible. This difference may cause the employee to act differently, being more aware of and sensitive to the failure possibility. Their performance takes into account the probability of long-term career damage, and their behavior and leadership may invoke different approaches to problem-solving than seen from non-employee operatives. For this reason, participant selection was limited to

include only employee change managers as participants. Employees may well exercise

strategies, tactics, behaviors, and practices that consultants or researchers may never

think of, to ensure success. The employee might use academic or consultant

recommendations differently from what the external resource intended. These differences

might come from an intimate understanding of workplace culture and their sense of self-

preservation. External sources, such as consultants, academics, and researchers may not

recognize the nuances of culture and behavior, unique to that organization, and might

offer recommendations that are relatively insensitive to the needs of the people.

Employee leaders compensate for this possibility.

Data Collection

Ten participants contributed to the data. A process of contacting and interviewing

participants continued until the data collection achieved saturation; that is until further

interviews were deemed unlikely to expand the findings beyond the already identified

factors. One meeting occurred face-to-face, all others were individual, hour-long, one-on-

one interviews via telephone. Contact with each participant occurred twice. First was an

initial call describing the research, inviting participation, explaining the participation

requirements, and obtaining a signed Consent Form. The second contact was the actual

hour-long interview where participants told their stories about change initiatives where

they were primarily responsible, and how they managed that effort. I recorded the hour-

long interviews, and those recordings constitute the data collected. As noted by Giorgi

(1997), data collection for phenomenological studies is recording the conversations to

enable analysis. I derived the analysis from these recordings by looking for the themes, practices, and behaviors the participants used to effect successful change. That is, in this case, the essence of the strategies and tactics used to achieve their results. I reviewed these recordings several times to assure accuracy in reporting what was instrumental in participant successes.

While the preferred context for interviews was face-to-face, finding participants that could take the time required away from their work setting, was difficult. The preferable conduct of the interviews was in face-to-face meetings at mutually agreed locations, away from participant workplaces, or over the internet using video conferencing tools. If neither of these approaches were possible, then the interviews would occur by telephone. Participant locations were across the U. S., including in the Mid-Atlantic, Midwest, Northeast, Southwestern U. S., and particularly in Southern California. The distribution of these participants made travel to many of their workplaces expensive and time-consuming.

Data Analysis

The process used to get inductively from the data collection to deduction of the underlying strategies, and tactics used by successful change leaders, followed Giorgi's (1997) five-step approach to empirical phenomenology. This form of research differs in the sense that it first focuses on reducing the collected data to themes, referred to as meaning units by Giorgi. Findings came from the received data, the interviews, rather than from other research. The analysis began with understanding the content then

allowing that understanding to grow, through successive distillations into the themes that represented the underlying approach the participants said brought about their success. Those themes follow, organized under their respective research questions.

The study results show five major themes and five situational themes emerging from the data. The five major themes emerged as predominant, meaning many of the participants discussed them. The additional, situational themes, while not expressed by most participants, were essential to those who commented on them. The importance of these more secondary themes is that they too differ from the literature and were, to some degree, important. These secondary topics contain the strategies and practices to which the participants who mentioned them attributed their success. For example, two participants established quantified performance measurements then publicly tracked and posted them. These measures became driving indicators of success or failure for the change initiatives. While the CM effort included planning, organization, process redesigns, and so on, the teams focused on the measurements first and executed the change plans precisely to achieve those quantified performance goals.

The interviews were loosely guided storytelling by each participant with no undue influence the direction they went in with their stories. As it became apparent that the strategies and tactics expressed were different from what the literature presented, I asked some ad hoc questions to see if what the authors in the literature suggested were also considerations that influenced their leadership. These included whether a sense of urgency existed, or whether they had to do something to create a sense of urgency as

suggested by Kotter (1996/2010). I also asked whether there was employee resistance or an apathetic or non-supportive senior leadership mindset present that needed addressing for success to occur, as proposed by IBM (Jorgensen et al., 2008). Every participant indicated that these factors were not problems. If these criteria were in any way noted, the participant was confident in having the leadership and management skill to overcome them. They did not see these factors as troubling because team members involved in the changes resolved them as routine executive acts during the change initiatives. Every project was different. Each change leader acted differently dependent on the project requirements and the organization where they worked. A discussion of these themes and how team members dealt with factors such as a sense of urgency, employee resistance, or senior leadership apathy, or other key interactions in causing successful change, is given in more detail in the following Study Results section, and in the Interpretation of Findings in Chapter 5.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

As noted by Loh (2013), several criteria enhance the trustworthiness of this research. These include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The following sections address each of these. Together, these requirements present a framework that helps ensure validity, reliability, and generalizability (Trochim, 2006). While the participant group used in this study was small, consisting of 10 participants, a sense of probable generalizability is already evident. These participants independently expressed a list of common strategies, tactics, behaviors, and practices they used to

achieve success. In every case, they each described strategies and tactics that are summarily the research themes that follow in the next section. The strategies, tactics, behaviors, and practices expressed were so consistent that it is reasonable to expect that when study expansion to a broader sample occurs, the themes discovered here will remain predominant. The following subsections describe the preservation of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability during this study.

Credibility

Trochim (2006) suggested that credibility is the concept that the results of the study are only credible or believable from the perspective of the participants. Trochim indicated that the only way to test credibility is through reviews by participants. As expected, the first interviews were longer than planned. Most of the participants began discussing their change initiatives during the first introductory conversation. All told their complete stories were within the hour allotted for the second discussion. I had the discussions in these meetings transcribed. Each participant received a copy of their respective transcript for critique and correction, under cover of an email that included an interpretation and summarization of the story they told. Member checking occurred when each participant indicated that the transcripts and cover email contents were accurate and correct. No corrections came back. The themes noted in the section titled Study Results are the meaning units derived from these transcripts.

Transferability

Transferability is a concept of the degree to which the results of the research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings (Trochim, 2006). Loh (2013) noted that in *narrative studies* descriptions could add to the trustworthiness of the research. While this study is not a narrative study per se, thick descriptions, a technique of narrative study, was used to collect data. Jensen (2012) also recommended a thick description of the research design to show transferability. That thick description follows. This section also includes the boundaries of the study, notably recognizing limitations. This presentation, at least regarding replication of this study, should be transferable to any larger organization in the U.S. While this section presents the results of the study, a decision whether transferability exists is for the reader to make. The study was designed to question successful employee transformational change leaders in various organizations to determine how they were able to succeed in that practice. Scholars and consultants have conducted most of the research in CM. While these resources are not wrong in their findings, what they present seems drawn mostly from observing failed projects and may not be characteristics of successful CM. Their perspective, relative to changing organizations, are external. They are less connected to the internal politics, performance, productivity, and other requirements of the organizations they studied or supported, than employees. Simply put, scholars go back to school and consultants go on to their next project when change fails. The employee may suffer far greater consequences in that failure. Employees are connected to the organization more closely, and knowing the

consequences of failure, might manage change differently from external resource suggestions.

The perspective that the literature focuses on failure avoidance rather than on change initiative success is a gap in the literature. Most of the literature reviewed, although proposing strategies and tactics to achieve success, indicated that the authors based those recommendations on observed failures. There is little research available reporting the outcomes of successful employee change leaders, the person accountable for leading change from start to finish while engaged as an employee.

Study participants were senior executives, director level or above who have been responsible for transformational change and were employees for the change initiatives they presented, employed by the organizations where they led those initiatives. The participants reviewed their stories and confirmed their accuracy. One participant demonstrated transferability, describing how his industry had changed as a result of his effort to redefine his organization's operations. Four change initiatives were ERP implementations, following project management practices such as published by the PMI (PMI, 2013). One used both internal and external change managers to effect change. Participants came from for-profit businesses and educational institutions. The participant group did not include representation from government agencies or non-profit organizations. However, the findings here should be transferable to other organizations that are similar with hierarchical chains-of-command, organizational designs, business plans, and budgetary financial controls using *Generally Accepted Accounting Principles*

(GAAP) to control finances. All organizations were U.S. based. One was a subsidiary of a Japanese company, but the study excluded organizations outside the U.S. The Japanese subsidiary case occurred wholly within their U.S. organization under the direction of U.S. leadership. The change initiative was not influenced by the Japanese parent organization, although they started it.

The interview processes prompted open, free-flowing discussion from participants. The only questions posed beyond the initial one to start the storytelling were queries and comments to keep the conversation about change leadership as opposed to the many other activities senior executives attend to while doing their jobs. Participants expressed the strategies and tactics they used. While discussing these strategies and tactics, they also described the behaviors and practices they affected to achieve their intended outcomes. The results bracketed into the themes in the following section. Leadership literature commonly presents these themes, for program and project management and organization development.

Dependability

Trochim (2006) defined dependability as based on the assumption of repeatability expecting the possibility of achieving the same results, given the same context for the phenomenon. The study results noted here clearly demonstrate dependability, at least for this small participant group. The themes discussed were typical for a clear majority of the participants and were apparently also part of the behaviors and tactics of those who were the minority. A reasonable expectation, given the outcome of this study, is that further

expansion of participation would produce similar results. The top five themes noted were elaborated by 50% to 90% of the participants. These participants agreed that similar results would occur in similar circumstances and that in many cases they had used these same or similar strategies and tactics to achieve successful change in other initiatives. Often, the participant described the application of a tactic, behavior, or practice they used in earlier experiences in other change initiatives as extended examples. While the participants were not brought together as a group, their descriptions are so closely similar that they show a uniformity where at least the top five themes are consistent.

Confirmability

The similarity of the strategies, tactics, behaviors, and practices used by the participants itself confirms them among each other. I asked Participants if the themes commonly expressed by others were meaningful to them and they confirmed that they were. This theme confirmation held true for those participants that did not explicitly indicate the top five themes were significant. In most cases, the top five themes were inferred in the discussion rather than expressly described. At least two or three participants independently and explicitly described one or more of the top five themes as strategies and tactics intentionally used to achieve success. For example, P02 described all five of the top themes. P01 described four of the top five themes. For the rest of the participants, if this significance did not come out in the conversation, it was queried. Those asked, confirmed recognizing the top themes as contributing factors.

Study Results

This section presents the research question and each sub-question of the study, with examples of how each major theme derived from the research data. The interview results are the research data in keeping with the process expressed by Giorgi (1997), and the discussions show examples of how acts of the participants resolved to exercise a particular theme. In several places throughout this section, there are direct quotes from the primary interviews with study participants. These quotes were included to clarify how the themes came from the data. Participant numbers identify these instances.

Research Question

The overarching research question is stated, followed by Table 2 listing the Themes associated with this question, followed by a discussion of theme applicability. The material sought by asking this question was what were the primary strategies and tactics used to achieve change. The overarching research question was: How do employee change leaders, responsible for delivering results in CM initiatives, live their experiences of CM success, specifically, to be held accountable for achieving the results of planned change, to experience the culture of change, and accomplish the results forecasted in planning the change process?

Table 2

Overarching Themes

Major Theme	Respondents	Definition
1. Collaborative Leadership	90%	Strong, proactive, qualified, self-starting, collaborative leaders incented to do the work of getting others to execute plans and achieve goals.
2. Open Communication	80%	Formal and informal communications structured to encourage open, candid, non-punitive communication between team members and with the total organization, focused on success.
3. Defined Expected Outcomes	70%	Redefined plans and operations around new business objectives for the organization, then executed to achieve the new design.
4. Changed Organization Focus	60%	Changed product and service offerings to the extent that what they offered their clients and customers was something new and different from what they offered before changing.
5. Recognized Change Necessity	50%	Recognized continuous change as an imperative, and the risk for failure if they did not change.

Discussion. The themes in Tables 2 and 3 list common terminology for strategies

recognized as descriptors for leadership activity that organizations exercise to provide

leadership and obtain results. They will be described in more detail in the following

discussion while describing how their codification came from the data. These themes

came from listening to the conversations, analyzing the discussions, and realizing that

while each participant was describing what they did differently, what they said fell within

summary categories represented by the themes. For example, the first theme,

collaborative leadership, was mentioned by nine of the 10 participants. Only one

participant used those words, but each participant described the leadership they exercised

in such a way that their commitment was clear. They expressed this theme differently but

when reviewed for what they said, the summary of what they meant consolidated under

this heading. There were differences. When P01 made the statement quoted in the

following section for Collaborative Leadership, she referred to having a team of change

leaders under her supervision that were committed, proactive, collaborative actors who

worked together to achieve their goals. When P02 talked about Collaborative Leadership,

he referred to the importance of having the senior management on board with his concept

of change and how he would manage it, the strategic direction that he would take the

change initiative. In other words, he was *managing up* as much as he was managing the

change. That is, he ensured that top management, including those members of top

management who were not involved in executing the change plans, agreed with the

approach he took and supported it fully, or that they would protest privately so that

unintended dissemination of their opinions did not influence the outcomes of the change.

Reviewing the data occurred in three phases. Before starting the analysis, I reread

each transcript while listening to the interview recording to ensure that the transcript read

the same as the interview. The first phase was to read the transcripts and identify specific

strategies, tactics, behaviors, and practices that were invoked or used to manage the

change initiative. Codification began During this phase. The second phase was to read the codified transcripts while listening to the recordings again, to determine if listening changed the meanings or quality of the statements found in the transcripts. This second phase brought the emphasis, the inflections, the passion of the participant, into the coding process and resulted in clearer definitions of the critical parts of the transcripts into the themes in Tables 2, 3, and 4. A third phase was reread through the transcripts, again to identify a distinction between Strategies and Tactics, and Behaviors and Practices. The discussion for the overarching research question presents the Strategies and Tactics employed by the participants. The discussion for Research Subquestion 1 presents the Behaviors and Practices exercised to influence commitment to the change initiatives.

While five primary themes emerged from the data, there were also five additional themes that were situationally unique to some of the initiatives discussed by participants. These additional themes were tactics employed by their respective practitioners to foster success. When these were considered significant, they were noted and included in the findings. For example, two participants established and posted business performance metrics in their organizations. They focused on operational performance improvement as demonstrated by improvement in operational performance measurements. The management of their change initiatives were tailored to effect operational change in a way that these metrics demonstrated improvements. This approach is encouraged by consulting organizations like IBM, Deloitte, and McKinsey. These two participants did not attribute their knowledge of focusing on performance achievement rather than on the

changes themselves, to consultants from companies like IBM or McKinsey but they took

that approach. The themes unique in this sense, are explained after showing how the

findings for the research questions were derived.

I reviewed each interview multiple times. The results in the Tables are from

interpreting participant conversations, codifying components from the interviews under

each of these headings and summarizing them into the themes presented in the tables. For

example, P02 never used the words *managing up*. However, what he described was

managing his peers and superiors, a practice of managing up. P01 summarily defined

collaborative leadership. Her statement was her strongest narrative in the entire interview,

although she gave a strong discussion of each other theme as they occurred to her. In this

way, the participants summarized their descriptions into the themes presented here.

Collaborative leadership. Nine out of ten participants (90%) addressed strong

leadership as a strategy for success. Two considered it the most critical aspect of their

work. P01 describes a vision of collaborative leadership, summarizing by stating:

> It all boils down to strong and present leadership. It is common goals,
>
> incentive to perform the work, strong and present leadership,
>
> complementary skill sets, and enough of them to get the job done. If you
>
> do not have them all; change will not happen. (P01)

Like P01, Participant P02 noted that the first action was to ensure adequate buy-in

for his approach to change, among the executives of the organization. P02 approached his

project by not only seeking this buy-in, he actively managed the executive team, his peers

and superiors, to ensure that no discord or disagreement among the senior executives was visible to the rest of the organization. He also identified the informal leaders throughout the organization and took steps to manage their interest and involvement as well. He sought to ensure that those informal leaders would not foment resistance or other problems by influencing the rank-and-file organization personnel He described the managing up process as follows:

> My priority was to get the executives to buy into the changes. I made it very clear to them that once they bought into it; at no point could they question it, except behind closed doors to me. If they were to question whether we have made the right decision about something that is going to give people that are going through the change an excuse to show resistance, they would all act like they have the senior person's support. (P02)

Dissension among the senior executive team could damage progress and P02 needed to ensure that did not happen. He allowed for dissension among the senior executives but asked that they not exhibit this dissension in front of the rest of the organization. If their concerns were valid, he quietly adjusted his plans to accommodate them.

Every participant recognized the need for strong, proactive leaders who could foster acceptance, participation, and support for the initiative's outcome. They sought to manage their leaders as well as their subordinates. They sought active, participative team

members who could drive the projects and activities by fostering acceptance, participation, and support in turn. The practice included managing up, obtaining active, participative acceptance from the leaders over them. In every case, participants were clear to emphasize the importance of collaborative and participatory leadership as opposed to an assumed command and control or directive-in-nature leadership posture. As P01 noted, there was no time for micro-managing projects and the people chosen to lead needed to be equipped and capable of acting relatively independently while staying within the bounds of the project objectives.

Open communication. Eight participants (80%) stressed the importance of open, candid communication in their organizations. One CIO noted that communication among managers and senior executives were completely open; there were no secrets. They worked in an environment where they could discuss progress and activity openly and candidly, and they helped each other toward achievement. They focused on the success of their actions. One example was P04, was hired as CEO to develop a new business organization with the intent to sell it to another company. As P04 indicated when putting the business on the market,

> There were no secrets: We tried to make everyone in the organization fully
> aware of the coming changes and how they each would be affected. The
> goal was to keep everyone in the loop and continuing to work toward our
> objectives, given that change was coming. Everyone would know
> something was afoot, so we made sure everyone knew what was

happening, why, and that he or she was aware of the progress on the deal.

We were a small company and could not hide what we were doing so we

decided to keep everyone informed. That turned out to be a good decision.

in the process of getting bought, we made sure everyone was aware of and

matched to his or her counterpart in the new company. Those people who

were not staying with the company through the transition were told as

much as were the rest of the staff. That turned out to be a good decision.

Everyone stayed through the transition, even those not transferring to the

new organization, and all of the employees respected and appreciated

being kept informed. (P04)

P04s change activity was to prepare the company for sale to new owners. They

ensured that everyone was kept aware of upcoming changes and how he or she would

each be personally affected. Given the impending change, he needed to ensure that each

person would continue to work for the good of the company as long as they continued as

members of the organization. The entire organization knew what changes were coming

and when. P04 felt that if he did not do that, each member might surmise a negative

impact, lower their standards, and plan to leave early. By knowing what was coming to

the organization and sensing a level of appreciation, the staff remained cooperative,

committed, and stayed with the group through the transition, even those scheduled for

termination after the change. This change resulted in several key position eliminations.

The CEO believed the employees appreciated the openness and candor and respected the

changes as they occurred. He believed that those employees, scheduled for termination

upon closure of the sale transaction, stayed to the end of the transition because they

appreciated this openness.

P02 expressed this differently. As CIO, responsible for centralization of

technology support operations in an international pharmaceutical company, he had a very

large team working at several plants and distribution centers around the world. These

teams needed to be able to act independently and proactively as they completed their

parts of the change initiative. P02 expressed this as

> A problem was the fact that people instinctively avoid change. The change
>
> piece is the challenging piece. People fear change and instinctively avoid
>
> it. We developed a change map. We took each group through the change
>
> map and showed everyone where they fit on the change map. We then
>
> conducted monthly Town Halls where we would update progress and how
>
> far we had to go, if we had any *wins*, we would share them with the
>
> organization, and share what was on the horizon. We shared the strategies
>
> and guiding principles, both behavioral and technical guiding principles,
>
> and referred back to them all of the time. We tried to get people to believe
>
> in them, to love them. We conducted workshops, not only for the
>
> necessary training for work responsibility, and process changes but also
>
> for CM. In the CM training, we had HR explain what happens in change.
>
> This training covered the obstacles, what happens in the *cycle of despair*,

then asked people to say where they thought we were in changing and to verbalize how they felt about it. (P02)

P02 was pleasantly surprised at the positive effect this approach had. He felt challenged by the fact that the organization had more of an engineering type of reaction and changing roles can be frightening. They showed the people whose roles were changing, how the new role was different and how their existing skills fit them.

Defining expected outcomes. Seven participants (70%) talked about defining or redefining the anticipated results of the change initiatives they led. That is they started with a planning process that identified and set objectives for their operational, marketing, legal, or financial efforts, then continued tracking their work through the process of defining and executing the changes. This approach allowed participation in setting objectives by the people who would have to live and work with the changes. The approach changed the focus from the changes themselves to the operational outcomes expected from changing. In most cases, project plans developed a sequence of events designed to achieve the goals. The respective participant disseminated these plans where they applied. In some cases, the changes required careful roll-out of closely held confidential plans as change transitioned the organization. For example, P06 was hired to turn around the performance of an EEP at an ivy-league business school. He observed his existing organization and studied its markets and operations. He developed a program that reorganized the faculty and staff of the school based on noting a radical shift in EEP requirements in business organizations. He did not immediately share the program with

the organization as a whole because the changes were significant, they involved critical

faculty and staff realignments and some terminations, and those actions alone would have

fostered resistance. With the support of his superiors, he rolled the program out over a

two-year period. The reorganization was designed to respond to market requirements; the

fact that large corporations could not afford to send senior managers away for four to six

weeks of resident schooling. When finished, the school curriculum, the faculty, and the

educational design had significantly changed. That school transitioned to profitable

operations from consistent losses. P06 described this first, as

> I analyzed operations costs then raised the price to $10,000 a day. What
>
> happened was about a third of the custom clients agreed, a third of the
>
> clients indicated the price change was not in the budget for that year but
>
> they would renew in the next year. They agreed to pay the higher price.
>
> Then one-third of the clients indicated they were not going to pay the
>
> higher price, but in the end, they did. Without doing too much except
>
> raising prices, I made the place profitable for the first time, probably in its
>
> history. (P06)
>
> P06 went on to explain how he changed the product and service offering of the

school, indicating

> The faculty essentially ran the EEP division. They ran it as much for their
>
> personal benefit, making extra money themselves, as they did for
>
> providing senior executives with training at a level commensurate with

executive skills. Unlike EEPs at other University business schools; at this school, if faculty taught in the EEP, they received compensation in addition to their basic pay. Working in the EEP was not a zero-sum game for them. As a result of my work, the faculty-led programs changed to market-driven programs. The School was teaching courses, for example, time management, that a premier business school should not be teaching at the executive level. I eliminated the *old boys club* and changed the products and services offered by the school. By my third year, 70% of the off-the-shelf open enrollment programs had changed. I re-cast the product line and offered programs based on what market research identified as needed. To do that, I changed the faculty to use professors that were not the standing faculty at The School, not tenured professors. I used non-tenured practitioners at least 50% of the time which upset the tenured faculty. The dean, who also disapproved, supported the changes because the school was growing market share and was profitable. People said we could not do that, but we did. They said we could not raise rates from $6,300 to $10,000 a day, but we did. I created new products and a new EEP. (P06)

The new organization design developed by P06 is now commonly used in EEPs at Universities across the United States.

In another example, P08 was hired as corporate attorney at a mail order company to resolve legal disputes over marketing practices. He eventually became the chief operating officer (COO) of the company. He recommended operational changes designed to counter legal issues and poor marketing practices and took responsibility to implement them. Several state attorneys had sued the company for their approach to marketing, and they needed to change quickly before the legal expenses shut the company down. P08 identified an approach to marketing that satisfied the States Attorneys offices and enabled the company to continue. He described the problem like this;

I joined this company in 2013, about three and a half years ago. The company had achieved revenues of around $110 million. About four years earlier, maybe 2008, revenues were more like $25 million, and if you went back to 2004, they were more like $3 million. They had a meteoric rise, and I was the first in-house attorney the company had hired, ostensibly because it had huge regulatory problems.

The problems came up in 2008. Late that year, the company changed its marketing to a somewhat risky but very legal approach to soliciting customers. By 2011 a couple of different government agencies had observed that this marketing activity was causing, in their minds, consumer harm. By the time I joined the company, the place was in trouble from a regulatory perspective. Three different states had opened investigations, and the company had retained three top law firms, notable

experts in advertising and marketing, to handle these three investigations. They were consuming an average of $50,000 to $75,000 a month in legal fees.

The business was that this company, essentially a startup, was in the process of renewing a second license with an old-line publisher from the 1920's and 1930's. The two organizations had very different cultures. The publisher had extended the license to this startup, but over the years management relations had become incredibly strained, mostly due to cultural differences.

The startup considered the publisher out of touch with the art of marketing. My first duty was to resolve the regulatory and franchise issues. Almost immediately, it became obvious that I needed to repair the relationship with the licensor, the publisher.

What I discovered is that the entire culture at this company was highly entrepreneurial. They employed about 200 people at the time I started, of a very cutting-edge culture led by two young mavericks, who believed that they could do nothing wrong. They felt that the world was wrong and they were right. They were facing fines of more than 100 million dollars that would have put the company out of business. (P08)

In the course of his employment, P08 resolved the legal issues, redesigned the marketing programs, which in turn redesigned the organization that existed to support

them. He was eventually appointed COO of the company's continued operations. He renegotiated the second license with the publisher that supplied their products and continued the business without impending legal concerns hanging over them. When renegotiation of a third license came about, the publisher chose not to renew the license. The publisher, being one of the oldest and largest in that business, and a more conservative organization, was not comfortable with the practices of this company and chose to sever the relationship. P08 had foreseen this outcome during his earlier interactions with the publisher and had developed a plan for an orderly shutdown of the company. He assumed responsibility for the business shut-down, pending acquisition of new products they could market.

ERP projects are a common form of a change initiative, and four of the projects represented here were of this type. They are an example of change initiatives that require extraordinary planning and execution to achieve the goals or outcomes expected in change. The PMI is a professional membership organization focused on project management. This organization has developed the project management body of knowledge (PMBOK), a complete body of knowledge (PMI, 2013) around the concept of planning and executing projects. Most professional project managers use this body of knowledge to guide their work. These projects may range from construction to reorganizations, to acquisitions and divestitures, or ERP. ERP is a typical example of transitional change. The application of this technology is likely to drive change in organizational design, structure, staffing, and the management of the delivery of products

and services. P01 gave three examples of organizational change that were driven by ERP implementations. P02's employer, a senior executive team that had already decided on changes needed for the organization, hired him to lead a successful ERP change. P03 talked about two ERP experiences; the first, as a member of a project team charged with recovering from a failed ERP implementation at an international car parts manufacturer and distributor; the second, as the corporate executive in charge of standardized ERP implementations at newly acquired companies as the parent company merged with those organizations. These latter implementations replaced unique business processes with standard processes for the control and operation of their respective businesses as subsidiaries of the new owner. VG talked about one example that was a key component of a larger ERP initiative. These leaders referred to elements of the PMBOK (2013) when they explained how they approached their projects. The interesting part is that the other leaders who were not involved in technology installation or replacement initiatives did not refer the PMBOK. However, they framed their approaches similarly, and their key themes were essentially the same.

Changed organization focus. Six participants (60%) discussed changing the organization focus. That is, they changed product and service offerings to the extent that what they offered customers after changing were something different from when they started. For example, when P06 started with the EEP, a program that had lasted four to six weeks, operated as a residential college program. Client organizations struggled with this because they had to absent their managers to this program that length of time. The

program taught executive education using the same models, materials, and classes used in their Masters of Business Administration (MBA) program. The program merely packaged the MBA curriculum as an EEP, something most attendees had completed in prior learning. P06 changed the program to follow a model he called Managing with Ambiguous Authority, a curriculum designed for working mid- and senior-level executives who were targeted to move up to the most senior positions in their organizations. P06 described this effort as

> When meeting the associate dean in the interview process, I indicated I would only take the position if they rewrote the job description to a much higher-level. They agreed and redefined the position as the director of the EEP.
>
> I began with a couple of things. First, I worked on a new strategy. Second, I worked on the school finances and will discuss that first. They were losing money and needed to change their pricing, cost models, and deliverables. They could not say which products were profitable, which were not, how much it cost to run the program. The EEP had a dedicated building on campus, a conference center including 102 hotel rooms, an executive chef, and dining facilities. I asked how much it cost to deliver meals, what the mortgage payment for the facility was. No one had ever asked these questions. I learned that the fully-loaded cost was about $7,000 a day. Our biggest custom client was General Motors, who paid

$6,300 a day. We were losing money. I raised prices to $10,000 a day. Without doing much else, the program became profitable. The changed finances surprised and delighted the dean.

The strategy changed to more market-driven programs. The old curriculum included courses that an EEP should not teach. By year three, at least 70% of the off-the-shelf open enrollment programs had changed, redefined based on market needs instead of faculty prerogatives. Non-tenured faculty was hired, teaching 50% or more of the time. The Dean disapproved but tolerated this, appreciating the growth and profitability it brought to the school.

The old curriculum came from the MBA programs. The classes were based on case studies, using cases that had been around for 20, 30 years. An audit of the classes found that in a normal week, several faculty members might use the same case study, taught from different perspectives, not knowing this because they did not know the entire program's content. Program redesign created new classes with different segments built on each other. The faculty appreciated this teaching approach as the process was more challenging than it had been.

We changed the leadership processes in the school. The Center for Creative Leadership was, at the time, known for its 360-degree feedback evaluation system. I introduced this system into The School, the first EEP

school to do so. We did things like action learning projects. In a joint presentation with a large financial services firm, at UNICON (the global consortium for University-based EEPs,) a client expressed how learning groups changed his company. I changed the EEP because as part of changing concepts, it was not academic EEP anymore; it was applied executive training using academic tools.

The last change was marketing open enrollment. Traditionally, marketing was print media. Most executive program ads were tombstone ads, presenting innocuous information about stature and suggesting enrollment. They included pictures of buildings, edifices, such as a business school building. There were always building pictures in the ads. We hired an ad agency, targeting 45 to 55-year-old men, senior managers going through major transitions, moving to higher levels, or possibly some other life crisis. At that time the target market was mostly men, and advertising was mostly in print media. We created a four-color picture of a Harley-Davidson, with the headline, "Malcolm Forbes learned to ride a motorcycle at 51. What have you done lately?" After that ad went out, the phone would not stop ringing. The ad was different. It popped because everything else, the ads from other schools, were black and white, bland text and pictures of edificial buildings. This ad strikingly stood out. The ad essentially challenged the typical mid-life crisis of successful executives.

That ad changed EEP marketing, changed everything in the program, and

turned the industry upside down. (P06)

The program taught the concepts of disruptive planning and execution. The new

courses were designed for working executives moving to senior level positions. P06

changed the instructor staffing to adjuncts instead of tenured faculty, recognizing that

adjuncts focus more on teaching than they do on publishing. The University was a

research school. Teaching in the EEP was a secondary priority for tenured faculty, who

were focused more on publishing than teaching. P06 raised prices for the program and

changed the marketing approach. The EEP had been operating at a loss. The price

increase was more than 58%. Marketing had followed the typical marketing tactics of

Universities; he changed that to appeal more to C level executives of large organizations

by using a Park Avenue advertising agency to develop business-oriented marketing. The

new focus was on results to expect from sending entire management teams through the

program, instead of focusing on the individual contributor's growth in the organization.

In another case P07 found his organization so internally focused that they could

not define or accept new products, new processes, or new markets. P07 presented two

cases, and this one was his most comprehensive example. Company growth was stagnant.

He had problems from the start because of competition with the prior CEO, an autocratic

leader who led through fear and intimidation. In P07's words

My first case was a Chocolate and Candy Company, a 50-year-old family-

owned business that was run by an autocratic founder and owner who had

recently passed away. Grandchildren were working in the business, and the family decided none of them were prepared to take over. The grandfather took this little candy store and made it into a $50 million business that sold seasonal confections; hollow Easter bunnies, Easter eggs, chocolate Santa Clauses, Valentine's Day candy, and Halloween candies. Mostly chocolates and some other products. For example, imported hard candies. Company products were all private label and unbranded. Distribution channels were through mass retailers such as Woolworth, Wal-Mart, K-mart, Family Dollar; drug chains, such as Eckerd, Rite-Aid, Walgreens, and CVS, a lot of independent stores, and some grocery stores. This case occurred in the 1990s when there was no e-commerce. The company was the grandfather's source of joy and income for the family. They went through 10 years of profit erosion under the grandfather, who died in his late 80s. The business was still profitable, so no one did anything that upset him. The family allowed the business to continue as he had designed it. Expenses were increasing, and revenues were flat. However, it was still income and pride to the grandfather; the family did not want to upset him. So, they let the business ride.

Everybody loved Sam. During onboarding, I saw it was going to be very difficult because I feared that the staff and family would see me as the new Sam, which I did not think I could ever be. They loved Sam; they

did not love me. I was not a family member. I needed a different approach. The plant manager under Sam had been with him from the day Sam started until he died. I committed not to fire any long-term employees because they were not trained to do what I wanted. I would respect Sam's wishes to treat these employees like family members. Clarence, the plant manager, let me know that he founded this business with Sam. Sam said it would always be a family run business. Since I was not a family member, the only way Clarence was leaving before me is if he sees one of the grandchildren become CEO or if he died. Unfortunately, about two and half years into the process, Clarence passed away. That is what I saw, what it would be like, even before onboarding.

I decided that the best way to work because people would fear me like they did Sam, was by trying to be nice. I did all the pump-up speeches and tried to get the staff to know me but knew that this was like trying to retrain a dog. The dog that had been hit with a newspaper so many times that when the newspaper comes out, the reaction is fear. When the President shows up, they all cowered and asked, "what do you want me to do?" I identified, through a strategic assessment, how to grow this business so that the top line increased. The business had not increased revenues in 10 years. Expenses continued to rise every year. They needed to get the top line growing at least as quickly as expenses. I created four

task groups. One for product development. One for quality because the quality was terrible. One for safety because we had $500,000 of workman's, compensation expenses, and one for, cost reduction or productivity. We selected team members; each had a separate team of 7-10 people, representing each function; marketing, production, finance, and so on. I hired a facilitator who is a proponent of work climate, brought all the teams together and gave each a one-paragraph charge for their responsibility for the next 90-days. For example, the team on productivity would look at ways to reduce our costs so that we could become more profitable, without affecting the customer experience.

New products in a seasonal business are their lifeblood. In the past, they had only done product line extensions. I told the product development team I no longer wanted to see 2 or 3% growth from new products; I wanted them to represent 30% of our sales growth within three years of starting. Their reaction was that new product development was a wholly different from anything they had ever done. They had to think differently. They may have to test equipment. Everybody was pushing back, giving all the reasons why it would not work. I told them that is the charge, and since I did not know enough about the business yet, I provided a facilitator. For the next 30 days, I am not going to talk about this. You can meet as much as you want, but I expected each team to meet weekly. I

gave them an outside facilitator to help with these meetings. He will keep

you focused on your charge, by asking how you know what you know,

and bring you back to it. In 30 days, you will give me an interim verbal

progress report. In 60 days, you will give me a written report for feedback

about where you are heading. At the end of the 90 days, we are going off-

site, to make a presentation of your findings and recommendations. What I

tried to do is involve everybody in the strategic portion of the business.

Obviously, I outlined a couple of strategies that I felt were important.

However, I tried to build consensus on the strategic thinking. All too

often, I have seen people autocratically force a strategy, and then they try

to build a consensus at the implementation level. That fails miserably. In

this case, it took us 90 days, and I got four reports. I will tell you that I

probably accepted 75% of the recommendations because this was part of

my onboarding and part of the change for doing things differently. I

needed to show that if you made reasonable recommendations, you would

get green-lighted. The result was that consensus about cost savings,

quality control, how to control Workers' Compensation, and new product

development became the targets of the teams. I accepted most of the

recommendations and implementation became easier.

So, let's go through a couple of results. The Workers'

Compensation problem took over three years to correct. We put a safety

program in place that reduced expenses from $500,000 to $33,000. The

program was simple, nothing more than communication. First, somebody

suggested an OSHA audit us because we were an unsafe environment.

Obviously, you would not invite government agency to inspect, but we

found a company, a private company that could inspect like OSHA. They

came in, announced themselves as if they were OSHA, acted like OSHA,

but were an audit firm. They asked for safety logs when they first came in.

Within the first two hours, all 500 employees in the plant knew that OSHA

was there and we were in trouble. We issued citations, which supposedly

represented fines left and right. The inspection happened differently in

each building; we had 500,000 square feet of buildings. By the end of two

days, we had about 180 citations. The employees did not know the

citations were not real. We told them that the audit was not real but was a

private company that audits for OSHA compliance. The Workers'

Compensation Safety Task Force recommended this approach. That team

built a consensus around the problem, noting that it was not a money

problem. Somebody could be injured; the problems could be life-

threatening.

We started the communication program and made the capital

investment needed to fix whatever was facility related. For example, on

the roof, you have to have a safety warning light, so when you get within a

certain number of feet of the edge, you receive a warning that you close to falling off. We started Lock-up, tag-out programs. We had people lose fingers in machinery. We did not have safety guards and lock-up, tag-out programs on saws and other machinery. That required capital investment. The more important part that saved money was a yellow card system. Any supervisor or higher could walk around and issue a yellow card. These yellow cards were available around the plant and anybody could issue one. If you saw somebody committing an unsafe act, you would go to that person and write up what you saw on the card. No punishments or firings resulted. Nobody lost time or pay. The process was that simple. You go over to that person, and you would say, I just saw you committing an unsafe act. The process used a carbon copy card. You would write it up and say, Michael Moore, you were committing an unsafe act. I saw that you did not shut this machine off and put the lock-up, tag-out protocol in place before you reached under the filling head. I wanted to let you know that is an unsafe act. Your arm could get caught in there, it could have been punctured, broken, or something else dangerous could have happened. The finding was written up on the card with one copy given to the offender, and the other dropped in a box. The workmen's compensation team reviewed the cards from the box and took appropriate action. When you collected a certain number of violations as an

individual, you attended a training program. We punished nobody.

Nobody lost their jobs. There was no docked pay, nonpunitive personnel

actions, a practice frequently seen in other businesses. Training went out

to everybody. It was just a communication program. Ultimately, the

$500,000 Workers' Comp expense reduced to $33,000, which meant

insurance premiums were much lower, so that was very successful.

Another accomplishment was in new products. Once they knew we

wanted a third of our business from new products, they started thinking

creatively. They thought about new equipment, which could enable

different products. I told them we did not have to manufacture the

products; They had always made everything we sold. We could

subcontract. We could outsource. We could do anything you want. They

were excited by that. We started a brand licensing program. For example,

we licensed Nickelodeon products such as Rugrats and SpongeBob

SquarePants. We licensed products from Universal Studios like Curious

George and Woody Woodpecker. We licensed Hawaiian Punch to do

flavored licorice with Hawaiian Punch flavors. We licensed Peter Pan

Peanut Butter to do Peter Pan peanut buttercups, a take on Reese's. Some

of these things make these products that work very well. For example, for

SpongeBob SquarePants, we had bought plastic models of SpongeBob

SquarePants in China and manufactured chocolate to put inside them. We

could not do licorice ourselves. So, we outsourced it to a company in, I believe, Argentina. They made the licorice, and we would send them the Hawaiian Punch flavor.

We took the company from 30 million dollars when I on-boarded, to 75 million dollars in five years. The growth came from this brand licensing program, a whole different product line, where we manufactured only about half of the new products in our plant. We outsourced the rest to other manufacturers who wanted to do business with us. Taking those governors off was not something I thought of, these were the ideas of the new products task group. They brainstormed ideas knowing they did not have to manufacture here. Someone might say they had wanted to be in marshmallow business; another might have wanted to be in the hard candy business, and so on. The team brought that to me, and I just had to say, yes. Since I came out of a branded background, I might have added a little value, suggesting that we put a brand on it and try to license it under our candy company name. The program was highly successful.

Regarding quality that was all about machinery. The organization recognized that nobody had put any capital investment in this company. The machines could not do what we wanted them to do. The foil wrapping on the candy could not be good if the foil wrappers were 30 and 40 and 50 years old. Ultimately, this team recognized the places of the best leverage.

They knew who the best machinery makers were, which were almost all German. They knew the best Swiss candy making machines. We spent about 6 million dollars on new machinery. I would not know one candy-wrapping machine from another. I will be honest with you. There were smart people there, and they knew what was needed.

This company was successful, profitable within the first six months. Subsequently, we took years to implement the changes. I was there just under five years. When my contract was running out, and they wanted to renew me for another two. I decided to move on because I was not a family member and one of the family members, the eldest of the grandchildren working in the business, became the CEO. They continued these strategies to date, have been successful, and are doing well. Onboarding was the key and framing everything as the customer experience. Because of the command and control environment, this case needed a certain approach. That was the approach taken there. (P07)

Others who change their organizational focus included P09 who identified the need to standardize products across plants and defined change initiatives designed to achieve those goals. These included changing job descriptions, engineering design processes, and redefining the day-to-day operating objectives for the company and each plant around the country. This project was successful in the sense that the organizational changes needed to support standardization were made and became permanent. However,

this project brought about tremendous cultural stress due to the old organizational structure. The organization was an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) company. They did not terminate employees. Most of their midlevel and senior managers and many of their rank and file employees had been with the company more than 30 years. The board of directors was made up of the retired company founder, several former CEO's, and one outsider. The five of the six plant managers were among these 30-year-plus veterans, and they enjoyed the autonomy they had as directors before the standardization. Implementing these changes caused tremendous cultural stress. The company brought in management consultants to help lead the projects, but the changes were difficult. Nevertheless, the project was successful. Three of the plant managers retired rather than participate in the changes. P09 was forced to take a directive-in-nature stance, which compromised his ability to lead the organization in a broader sense, but they completed the program to centralize and standardize operations successfully. P09 still works at the company in a different role.

P01 led an ERP implementation in a global pharmaceutical company. She maintained the focus on change by directing that focus on operational metrics that should improve as a result of the project. That approach tended to divert attention from the changes themselves because the project teams and other affected personnel paid more attention to the outcomes of the project than they did the exercise of the project plan. They focused on the business imperatives instead of the changes. P05 maintained a focus on the changes while structuring the underlying projects at very low levels in the

organization. He ran many small projects instead of one big one. That way, stress, and conflicts were less likely to be elevated to the executive levels of the University. He had resistance from older employees who could not understand or did not want to change and managed that by downplaying their concerns. He listened, evaluated, and if those concerns were about elements not critical for business continuation, ignored them. He recognized that this approach was manipulative but stood quietly by as the resistant employee either accepted the change or left. P08 changed the marketing programs and organizational design of his employer. They had been marketing using a *negative option marketing* approach. They were under investigation by three state attorneys' offices in the U.S. who were concerned that this form of marketing was damaging consumers in their respective jurisdictions. Their product supplier also disagreed with this form of marketing, feeling that the negative aspects of it reflected on them. At the same time, the organization leadership did not understand the problem, nor did they understand how their leadership and business processes contributed to their exposure to risk in these two areas. P08 was able to convince the leadership of the need for change, developed new marketing and organizational design, got it implemented, continued operations, after having resolved the legal problems. The supplier problems persisted in the sense that the supplier refused to renew their license at the next round of negotiation. The company operated successfully for two years after resolving their legal issues, and the supplier had no concerns after that, but they were a conservative organization and felt that the company P08 represented was too aggressive for them. They were concerned that future

trouble might arise and reflect negatively on them. The changes P08 implemented were successful but were unable to overcome the concerns of their supplier.

Recognized change as a necessity. Five participants (50%) addressed the point that change was a necessity in the organizations where they worked. All ten participants gave positive responses when asked about the importance of recognizing change as a necessity, but five either proactively expressed this as important or took the time to explain their positions on this. For example, P09 developed the direction and needed change then sold that concept to the senior leadership of the organization. He measured success in regards to the success of the change initiative. The negative consequences he experienced resulted from the change initiative success. In his words

We are a manufacturing company with five branches in Illinois, Ohio, Kentucky, Dallas, and Nevada. Our leadership is very tenured. For example, I have been 37 years with the company. I started at the bottom and went to the top, as CEO and President. The district managers, the most senior managers in each branch, have similar backgrounds. The company does not terminate employees. They keep them for as long as they wish to stay. If they stay long enough and wish to climb higher, they can, but that is not an up-or-out advancement system. They can stay at their current level for as long as they want, as long as they want to stay with the company. Unfortunately, I am no longer at the top spot, but that is another story. The challenge was aligning the branches with standardized

products, processes, structure, accounting practices, supply systems, and so on. Each branch operated pretty much as a separate entity, like silos or individual profit centers. Each had their approach to developing products, providing support, and so on. Some developed custom products that could exist elsewhere in the system. A district manager ran each plant. They ran their districts like a fiefdom. They disdained guidance from corporate, which was here in the Midwest.

The change initiative we envisioned was to install more centralized sales, product design, and support processes. Each factory would have a central depository of designs, with everybody conducting sales and other business processes in standardized ways. The central leadership team would leverage the five plant teams to get all personnel working as one group rather than as five separate groups. The goal was to leverage the power of that knowledge by consolidating it and making it available to the entire company. We recognized that there could be economies of scale by centralizing and eliminating the redundancies between districts.

We hired an external consultant to help with centralization and began with the distribution of the overhead burden. Each plant paid 20% of the overhead. The process had been that the company equally split the overhead between the plants. There were inequities in this. A couple of plants operated with maybe a dozen engineers and a few office people,

while others would have larger staffs and more complexity. The largest

plant was operating two shifts per day with 70 employees plus maybe a

dozen office personnel. A comparison to other plants set up an

inequitability where one plant with 16 employees doing primarily

maintenance support paid 20% of the burden, the same amount as another

plant paid with 82 employees supporting new product development in new

construction. The larger plants used more resources, more materials,

needed more accounting, bookkeeping, and other support. One plant might

have ten million dollars in revenue, another less than three million dollars.

Both paid the same overhead. That allocation of overhead was not

realistic. With the help of the independent consultant, we changed our

accounting structure to distribute the burden based on headcount instead of

numbers of branches. The 70-engineer branch would pay more than the

12-engineer branch. Funding became more equitable than it had been.

Plants paid costs based on resources used instead of an equal distribution

based on the number of plants in the system. Region directors rethought

whether, for 11 million dollars of revenue, they needed 70 engineers, or

because of the overhead cost, could they get by with 60, 65, or some other

number. Likewise, it affected other resource management, changing many

thought processes at the plant level. The new burden allocation brought

more equitable distribution, worked better to drive local decisions, and

fostered savings beyond burden allocation. The new method for overhead distribution made smaller plants look more profitable than before.

The allocation change drove out other changes. For example, plant personnel now came to the home office, working on our centralized design database, a data-warehouse of drawings from all of the factories. When a designer looks for a design, they have more options from which to choose. If they need design changes, they have a larger pool of drawings to choose from, thus reducing the need for one-off custom designs.

Change brought benefits to the factories. The new allocation system developed standards by evaluating factory personnel along with plant managers and designers and talking about how we did things in the shops. We had meetings with the designers and plant managers, who returned to their districts with the new approaches. The most senior managers at the plants were district managers. These individuals were promoted from plant manager positions where they had overseen their respective facilities. As District Managers, they worked primarily in sales roles with customers. Plant managers were responsive to them but additionally reported to the home office in a matrix style of organization and were more responsible for operations. Most of the district managers were against the changes. We dealt with this resistance while centralizing the organization. They expected to continue operating independently, not

agreeing with centralization. Three retired rather than submit to change. The district manager of the largest district stayed. The Nevada branch, a much younger organization, having been recently established, had person transferred from another plant to head the Nevada district. He came from the shop environment and had been with the company close to 40 years. He knew the expectations and agreed with the program objectives. As CEO, I was in the Illinois facility. They did not have much choice, and that transition went smoothly. The Illinois facility district manager was one of those who retired. In his mid-sixties, he said: "Okay, it is my time." With many people who had been with the company a long time, this was a concern. People joined us and did not leave. Friendships exist among long-term employees, some that made change difficult. Some people recognized that friendships were secondary behind business requirements, others did not. We resolved Some conflicts by applying pressure until changes took hold, others were not. Eventually, I moved to a marketing position dealing with major accounts and The Board of Directors selected a new CEO. They recognized the changes were significant. I am still with the company, still working on change. These include using more metrics to monitor our work than we have in the past and standardizing business processes. We installed CRM software and are using it to track our work and refine our sales process.

Our accomplishments were in our accounting process structure. This added efficiency resulted in winning more profitable business. We are still centralizing business processes, getting an agreement with a "one company, many arms" concept instead of the silos we used to operate. We are not there but are well past the point-of-no-return. Right now, I am working with order entry and project managers. There is extensive communication between sales and customers. We are a job shop. We communicate order information to our design team and order entry personnel on a case-by-case basis. Often, we do not get the information we need. Somebody must go back to the client to obtain it. We are installing a step-by-step project management process. If the information is not there, project managers must get it. Last year was one of our biggest years ever, for chargebacks. We had over 658,000 dollars in chargebacks; charges for wrong products, wrong work, fixing mistakes, wrong deliveries, and customers hiring contractors to repair our work. That sum results from not paying attention. We are correcting that through change, centralizing and standardizing the sales and design process the way we learned to do through the consultants we brought in before. (P09)

P09 managed change through an apathetic organization. His change initiative was successful, although it cost him his position as CEO of the company because of the stress and animus that grew between him and the plant leadership. If organizations like these

did not achieve the changes needed, were at risk. In most cases, these leaders recognized the potential for business failure if they were unsuccessful. One leader, P06, recognized the need for change before his recruitment. He proposed changes during his interview process and followed through with those changes over the next three years of work at that educational institution. The case presented by P03 was for a public company, an international manufacturer, and distributor of automotive parts, who had repeated findings of a *material weakness* in their annual independent audits. These findings put the company at risk for lost financing, which can lead to a significant reduction, possible dissolution or divestiture of the business. P03 could get the change initiative properly staffed and to get the business owners to pay attention to what was needed to ensure success.

P07 presented a case where culture change was critical to continued business. That company, a $100 million family-owned business, had been led for 50 years by its founder. The that culture instituted by that founder had not changed in decades. This stagnation of cultural development was responsible for lack of growth for the company. The organization was too internally focused and was not visionary about their markets and where they stood in them. They were slowly declining in the sense that they were not even growing at the same rate as standard inflation. To grow, they needed to modernize products. They needed to answer a changing market environment, and the culture had neither the drive nor the vision to do that. They did not have this capability among their personnel. The company risked failure due to the inability to keep up with evolving

markets. The owners recognized this problem and brought P07 in to correct it. P06 recognized that without change, the institution where he worked would not be able to account for or manage its business adequately. He also noted that the organization had many resistant actors that he would have to overcome to achieve success. He did this by keeping his plans very low key. He organized the change initiative into a list of smaller, low key projects that would not have visibility in the political dialogue of the institution. Each project was a relatively simple endeavor with project teams not to exceed five members. However, they were chained together and resulted in a large change coming together without broader visibility, especially from political players in the organization who might be critical or feeling a need to control the effort.

Each project listed here was different, had different priorities, dealt with different aspects of organizational design and operational imperative, but all were common in the sense that they were designed to change the organization where they functioned in some way. Some emphasized cultural development, others were focused on business processes, some were about organizational structure, some about customers, markets, or other external imperatives, but all were successful in the instance of managing change and achieving the outcomes prescribed for those initiatives.

Subquestion 1. The themes for research Sub-question 1 are the same as for the overarching research question. They appear from different perspectives, showing a different view. The central issues of the overarching research question fostered lengthy, complex, and robust expression around the strategies and tactics used to achieve

successful change and included multifaceted looks at how they applied. The subquestions narrow the focus to particular areas of concern. Subquestion 1 focused more on the behaviors and practices exercised by the participants to get their organizations to apply the strategies and tactics defined for their respective change initiatives to result in a successful outcome. The themes associated with Subquestion 1, are again, listed in Table 3, followed by a discussion of how they apply to this subquestion. Subquestion 1 was

What behaviors and other practices do internal change leaders seem to exercise, what do they do differently from what external change practitioners suggest, that results in CM success?

Table 3

Sub-question 1 Themes

Major Theme	Respondents	Definition
1. Collaborative Leadership	100%	Exercised behaviors and practices that induced strong, proactive, qualified, self-starting collaborative leadership from superiors, peers, and subordinates.
2. Open Communication	70%	Practiced open, candid, non-punitive communication throughout the change initiative
3. Defined Expected Outcomes	70%	Developed plans and operational designs that constituents used to frame and control their performance.
4. Changed Organization Focus	80%	Led their organizations through a transition that was effectively different from what they were when the change initiative started.
5. Recognized Change Necessity	50%	Exercised behaviors and practices the fomented an organizational attitude that change was an absolute necessity.

Collaborative leadership. All participants (100%) described behaviors and practices they used to get their direct reports and others to strive toward and achieve their planned goals and to get their organizations to accept and go along with the changes they were leading. An interesting dynamic that existed in every interview conducted was that the interviewee showed a commitment to leading their respective project to fruition.

Every leader was goal oriented and focused on achieving their primary objectives in the change initiative they led. This focus was evident in every case, notable to such an extreme in one instance that the change leader's success resulted in his removal from his leadership position because of the social stress his drive caused in achieving the change initiative objectives. The changes in that case, while successful, created such cultural stress that the board of directors decided he could not effectively continue as the CEO.

The line of questioning found in the interview questions at Appendix D fostered open and candid discussion of what was done to ensure that leadership was effective. Participants P01 and P02 both led initiatives that were conducted across multiple business locations worldwide. They delivered training and development for their subordinates in a way that the respective subordinate would then be able to respond independently and proactively to the common problems typically inherent in large, complex projects without undue checking in with the boss. P01 recruited former colleagues and others who had worked in large ERP implementations before. Those that had worked at other employers were people she had worked with and knew their abilities. She described this as

I have done this work multiple times myself and made sure that I brought

in people that had also done this type of work before. Some of us had

worked together previously, but not everyone. We were like-minded and

committed to using the template that we all knew worked well in life

sciences. We had a structured approach that we had used more than once

in an analogous industry as a team of people, some of whom had worked

together previously. I think that is huge. That is how a good sports team wins. They practice and get better and better together. It is like they say in basketball; every basket has ten hands.

P01 and P02 trained their subordinates, in turn, to be leaders. P03 used a different approach that was equally effective. His charge was to effect change that, for cultural reasons, did not support his plan. He empowered his peers and subordinates to act proactively and independently, even when contrary to the management styles of the home office senior leadership. Part of his job was to manage the expectations of senior leaders to avoid violating the project management practices used and promoted throughout the organization. This approach was risky, but since the home office was in a foreign country and there were other more senior executives in the USA that understood and supported his approach, he succeeded. Another example was P06, who redesigned the program offering of the school he led, redefined its markets, procedures, and staffing for delivering those services, and changed the definition of EEP at that institution as well as in the rest of his industry. This change began with rewriting his job description during the hiring process. In another case, P09 invoked change that many of his subordinate leaders rejected. He eventually prevailed in getting the changes made by replacing or removing people who rejected his plan. The organizational stress, the social and cultural discord, was so apparent that his board of directors eventually removed him as CEO and President, reassigning him to a sales marketing leadership position. However, the changes he led were successful, including those that he had implemented as CEO and President.

The company achieved the centralized functions proposed for operations, and he is still there, still leading change initiatives. In his words

> There were five factories. Each led by a district manager. The district manager was the senior manager in charge of the facility. Each factory operated independently as a separate entity. They each solicited their respective clients, independently created their products, prepared and maintained their architectural and design drawings, managed their inventories separately, and conducted their accounting and reporting locally. This independence created a lot of redundancy and duplication throughout the company. Almost every District Manager worked predominantly in a sales role. The District Managers expected to continue to operate independently, not participating in the centralization plan. When they could not there was tremendous resistance. One District Manager, the one in charge of our Texas facility did not want to work anymore and retired outright. The Ohio manager was a battle between him and I. There was constant fighting over the direction we took. The argument eventually reached a point of an ultimatum; *it's my way or the highway* sort of discussion. For him, it became to either comply or receive a formal reprimand. He did not like that and retired.
>
> The Nevada branch was newer than the rest of the plants, opened in 2007. We promoted and transferred an employee from Ohio, who had

been with the company close to 40 years. He knew the expectations, what

we were trying to accomplish, and agreed with the objectives. Since I was

in the Illinois facility, they did not have much choice about change. The

district manager in Illinois was close to retirement and rather than

participate in the changes; he did that. The Kentucky facility, our largest,

was the most productive and did not change Region Managers. The big

thing with our company was, once we hire someone, few people leave.

The average length of employment is over 30 years. There are many long-

term friendships in the ranks of the organization and change was difficult

because of those who did not want it.

P09 achieved change by replacing the top management at the region/plant level.

He directed change and fought with those who would resist. He lost political battles due

to personal friendships between senior employees and board members. Most of the board

members had been long-term employees and senior executives who had retired from the

company. P09 prevailed in getting the changes they planned implemented. Each of these

cases was an example of aggressive, proactive, collaborative leadership and every

participant in the study told a similar story about what he or she did as a leader to effect

change successfully. Some were through completely open, candid communication, while

others were through more structured realignment of staff. However, in every case, strong,

proactive, collaborative leadership was the key to success.

Open communication. Seven participants (70%) described behaviors and practices that contributed to open, candid communication among their respective organizations as they led their change initiatives. Many of the strategies and tactics described as regulating the planning and execution of change, were in fact, resultant from the behaviors and practices the leaders exercised to achieve their results. For example, P04, the CEO that worked to maintain open, candid communication with the entire organization throughout the sale of his company, did so out of what he saw as a necessity. His group was small, and it was not possible to maintain confidentiality while the sale transaction was in process. P04 was hired to grow and sell the company. His example for managing change was preparing the company for sale and then actually selling it. He believed the team would collectively know that something was afoot and would react negatively to it if he were to try to maintain internal confidentiality about the sale. He needed to act so that whatever the informal leadership, those individuals who while not in the chain of command were known and respected by the organization rank-and-file employees, surmised or guessed. He decided that providing the team with frequent, candid, detailed information about the progress of the sale transaction, through weekly or bi-weekly all-hands meetings and discussions, was the best way to avoid the discomfort caused by unclear knowledge of the business owners' immediate plans. In his words

> We had an open-space office. That made it was very difficult to pretend
>
> that we were not selling the business. There were lots of hush, hush
>
> meetings and frankly, everybody knew what we were doing. I think there

was a general awareness that the business was having a tough time hitting

all our objectives. I think it was clear that the people were all going to be

aware of what we were doing. For that reason, we took the unusual step of

making sure that everybody was reasonably engaged. Getting everybody

engaged during a sale process without people freaking out is hard.

Regardless, people were inclined to freak out. By getting them in the loop,

keeping them informed, they knew what was happening and where they

stood in the process. In any other scenario where they would not know

what's happening, they would invent it themselves. The fact that people

were going to know one way or another that something was afoot was

clear, so we decided to keep everybody up to speed on a frequent basis.

Every week or two throughout the selling process, we had a stand-up

meeting and told everybody where the deal stood. We made sure that all

the employees had a chance to interact with their counterparts at the

buying company before completing the deal. There was a risk in that. If

the buyer was a group of mean people or said things that led employees to

think that they would get fired once the deal was done. Many things could

go wrong in the deal. However, keeping the entire company informed was

the right decision.

At some level, the decision was going to be made for us because

we could not have hidden it in such a small company. Keeping people

informed was important. We had to go one way or another. That was a big move, and it made it so that we could get through the transaction without any attrition. In the process, it gave an additional benefit of impressing the buyer and maintaining the purchase price on the term sheet through the transaction. I am not sure how to characterize that, but in the process of introducing everybody to the concept of being bought, which is always a period of dramatic uncertainty, we took a semi-risky but bold approach to tackle the keep employees on board problem head-on. (P04)

In a different case, P06 maintained open and candid communication with the people within the faculty he intended to keep in the school, while less informative to those he felt needed to leave. He was selective in who knew about the reorganization. The professors identified to leave the school were not let go as they were already employed elsewhere in the University. They were merely not invited to participate in the new business model. The strengths of those professors were academic, and the new business model was oriented more toward practitioners. The professors that were also practitioners were more likely to stay with the EEP school. P06 managed this transition by selectively communicating with the professors invited to stay in the curriculum while quietly not informing the other faculty. P06 described this as

I pushed the faculty. The faculty was teaching what they taught MBAs but in 90-minute segments for executives. The courses taught a lot of case study, using case studies used in the business school for the prior 20 to 30

years. I redesigned the programs to be more relevant to the typical senior

executive in larger organizations. I created programs that had logical

beginnings, middles, and ends. Different segments built on each other in a

way that the faculty started to enjoy teaching them. Instead of showing up

and teaching the same old thing, I challenged them. The good faculty liked

that.

I took one faculty member in the marketing department and one in

the management department and suggested that they co-teach a course.

They would see what they each do, discover some synergy, and build

better courses between them. Some faculty started writing books together.

They were stimulated, energized, and learning new things. I was pushing

them, not letting them get away with mediocre performance. You cannot

teach executives what you teach in MBA programs. These students are

experienced people. You must give them a case study that challenge them,

that gives them an experience to which they can respond. They have been

working in real life, exercising the problem-solving skills represented in

the cases for from 15 to 20 years. They need case studies based on

conditions commensurate with their levels of experience. The faculty

made the classes much more interactive and participatory. They enjoyed

that, and it led to consulting business for them. What they were teaching

was more relevant to the executives who attended the programs, who in

turn, asked the instructors to come and teach the material at their

companies. It was a win-win relationship for them. They were enjoying it

more, and the instructors were getting more side consulting. Courses were

filling up. The faculty that disliked the program changes would not be

used to teach them. (P06)

P05 kept communications open only to the extent necessary in organizing his

effort as a series of small projects that did not elevate interest beyond the immediate

objective of the respective current project. There were no large-scale initiatives that

became points of discussion throughout the change effort. Another example was P01,

who maintained constant open communication using town-hall-style meetings, face-to-

face interaction, regular blog posts, an intranet website where current information was

available, and so on.

Defining expected outcomes. Seven participants (70%) talked about behaviors

and practices they used to encourage compliance with plans for change. In every case, the

leader developed plans for change that included specific, expected outcomes. They led

their respective organizations by emphasizing the objectives set in these plans and

working collaboratively with peers and subordinates to achieve them. For example, P08

initially studied the company over months of employment while dealing with legal

problems he was hired to resolve. From this, he redefined a strategic direction that

complied with both franchisor and States Attorney requirements. He refocused the

organization on profitability by including financial analyses, used to focus operations.

These analyses identified objectives and set goals for employees to adopt changed practices. He described this process as follows:

> You can command change, but you cannot command respect. I believe long-term change requires respect. Otherwise, I think it has an elastic feature that when you stumble, leave, or something else causes doubt, people backslide. What I found important was not only gaining the respect of the two individuals at the top of the organization, the CEO and COO, but also gaining the respect of our senior marketing individual who was himself a maverick, some other key people in the organization, and the publisher who was our supplier. First, I was the new guy in town, and second, I identified that while our company did not necessarily think the publisher's core values were wrong, the organization did not respect them. What I needed to do was convince the publisher that while we were different, we could still work together harmoniously. They were skeptical. I found that the two founders took about four to five months to gain their respect. When I started, I had had a successful career in business law, but the COO was asking me to run scripted notes by him, the conversations I was going to have with others, such as the states attorneys or the publisher, prepared o almost to a teleprompter-like quality. I had to do this to convince them that my approach would add value, even though they were looking for me to resolve their problem. Gaining sufficient respect

that they saw that I could grow the trust and respect of the outside legal experts took four or five months.

Once I had the respect of the top leadership within the company, I got better cooperation from the head of marketing, who understood that he had to consult with me in the strategic marketing. Again, the initial thought was that I was going to solve the problem. The problem was that they still wanted to use the same approach to marketing, but wanted me to fix the messaging, so they were not in trouble with states attorney offices or with the Publisher. The publisher had the same needs because some consumer complaints would go to them instead of us because their name was on the products. These complaints tarnished their reputation because they sold the same products outright, though they had licensed them to us. Of course, that concerned the states' attorney offices who questioned the company for not heeding earlier notices.

I started meeting with the three departments that were most significant; marketing, information technology, and graphics, which created the messaging, to redesign the sales and marketing processes. I moved on from there to customer service and told them to throw the book out, to ignore what they had been told before about customer service operations. In each case rather than using the typical approaches, I brought them something the founders were concerned about, which was to air our dirty laundry with other people. At that point, the three states attorneys had some subpoenas and other documents outstanding, of which the

organization was aware. I was spending significant amounts of time feeding information to them. The licensor had denied requests to expand marketing to television and radio, and it was becoming obvious to the senior marketing people that something was amiss in the publisher relationship. Everyone else just thought it was business as usual. The customer service department was used to, maybe 100 customer complaints a day. To put that in perspective, they had about 500,000 unique customers a year. That is still a lot, and over a month, 3,000 irate customers could be significant. We were not quite a 24 hour per day, seven days per week operation. We had an international customer calling center, as well as two in the U.S., so what I started was to explain to everyone that we had these governmental issues. I expected confidentiality from the senior people in the organization, whom we told about the legal problems. I did not tell the junior people very much beyond recognition that there were problems and that the culture needed to change. I did tell them what could happen if we did not change how we approached things, how we did business.

I met with the head of Human Resources and analyzed turnover in the customer complaint department which was significant. Out of about 120 employees in that department, we probably turned over 1/3 of the staff each year. Handling customer complaints was very difficult work, given the kind of complaints they handled. The products were for language learning. The key was to help Human Resources understand how their jobs would improve. We had two

recruiters working full-time, recruiting people. We started small meetings of groups of individuals to explain that we needed to create a new customer-friendly culture. Everyone would nod their head and agree that it sounded great. We call it *putting the customer first*. Nothing novel about that.

There was nothing unique about the program, but people would go back to their desks thinking it sounded great. After a few weeks of these department meetings, I would meet again, and start developing *key performance indicators* (KPI's) and metrics that demonstrated what it meant for each person in the department. The need to change began to dawn on people. I opened their eyes to the fact that having these complaints, at a high level, was a numbers game. We needed to go through the type of things that were limitations. We knew we could not immediately cut expenses but recognized that the company had spent about 2 million dollars over a year-and-a-half defending these complaints. That could have been a lot, but in the end, most people did not connect with the fact that with every single caller, we needed to resolve the issues before they could become customer complaints. We developed new phone scripts. Those scripts first had to be approved by management. The leadership agreed to use them on a pilot basis. The average call went from about seven a half minutes to about 12 and a half minutes. That four-and-a-half to five-minute increase was significant when multiplied by the number of calls we received daily. We added the additional time to let our customer department befriend the customer as well as they could, to

diffuse any problems, and get to the heart of what was causing the issue. We began to see better metrics about our process. Now, it is at the tail end of the process where we would see a customer's complaint. What we needed to make a difference was to fix the front end of the customer relationship, the marketing message they saw or heard up front, so they had a clear understanding of what was going to happen in their relationship with us.

P06 began proposing a direction during his interview for hire. He demonstrated to school leadership possible alternatives for changes to organization and structure. This proposal led to him rewriting his job description to assume responsibility for the changes that would achieve the new vision. He developed a plan for transitioning to a new model that better served the school's potential markets and organized change activities so that they would evolve into a new organization design. For example, he negotiated adjunct professors and practitioners as faculty and eliminated tenured academic instructors, using the new plan as justification.

P10 refocused her organization on expected outcomes directed by the new DVAC, instead of focusing on data systems and processes. Her team was made up of information technology people who neither knew about nor understood how the business of education delivery worked. She brought in functional representatives, people responsible for executing the business processes of an educational institution, to define requirements and reduce them to a standard model that delivered operational results for line departments. P02 invoked an objective to convert information technology operations

and processes to comply with the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL). This focus alleviated potential conflict by centering on an external, third-party approach to information technology management. This method avoided the sense of ownership or the *not invented here* resistance often offered by information technology employees. P01 defined business operational metrics that were the focus of program work and outcomes. P09 created objectives for centralizing operational processes that were contrary to the existing organizational design. These examples show that the change leader inspired focus to some dynamic other than the change initiative they were managing. In some cases, they identified operational metrics that should reflect outcomes because of the work of the change initiative. In others, they invoked procedural or administrative changes that became the focus, the expected outcomes of the changes. Every case diverted attention from the change to some operational requirement or statistic that would be influenced by or would reflect the effect of the change.

Changing organization focus. Eight participants (80%) saw that changing the focus of the organization was necessary to ensure successful change. P06 changed the curriculum, the organization structure, the processes, the markets they supported, and their marketing and sales practices. In so doing he completely changed the business of the school. To do that he needed to obtain a changed understanding among the senior leadership of the College as to how the EEP division of the school should function, should approach its markets, and should deliver its services. There was much overlap between strategic objectives for the organization and the behaviors and practices of

individuals charged with achieving those goals. In P06 case he identified the need for change then led a restructuring that came from that definition. He did this out of a sense of self-direction, leading the organization to a different design. P06 was a driven personality, and his selection for this work was a form of self-fulfillment. Defining the organizational change was a practice from earlier in his career that he repeated at new assignments.

P05 worked in a University with a large number of long-term faculty and staff. Many of the staff had never worked any other place in their career. In fact, many had not only never worked anywhere else, but many had also obtained their education at that University. They had gone there as an undergraduate student then obtained employment with the University, staying on in a permanent capacity. There was a firm inclination to resist change, regardless of whether it made sense or not. These employees not only resisted, in some cases, they refused to change. They saw no reason for it, considering past practices adequate for future use, saw no reason for change.

P02's executive board charged him with achieving the changes identified by others before his hire. They recruited him for that purpose. He developed the strategic approaches and led the team so that they accomplished the changes. Decisive, proactive leadership was his style, and he could not listen to or hear about potential failure. P01 also had her objectives set by senior leadership. She developed a team of proactive, collaborative leaders to help roll out the plan throughout the organization. Her practice is to develop these leaders as she pursues the objectives in her charge. P09 changed the

company despite cultural problems that existed. The resolutions resulted in some

retirements and reassignments for people who disagreed with the objectives. P07 changed

the team to focus on the *customer experience* instead of on making and delivering

products. This focus was invoked as a mantra and used to overcome apathetic behavior

throughout the organization. P08 did this out of a sense of legal responsibility on behalf

of the organization. He conducted analyses, developed new organizational designs, and

convinced the owners to change to those designs to survive. P05 did this by standing his

ground in the face of resistance. He kept a low profile, avoiding visibility in senior

management circles, and could accomplish change without undue executive involvement

that might have questioned the changes.

   Recognized change necessity. Five participants (50%) recognized change as a

necessity, a constant in business, and discussed behaviors and practices they exercised to

get their organizations to recognize change as a necessity in their organizations. For

example, P02 felt that change is a constant regardless of the context within which it was

occurring. In his words;

> For me, I almost feel as if change is constant. Change is not like at some
>
> point you would look back, and say *wow we did it*, even if it is a project.
>
> When we look at information technology, for me, it is very much driving
>
> the mix of change at any company. The reason you put in a new project or
>
> make a system change is to change a business process. As soon as you
>
> change the system, you are changing how people operate and respond to

things, and then you change outcomes. So, we are always involved in

change, but change continues. Change is not like we implement the

solution, make the necessary changes, people adapt to the changes, they

assimilate the new processes into their existing workflow, and then it is

over. In my mind, it is never over. You keep measuring. You keep

changing as needed. (P02)

Thus, P02 recognized that change is constant. He knew that change results in

more change. Once you make a change, that causes another change somewhere else in the

organization, which in turn causes another change, and so on. This trickle effect of one

change driving another is circular and tends to continue to trigger more changes until it

ultimately causes change in the original change that started the process. Change is never-

ending and circular.

P03, recognizing that change was a necessity, took advantage of repeated audit

findings of material weaknesses reported by external auditors in annual audits. A

Japanese parent company owned his organization, and they addressed problems,

managing people and finances differently from how U.S. organizations manage these

things. The company had implemented SAP, a brand of software, as a tool to administer

their business execution processes. People from the Japanese home office led That

implementation, it was done poorly, and did not invoke the security and compliance

aspects included in the software to comply with operational and legal requirements

imposed by such organizations as the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants,

the Security Exchange Commission, and the U.S. Congress. The remoteness of the

company headquarters, where the concepts for running a business was very different

from the U.S. approach, exacerbated the problem. As P03 invoked change, he weighed

any resistance against the possibility of further negative audit findings. In his words:

> As an internal auditor, responsible for Sarbanes–Oxley compliance (SOX),
>
> I recommended that the company replace the information technology
>
> Director with a person who understood manufacturing and distribution
>
> business administration in the U.S. This person should know how to apply
>
> SAP products in operations properly, who could conduct appropriate
>
> training and could change an organization to one that effectively complied
>
> with both legal and practical requirements for business operations using
>
> the SAP tools. (P03)

P03 accomplished this by writing reports that went to the U.S. CEO, a person who

also understood the differences between U.S. and Japanese structure and culture. The

U.S. CEO validated the needs to the company ownership in Japan and enabled a project

to redesign business systems that complied with U.S. regulatory and operational

conventions for performance. The goal of this effort was to eliminate the annual audit

material weakness findings they had received every year. The company replaced the

information technology director with one who had been a consultant, leading companies

through SAP implementations and had experience in socializing those tools into

manufacturing and distribution organizations. Within 2 years, the organization invoked

the financial and operations controls found in SAP and eliminated the threats of material weakness findings in their annual audits.

P07 recognized that culture change was needed to change the business. His program to change the organizational focus from making and delivering product to creating a customer experience was used as a framework to achieve this culture change. P06 also recognized that culture change was needed. A fundamental component of his reorganization was changing the culture to more business and less academic focus. P04, like P02, recognized that change is a constant. He had difficulty understanding the research premise at first because he felt that any manager should understand the continuous nature of change and CM is just one of the tools that managers bring with them. There is nothing special about CM. However, in the discussion about transformational change, he recognized the need for a structured, formal approach and dedicated resources for managing change, particularly in larger organizations. P08 knew that everything needed to change. He developed and executed the change plan. When the company lost their franchise, he downsized the organization to keep it viable while they found new products. P05 had senior leadership that recognized the need to change as a necessity and a rank-and-file employee staff that did not. He stood his ground in moments of conflict with the rank-and-file, knowing he had senior leadership support. P04 considered change as a constant and change leadership as a necessary skill that any manager must have. CM is just a routine responsibility of leadership, although

transformational change exists and requires a more comprehensive approach, using program and project management tools and tactics.

Subquestion 2. The information sought in Subquestion 2 was a more generalized interest in what successful change managers thought about the reported failure rates found in the literature. The finding turned out to be that all of these managers had in one way or another, the same thought; the failure rates for failed projects were of lesser concern than successes. They would do what they had to do to be successful. Failure was not considered an option for them. What follows is a restatement of Subquestion 2 and a discussion reporting how these managers saw those statistics. Subquestion 2 was

> What meaning do employee change leaders attribute to the high failure
>
> rates in CM and how do these leaders show through their lived
>
> experiences to avoid them?

Every participant in this study indicated one way or another that they were either unaware, only vaguely aware, or knew of the published failure rates for change initiatives. If they were aware of these statistics, they did not place much value on them. Some neither believed nor agreed that the high failure rates were valid. As P04 noted:

> I was not aware of the failure rates for change and was not trying to be
>
> interested in knowing what everybody else's failure rates were. I am not
>
> sure there is any value in knowing that. There are many reasons that
>
> companies do not get sold, but I guess all that matters, in the end, is
>
> whether you are sold or not. That is the ultimate measure of success or

failure when it comes to selling your business. Either you sold it for a

multiple people are satisfied with, or you missed, and you can blame it on

whatever you want, but in my case, selling a company required good

execution on lots of levels. So, no, I am not aware of the failure

percentages. I think that is the kind of thing that knowing would not help.

All it does is make you more nervous about the outcome than you are

already. (P04)

P01 related the failure rates in change to the failure rates in ERP implementations,

considering ERP implementation merely one form of transformational CM. She

recognized the potentiality for failure but considered it less important than a dedicated

focus on results. She saw a dedicated team of positive, collaborative managers to work

with as an important contribution to successful project outcomes. Her description was

To me, an ERP implementation is just one of many different forms of CM

initiative. If you are not investing in something, then it is operations. It

does not CM. People will say you do not need to do such and such; the

existing process works just fine. Then what you are telling me is that your

normal operations are sufficient to continue to achieve your growth

objectives, your revenue objectives, to satisfy your customers, and so on.

That position, to me, means you are running the business. To me, the

biggest failure occurs when the change initiative is a write-off. How you

avoid that circumstance is most important. You let it get to that level, you

deal with issues when they are small. By the time they become a big

problem, it is almost impossible to "right the ship" so to speak. I have

worked places where there were write-offs. None for which I was

personally responsible, thankfully, but I respect companies that do not

punish people for failing because nobody in those companies wants to take

risks. However, with that said, you cannot keep making the same mistakes

over and over again. There are penalties for failure. (P01)

Every response to questions about the published failure rates was similar to those

of P04 and P01. Those who were aware of the published rates downplayed them as

though they were of less importance than completing the change initiative for which they

were responsible. P02 did not know what the published failure rates were and did not

want to know. He considered that knowledge counterproductive. Change was going to

happen regardless of the published failure rates, and that change required leadership. P09

did not pay attention to failure rates; he just continued to push his organization until

completing the changes. P03 never mentioned a potential for failure; he had a

methodology he followed to induce change, and he followed it. Most of the participants

had seen or heard about the failure rates but did not look for literature documenting

change failures. All of the participants knew what they had to do and did it.

Sub-question 3. The third sub-question in this study was

How, given the extraordinarily high potential for failure, do these leaders

continue to exercise CM practices successfully in their organizations?

As previously noted, most participants were either unaware or only vaguely aware of the high failure rates reported for CM. They continued to lead their initiatives without considering the published failure rates. However, when asked, they were mostly aware of Kotter's (1996/2010) reported causes for CM failure. These participants provided leadership, addressed problems and challenges, maintained open communication, and drove toward success. They went beyond recognizing that change should be a focus. CM was considered a distinct factor in business and organizational operations requiring leadership and management in the course of continuing operations. Change was considered unavoidable, and the participants dealt with it as it occurred. The focus of participant efforts was on the results expected from starting a change initiative in the first place, not on the processes or practices of change leadership, especially as reported in the literature. They were more inclined to identify problems and develop solutions as proactive leaders than they were to study failure rates and their causes. As P04 said, knowing the failure rates served no purpose other than to frighten. He would rather not know these rates and continue working toward success rather than study the literature for insight into what causes failure.

Additional situational themes. Several secondary themes emerged from a few participants. These were more situational than the primary themes noted above and unique to certain aspects of CM. Circumstances drove some of the projects that included them; others were strategies, tactics, behaviors, or practices that the participant found useful as part of their leadership practices. For example; two participants addressed the

need for culture CM; two used organizational performance measurements to drive change; two who understood transformational change as compared to routine or regular change once explained saw all change as continuous and never-ending. These themes are shown in Table 4 and elaborated in the following text.

Table 4

Additional Situational Themes

Major Theme	Respondents	Definition
1. Changed Individual Programs, such as Marketing, Information Management systems, Performance Tracking systems, and so on.	100%	Diverted attention to operational dynamics or some other imperative that drove the need for change.
2. Broke the Change up into separate programs	40%	Defined the change initiative as a program of many smaller projects, each sufficiently low-level to avoid a need for higher level scrutiny or senior leadership involvement.
3. Managed up and managed the informal leadership	60%	Actively sought to influence organization leadership outside of their chain-of-command to foster a positive reaction and acceptance. This included informal leaders, those employees who by their personalities or roles influenced how the organization accepted changes.
4. Established and Posted Metrics for Progress Reporting	20%	Defined and publicly displayed operational performance metrics that demonstrated strategic or tactical improvements in operations, attributable to the changes.
5. Recognized Change as a Constant	30%	Recognized the circular nature of change, where one change causes another change, which in turn causes another until eventually the original change must be changed again. These leaders recognized the continuous, never-ending cyclical nature of change.

Changed individual programs, such as marketing, information systems, and so on.
All of the transformational change initiatives discussed focused on a particular part of the organization. A practice used by several leaders was to focus their planning and execution for change on a neutral or entirely new structure or process, thereby avoiding the angst change participants might feel over the not invented here syndrome. For example, P01 focused the change leadership team on operational goals. Their change initiative was to install ERP software across an international organization of more than 7,000 people. The software would improve operational dynamics such as reduce inventories and increase inventory turns. Thus reducing inventory carrying costs; improved efficiencies in production operations so that products were in production a shorter period; improved efficiency in taking orders from customers and managing them through the systems, thereby reducing the potential for mistakes and rejects upon delivery; and so on. P01 focused the change initiative team on those types of metrics. Without this sort of focus on characteristics such as these, organization staff members often feel an investment in the existing systems and processes to such a degree that they find new systems and processes threatening.

Participants addressed the potential for resistance by employing external philosophies, designs, or other tools that replaced the invented here systems and processes. For example, P06 redefined the markets, an act that drove change throughout the organization. Every functional aspect of the organization changed. Another example was P02, who focused his organization on the requirements of the ITIL. This changed

focus changed the paradigm for information technology management in the organization. The organization membership became so engrossed in learning to operate under ITIL requirements that they had less time to worry about or defend the old systems and processes they were replacing. Some other examples: four participants changed their organization's marketing programs. Four individuals changed their information systems, two changed their products and services, two focused on culture change, and one focused on preparing an organization for sale. Only one focused on changing everything.

All participants recognized the difference between CM and transformational CM. The examples used in every interview were transformational change initiatives. The participants recognized that change which is less than transformational is more routine and incidental, needing less formal leadership or management effort. This change is more evolutionary and localized. Routine change that is not transformational occurs in the normal flow of operations and is dealt with locally and circumstantially by the people affected by that change. As P04 stated, "A change in the ordinary process of business operations is just that, an ordinary change. The people managing the changing process or dynamic should be able to handle it as a matter of routine" (P04). He recognized that there are changes that are more comprehensive that require planning and roll-out or execution management, such as a shift in the market, an ERP installation, buying (and merging) or selling (and divesting) a business unit, but most change is minor or simple. Changes such as redefining a product component, adjusting the workflow of one

particular process, changing a report layout, and so on, are routine and the responsible

manager should be able to resolve them in their day-to-day work.

Broke the change up into separate programs. Four participants (40%) conducted

their change initiatives by splitting the requirements into multiple separate programs and

projects that ultimately delivered the expected results. Different reasons existed for this,

but the tactic was common. The approach was particularly evident in information systems

initiatives. For example, P02 ran each plant conversion as a separate project. They were

all defined similarly but replaced disparate systems and procedures and needed to address

each case differently. P05 broke his initiative into multiple projects because that made the

whole initiative less visible to detractors, less apparent as it happened, and delivered

transformational change without the social stress often seen in these sorts of projects.

Each small project was a routine change, but together, they were transformational. P05's

initiative quietly replaced a 35-year-old information system of a major university. The

organization completed the change without realizing the scope until done.

Managed up and managed the informal leadership. Six participants (60%)

expressed a need to manage up, that is to structure their leadership to influence senior

leaders outside their chain-of-command. This need again was most apparent in the

information technology projects, where senior leadership tended to be less involved in

leading the change. Program managers developed tactics to bring them into the process

and thereby exhibit their support for the changes as they occurred. Two participants noted

the importance of managing the informal leadership, those individuals who while not

members of management, held sway over the organization based on their informal leadership capacity within the rank-and-file of the organization. They were the respected leaders of the social structure, the grapevine, that could derail a project by criticizing or campaigning against it, even though they had no managerial responsibility in the organization.

Established and posted metrics for progress reporting. Two participants (20%) established and posted metrics for progress reporting. That is, they made operational performance metrics the goals and the organizations focused more on achieving those metrics than they did on the changes themselves. For example, P01 focused the organization on inventory control. A reduction in inventory carried can result from improved efficiency in purchasing, receiving, storage, issue control, control while in production, and control in shipping to customers. It is represents increased inventory turnover, reduced inventories on-hand, and reduced carrying costs. A well-written ERP system can significantly impact these measures by offering visibility to them. Similarly, P08 worked with his marketing people to develop key performance indicators (KPIs). These were simply running compilations of numbers of orders taken, by whom, number of complaints, and so on, that could collectively demonstrate the success of order entry personnel in taking orders without cancellations. These examples enabled change acceptance because those changes enabled operational personnel to achieve their goals better. This approach was again, a tactic that avoided the possibility of resistance among the rank-and-file staff of the organization.

Recognized change as a constant. Three participants recognized change as a constant that is a routine part of management responsibility. Two recognized transformational change as a unique requirement that occurs from time to time. P02 recognized change as continuous, noting that one change drives out another, which in turn drives another, and so on until the latest change drives a change in the first change that started the cycle. He saw change, even transformational change, as continuous, cyclical, and an organization needed to prepare itself to forever change. P04 had difficulty with understanding transformational change at the start, for this same reason. He saw change as a constant that is always happening, and CM is just another skill that any good manager has as part of his or her managerial skill set. He recognized that there could be major changes needing a higher level of leadership, planning, and execution but that most change is simple, localized to the process in which it is occurring, and the responsibility of the manager in charge of that process. P07 was the only participant that recognized the distinction between change and transformational change, without needing an explanation. The program he presented was transformational change, the process of changing a culture from a flat performing organization to a driven organization that sought ever higher levels of business and performance through change.

Summary

This chapter included a description of the research study conduct, and the results noted. This presentation included a description of the pilot study, the approach to data collection, the process used to reduce the findings to their general themes, including

descriptions for how participants supported those themes, and how the themes relate to the research question and sub-questions posed in Chapter 1. Most notable was the fact that the descriptions demonstrate how successful transformational change leaders plan and execute their change initiatives.

The stories that participants provided represented the leadership of transformational change very differently from what was expected, after having read the literature presented in Chapter 2. The strategies, tactics, behaviors, and practices exercised by the participants in this study, all successful transformational change leaders, were different or applied differently from the strategies, tactics, behaviors, and practices recommended by the authors and practitioners studied and presented in Chapter 2. Some of these leaders were aware of the findings suggested by the Chapter 2 sources, but none showed any signs that they had studied those recommendations and applied them to their work. These participants did things differently. These successful transformational change leaders suggested that what the authorities in CM present, is not the most critically important aspects of planning, organizing, and executing transformational change.

In short, a summary of how the research questions were answered by study participants follows in Table 5;

Table 5

Research Question Summary

	Research Questions	Summary Answers
Overarching Question	How did employee change leaders, responsible for delivering results in CM initiatives, live through their experiences of CM success, specifically, to be held accountable for achieving the results of planned change, to experience the culture of change, and accomplish the results forecasted in their planning the change process?	Employee change managers were proactive, collaborative leaders, that developed qualified teams of leaders around them who were equally qualified, proactive and collaborative. They did not respond to the literature and were mostly unaware of what was in the literature.
	Research Sub-Questions	
1.	What behaviors and other practices did internal change leaders seem to exercise, what did they do differently from what external change practitioners suggest, that results in CM success?	Some approaches were similar to external recommendations but not because participants were aware of them. Some used novel approaches, specific to their project contexts.
2.	What meaning did employee change leaders attribute to the high failure rates in CM and how did these leaders show through their lived experiences that they avoided them?	Employee change leaders were mostly unaware of high failure rates. They did not avoid them, did not entertain them. Failure was not an option so they did not fail.
3.	How, given the extraordinarily high potential for failure, do these leaders continue to exercise CM practices successfully in their organizations?	All were successful change leaders. They never had and did not expect to fail. They were confident in their ability to succeed.

Every author and practitioner cited in Chapter 2 suggested different organizational dynamics in CM that contributed, in their opinions, to CM success. Their solutions were different from what a majority of the study participants said made them successful, or at

least the study participants applied concepts found in Chapter 2 differently. A comparison

of the differences noted between the practices of successful change leaders and what

expert authors and practitioners in the industry of CM recommended follows in an

interpretation of the findings in Chapter 5. This comparison includes the limitations of the

study; recommendations beyond this research; a discussion of the implications of these

findings; and their implications for social change, future research, and practice.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This study explored the experiences of successful employee change leaders to understand how they make change happen and achieve their planned results. I compared these results to the literature to see if these change leaders exercised strategies, tactics, behaviors, and practices that matched what seminal authors in CM suggested. Modern CM philosophy has existed more than 60 years. Authors, such as Burke (2014), Conner (2012), Kotter (2014), Schein (2010), and many others, suggest that 70% of change initiatives fail. This statistic seems extraordinary, given that the field of CM has such a long history and widespread interest.

That high failure rates persist, despite the significant investment in it over those 60 years seems implausible. Most Universities teach CM in their curriculums. Many management consulting firms, including practices in the largest firms in the management consulting business, specialize in CM. Two professional career disciplines exist for CM: the business systems Change Manager and the OD specialist. Thousands of people make businesses of CM. There are Hundreds of books and thousands of articles published about the amelioration of change failure, yet the 70% statistic does not seem to change. Given that, organizational leaders still lead successful change initiatives. Starting transformational change does not seem prudent to a manager whose career success might hinge on one failure where the failure probability is that high.

The findings of this study are reported and summarized in Chapter 4 of this dissertation. The basic answers to the research questions are the summary of the research findings and are represented here in Table 6.

Table 6

Research Question Summary

	Research Questions	Summary Answers
Overarching Question	How did employee change leaders, responsible for delivering results in CM initiatives, live through their experiences of CM success, specifically, to be held accountable for achieving the results of planned change, to experience the culture of change, and accomplish the results forecasted in their planning the change process?	Employee change managers were proactive, collaborative leaders, that developed qualified teams of leaders around them who were equally qualified, proactive and collaborative. They did not respond to the literature and were mostly unaware of what was in the literature.
	Research Sub-Questions	
1.	What behaviors and other practices did internal change leaders seem to exercise, what did they do differently from what external change practitioners suggest, that results in CM success?	Some approaches were similar to external recommendations but not because participants were aware of them. Some used novel approaches, specific to their project contexts.
2.	What meaning did employee change leaders attribute to the high failure rates in CM and how did these leaders show through their lived experiences that they avoided them?	Employee change leaders were mostly unaware of high failure rates. They did not avoid them, did not entertain them. Failure was not an option so they did not fail.
3.	How, given the extraordinarily high potential for failure, do these leaders continue to exercise CM practices successfully in their organizations?	All were successful change leaders. They never had and did not expect to fail. They were confident in their ability to succeed.

This study interviewed several employee change leaders to learn what they did to achieve success, to learn how they viewed change, and how they saw the purported failure rates. These interviews provided the data for this dissertation. The study used an empirical phenomenological approach. The research design followed an exhaustive literature review that showed what scholars, consultants, and other external resources believed were the strategies and tactics that organizations should use to achieve successful change. The data collection process allowed study participants to tell their stories about how they succeeded, then distilled the essence of those stories into explanatory insights. The literature review did not answer the basic questions noted above, or the research questions posed in Chapter 1. The analysis showed that successful working change leaders viewed change differently from what the literature suggested.

The strategies, tactics, behaviors, and practices exercised by the leaders in this study were different from those recommended by scholars and other seminal thinkers in change management. The differences are significant. This chapter presents an interpretation of these findings, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research. It then closes with a discussion of the implications of this study, particularly their impact on positive social change. The chapter closes with conclusions drawn from the discoveries noted in this research.

Interpretation of Findings

The strategies, tactics, behaviors, and practices exercised by the leaders in this study were different from those recommended by scholars, authors, and other seminal thinkers in CM.

The literature, the published body of knowledge about CM, exists in both scholarly publications and popular business books and articles. This literature addresses a mature discipline of business and social science dating back to the work of Kurt Lewin (1997/2010) in the mid 20th century. All of the literature found came from scholars and consultants, qualified but external to the organizations that execute transformational change. While these individuals were technically competent and thorough in their findings, they had limited involvement in the culture of the organizations they wrote about, particularly regarding their responsibility to successful outcomes. They tend to write about what they perceive as contributors to successful change, but do not recognize the social and political aspects of survival in the organization beyond the position of responsibility for achieving change results. There appeared to be a lack of published opinion by working organization leaders. Unlike the literature, executive-level employees of working organizations expressed the findings here. These are the people who exercise the practices and behaviors that influence the culture of the organizations that employ them. They are committed and subject to experience the consequences of failure. They were not just there; they were culturally connected. They had a responsibility beyond leading change initiatives and were sensitive to their continued participation in the

organization, beyond their responsibility to achieve results in transformational change initiatives. They were more vulnerable to criticism and censure by the formal and informal social organizations where they worked. Their status might jeopardize or change their performance, they would be sensitive to that fact and might adjust their approaches to obtaining results.

This study began with a CM literature review of transformational change theory; that is, change that affects organizational vision; the strategic plans, design, structure, culture, products, and services simultaneously. It is a major change that when finished, redefines how the organization exists and operates to serve its markets, clients, or customers. The literature review in Chapter 2 noted a lack of representation in the literature by working leaders within changing organizations. For example, Kotter (1996/2010) indicated that he based his discovery on the approximately 100 companies he had worked with over the 15-year period before his publication but did not identify those organizations. The scope of the study in Chapter 4 was to review successful transformational change initiatives of small to large business organizations and see if they followed the theories in the literature or did something different. They used strategies and tactics expressed in the literature but saw them differently. The study design was phenomenological research. I interviewed ten leaders of change initiatives, senior executive employees in their respective organizations of various sizes, industries, and locations across the Continental U.S. These interviews were free-flowing discussions of how they achieved transformational change in their respective organizations. While ten

participants are a small quantity for establishing generalizability, they represent a good cross-section of senior organization leadership. Generalizability might be concerning from this participant group, but only because the findings are so different from what was said by the authors in the literature review, caution suggests that further study to corroborate these findings is warranted. The study stopped at 10 participants because of perceived saturation, as defined by Giorgi (1997). The study quickly sorted into a set of themes that were common to most or all participants. There were also situationally unique themes that while not as common, responded to a higher-level idea for focusing organizations on outcomes rather than on change. Participants exercised what seemed a common practice, which was to plan for expected results or outcomes and to focus the change initiatives on those results rather than on the execution of the change. With 10 participants there were ten different approaches, which distilled to the five situational themes.

The findings in this study neither confirmed nor disconfirmed what the literature indicated were the strategies and tactics that allow change management success. Many of the strategies used by study participants were similar to those found in the literature review, but the study participants apparently acquired their knowledge through other means than studying change management literature. For those themes in the research that were similar to the strategies recommended by change management authors, their interpretations of those themes were different from how the literature review authors presented them. The findings of this study indicated that what the literature professes is

required to bring about success while similar, is not how successful change leaders effect change. The study findings were different from the literature for how the study participants applied the strategies, tactics, behaviors, and practices used to ensure CM success. Overall, the participants in this study appeared aggressively focused on success without regard to what causes failure. The scholars and industry writers seemed more focused on identifying the causes of failure and defining strategies for their avoidance. This section offers an interpretation of the major themes found in this study. These themes are shown again in Table 5 in the following results section. Situational themes noted by the study participants are identified later in Table 6 of this section with a discussion of their importance to the study. Those situational themes were the more common strategies used to maintain a focus on results, rather than on change per se. The results section that follows discusses the findings, the themes found in Chapter 4.

Results

Research Question

This section presents an interpretation of the findings shown in Chapter 4. It shows the themes identified in the Chapter 4 analysis by representing the themes in Table 5 and 6, followed by an interpretation for each. For clarification, the overarching research question that was the basis of this study was:

How do employee change leaders, responsible for delivering results in CM initiatives, live their experiences of CM success, specifically, to be held accountable for achieving the results of planned change, to experience the

culture of change, and accomplish the results forecasted in planning the
change process?

Table 7

Overarching Themes

Major Theme	Respondents	Definition
6. Collaborative Leadership	90%	Strong, proactive, qualified, self-starting, collaborative leaders incented to do the work of getting others to execute plans and achieve goals.
7. Open Communication	80%	Formal and informal communications structured to encourage open, candid, non-punitive communication between team members and with the total organization, focused on success.
8. Defined Expected Outcomes	70%	Redefined plans and operations around new business objectives for the organization, then executed to achieve the new design.
9. Changed Organization Focus	60%	Changed product and service offerings to the extent that what they offered their clients and customers was something new and different from what they offered before changing.
10. Recognized Change Necessity	50%	Recognized continuous change as an imperative, and the risk for failure if they did not change.

Discussion. A majority of participants expressed the themes listed in Table 5 as the primary contributors to the success of their change initiatives. These themes seemed exercised differently from what the authors cited in the literature review in Chapter 2 suggested. In general, the theorists focused more on strategies derived to counter transformational change failure. For example, Kotter (1996/2010) recognized that leadership is instrumental in exercising the strategies he recommended. His recommendation for leadership was to build a strong guiding coalition with sufficient position power to block those left out from disrupting the changes. The team makeup should include enough expertise to enable intelligent decisions, with enough credibility to be taken seriously by the rest of the organization, and enough leadership to drive the change process. Most importantly, Kotter recommended that the guiding coalition membership be able to work in tandem, using teamwork. He recommended not including high ego individuals and troublemakers, those individuals prone to creating an atmosphere of distrust and conflict. The study participants also indicated strong, committed, collaborative leadership as instrumental in their success. However, they did not go into the detail that Kotter did to describe requirements for good team member qualifications. They described the importance of the leader's continuous influence to follow through to see end goals achieved. They did not cite Kotter or other theorists to explain the importance of committed, proactive, collaborative leadership. The study

participants were senior, experienced, qualified leaders. The earned their leadership through years of experience at top levels in organizations.

Kotter (1996/2010) based his eight strategies on responses to eight errors that he said characterized failed projects. These failures were drawn from his experiences. This study showed the perspectives of participants who have led successful projects, embodied in the themes shown in Table 5. They did not see the eight errors Kotter professed that failing change initiative leaders exercised, or these leaders did not commit those errors, or they corrected and eliminated them as potential problems during the courses of planning and executing their projects. It seemed the study participants intuitively avoided the problems noted by Kotter in the preceding paragraph. They exercised what Kotter recommended, but not because they had read or given credibility to Kotter's findings. Of course, there are many ways that Kotter's suggestions for selecting change initiative leadership might have made their way into the participant's project plans. Only one participant indicated he was aware of Kotter's materials, and then only when asked. It is possible that the literature review recommendations came into the projects through some round-about way. Someone else in the organization or program leadership might have read change management materials or exercised them in other places where Kotter's, Burke's (2014), or Schein's (2010), or other's suggestions were applied. The example noted for Kotter's leadership step seemed similarly true for every theme expressed by the participants and will be discussed in more detail in the following sections. They were exercising practices found in the literature review, but they had come to the knowledge of

those practices independently, without necessarily, knowledge of or experience with the writings cited in the literature review.

Both Burke (2014) and Schein (2010) emphasized the perspective of culture change and described approaches to avoid failure due to a failure to effect a change in culture. Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010) suggested strategies that would avoid failure while following the 7-S model. Their discussion of culture change was limited to changing the mindset of the leadership. The 7-S model was developed by Peters and Waterman (1982/2012) while employed at McKinsey, a management consulting firm with a CM practice. Many of the theorists cited in Chapter 2 either recognized leadership as a precursor to their methodology or did not acknowledge it as a requirement for success. Many of the methodologies presented seemed more tactical than behavioral, rooted in observations of failed projects. Their methodologies presented strategies, tactics, and behaviors that they felt could create success and avoid failure. For example, Kotter suggested that if change leaders exercised his eight steps in their projects, he believed they would be more likely to succeed in their change initiatives. If change leaders exercised change within the McKinsey 7-S framework, as instructed by McKinsey (Peters & Waterman, 1982/2012) or by Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2010) their change initiative would likely succeed. If change leaders exercised culture change as prescribed by Burke (2014) or Schein (2010), both of whom expanded Lewin's (1997/2010) three-phase approach to three-phase, seven-step approaches, successful culture change was more probable, which would, in turn, lead to change initiative

success. While the change recommendations noted in the literature review and the

practices of the study participants were similar, there was no clear linkage between them.

The remainder of this section presents a description of these themes and how they are

different from what the literature showed could lead to successful change.

Collaborative leadership. Nine participants (90%) considered this aspect of

leading change critically important. As participant P01 said,

> it all boils down to strong and present leadership. It is common goals, incentive to
>
> perform the work, strong and present leadership, complementary skill sets, and
>
> enough of them to get the job done. If you do not have them all; change will not
>
> happen.

P01 was adamant that collaborative leadership is more than strong leadership; it is

committed, collaborative leadership working together with team peers and others to

achieve the goals of the change initiative. The emphasis on collaboration was important.

None of these participants felt that a strong, top-down, directive-in-nature, leadership

style, a hierarchical organization control structure, would lead to success. Several

participants stated this in their efforts to express the importance of collaboration and

teamwork. Several participants actively trained their leadership teams to be proactive,

take-charge leaders who would collaborate with affected personnel to achieve planned

outcomes. Other participants selected their program and project team members, what

Kotter (1996/2010) called the guiding coalition, because they exhibited proactive,

collaborative behavior. They were not only take-charge leaders in the first place; they

involved people in decision and execution processes as participants. Most of the resources in the literature review recognized the importance of leadership to achieving success but more as a prerequisite for participation than as the collaborative requirement expressed by the study participants.

Open communication. Eight of the 10 participants (80%) indicated the importance of ongoing, continuous communication and status reporting as their projects progressed. Study participants were adamant about continuous, ongoing, open, candid communication with everyone in the organization who was involved with, connected in some way to, an observer or of stakeholder in the change initiative. They included programs such as regularly scheduled *town hall* meetings over the life of their projects. They scheduled both mandatory and voluntary training sessions to keep the transition *front-of-mind* for all personnel. They established performance criteria, which they frequently measured and reported publicly. These tactics were part of ongoing, continuous communication programs to keep change activity at the forefront of day-to-day interaction throughout their organizations. None of the literature authors expressed communication needs to this extent. The closest anyone came was Conner (2012), who discussed how the organization membership might perceive change based on their culture and might interpret a message differently from what was intended when communicated to them. Kotter's (1996/2010) titled his fourth step as *communicating the change vision* which is one part of a communication plan such as suggested here. Kotter's approach suggested that his guiding coalition define a vision then communicate that vision to the

affected organization. He focused entirely on communicating the vision with little attention to how to keep the vision alive throughout the change process. I used Kotter's example as typical of external resources, the scholars and consultants who offered theories for how to effect change successfully. They tended to limit communication to the initial message of a vision or a need for change. The study participants viewed ongoing, continuous, open communication throughout the life of their initiatives, and even beyond, as critical to success. They seemed to view ongoing communication more important than disseminating the initial vision.

Defining expected outcomes. Seven of the 10 participants (70%) defined expected outcomes as part of their planning processes. These outcomes served several purposes. The first was to give those people who needed to change a clear, personal vision as to where they were expected to fit in the organization after the changes. Changing personnel may have had a better grasp of what they needed to do, what was expected, to change satisfactorily after having set these sorts of goals. Change plans were more manageable because expected outcomes were defined at fairly detailed lower levels, in some cases at the individual performance level. Several participants pointed out that they could move quickly through their change plans because outcomes were predefined. There is a point in the execution of change where it becomes more evolutionary than revolutionary, and quickly executing plans is important to avoiding the evolutionary trap. That is the sense of apathy that comes with the lack of excitement while project work is underway and the project seems to have evolved into a slow evolution instead of revolutionary progress. It

was important to sustain excitement and interest within the organization, such that

seemingly slow, non-productive activity momentum did not become prevalent. It was

obsessing over the *get it done now* mindset, before the organization lost interest and

dismissed the change as another brainstorm of management, with the rank-and-file

employee deciding that their continued involvement was not important. None of the

theorists mentioned in Chapter 2 addressed ongoing management of execution at this

level.

  Changed organization focus. Six participants (60%) changed the focus of their

organizations. The changes they initiated were so significant that their organizations were

something new and different from when they started their change. The organizations had

different visions, structures, staffing, business processes, offered different products and

services, and served different markets or the same markets differently. In some cases, the

changed vision was predefined, and the organization saw it as a matter of execution. In

other cases, the organization defined the changed vision. In one case, the organization

defined the changed vision then gave that vision to the guiding coalition in a way that the

guiding coalition believed the vision as if they discovered it themselves. Among the

remaining four participants, while they did not change the primary focus of their

organizations, they made significant changes to the underlying operations that supported

their missions and how they achieved their operational goals. These changes were

transformational in the sense that they changed major business processes. For example,

participant P01 changed how transaction processing occurred through the organization,

thereby improving operations and customer service. Participant P02 changed how IT supported the various operational functions of the organization, improving and standardizing internal operational support across the entire company. This improvement, in turn, expanded the company's ability to support its markets and other stakeholders.

Recognized change as a necessity. Five participants (50%) expressed the importance of recognizing the need for change as a prerequisite to their projects. Most participants needed changes defined for them before starting, but these five began their initiatives by defining the necessary changes before starting. These five participants recognized operational requirements beyond the changes themselves, as driving forces that demanded change. They began their efforts by recognizing that fact. For example, participant P09 was able to effect change in spite of heavy resistance among the senior management. His change program was to centralize administrative and engineering design activities across all seven plants in his organization. This recognition was critical to company survival to remain competitive in their markets. Participant P09 recognized this need and convinced his board of directors of the change required to ensure this survival. In another example, participant P10 was hired to correct a problem where an EEP at a major university had lost its position of leadership. The program was losing money as it continued operations. The need for profitability and a reorganization that offered a curriculum that appealed to large business organizations such as General Motors and AT&T drove the need for change. Every change initiative had external

drivers like these, and the five participants used those drivers to plan and execute the change initiatives they led.

Sub-question 1

The research question drove three sub-questions. The first sub-question addresses the same themes as the overarching question, but from a different perspective. Employee leaders were members of and connected to the social culture of their organizations. They exercised behaviors and practices to effect performance from their peers and subordinates without offending them in such a way as to lose their trust and respect. Their relationships with their organizations were long-term relationships. Whatever way they directed their business, they did so while maintaining positive social and personal relationships for the longer term. This section discusses these behaviors and practices. Research sub-question 1 was:

What behaviors and other practices do internal change leaders seem to exercise, what do they do differently from what external change practitioners suggest, that results in CM success?

Discussion. A problem noted in the literature review was a lack of reporting about the behaviors and practices successful change leaders exercised to control progress toward their desired outcomes. These leaders connected to the cultures of their organizations in ways that external resources would not. Not only did they proactively lead and direct the activity for which they were responsible, but they also did so in ways that retain the respect and trust of their superiors, peers, and subordinates. They led their

part of the organization, achieved the results planned as objectives of their work while maintaining the trust and respect of the organizational membership. There are circumstances where a leader might need to exhibit strong command-and-control behaviors, to push people with a very directive-in-nature style. At other times the leader might need to use more democratic or socially interactive methods, building consensus around a direction or decision, using softer social interaction to obtain agreement with a direction or decision from peers and subordinates. The literature talked about the need to be sensitive to the needs of the organization, to agree with the changes and expected outcomes, but did not discuss how leaders did this. For example, Kotter (1996/2010) indicated the need to develop and communicate a changed vision. He provided a list of tactics for each of his eight steps but discusses these at a relatively high and impersonal level. Kotter recognized that his guiding coalition would develop a vision, that this process worked best with teamwork, that creative thinking was needed, that creating a vision was a process that happened over time and ended with a product that represented a desirable future. He did not address how to involve people in doing this wholeheartedly, willingly, to become connected to and part of the vision as it was rolled out. He did not address how to sustain this involvement until the vision is realized and did not indicate how the change leader retained the trust and respect of the organization culture as they went through the exercises he described. The following discussion tells how the participants did this. The study suggested that there is more to exercising leadership than

simply directing action and expecting results. Some relationships need preservation beyond the completion of a change initiative.

Collaborative leadership. All participants (100%) described behaviors and practices they exercised as they associated with superiors, peers, and subordinates to get done the things that needed getting done. Some behaviors were forthright and obvious; some were subtler applications of leadership. Some of the subtlety was obscured to the point of seeming manipulative, focused on successful outcomes for the change initiative while avoiding conflict, resistance, or negative impact. For example, participant P01 recruited people she had worked with before in similar projects. A significant part of the core team had worked with P01 at past employers and knew how to approach changing the organization as a team. Both participants P01 and P03 empowered their subordinates to make decisions to, in turn, assume a role of leadership. That required these participants to assume ownership of the changes and to defend the activities of their teams as they implemented change. The staff was leadership trained and participated in program development at levels where they knew and agreed with the visions for their respective organizations.

Participant P03 empowered his project team to effect change and lead the organization through an ERP implementation. The home office leadership, culturally removed from the organization where P03 worked, disagreed with the proposed approaches, the processes and provisions needed to effect the change. P03 ran blocking maneuvers designed to distance the home-office leadership of his company from the

change activity. He protected the project team from home office interference by maintaining communications in a way to satisfy status reporting at the home office, while directing his project team to do what was necessary to complete the project successfully, regardless of instructions from the home office.

Participant P09, CEO of a manufacturing organization, encountered significant resistance from senior management, district and plant managers, under his supervision. The company had a policy that avoided employee terminations and layoffs. This policy was so ingrained that the average longevity of employment was over 30 years with the company. P09 encouraged the resistant managers to retire and replaced them by promoting more cooperative leaders into those top positions. In every case, the participants provided proactive leadership while empowering subordinates to act decisively, in turn, to achieve the goals of the change initiatives

Open communication. Eight participants (80%) described behaviors and practices that enhanced open communication among peers and subordinates as they led their change initiatives. These participants provided frequent, open, continuous, candid communication throughout their entire organizations, and especially to those within the organization who were affected by changes. For example, participant P04 scheduled *all-hands* meetings at least bi-weekly. These meetings were to ensure the entire organization was up to date on the progress of the change initiative (the sale of the company to a new owner). Additionally, he scheduled frequent one-on-one meetings with individuals in the organization, and as the organization grew closer to its transition to new owners, he

arranged for the staff to meet their counterparts at the new company. This openness resulted in the entire staff, including those who would not move to the new company, remaining on board through the sale and working for the betterment of the company.

Participant P05, an assistant vice chancellor at a West Coast University, had a unique challenge. If senior leadership became involved in the decision making and execution process, those decisions and their execution would become entangled in a highly political and heavily bureaucratic process that would slow down, and could completely derail, the initiative, putting it at risk for non-completion. That was the nature of the culture at that school. If progress reports, decision making, and the normal activity of project administration elevated to senior leadership levels, they became objects of never-ending discussion without resolution among that leadership until they lost to obscurity, the reasons for knowing about the project. P05 circumvented this by breaking his program into many small, low-level projects. He and the Chancellor were aware of the overall program plan from start to finish. Each department head, senior executive, or dean only knew what was happening in his or her area of responsibility while it was happening. Reporting that could elevate to senior staff levels was avoided and thus, the potential for excessive bureaucratic interference reduced.

Participant P06, a school director at a University, had a different problem. His change program radically redesigned and reorganized an EEP. P06 was selective about to who was invited to teach the new program and how he communicated the changes that were occurring. Some tenured faculty members worked in the old program but were

considered ineligible for the new program. A concern existed, thinking that the tenured faculty might resist that change. P06 worked quietly, only apprising those faculty members who would be invited to teach in the new program, thus keeping this knowledge from those faculty members not invited back. He maintained this posture over the two-year period it took to transition from the old to the new program. The only people outside of the new faculty told about this transition were the dean and associate dean of the university's business school. Of course, faculty members not selected for the new program learned about it through informal communication in the social network of the school, but there was little they could do about it. The dean and administration supported the changes, and the lack of communication precluded their ability to influence their inclusion. Between the nature of their reward system, the publish-or-perish paradigm, and the social sense of political correctness, they were unlikely to object to their exclusion openly. Open, ongoing communication was used to sustain the interest of those participants who were part of the change, who were invited to teach the new program, and thereby included in the new program design process. As in the other cases, P06 controlled communication in a way that kept interest alive while avoiding potential conflicts.

Defined expected outcomes. Seven participants (70%) described how and why they defined expected outcomes as part of the planning processes for the change initiatives they led. This thinking reflected the logic that something not broken did not need repair. Change for the sake of change was seen as a waste of time and other

resources. Most employees would know when a change was being made merely for the sake of change and that the changes add no real value to the organization. People are smart. When invoking change, the rank-and-file personnel of an organization will know it's worth and will dismiss it if they cannot see how it adds value. Change managers know this and will structure change initiatives around outcomes that offer real added value. For example, participant P06 completed a market analysis before determining the need for new programs in the EEP. He determined that enrollments were declining because the programs they offered were no longer serving their existing markets.

Participant P02, a CIO for an international pharmaceutical company, was concerned that during his project he would run into resistance in the form of a *not invented here* syndrome. The company had multiple plants around the world, each with its own IT operations that ran independently from the others as well as from centralized control of the senior leadership of the company. The mission was to centralize IT and standardize support operations. P02 planned his transition to implement ITIL company-wide. ITIL gave the organization an impartial but complete and comprehensive IT management methodology. Most importantly, all personnel focused on ITIL instead of aligning to defend various legacy systems and processes, each plant considering their respective processes as best for the company. The organization focused on outcomes instead of territorial concerns. This tact is similar to the tactics of the situational themes, presented later in this chapter.

Participant P08, a corporate attorney and new hire, who eventually became Chief Operating Officer of the organization where he exercised transformational change, took several months to build relationships of trust and respect before initiating changes. When he started, the company had been using questionable marketing practices of *negative option marketing*. These practices, while not illegal, were aggressive enough to pique the interest of several states attorneys. Those states attorneys were considering lawsuits over these practices. When he started, P08 was not seen by other leaders as credible in defining marketing or operational practices, although he was an attorney specialized in business law and had several years of experience as a corporate officer in other businesses. Over time, he earned respect and trust of the senior executives and marketing leadership of the company. He worked carefully to ensure that the advice he gave was correct. He did not compete with or critique past work, he just recommended new procedures that would allay the concerns of the various state's attorneys who questioned their marketing practices. This care earned him the trust and respect he needed to change marketing practices so that the company was not effectively closed down by state's attorney lawsuits. These examples and others showed that employee leaders needed to exercise leadership with sensitivity, earning trust and respect from others in their respective organizations. Sometimes they could invoke more forceful command-and-control type leadership, but often they needed to act subtly, earning trust, respect, and cooperation from their respective organization. They needed sensitivity to their respective cultures, the social structures of their organizations, to be a friend, and to get results.

Changed organization focus. Six participants (60%) changed their organization's focus. They changed the products and services offered by their organization to the extent that the organization itself was something different from when they started. For example, participant P06 completed a market survey that showed a need to revamp the programs offered by an EEP where he worked. His first task was to convince the senior leadership that the programs they offered did not meet their market's needs. The programs he proposed would fulfill this need better. Part of his implementation was to replace tenured faculty with adjunct professors, the latter being more interested in teaching than publishing. He needed to manage this transition in a way that he could successfully replace staff without offending the senior faculty or the administration. Part of this was, as previously indicated, to only involve staff and faculty considered for the new programs and to quietly exclude the rest of the faculty from discussions about the change.

Participant P07 needed to change the culture of the organization where he was employed. The previous CEO had been a strong command-and-control personality who had been in charge for about 50 years. Leaders were not proactive, having been subjected to heavy subordination by the previous CEO. They expected instructions from P07 telling them what to do, how to do it, and what outcomes P07 expected from their effort. There were no independent thinkers in the management, which showed how the previous CEO had run the company. P07 established four teams to deal with specific problems and charged those teams to develop solutions for operational problems. These teams were a new products team, a safety team, a quality team, and a cost reduction or productivity

team. He would not tell the teams what they needed to do but instead, charged them with defining solutions for problems in each of those areas. The expectation was that they would tell him what they needed to achieve their goals. This approach was intended to foment independent thinking among management personnel. The charge of each team was to develop recommendations for solutions and improvements in their respective areas. The goal was to inspire creative thinking among the management and self-starting activity where they would own their recommendations and the correspondent results they proposed. P07 needed to inspire independent thinking and leadership among a staff that had not been allowed that behavior in the past. At the end of a 90-day period, they reported to P07 with their recommendations and plans for implementation. P07 accepted all recommendations as presented. During that 90-day period, P07 remained intentionally distant. His goal was to encourage independent thinking and more of a take-charge attitude or mindset among the management team. The teams presented progress reports verbally, every 30-days and a final report including recommendations for improvements at the end of the 90-day period. P07 accepted their recommendations and charged them with implementing the programs. As a result, the management team accepted responsibility for these four areas and took ownership of the results generated in each. The results were good. Workmen's compensation claims dropped from $500,000 to $33,000 per year. The top-line growth of the business went from $30 million to $75 million over the ensuing five years, mostly from identifying and offering new products. The plant installed several millions of dollars worth of new machinery that significantly

improved productivity and product quality. Most importantly, the management team at the company, all highly qualified in their fields, took ownership of the business processes, the growth, and the customer service. They learned to act proactively and to lead the organization.

Another example is that of participant P01. Participant P01's project was implementing an ERP system at a multi-national pharmaceutical company. ERP is essentially the underlying transaction processing system throughout an organization design to keep throughput flowing efficiently, allowing workers to do their work without problems or excess resources. The system not only takes in posted transactions such as sales orders, purchase orders, inventory withdrawals, and so on; it also maintains the connections between those types of transactions, so that coordinated processing occurs and throughput optimized at its most efficient operational levels. ERP is a computerized, integrated transaction system, developed in a way to balance resource loading and achieve efficient order processing, procurement, production, shipment, and delivery of goods and services. The system undergirds business processes established to facilitate sales order processing, raw material acquisition, inventory management, work-in-process manipulation, and shipping of finished goods in fulfillment of sales activity. It is a toolset for managing the business. Measurements such as on-hand inventories, turnover, time to order completion, work-in-process, products in shipment, and so on, signify the health and wellbeing of executing the administrative processes underlying the business. Participant P01 established improvements in these business performance metric reporting

as the goals of the ERP project, thus focusing the interest in productivity and business

process improvement rather than in the implementation of ERP. The project teams

worked to improve those metrics rather than working to get ERP systems installed and

working. That focus changed the scope of the ERP implementation. It changed the design

of the project. This approach, to focus on something beyond the outcome of the change

initiative itself, assuming that operational improvements signify change, seemed common

in planning and executing change initiatives. In this case, it made project management

easier. It focused on operational outcomes instead of change initiative mechanics, Like

participant P02, who focused on converting management processes to ITIL to avoid the

not-invented-here syndrome, or like participant P06 who focused on profitability and

market share rather than on change programs. Or like participant P07 who focused on

business improvements instead of the need to disrupt the management staff behaviors.

Focusing on higher level outcomes appears to be common.

Recognized change as a necessity. Five participants (50%) recognized change as a

necessity, a constant, and talked about behaviors and practices they exercised to control

this reality in their respective organizations. For example, participant P02 recognized that

change was a constant, a cyclical process where one change leads to another, which leads

to another, ad infinitum until the latest change leads back to the original change, which

must change again. CM is a continuous, never-ending process in organizations.

Participant P04 talked about the fact that change is constant, is just part of the day-to-day

activity of business that any qualified manager should be able to deal with, and if they are

not capable of managing change, then they are not qualified. P04 recognized that occasionally there is a major change that requires planning, control, and execution, that might need an assigned manager due to its complexity, but that is rare. Most change is relatively routine; a process change at one point or another, packaging changes, market changes, and so on, that cause an adjustment in an already existing process. When taken together collectively, the sum of the changes might be major, but most change happens incrementally and is manageable within the normal routine of business operations.

Participant P09 recognized a need for major change, centralization of administrative operations as well as new product design and development. He brought in consultants to help plan and execute these changes. His business was essentially a collection of job-shops, and every new order was a custom product. However, centralization reduced design costs and improved customer service responsiveness. While pushing senior managers into retirement was not an original goal, P09 did this to replace resistant senior leaders. This participant's story demonstrated a reality in large projects and programs that drive much activity due to spontaneous occurrences that arise during the execution of the project. Transformational change projects typically run longer, sometimes running years from start to finish, and while in execution, other changes or influences may occur that affect the original plans. In this case, resistance from senior management caused leadership to force those who were resistant to retire. That, in turn, drove out a series of personnel decisions, replacing those individuals who left. The nature of these types of projects is such that planning is best at a relatively high level, leaving

much of the detailed execution to contingency planning during the work of following the plans to achieve the goals of the change.

Sub-question 2

The second of the three sub-questions was to understand how aware participants were of the published failure rates for change initiatives and their impression of this statistic. It was surprising is that only a few knew of the 70% claim in the literature. Most of the participants did not give credence to this statistic. Those participants that had heard it did not consider it highly in planning and executing their projects. The second sub-question of this study was:

> What meaning do employee change leaders attribute to the high failure
>
> rates in CM and how do these leaders show through their lived
>
> experiences to avoid them?

Those participants who were aware of the high failure rates published in the literature dismissed them. They focused on ensuring success in their projects. As participant P04 said, he was not interested in knowing about other people's failures. That knowledge might scare him enough to hesitate, and because of that hesitation, he might commit or omit an act that could lead to failure. He was confident in his ability to effect change and did not want to know about other people's failures.

Sub-question 3

The third of three sub-questions was meant to identify why change leaders, in spite of the published failure rates, would continue to pursue transformational change

initiatives. It would seem that a 70% chance of failure would caution a prudent manager

to avoid change, or at least to avoid being tapped for the leadership of a change initiative.

This avoidance might be particularly true for the employee, who is much more at risk for

negative consequences of change failure than others, external consultants and scholars,

who might be involved in a change initiative. Being held accountable for leading change

might also foster a great degree of careful planning, more than necessary, to ensure that if

the responsible leader were required to lead a change initiative, they would do so in a

way that ensures success. The third sub-question asked;

> How, given the extraordinarily high potential for failure, do these leaders
>
> continue to exercise CM practices successfully in their organizations?

Those participants who had thought about this question maintained that change

happens. It is an inevitability, things change, and managers must keep up with those

changes regardless of the inherent risk. That being the case, the participants were

sensitive to ensuring that everyone involved in change was equipped to exercise the

themes noted in Table 5. The participants provided training, mentoring, and personal

coaching to ensure that everyone involved had what they needed to work proactively

towards the change initiative goals. The participants knew that change would happen

regardless of whether they tried to manage it or not, so they proactively tried to control

and manipulate the changes in the best interests of their respective organizations so that

they achieved desired outcomes.

Some participants questioned the published failure rates in the first place. For example, participant P02 said he had heard about the failure rates but had never experienced a project that came anywhere near failure. He had not seen a failed project, and none of his peers had experienced one either. He was cognizant of the published failure rate but questioned whether it was real or not. Most participants, however, were not cognizant or were only vaguely aware of the failure rates commonly found in the literature.

Additional Situational Themes

The following themes, listed in Table 6, were also noted. Each of these themes was situational in the sense that they represented unique applications or techniques to sharpen the focus, the direction of the group charged with carrying out the work of change. These approaches that participants used as examples of their experiences were more tactical. Some have been discussed elsewhere as examples of approaches to leading change initiatives. Each of these themes was situational. The nature of the respective programs and projects allowed for these themes to exist and for the participants to use them to help control the change.

Table 8

Additional Situational Themes

Major Theme	Respondents	Definition
6. Changed Individual Programs, such as Marketing, Information Management systems, Performance Tracking systems, and so on.	100%	Diverted attention to operational dynamics or some other imperative that drove the need for change.
7. Broke the Change up into separate programs	40%	Defined the change initiative as a program of many smaller projects, each sufficiently low-level to avoid a need for higher level scrutiny or senior leadership involvement.
8. Managed up and managed the informal leadership	60%	Actively sought to influence organization leadership outside of their chain-of-command to foster a positive reaction and acceptance. This included informal leaders, those employees who by their personalities or roles influenced how the organization accepted changes.
9. Established and Posted Metrics for Progress Reporting	20%	Defined and publicly displayed operational performance metrics that demonstrated strategic or tactical improvements in operations, attributable to the changes.
10 Recognized Change as a Constant	30%	Recognized the circular nature of change, where one change causes another change, which in turn causes another until eventually the original change must be changed again. These leaders recognized the continuous, never-ending cyclical nature of change.

Discussion. Each participant exercised behaviors and practices that helped achieve change. As part of their planning and execution processes, there were several tactics used to maintain focus on the outcomes of the projects, lessening or softening the impact of the changes themselves. In many cases, these themes represent ways of establishing goals that were tantamount to setting up irreversible or *no-return* situations. Once the organization had embarked on implementing change, there was no way to go back.

Changed Individual Programs, such as Marketing, Information Systems, and so on. Every participant (100%) focused their programs on some operational theme or characteristic that gave a purpose for the changes. For example, participant P02 was charged with centralizing information technology operations for a $1 billion pharmaceutical manufacturer, with several plants around the world, each with their own independent IT operations. P02 feared that each plant's IT operation might choose to defend their respective operational designs, considering their version of operations better than the others and that they would campaign for their operations model to be adopted by the other plants. P02 saw this as a potential for conflict and resistance that he wanted to avoid. He adopted the ITIL standards for administration and operation of IT departments to overcome this potentiality. By doing this, P02 avoided argument and resistance over which approach to centralized IT management was best. The ITIL standards provided a complete system for IT management that the entire organization membership was aware

of but had not used. P02 avoided the not-invented-here syndrome and facilitated a smooth transition to a new management model.

Participant P01, as previously noted, directed her project team's attention to operational metric improvements. The change initiative became a problem of implementing ERP in such a way that it effectively improved operational performance, rather than to just implemented a new ERP system. Participant P06 focused on improvements that would serve their markets more effectively and profitably. His redevelopment of EEPs was in response to a market study that showed this as needed, rather than just recognizing that existing programs were not serving the market adequately. Participant P08 focused on redefined marketing programs that avoided the potential for being sued by state's attorneys, and the concurrent risk, bad publicity, and expense that sort of activity would add to the organization. Every participant, like these, found operational requirements beyond the change, goals that needed to be affected by the change, for the change initiative to be considered a success.

Broke the Change up into separate programs. Four participants (40%) led change initiatives that were large programs that could be broken up into smaller projects. For example, participant P05 led an ERP implementation at a large university that had a highly political and bureaucratic environment, especially at their senior leadership levels. Any approval process elevated to the chancellor, a school dean, or department director level, or higher, would get delayed in a painfully slow and circular process of discussion, negotiation, and renegotiation, without resolution. At this level, the possibility of failure

existed because of the bureaucratic processes at those senior levels. They could not make quick or efficient decisions. In fact, they often would not make decisions at all, getting into an iterative and reiterative cycle of rehash and re-discuss without acting. P05 broke the implementation into small projects that worked at a very low level. He worked with one office or department at a time until that part of the implementation was completed. At any point in time, only the University Chancellor, the Deputy Chancellor, P06, and the department head or office chairperson actively under implementation knew what was happening. Even then, department heads and office chairpersons did not know the full scope of the project. This approach avoided the need to elevate coordinative decisions to senior levels, where the bureaucracy tended to work against quick decision making. The entire transition took about three years to complete. In another example, participant P02 centralized operations for six plants located in various markets around the world. The centralization project at each plant was an independent project. The structure of the organization allowed for a level of independence at each plant and breaking the work into separate projects that allowed for each to proceed at their own pace. The same approach worked for participant P01. She planned the project for each plant in her organization separately, in a way that enabled them to implement ERP sequentially across the organization. These participants found that by breaking their initiatives into multiple smaller projects, they were able to manage the changes more efficiently and had better chances for goal achievement.

Managed up and managed the informal leadership. Six participants (60%) not only managed their respective change initiatives, but they also exercised leadership to influence their peers and superiors, as well as the informal leadership of their respective organizations. This need was most apparent in the ERP projects, where the transition to a new organization with new systems was the objective. These leaders needed to ensure that they had no naysayers at their senior leadership levels. As participant P02 put it, a C-level peer, who disagreed with the change or the approach, could cause a project to fail. If the senior leader openly and publicly expressed disagreement, that expression could be picked up by others, including people with responsibilities to make the changes called for in the plan. Those others could use the criticism by the C-level peer as a justification to resist or otherwise not cooperate with the change process. P02 asked his C-level peers not to express disagreement publicly. He requested that if they had a question about or a problem with, what was happening, they should express it to him personally and privately so that they did not unduly influence the organization to resist the change. P02 would take their critique under advisement and either make changes to the projects or negotiate with them for ways to satisfy their concerns without undue influence over the rest of the organization. P02 also talked about the informal leadership. Every organization has informal leaders, people who are not in the chain-of-command or charged with leadership responsibility, but who are liked, respected, and trusted by the organization membership. They can and often do influence what organizations believe and accept. P02 sought these people out and made them part of the larger team, the guiding coalition that would

support the changes. These informal leaders did not have responsibility for change or for leading the organization, but they could easily create discord that could lead to project failure. P02 avoided this by including these people in the planning and execution processes of the change initiative. They were pulled in as part of the solution, with their power to instigate resistance or somehow undermine the initiative significantly diminished. They were, in effect, made part of the change initiative delivery and given a vested interest in its success.

Established and posted metrics for progress reporting. Two participants (20%) identified operational performance metrics and posted them for the organization. As previously noted, participant P01 focused on inventory and production control measurements routinely found in manufacturing operations. The mission became one of improving those metrics rather than one of successfully installing ERP. A well-written ERP system can significantly impact efficiency regarding order processing, accounting, purchasing, inventory management, work-in-process management, and shipping, distribution, and fulfillment control. These systems can affect improved performance in the form of inventory on hand reduction, shortened manufacturing cycle times, minimized shipping and transportation costs, and on-time fulfillment of orders for finished goods. P01 managed her ERP implementations to identify these measurements and to show how much they improved as a result of the ERP. The approach changed the project team's focus from ERP implementation to business process improvement. The improved performance measurements demonstrated successful implementation.

Participant P08 did something similar when redefining the marketing programs for his company. That change was to redefine marketing strategies and practices. He facilitated meetings with the marketing personnel where they identified *key performance indicators* for marketing programs and started tracking those measures while they worked to transition their marketing practices from negative option marketing to a different approach.

Recognized Change as a Constant. Three participants (30%) recognized change as a constant, a routine part of management responsibility. Two participants recognized transformational change as a unique requirement, apart from the more routine day-to-day change that is an ongoing part of organizational operations. Participant P02 and his position regarding the cyclical nature of change discussed previously, gave a comprehensive overview of the continuous nature of change. Participant P04 had the thought that change is a routine skill that a manager brings to the job with him. He had difficulty, at first, understanding transformational change. He talked through this during the interview and concluded that occasionally, major changes occur. When that happens, the organization might need to stop, redesign, plan for change, then implement. He conceded that there are occasions where transformational change is the responsibility of the entire management team. P04's understanding was the most common among participants. Participant P07 was the only participant that recognized a difference between routine or incremental change and transformational change without prompting. P07 presented a transformational change program, one that changed the culture, the

vision, the mission, the structure, and the business processes of the organization. The rest of the participants either led transformational change programs without realizing that was what they were doing, or they knew they were leading major change programs but were unaware of the published literature about this activity. Most participants did not understand the emphasis on transformational change, apart from leading other change, until, in the course of the interview conversation, they thought through and realized the distinction.

Limitations of the Study

This study started as an exploration to discover what successful change leaders, employees of the organizations where they worked, experienced in leading that change to success. The most significant limitation of this study was that the participant group was small, with only 10 participants. That limitation came about because the findings achieved saturation as defined by Giorgi (1997) quickly. The study was not expected to achieve saturation that quickly, but it made no sense to pursue further contacts, given the fact of this occurrence. The size of this participant group was small, and generalizability is a concern, but the value of the study is clear. The insights show that practitioners' experience, while similar to that prescribed by theoreticians and consultants, was exercised independently without general knowledge of what was in the literature. Further study is needed to substantiate the findings. Though this study was exploratory, it did suggest that what successful change leaders do is different from what the literature prescribes, at least insofar as to how these leaders approached their work. These leaders

were successful. The literature, although expansive and mature, has not contributed to reducing the failure rates noted by some scholars and others who study CM. Moreover, the so-called failure rate seems to be a consultant's convenience and not based on practice.

The study participant group included only senior leaders, director level and above, responsible for leading transformational change in small to large organizations. The group included CEOs, CFOs, CIOs, General Managers, and Directors. The participant group included people from multiple industries including education, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, and services. The projects presented represented various forms of transformation including ERP implementations, reorganization, centralization, mergers and acquisitions, and turn-around management. The findings are from a cross-section of leadership and management activities and positions. The 13 projects given as examples showed a variety of scenarios where transformational change occurs.

The results of this study are valuable to CM leaders and all others who take an interest in transformational change in organizations. The study results were significant beyond the senior executives who lead change. The results should also be significant to all who are interested in CM, in particular, the scholars and consultants who have supported the methodologies found in the literature. The external resources who recognized the failure rate for transformational change initiatives remaining around 70%, should reconsider, or at least question, that figure in light of these findings. What was unique about the findings is that they represent results achieved by employees of

changing organizations, held accountable for results, and these employees were successful in achieving the desired outcomes in their change initiatives. These cases of CM success offered a unique perspective that could enhance the usefulness of the literature.

Recommendations

Further research is needed to augment the credibility and transferability of the findings of this research. Qualitative studies designed to broaden participation, based on the findings of this research, should be developed and executed. That research should be structured to ensure that this research was not an aberration of the broader subject of change management as it is exercised by successful organizational change leaders. Further study should qualitatively show that the findings in this dissertation are not outliers. The themes noted as strategies, tactics, behaviors, and practices used by the study participants differ from what the literature reports in their application. That said, much of what was represented by the study participants were similar to the recommendations in the literature. Where they differed was in how they applied leadership principles throughout the life of their projects. In leadership, they focused on how they worked with people, participating in the social and cultural processes in ways that retained the trust and respect of their respective organizations.

The comparison between external resources and executive employee leaders needs further study by students and practitioners of change management. The theorists reviewed in Chapter 2 did not show how they derived their theories, nor did they

substantiate their credibility. They offered no replicable examples or fundamental research that demonstrated their findings as transferable. Their findings, as presented, are not generalizable from a research perspective. Most of the authors reviewed mentioned one or more of the themes found in this research, but not as primary causes of success. If they mentioned a theme, it was usually defined or applied differently. For example, Kotter (1996/2010) recognized a need for leadership to execute his eight steps, but that represented only one of his eight steps. He did not indicate how important that particular step was to success. He talked about selecting leaders who were team players and were not ego drive or troublemakers. One of his steps was about communication, but it was more of a top-down type of communication, to disseminate a vision throughout the organization. Kotter's concept of communication did not seem to suggest the two-way communication needed to foster collaborative decision making and execution throughout the life of the change initiative. That said, Chapter 2 presented the works of experienced scholars and consultants, noted CM researchers and leaders. Their theories may well be credible, but they did not include sufficient data to validate this fact. Further research is needed to establish the validity of their theories.

Further research is needed to establish whether the literature review recommendations are, in fact, successful in fostering transformational change. As it stands, transformational change failure appears to have hovered around 70% of all initiatives undertaken by organizations for at least the past 60+ years. Most of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 was developed during that period, yet that statistic for

transformational change remains unchanged. The concepts of transformational change management appeared highly situational. The research showed that transformational change is something that happens over time in highly dynamic environments that are simultaneously evolving in other ways. This type of change does not seem to lend itself to the execution of structured or standard practices or theories, as presented in the literature. Some cases might need more focus on project planning or leadership, management, or execution practices, while others might need to focus more on training and development or other culture change needs. Most change leaders probably require some mixture of these characteristics. The change initiatives themselves may be very complex, requiring a combination of strategies and tactics drawn from various disciplines. These initiatives may be so complex that each change requires custom planning and execution, may require being broken up into multiple initiatives, each with its own definition of success. There might be a need for highly flexible execution in a highly dynamic environment that is evolving over the time spent executing the changes. That seemed to be the case among several of the participants in this study. Further research is needed to establish this fact.

I do not question the competence of the scholars and consultants reported in the literature review as change leaders; the criticism is limited to the facts that they did not present sufficient evidence to validate their claims or enable replication of their findings, and their research was focused on failed change initiatives. They should have focused on successful initiatives to determine why they were successful rather than trying to

understand why unsuccessful initiatives failed. In the meantime, the published failure rates continue at extraordinarily high levels and have done so for over 60 years. If the strategies recommended by the scholars and consultants reviewed in Chapter 2 are valid, they should be at least replicable in the sense that similar studies could be mounted that produce similar results. Those strategies should show a history of adoption and should have affected the published failure rates. They should be verifiable with fundamental research. None of the authors reviewed in Chapter 2 gave enough background to enable this testing. Thus, the theories of the authors in Chapter 2 remain unproven and unsupported, and the recommendation here is that additional research is needed to validate the findings suggested in the literature for CM.

The research was empirical phenomenology. This study was a phenomenological exploration to understand what employee change leaders, those executives employed by the organizations where they worked, responsible for delivering results in transformational change, did to ensure success. The recommendations in the literature were thought valid as organization executives were contacted and interviewed for this study. The study asked these leaders to describe a recent successful transformational change initiative where they succeeded and to explain in detail what they did to achieve that success. This questioning was open-ended, expecting they would tell stories about successes that would either validate or refute the literature. The executives involved in this study did not follow the recommendations in the literature, although they did exercise many of the steps and activities that the literature authors suggested. When they did this,

they were not acting in response to knowledge gained from the literature. As such, they neither validated or refuted the literature. They acted in ways that the literature suggested but not in response to what was in the literature. They were acting as managers and leaders, as trained over the years in their personal and professional development. Some of the participants were aware of the literature but still did not necessarily apply those strategies. Instead, they focused more on collaborative leadership, allowing for continuous open communication, defining expected outcomes, changing their organization's focus, and fostering organization-wide recognition of the need for change. They focused on goals and directed their organizations to those ends.

This research needs broader coverage due to the disparity of these findings and the impreciseness of the literature. This study was an exploratory exercise to ask successful change leaders what they did to achieve success. The study needs expansion to ensure that these findings are valid, reliable, and generalizable. At the start, the strategies noted in the literature review were accepted as valid techniques for facilitating change. While the research did not confirm these strategies, neither did it refute them. They were there but exercised differently. Further work leading to fundamental research is needed to show how the strategies noted in the literature, as well as the strategies used by the study participants, bring about successful transformational change in organizations.

Further research is needed. The recommendations in the literature are unsupported. Change research needs more comprehensive qualitative and quantitative research to demonstrate the validity of the literature. Most of the authors in the literature

review did not provide this validation, although they did refer to examples from their experience that demonstrated points they were making. Through these examples, they showed a depth of experience that suggests their recommendations could be valid, but they did not provide adequate validation of their findings. Likewise, this study was an exploratory qualitative study to learn how successful change leaders foster transformational change success. This research needs expansion, to clarify the disparity between what change leaders do for success and what the literature recommends they should do. Thus, further qualitative research is needed. This research necessitates multiple levels or layers, growing into the conduct of fundamental research that establishes internally and externally valid practices that are reliable and objective recommendations for change strategies.

CM and OD disciplines. CM is an engineering discipline associated with systems design and business administration. This discipline is a technical science used to design and maintain organizational structure for exercising efficient communication, organizational transaction processing, and activity resolution. OD is more of a cultural discipline, focused on creating work environments supportive of organizational participants. Indeed, Schein's (2010) work was exclusively about culture change. He saw change management as a function of changing the culture.

In transformational change, both disciplines were critical to success. Transformational change involved the redefinition of the organization (Burke, 2014). It redefined the mission, the underlying business processes, and the work environment for

the organization. Burke noted that when change occurred, it was people that were changing. Without people change, transactional and structural change cannot happen. Both disciplines, OD and CM, needed to address change or the potential for failure of the change initiative increased. The two disciplines are interdependent. One cannot achieve planned results without the other. While some scholars in Chapter 2 recognized this, it was not a consensus of understanding. Most of those scholars did not mention this distinction. Instead, they were more focused on one or the other discipline. Their presentations seemed to hold these two disciplines separately, with CM relegated to the project management element of a business analyst in the information systems and technology management activity. OD was presented as more of a human resource activity, relegated to human resource or training departments. Change is possible with one or the other of these disciplines, but the potential for failure increases. As Burke said, change occurs because people change. Process change is, by comparison, easy.

Implications

Change happens. As the study participants in Chapter 4 suggested, change is a continuous happening that occasionally rises to a level of transformational change. As participant P02 noted, Change is a never-ending cyclical process. Once you invoke a change, that change drives out one or more other changes, which in turn drives out more changes, until they ultimately cause a need to change the original change that started the process. Duck (2001) made this point but did so differently. The results of a major

change eventually resulted in changing whatever started that process in the first place. This cycle of change will go on for as long as an organization exists.

Chapter 1 of this study indicated that the most likely beneficiaries of this research would be anyone responsible for leading change. If this study led to a reduction in the published failure rates for transformational change, it could conceivably lead to a reduction in the negative social impacts of failed change initiatives. Sensitivity to the possibility of job losses due to change failure drove this research. Possible job losses due to change failure and the social impact to communities surrounding changing organizations remained at the forefront. If the findings here were generalizable, they might also be transferable. An impact statement of such an outcome follows, in the form of a statement of relevant contribution to positive social change.

If the CM and OD industries had presented integrated, validated theories, strategies, and practices that were generalizable and transferable, those theories might be more heavily adopted and organizational leaders more likely to use them with confidence. Most importantly, organizational leaders would not fail 20%, 70%, or 92% of the time when executing transformational change. The CM literature was predominantly the product of scholars, scholar-practitioners, and external consultants, all external resources contracted by working organizations to assist in exercising CM in continued operations. These theorists have not established the criteria needed to demonstrate how to achieve successful transformational change. Actual working change leaders, those employees of organizations responsible for effecting transformational change, have

contributed very little to the literature. There is little showing what successful change

leaders do to execute transformational change in organizations where they work.

Employee change leaders have a different perspective from external resources, driven by

the fact that if their change initiative fails, not only are they at risk of losing their jobs,

thus damaging their careers but also at risk of causing other job losses in turn, in a

domino effect. At their worst extremes, these leaders might also cause organization

failure. If this collapse were large enough, it could significantly impact the community

surrounding the organization.

One or a few people losing their jobs in a healthy economy is not very impactful

to the society where those people live. If a corner convenience store closes, that might

represent job losses for, at the most, 5 to 20 people. That includes the ripple effect, jobs at

other organizations, lost because these people no longer work at the convenience store. If

a larger organization were to fail, the impact is much different. One example that

demonstrated this probability occurred during the U.S. economic recession started in

2007 and continued through 2012. The *Big 3* automakers; Ford, General Motors, and

Chrysler were on the verge of bankruptcy at the beginning of the recession. Had they

failed, that would have represented a loss of approximately one million jobs, plus the

ripple effect for those losses (Amadeo, 2017). Estimating that ripple effect is difficult.

The U. S. Department of Labor does not estimate the residual impact of job losses

throughout a community because of the complexity of that impact. As people lose jobs,

many find new work relatively quickly. If the Big 3 auto manufacturers had failed in

bankruptcy, other manufacturers might move in and fill the void in the auto market left

by those closures. Many workers, let go because of the failure, would have found new

jobs elsewhere. The same is true for the ripple effect. As the industry recovered, those

jobs lost in the community might become available again as other businesses vied for the

lost market share. To examine the impact of lost manufacturing jobs, one economist

estimated that each manufacturing job in an economy leads to 1.9 jobs in the community

that rely directly or indirectly on that manufacturing job. These are mostly supply-chain

positions related to the goods, services, and raw materials needed in support of

manufacturing (Moran, 2004). There are other jobs beyond the direct and indirect

employees of the supply chain supporting the manufacturer, in the form of local services,

such as restaurant workers, retailers, household services, transportation services, and so

on. These workers also rely on the manufacturing job for their existence. These losses are

even harder to estimate. Calabresi (2009/2016) noted that in unhealthy economy job

losses grow, leading to more job losses in the organization and in the community. These

community job losses lead to further job losses in the goods and services industries

surrounding the community, to further losses in the governmental and public services

agencies that support the community and leading to what he called a *perfect vicious circle*

of less available work for job seekers (para. 5).

The ability for an organization to effect transformational change is a significant

advantage, not only at individual and organizational levels but within the community as

well. Each job not lost enables continued economic support to the organization and the

community. The estimates noted above suggest that the job losses had the Big 3 auto manufacturers failed, would have been approximately 2.9 million jobs. There would have been an uncountable impact on the local retail and services economies, which would have been heavily impacted, requiring government services would have also needed to cut back. A perfect vicious circle (Calabresi, 2009/2016), where just as those services were needed for the millions of jobs lost, the local and regional governments would not have been able to provide them. Economic depression in Some sections of the U. S. economy would have occurred with that large of an impact. U. S. Government investments in the Big 3 auto manufacturers avoided those job losses. However, the onset of the recession was known a year before it happened. Had the Big 3 automakers forecast that event and started planning for change, the U. S. Government might have avoided providing them with a bailout.

CM and OD are part of the management consulting industry. The companies that help large organizations change are the primary authors of the most widely read leadership and change literature. Those authors routinely cite the scholars who study CM and OD. Often, they are the scholars who conducted the research, as in the cases of Kotter (1996/2010) or Jorgensen et al. (2014). Many organizations consult academia directly, rather than use professional consultants. Organizations rely on companies and universities to provide consulting services; delivering the training, development, and other leadership support needed to facilitate change.

The CM industry has not changed the potential for CM failure, as evidenced by the fact that the reported failure rates have not declined. The reported failure rates in recent years (Isern & Pung, 2007; Jorgensen et al., 2008; Jorgensen et al., 2014; Kotter, 2014; Conner, 2012) are essentially the same as were reported in the 1940s and early 1950s (Lewin, 1997/2010; Schein, 2010). The theories noted in Chapter 2 seemed not to have reduced the potential for transformational change failure, were not validated, and are not generalizable as they stand. Whether the failure was due to a fragmented understanding of the CM or OD industries, or some other reason, successful employee change leaders seem not to do what the authors of those theories recommend. If followed, the theory recommendations should have reduced the probability of failure in transformational change. The theories should have reduced the possibility of employee terminations due to failure, reduced the chances for the organization itself to fail, and quite possibly avoided an economic impact in the community where the organizations existed and worked. That wasn't the case.

Conclusions

There are several obvious conclusions from this study. CM, as a discipline, although having a long history of extensive study, is inadequately supported in the literature. It appears to be more complex, more complicated, and idiosyncratic than the research suggests. Until the quality of the published theories includes fundamental research, the literature will continue, at best, to represent only conjecture about possible strategies and tactics for leading change initiatives. I intend to pursue this research until

there is an adequate underlying study that supports generalizations and transferability of what works in CM.

There are two primary kinds of change, evolutionary and transformational (Burke, 2017; Jick & Sturtevant, 2017). There are also two disciplines that influence our understanding of change; CM and OD. Evolutionary change is minor change that occurs during normal organizational operations. This type of change is typically handled by the affected operative within the organization as it occurs. It does not include changing the mission, the organization design, or the culture. It is typically changing a process step or a structure. It is not likely to involve culture change at all. Transformational change is revolutionary. It involves a redefinition of an organization. It can include a changed vision, mission, organizational design, a change in products or services, or a change in staffing. The organization that emerges from transformational change is something different from when it started that process. This type of change includes cultural considerations, offering training and personnel development or redeployment, that encourages personal and group social change to work with the new vision.

Change appears more complex and situationally oriented than general theories seems to allow. What works in one case may not work in another. Every change initiative seems unique in the sense that what works in one context may not work in another. Often, contingencies apply to a change that might alter the approach and methods used to effect change. The same change in a similar organization might require a completely different

approach to ensure success. The similarities from one change initiative to the next may vary, dependent upon the underlying culture and context.

CM seems to be, first and foremost, a leadership discipline (as opposed to a management discipline). Change appears to be an outcome of applied leadership practices as much as it is the result of following some methodology or process designed to facilitate change. Much of the leadership literature is actually about change. For example, Peters and Waterman (1982/2012) wrote about organizational excellence and identified several leading companies, recommending their emulation. One participant in this study noted that any organization wishing to emulate those companies would need to initiate a transformational change project or program. Goldratt and Cox (2004) wrote about process improvement. Any organization considering process improvements such as Goldratt and Cox suggested would need to plan for transformational change to apply the approach that Goldratt and Cox advocated. Senge (2006) wrote about *systems thinking*, suggesting that organizations are a system and should not only manage their business but also manage the system connectivity across their organization. Any organization wanting to adopt Senge's perspective would need to plan for transformational change to achieve it. Argyris 2010, Beer and Nohria (2010) Blanchard (2010) Bradford and Burke (2005a, 2005b) and the many others cited earlier offered many approaches to OD and business execution. As organization leaders plan their change initiatives they must consider the design and structuring that accentuates learning at a systems level which should be built into the infrastructure and system of the organization.

This study has reviewed the literature for CM theory and methodology and found that the primary activities of actual employee change leaders, the strategies, tactics, behaviors, and practices, were, at best, coincidentally included in the theories suggested by CM scholars. The CM literature reviewed in Chapter 2 does not show what successful change leaders in organizations do, day-to-day, to successfully invoke change. Instead, those scholars and authors focused more on failure and what they recommended that change leaders do to avoid that outcome. What successful change leaders did to succeed was not clear in the Chapter 2 presentations, although there were point examples given to demonstrate one step or tactic, or another. That led to the study presented here, to explore the strategies, tactics, behaviors, and practices of successful employee change leaders, that led to successful transformational change. While the Chapter 4 study has broadened knowledge of CM, there is more work to be done. Research is needed to expand knowledge in this area beyond the conjecture of qualified scholars and consultants. While the authors cited in the literature review were obviously qualified and experienced change researchers and leaders, and their contributions are well said, the literature needs to expand to where it includes fundamental research that demonstrates their theories are substantiated, generalizable, nor transferable. This study is not complete. It expanded knowledge in change leadership by focusing on the experiences of successful employee change leaders in working organizations, to learn what they did to achieve transformational change success. However, this work was just another qualitative study, much like those cited in the literature review. The findings only lead to more research to

expand the knowledge of change leadership until it includes internal and external validity

and is a reliable and objective qualification of the strategies and tactics recommended for

achieving change management success.

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Appendix A: Welcome Letter

{Letter Date}

{Participant Address}

Dear {Participant}

You are invited to participate over the coming weeks, in a research project designed to explore experiences like yours in change leadership. To participate, you may need to commit up to three hours of your time over the next 10 to 12 weeks, spread over two or three meetings.

The research entails you telling me about the single biggest challenge you struggle with in your change initiatives. If you could take a few minutes to outline this challenge, it would mean the world to me and most importantly, help generate the information needed to frame my research in change leadership. You can respond to this through survey web page at http://www.leadership-and-change.com/

You can also schedule a brief meeting to discuss your experiences. This could be done telephonically, and would serve as a mutual introduction and to plan going forward. The meeting should not last more than five to ten minutes, but I would stay on as long as needed to plan for understanding your experience.

We can then set another time for a longer conversation, to describe your experiences in depth. After that, we can meet again to ensure that the research matches your understanding. Your input will be merged with others and summarized in a report. I expect to speak with between 10 and 20 people during this project. We can meet a third time to review the summary if you wish. Regardless, you will receive a copy of this report, detailing the broader understanding of the success factors found during the study.

I should reiterate that no participants will be identified in this study. Findings will be structured to protect confidentiality. For questions or comments, you can reach me by email. I welcome and look forward to hearing from you. If, after completing the survey, there are no questions and I do not hear from you, I will call to schedule our introduction.

Sincerely,

Michael E. Moore
Ph. D. Candidate

Appendix B: Introductory Phone Script

First Contact:

Hello, {participant}? My name is Michael Moore. Thanks for your interest in learning more about my study of change management. I'd like to introduce myself and the study and answer any questions you might have. Then, if you are interested in going forward we can set up a time to talk at length. Do you have a few minutes to talk now?

(Yes): Excellent. This conversation should not take more than about 10 minutes and includes planning for a later meeting of up to an hour of your time, to talk in detail about your experiences. Does that sound okay?

(No): That is fine, when would be a more convenient time to call back?

Appendix C: Online Survey

Research Participation Data

The following survey collects basic administrative information needed before entering into an interview about change management. Interview time will be limited, and completing this survey enables sharing this basic information without consuming interview time to gather it.

1. **Your name**

2. **Organization**

3. **Phone Number**

4. **Email**

5. **Business Address**

    Street

    City, State, Zip

    Mail-drop

6. **Best time to contact you**

7. **Describe the change management project that brought you to participate in this research:**

8. Top three goals for the project

1st goal

2nd Goal

3rd Goal

9. **Top three problems that occurred during the project**

First problem

Second problem

Third problem

10. **On Scale, how successful would you rate the project outcome?**

Unsuccessful   **Successful**

Appendix D: Interview Questions

1. Tell me about the change initiative you were responsible for; that prompted you to participate in this study. What was it like; how did you approach it?

RQ1 What behaviors and other practices do internal change leaders seem to exercise, what do they do differently from what external change practitioners suggest, that results in change management success?

2. Talk about the things you did well, what you could have done better, and why?

3. How do you define successful change management, how do you know when you have achieved it?

4. Have you read any professional or academic literature on managing change? Was it useful in your own efforts? Was your experience what you expected after reading their articles/books? What was different?

RQ2 To what do employee change leaders attribute to the high failure rates in change management and how do these leaders show through their lived experiences to avoid them?

5. What words describe change management?

6. Have you ever heard that 70% of change efforts fail? Did that influence your own strategy in managing change?

7. What would it mean to you to fail in a change project; what happens and how is it explained?

RQ3 How, given the extraordinarily high potential for failure, do these leaders continue to exercise change management practices successfully in their organizations?

8. How do you feel about change management in your organization?

9. What practices or behaviors do you see other change leaders exercising to achieve success?

Appendix E: Confidentiality Agreement

{Name of Signer}:

During my data collection activity for the research: "An Exploration of the Causes of Success and Failure of Managed Change" I will have access to information, which may be confidential and should not be disclosed. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential recognizing that improper disclosure of confidential information could damage the participant.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement, I acknowledge and agree that:

1. I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.

2. I will not in any way divulge, copy, release, sell, loan, alter or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized.

3. I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant's name is not used.

4. I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification or purging of confidential information.

5. I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after termination of the job that I will perform.

6. I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications.

7. I will only access or use systems or devices I am officially authorized to access, and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.

Signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement, and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Signature: **Date:**

Participant   **Researcher**

By: _____   by: _____

Title: _____   Title: _____

Dated: _____   Dated: _____