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# Are your change programmes set-up for success?

A wide range of change programmes and centred around answering real time attendee questions,

**The focus  
needs to be  
on People!**

# Introduction

**It is reported that 75% of change programmes fail. So what is it that makes the other 25% succeed?**

**The focus needs to be on People!**

NFP's Director of Organisational Change and HR Services recently lead an exclusive and interactive seminar on all things change. This session addressed a wide range of change programmes and centred around answering real time attendee questions, offering support and advice, and highlighting where NFP might be able to help.

The webinar delved into the current labour market and economy, addressing the impact on organisations and why, if you are not changing, this could have a major long- term impact on you as a business.

With over 30 years of experience in leading major change programmes and working closely with a significant and superb network of people, we share the pitfalls, the changes being navigated, the trends that we are seeing, and the insights you can use to make your change programmes a success, delving into topics such as:

**Restructures**

**Organisational Change**

**Organisational Design**

**TUPE**

**Mergers**

**Acquisitions**

**Redundancies**

**Office moves**

**Hybrid working**



**Steve Foulger**

Director of Organisational Change and HR Services at NFP

- Specialist in all areas of HR and Change.
- Experience in wider remits including looking after Legal, Estates, Facilities, HSE, Security, Catering, Operations etc.
- Playing a Leading role in a wide range of change programmes domestically and further afield.
- Key C-Suite and Non-Executive roles over the last 10 years.

...over 30 years  
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programmes.

# A little about us

**We are people change specialists with over 30 years of experience in delivering successful change programmes.**

As the people and change experts, we are **passionate, pragmatic, flexible and agile**. This is because we love working with organisations to **improve their performance through their people** – and that means working in a way that's bespoke to you, aligned to your culture and sensitive to your objectives and budget.

We are small enough to provide the **personal touch** essential to success, yet also have a track record for handling large scale, difficult projects, with a network of experts that can support you on a **local, national, and international basis**.

Find out more by exploring our organisational change services [here](#).

## What you need to know about change

**So, as we've mentioned, change programmes have one thing in common.... People!**

Get that bit right and you have a high chance of being successful in managing change.

Your people are your biggest variable – and we are all complex in different ways. We can't just turn people on in the morning and hope they produce the same things each day, we need to factor in their requirements in order to be in a strong starting place for success.

Many change topics have dedicated legislation, processes, procedures, approaches, standards, or governing bodies. They are open to interpretation, but **all are intended to focus on people** – i.e. to focus on employees being treated fairly and appropriately.

Take the overarching purpose of why you have to consult when facing into potential redundancies, for instance...

**"To avoid redundancies wherever possible!" It seems counter-intuitive, but that is your benchmark.**

Planning, preparation, and management capability is key. Burying your head in the sand doesn't work, but, going boldly and brazenly into a wide-reaching programme of change, without proper consideration, resource, plans, and support is also doomed to fail.

Don't forget as we said, it's reported that 75% of change programmes fail.

So what can we learn straight away? **Deal with each change as a project in its own right and lead it with a 'people first' mentality.**

But.... What does that actually mean?

This whitepaper will address these topics and offer real, tailored advice on the key things you need to know in order to deliver key change initiatives.

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The session kicked off with some real-life examples of 2 key change programme areas:

## 1 TUPE – time, contingencies, and resource.

Our webinar host, Steve Foulger, shared a story from his own experience, saying, *"TUPE is one of those subjects where we have a lot of things that change in law over a period of time. I remember a situation a few years ago where we were in a position before the legislation changed, where fragmentation or 'shattering' occurred. Shattering means that a role is going to be split up into different parts and go to different businesses – so in other words, there is no TUPE, as was the case originally, and people couldn't move across.*

*That legislation has now changed, and things have moved on in terms of what's feasible and what's not."*

With all change projects, it's incumbent on us all to **think about the things that 'might' happen**, so that we can be prepared for all types of eventualities. Take the last few years as an example, we weren't aware of many of the changes that were coming, and when they did, we needed to act urgently – like with Covid and the UK energy crisis. It's important to be prepared and look at what you can do to be prepared and ready for crisis management, when it becomes BAU.

Examples shared during the webinar of unforeseen circumstances during TUPE include office moves and line manager training.

With office moves, have you considered the journey implications for someone having to move office? One example discussed was where employees would need to move to another site. A 6-mile journey as the crow flies – but the reality of the journey was that people would need to traverse 3 of the biggest junctions in the Midlands. This route meant heavy traffic for many and what sounded like an easy move, was in fact much more complex than originally anticipated, and certainly nothing like a typical 6-mile journey – for some it was an hour and a half.

How about your line managers? Have they been communicated clearly to or trained to manage disruptions, employee disengagement, or uncomfortable conversations relating to TUPE?

Sometimes when something seems simple – it isn't. So don't plan for it to be simple. Plan for the outcome and the process to be simple but assume that there will be issues and bumps along the way. Your plans will need time, contingencies and resource built in for this. If in doubt, consult a change expert who can work alongside you to help you to navigate changes and plan for these unforeseen circumstances. We regularly speak to people after 'they have had a go themselves and this increases cost and loses time and credibility for them. Ask for help early!!

## 2 Restructures – Get the right plans in place up front.

Steve explained, “I was in a quasi-government organisation which had a profit target they weren’t achieving. It was my role to build a plan of how we were going to restructure the business. We had multiple options and ways we could do this and so I built it as a model alongside the finance team, that would ensure we broke even within 12 months. From there we could enter into a new way of working – change management that was successful – and would set the business up to make profit from that point onwards. This plan was signed off. By the time the business broke even, as per the plan, the government changed its mind and made the decision to privatise and break up the business. We ended up in Private Eye.

*Effectively what happened here, is that **something changed**. So even though we had the best laid plans and moved from a loss-making business to a breakeven business, through hard work and diligence we still ended up in Private Eye. This was actually ok. It’s never bad news, when they’re pointing out you did the right thing! Private Eye recognised that we had in fact put the right plans in place to follow.”*

In this example things went right, but it doesn’t always go right and so again, it’s important to be prepared for any eventuality.

It also highlights the fact that **the law and processes can change**. These can be checked as you go, but it’s far more important to **live in the real world** and use initiative without making it too ‘HR’y.’ Remember to **tell people what it really means** and what they need to understand **on a human level**.

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# Question and answer session

This webinar invited its attendees to ask questions before and during the session, relating to change programmes that the host Steve could answer and provide advice on.

## Q1 How is the current market impacting organisational change initiatives?

The truth is, it's a tough market at the moment. There's definitely a recession and we're seeing a lot of businesses saying 'we will do it in Q1 2023' instead – so they were planning to make some changes but have held fire. Who can blame them? Many are in a position where the government and economy have changed so much that you almost want the confidence that things will settle down, then you can comfortably make your decisions against numbers that aren't going to change again. But things are changing all the time and **doing nothing isn't a strategy**. And where we may see leading brands such as HSBC and Joules being affected by the turbulent economy, this will likely have a ripple effect on other businesses, posing the question as to whether they are in fact moving quickly enough, or reacting too late to this change.

There's still plenty of Private Equity activity, but that activity is shifting in its profile and its demands. So people still want to buy businesses, and many are wanting their risk profiles to come down, so they are now looking closely at the management teams to ensure they are performing as required and looking closely at their **Environmental Social and Governance measures (ESGs)** – this is a vital requirement now and for the future.

**Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)** is shifting quickly up the agenda. What we are noticing in those agendas is that you are destined to fail if you are approaching it as a box ticking exercise. What we need to see is change. If you have an issue, know that you have an issue, then make sure you are doing something about it.

Right now businesses are unsure where to spend their money. Budgets are crucial. However, no matter how tight budgets are, **it's important to invest in change now** because the cost of getting it right now is far lower than the cost of getting it wrong multiple times.

To learn more about this, take a look at our blog which addresses the importance of asking for help when it comes to change programmes and why it is we find it so hard to ask for help.

**Read blog - Why do you find it so hard to ask for help?**  
**It's all about you, you, you... - NFP**

## Q2 **How do you see this changing (if at all in 2023) and what would your advice be to companies?**

The best advice is to act now. We will see many more business start to act and in fact we are seeing this already.

It's important that companies understand their point of no return. When are you going to go live and announce? If you aren't ready to go live yet, start the pre work now and get ahead of the game. Work out your minimum viable business that continues to operate. If you know that and what your best-case scenario is – your answer likely lies somewhere in between. If you don't do that, you may find that the minimum viable business is too far above your head, and it may be too late.

When dealing with any change programme you've got to know what it is that you can be doing in the background and under the radar that gets you ready for all kinds of situations. This can include getting help early on – companies like NFP can sign an NDA and work on even the most secretive and sensitive of projects.

The market is different at the moment. I think we will see a rebalancing of the labour market and where we've seen a real power dynamic in the employee space, we should see it rebalance back the other way.

A reminder – don't let this stuff happen to you. Take control because natural wastage is not a strategy. It might be a by-product or beneficial at times by saving you money, but you want to be in control where you can be, with who you retain, who you attract, and how you do things moving forward.

Lean businesses are suffering. How do you cut even further when you have a lean business? You may actually benefit from thinking laterally – investing and not having a recruitment freeze at a time when you feel you should be cutting costs can have long term benefits. That's where restructures become really important because restructures aren't about just cutting numbers, its about moving and shifting things around and where organisational design becomes really important.



### **3 main leadership challenges that every new CEO must come across**

They must efficiently manage their energy.

To productively engage the board and external stakeholders.

To make sure the right info comes to them, the board and external stakeholders.

### Q3 **How can we best support staff who have to leave the organisation due to external business pressures?**

A key way to do this is via outplacement. Outplacement is when you support your people with their onward journey.

**Outplacement is a good investment for the individual**, who will feel like they are getting something valuable from the business and being supported at a time when they need it most. But it is also a **good investment for the business**, because you have done the right thing for your people, which in turn benefits your brand. Not only does outplacement support benefit those exiting the business, but offering this type of support has a knock on effect for those remaining within the business, often referred to as 'survivors.' These people will be impacted by how well you treat their former colleagues, not only in the sense of retaining these people - did my company treat my colleagues fairly? But in the sense that it enables them to manage and reduce what we know to be 'survivor's guilt,' where they may feel guilt at being the ones chosen to remain, over their former colleagues.

Outplacement support also makes a big impact on **wellbeing and mental health**. It may be the support someone needs to help them to manage the emotional journey of redundancy, or even to help them to plan their finances, accordingly, reducing stress and anxiety when entering into the 'unknown' that often comes hand in hand with redundancy.

They could benefit from having a coach, someone that gets them back on track and helps to build their confidence back up. And don't forget about the importance of maintaining relationships whilst they are still in the business. These relationships don't just end the second you announce redundancies, and by having support in place it helps to reinforce these relationships during the process and builds trust.


In our experience and what we focus on as our USP with our clients, is offering an **indefinite outplacement service** that isn't restricted by a time limit. Many other providers offer a service whereby there is a start time and end date, we continue to support people for as long as they require us, whether that support be to find another role, set up a business, or even retire.

If you get this part right, it has a **positive effect on retention and culture**. People will be far more forgiving of redundancies if you've done the right thing by people. What you don't want to do is open the door for people to leave but provide no support.

Just look at P&O Ferries and the impact this has had on their brand for making mass redundancies without following the law. Or how about Twitter and the recent news headlines for how employees have been treated? These brands are still paying the price.

Remember that **values are a crucial thing**. People select companies based on whether their personal values align, not just because of skill sets.

**Ultimately – be human.** Know that you have done everything you can to support your people during a difficult time.

 <b>Outplacement</b>			
Always a crucial investment.	Think survivors.	Think brand.	Think retention.
Think productivity.	Think mental health.	<b>... Be human</b>	

## Q4 How does maternity leave work in the UK? How does the process work?

On the surface this is not an organisational change question ... but it could be!

Steve explained, "We had a Canadian client who approached us to ask how maternity worked in the UK. What began as a query, quickly highlighted that they were out of their comfort zone and with a number of employees in the UK, they needed a UK HR support specialist in place to help them in this area.

In doing this, a cultural gap was highlighted. They understood that in the UK there was a requirement to undergo an HSE risk assessment, for all who were on maternity/ or were going on maternity. We undertook this assessment and then took a look into other things that they may potentially not be doing. It turned out that the risk assessment was done really late in the day after finding out from the employee that this was a requirement. We investigated further and found that they were unaware of some critical parts of the process, such as the Mat B 1 form (a vital form that protects your business and employee, detailing what you are entitled to from the NHS and information you need to know to ensure you are supporting individuals correctly), and policies relevant to the UK."

Ultimately the Canadian market is very different to the UK market. The Canadian market was an 'insured model' with staff being insured during maternity. This isn't the case or a requirement in the UK.

Working with them enabled us to **uncover a gap in knowledge**, or as it we sometimes call it 'out of time zone, out of comfort zone.' This meant that we were able to implement the right policies and procedures, and effectively act as a dedicated support and extension of their team. This in turn improved the culture of their UK businesses, with individuals feeling supported and reassured.

This is an example of organisational change. Essentially, **organisational change is moving from the 'as is'** (where we are now), **to the 'to be'** stage (where would you like to get to). The change journey is the stages in between.

Our role as change specialists is to help our clients to uncover the 'as is', define the 'to be' and physically deliver the transformation journey. We help you to prepare for the unexpected, manage the challenges and get to the crux of the issue – in this case, is it maternity or shared parental leave? Have you prepared for sickness during maternity? How do you best manage these scenarios? Are your existing policies fit for purpose?

Having dedicated support in place that understands your business, culture, goals, and has knowledge of the local law is key.

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# Some key lessons to take away...



## There are experts in place to help you

Like football, we all think we can pick the team or do better than referee. With organisational change be aware that you may be in a position where someone may know more than you about a particular topic. There are experts in place who can provide the right support for your people, help guide you and ensure that you are doing the right thing.



## Don't force the situation

Think about change as an opportunity to get out a blank piece of paper. With restructures for example, rather than looking at it as where you are going to place each person, Stop. Remove names and focus on roles and what is right for the business. Then after work out if any names match this. By doing this, you will be more able to more easily justify your rationale for any proposals put forward into consultation. Remember that getting a proposal up front is crucial, as without this, you've got nothing to consult on. And with any proposal, be prepared for it to change – don't go in thinking or planning for what will happen. Forcing a situation is when things will go wrong. Focus on the commercials, focus on the business, and put your people first.



## Try to adopt a people first mentality

'People first.' Often when it comes to change, many businesses will say, 'we've got all of these priorities...' The definition of 'priority' means 'number 1,' and so when it comes to prioritisation, you either have a priority or you don't. If your aim is to put your people first, then they need to be the first thing that you focus on and then the rest falls into place. Doing this will show that you are being authentic, it will make sure you look after the previously mentioned 'survivors,' that others in the business feel looked after, and that you have a healthy business going forward.



## Have that focus on projects

If you look at legislation and required processes, these are quite clearly laid out from the start. This means that it is often quite easy to put a project template across the top of these. Your project, however, will not remain fixed. In fact, we can almost guarantee you that things will come up that will change – particularly when you're in consultation, or even during TUPE. Make sure you are building in that contingency and thinking plan to deal with issues as they arise and as things change. Calling on the help of experts will help you to pre-empt these curve balls and navigate them when they land.



## Culture eats strategy for breakfast!

All of these things we are talking about are cultural. They are 'what are the right things to do for your business' and it's certainly what determines the 'to be.' So, some of the things we like to encourage people to do is:

- Do the right thing when no one is watching.
- Invest in your leavers.
- Remember maternity is different in other countries – get international partners when you need to.
- Plan now for changes that are coming.
- Identify your point of no return and really focus on what else you can be doing to get ready.



# How we can help

If you are in the process of undergoing change but need some support, or are planning for future change, our team of experienced consultants can partner with you to deliver the full range of organisational change and organisational design support.

 **peopleandtalent@nfp.co.uk**

 **+44 (0)1491 414010**

 **[nfp.co.uk/organisational-change](https://nfp.co.uk/organisational-change)**