

# **Change Management**

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**ISBN:** 978-81-314-1483-5

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*Visualiser and Designer:* C. Chinna Mabu

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## P R E L U D E

Hardly does anything around you remain unchanged – including yourself. Every moment is the loss of the previous moment and emergence of the next one. Why not? Hadn't we thought of changing over to something better, we would still be clamoring with the chimps. And it is strongly proven that we are evolutionarily wired to change. That too, not just for ourselves, but also for the greater good of the humankind. Individuals and the institutions they make have evolved over time; in fact, all the time. A minor change anywhere in the world of business can trigger a major change in the way the whole enterprise or even the industry thinks. Hadn't Toyota not invented its obsession with "continuous improvement", somebody else would have. That's the need and seed for change.

**"A minor change anywhere in the world of business can trigger a major change in the way the whole enterprise or even the industry thinks."**

Companies, like countries and individuals, go through the process of change. For some, it's intended metamorphosis. For many, it's sheer desperation. Even when it is intended, not every company achieves the desired results. The prime suspect in all such cases is execution. You would hardly find Louis Gerstners (at IBM), Carlos Ghosns (at Nissan Motors), Mike Hurd (at HP) or Jack Welch (at GE). And these people were exceptionally deft at that. Of course, no two transformations were alike. However, when probed deeper, exemplary commonalities would emerge. For one thing, they looked at both, as Sumanthra Ghoshal said, sweet and sour. And that in itself is a chiselled skill.

Many companies adopt change out of desperation. The going is getting tougher. They have not read the signals. They have miscued some of the triggers. And as Sumanthra Ghoshal observed, they go through the valley of death. It's now or never for them. They are whiskers away from bankruptcy. Some of these "caterpillars" become "butterflies". And to pull them off from such a catastrophe, you need leaders who are focused. Just the way Paul Levy did at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC) or Cyrus Freidheim at Chiquita Brands



International or Lee Iacocca at Chrysler. Who else is better than the highly accomplished Michael Beer, Michael A. Roberto and Michael Hammer to engage our readers on this topic along with other illustrious contributors?

Would you not appreciate and applaud when you see a “phenomenal” change? But, change is not all that simple to come by. Until the whole workforce has enough faith in the urgency for change, not a stone gets moved. Besides, the whole organisation becomes frozen. If change is inevitable, it must also stop somewhere – so that new changes that keep up with the times can sneak into the company. But some companies are martyred for the sake of change. Others martyr change for the sake of the company. Because it’s not terribly easy to decide whether the change is really needed or not. And that’s where quality leadership makes all the difference.