

'Change is the new usual and it's not going to go away'

Organisational change has become a constant in today's workplace, so HR professionals need to learn to embrace it



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It's no longer a matter of thinking "if we can just get through this period of x", it will all be ok, and we will go back to life as usual.

Indeed, "change is the new usual and it's not going to go away", according to Tammy Tansley, director Tammy Tansley Leadership & Workplace Culture.

"The concept of 'managing' change brings to mind visuals like an animal trainer trying to tame a feisty lion or tiger," Tansley told HRD.

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"But as HR professionals, we need to do more than just "manage" it- we need to use it as an enabler for our organisations to grow and thrive.

"Rather than thinking of it as something which we need to control, we need to embrace it, and use it as a competitive advantage."

Tansley said that HR professionals have access to more information than ever on what makes for a successful change.

"It's critical that we do change our way of thinking around success, as change initiatives are still not delivering."

Indeed, research from 2018 from McKinsey found that transformations are still not delivering on their value. The research cites a 74% failure rate which is "pretty damning", according to Tansley.

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"It still stuns me that we know this about change effectiveness (and have for a good few decades), and yet we think that our organisation will be the exception to the rule," she said.

"It may well be, but only with change built in as a fundamental part of an organisation's DNA – not as a bolt on at the end of a project."

Tansley said it's important to consider the number of times a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) or other system has been hailed as "successfully implemented" only to find that there are still employees using excel spreadsheets rather than the new system.

"A nice way to think about this is: project management gets stuff done, change management gets things adopted. A shiny new system is useless if people don't use it," said Tansley.

She offers the example of the Sydney Cross City Tunnel was an astounding success from a project management perspective- it was ahead of time and unbelievably, under budget.

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"And yet, it is widely considered to be a failure – because the public even years later, didn't use it. People went out of their way, taking routes that took longer or cost more because of the perception of the way that the change was managed and how it was foisted upon them."

Tansley will be speaking at the upcoming [HR Summit in Perth](#) on the topic of 'Managing constant change in your organisation'.

She said events like this are useful for challenging thinking and the status quo. They should provide us with alternative ways of thinking about a topic.

"They should spark interest and creativity – and allow us to return to our day jobs with a fresh perspective and a potentially different way of doing things," said Tansley.

Tansley added that it's important to share both what has worked, and what hasn't.

"The second part is important, as we often are keen to share the successes, but we know we learn as much, if not more, from our failures. Being open to unpicking why something failed can be so very powerful."

Tammy Tansley is a leadership and workplace culture expert. She runs a coaching and consulting business. She will be speaking at the upcoming [HR Summit in Perth](#).

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