

Leading Organizational Change in a Divided World

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Note: Marcia spoke at the 6th Annual Assessing & Developing Potential & Performance Summit in Chicago on this topic

If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner. Nelson Mandela



“New People to New Groups” by
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Effective leadership across an organization is the key differentiator to maintaining competitive advantage and organizational performance. Creating organization culture that supports ease in communication, dealing with conflict, collaboration and mutual respect establishes success for the organization and loyalty from leaders and their staff. Yet, creating a cohesive culture is harder now than ever given that our 24/7 news cycle and polarized politicians seem to be scaring everyone to one side or the other of value-laden issues.

Organizational culture is impacted by society’s brewing fear and discord.

Today’s leaders are challenged when members of their workforce view change and tasks from very different lenses resulting in increasing fear and discord.

Leaders who have grappled with these challenges include Abraham Lincoln, Angela Merkel, Nelson Mandela and Sheryl Sandberg. Every leader faces cultural challenges, these four leaders demonstrate the strategies that differentiate those who can surmount cultural hurdles and build engagement thus preventing the organization from sinking into divisiveness. Success requires building emotional intelligence, managing change and influencing in a manner that creates a sustainable environment where people can and will communicate and build bridges.

Four strategies that differentiate successful leaders are:

1. Intentional & Positive Strategy
2. Accountability
3. Common Language – Unified and Integrated Use of Assessments
4. Inspiring Purpose

Intentional and positive strategies call for evaluating your organizations state with honesty and clarity. What’s really going on? What are the first level staffers, seeing, feeling and



hearing? State your intention to the workforce to pay attention and continue to build a positive and engaging workplace. A positive outlook opens new neuronal pathways so unexplored opportunities become available. With hope, new energy and creativity is invited. Keep your eye on the ball and on any initiatives. Show the staff this is a reliable change, not a flickering thought that will be gone by next week.

Accountability to the change at all levels of the organization is essential. This is often the most forgotten step, perhaps because it can be uncomfortable to hold people accountable. Ignore it at your peril! You and your change will be tested multiple times. It's key to notice and respond to those challenges to show you mean business.

Common Language follows from a unified and integrated use of assessments. When leaders and employees are using development and engagement language in a common way, there's tremendous power to calibrate workplace engagement. This language comes from trainings and from the assessments used. We suggest you carefully chose the assessments to be applied in your organization and then intentionally work to build language that's used in common. Assessments to consider include:

- Personality – such as MBTI or Emergenetics and consider topic specific personality assessments such as the *Change Style Indicator* and the *Influence Style Indicator*.
- Skills – in terms of managing yourself and responding effectively to others, there's no substitute for the [EQi 2.0!](#)
- 360 for leaders. To build personal and interpersonal awareness and expanding skills the [EQ 360](#) is powerful. Other good assessments include CCL's Benchmarks. Additional specific value can be gained from more targeted 360s such as the Discovery Leadership Profile and the Emerging Leaders Profile.
- Change - the [Change Style Indicator](#), CSI, serves organizations powerfully by helping people understand their personality differences in how they respond to change and then being able to adjust their approach and expectations realistically.
- Influence – the [Influence Style Indicator](#) guides users in how to leverage influence.

CHANGE STYLE PREFERENCE		
CONSERVERS	PRAGMATISTS	ORIGINATORS
Accept the structure	Explore the structure	Challenge the structure
Prefer change that is incremental	Prefer change that is functional	Prefer change that is expansive

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The [Change Style Indicator](#) focuses on the emotions of individuals as they navigate change and the stages of transition. It's a powerful way for a team to take their pulse and understand how they're doing individually and together. Different emotional responses show-up when **Resisting** change and to emotions that lead to **Resilience**.



Emotions that lead to Resistance	Emotions that lead to Resilience
Anxiety	Purpose
Confusion	Enthusiasm
Frustration	Optimism
Fatigue	Confidence

Source: McKinsey Quarterly

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Inspiring Purpose is supported by giving super respect to all involved in your organization. Super-respect introduces new awareness and connectivity.

Successful leaders will use their skills to understand the diversity of their workforce and how to approach change and influence their staff and co-workers. Then they will apply emotional intelligence skills to accomplish the desired behavioral change.