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# myths BUSTED

## PATH TO PROGRESS

Dean Lindsay, author of *Creating Progress In a World of Change*, dispels the myth of change management. He is also a keynote speaker and author of *How to Achieve Big PHAT Goals*.

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leaders should focus on  
change management

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## 01 leaders should focus on change management

The business term change management has been around for a good long while. The term relates to initiating significant change within an organization's processes. This change can include anything from altering work culture to embracing diversity to modifying an individual's work tasks to increasing company morale and loyalty. The goal of initiating significant change is solid, but where is the passion in the word choice?

The problem with the term change management is that no one really desires to change or plans to change. We desire and plan to progress. We do not want managers to manage our change. We want leaders to lead our progress. Let us call initiating significant change what it truly is (or should be): progress leadership.

## 02 it is good to be a change agent

It takes more than the title of supervisor, manager, or 'change agent' to lead people in the direction of progress. We all want to be in relationships with people, as well as partner with organizations that bring progress to our lives. Without personal commitment to execute, new organizational plans and initiatives often fail. Execution is assured by establishing clear links between operations, strategy, and team members.

I have come to believe that everything humans do is done because we believe, consciously, or more often subconsciously, that the projected consequences of those actions will be us feeling the right unique mixture of six core feelings, feelings now known as Lindsay's Six Ps of Progress:

Peace of Mind

Pleasure

Profit

Prestige

Pain Avoidance

Power

The people we desire to inspire to action (lead, do business with, etc) must believe that our ideas, our products, our services, our leadership, and our initiatives will help them to move forward. Solid trust must be in

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place before we can even hope others will choose to alter their lives to include us. We must be seen as catalysts in others' progress, agents in their progress. We must be 'progress agents' not change agents.

In a time of continual transformation, committed leaders—progress agents—should focus on inspiring the progress, not apologizing for the change. Progress agents do not just tell people what to do. They include others in the progress as well as the process. It is reasons that shape, nourish, and sustain the thoughts that create the actions necessary to reach desired results.

Companies are most successful at initiating significant change when the reasons to act connect personally with the individual employees making the alteration in behavior. If the reasons do not connect with the individual, then the planned progress will be viewed as merely change and will be resisted or at least not acted on. Team members may still physically clock in but have often mentally checked out.

## 03 it is bad to be influenced

Progress Agents work to positively influence thoughts and feelings as well as oversee actions. We live in a world of influence. We are influenced to purchase this, to believe that, to participate in this activity, to attend that event.

This is not a bad thing. Most often it is good. Our parents influenced our decision not to play with fire. Our best friend influenced our decision not to wear corduroy. Ever turned a friend on to a restaurant? You influenced your friend. Ever go to a movie because a friend said it was good? That friend influenced you.

Dale Carnegie wrote his classic *How to Win Friends and Influence People* way back in 1936, and its wisdom is no

less true and vibrantly powerful today. The book is packed with insight on leading and building strong relationships by lifting people up, making them feel good, and ‘spurring people on to success.’

Wisely, the book is not called *How to Lift People Up and Make Them Feel Good* or *How to Spur People on to Success*. No, Carnegie’s classic is appropriately titled: *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. And who is doing the winning? It is you and me, along with the person being lifted up, made to feel good, and spurred on to success (read: influenced and led).

In his book, Carnegie encourages us to: talk in terms of the other person’s interests, respect others’ opinions, try honestly to see things from the other person’s point of view, and try to make the other person happy about doing the things you suggest. In other words, genuinely care about people and their feelings.

But Carnegie’s classic does not only encourage us to take these actions for the benefit of the people we are respecting and ‘making happy’. The book does not even make the argument that it is even morally right to care about people’s feelings (although I am sure Carnegie would agree that it is). No, the book simply makes the clear case that caring about others’ feelings is good for the person (or company) who cares.

#### 04 businesses have sides

Intense focus on feelings in a time of transformation is often described as the human side of change management. This always gives me pause.



The ‘human side’ of business—what other side is there? Some might say the company side. So, the company and the humans are on different sides?

That is the problem right there. Companies are formed by people (humans) partnering to get their wants and needs met by helping other people (humans) get their wants and needs met. Leaders who do not take the individual into account and do not plan for the human side of progress often find themselves scratching their heads about where their plans went wrong.

Progress leadership means striving to help others find meaning in their work. Progress leadership means working to understand and communicate how a team member’s personal goals can dovetail with the organization’s goals and thus create true commitment that gets the team member to act—because she wants to, not because they have to.

#### 05 bigger is better

Just because a company is getting bigger does not mean it is progressing. A serious challenge for companies large and small is to progress, and not just change. Moving our focus from change management to progress leadership creates a shift in power from wielding power over employees to creating power among employees. Progress Agents thus create a work culture in which empowered employees are committed to finding what is truly the next step forward. ■

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