This morning we complete the final three stages of the change management process. And you may be thinking 'finally'. There's definitely a downside to dragging t out over a whole term. But in one sense that's representative of the change process. It takes longer and requires more thought than perhaps we'd like!

We're going to be thinking about maintaining the momentum of change, building on the change and then embedding the change into the churches culture.

I'll describe what happens at each stage before finally summarising the entire process of change management to conclude.

I want to reiterate what I've said before. This is absolutely critical for your leadership. At its essence, Christian leadership is change management. We are in the change business. We do not want to leave everything unchanged. We want to see things being done differently. And the process outlines here articulates a way of ensuring that we avoid pitfalls and build a credible case and plan for doing things differently.

Under each of the three categories, I simply want to clarify

- What we are talking about
- Why it matters
- And what part we play

1. Remove momentum killers

The issue that we need to address at this stage is that of removing obstacles to progress. These momentum killers are unpredictably predictable in that you know they're going to happen, but you won't know what precise form they'll take. You just need to respond swiftly and sensibly when they reveal themselves.

What we're talking about are the momentum killers that cause people to question whether things are in fact any better with the new ways of doing things and whether it might be worth going back to the old ways of doing things.

The obstacles can typically be caused by one of the three Ps

They can be **people** – the principal deliverers of change. We are not saying that people necessarily are the problem, and they need to be removed. It may be that. But it's more likely that they lack the understanding or the ability to make the change work as effectively as it should.

They can be **processes** – systems that have been established.

They can be **practices** – ways of doing things. We may need to look at the methods that we've adopted and work out whether they're incompatible and causing problems.

Essentially, we're talking about anything that stops things from running smoothly. Identify them and remove them. And so, as leaders, and together with others, we need to analyse what's going wrong and then do something about it.

The enemy we're trying to defeat at this point is the negativity that comes from something not working as well as you'd hoped it would.

Your role in this stage is to analyse what's going on and to be relentless in your identification and eradication of momentum killers.

2. Make mid-flight adjustments

By the time the change has been implemented, you're well on your way to getting what you wanted to happen to happen. But the danger at this point is to take our eye off the ball or the foot off the gas. The trouble is that we're not done yet. The change isn't permanent. You're on your way, but you're not there yet.

If we get distracted and move on to whatever is next on your 'to do' list, you run the risk of not cementing the change. And so, this is the time to build on the change that you've made and make it better. Keep refining it. Trim it like a sailor would a sail so that the change is that bit better than it was before. You're not talking about wholesale change, you're talking about minor adjustments.

And so, there'll always be the need for mid flight adjustments.

The enemy at his point is the attraction of 'what's next?' If you have a small attention span, this is your danger. If you're not a completer finisher, the warning signs are for you!

Your role in this stage is to focus on tweaking the system not so that you start over but that you find ways to make what you've done stick and to make it even better.

3. Pursue permanent change

This is the point at which the proposed change goes from being something that is associated with your leadership to something that is inseparable from church culture. It's the point at which the church accepts that this is the way we do things around here.

Your role in this stage is to provide the energy. It's going to take patience and persistence to bring about the change for which you've planned. And so, during the time it takes for the

change to become permanent because it's embedded in your culture, you need to patiently persist.

Summary

Let me recap, for the sake of completeness. And to give you a birds' eye view of what we've been thinking about.

1. Creating urgency or rather **building the case for change**. Because we're not inventing something that isn't there or exaggerating something that is, we're pointing out the potentially damaging consequences of leaving something unaddressed. It's diabetes and heart attacks. This is the reason to accept the possibility that there may be value in doing something differently.

2. Gathering allies or rather **winning hearts and minds**. Because we're not trying to win a popularity contest or embed division within a divided congregation, we're trying to build the momentum for change.

3. Developing a vision for change or rather **describing a better way**, which is not telling people what your proposed plan is to make the whole thing better, it's trying to describe what a preferred future might look like.

4. This fourth stage is about turning this vision into a plan of action, or rather **coming up with a strategy** to take us from where we are to where we need to be. It's about reverse engineering the situation and saying what we're actually going to do to get there.

5. Go Public and Implement. This is all about communication and talking about what's happening in relation to where you're going. I likened it to providing a running commentary on the process of change and making sure that no one loses sight of the fact that every step forward is a step closer to the finish line.

6. Ensure Easy Wins. Here we address the motivation issue. It's hard to get something going. And then there's that difficult bit when you can't see where you've come from, and you can't quite see where you're going and the morale seeps. And so, there need to be some highly visible, very tangible benefits to the change project.

7. Remove Obstacles. Identification and eradication of the momentum killers that suck the life out of morale.

8. Build on the Change. Keep adding to the change with minor changes. Make the in-flight adjustments to make sure that you're going where you want to do as quickly as possible.

9. Embed the Change into the Culture. Get to such a point that you can exit stage left and the church carries on doing things the way that you want them to do it.

Conclusion

If you wanted to rehearse this material at some point, I can recommend three things

1. Craig Hamilton's material
2. John Kotter's book 'Our Iceberg is Melting'
3. The recorded version of these talks available through Andy – though I should warn you that I have leant heavily and borrowed generously from the previous two sources!