CHANGE MANAGEMENT: AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH

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Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, February 2008
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Acknowledgements

Many people have provided high levels of support and guidance as I embarked and developed through this research programme. I have, it is clear, changed as a result of engaging in the process of Action Learning and this has resulted in some difficulties for those closest to me – for that I acknowledge your love and support and thank you. You have enabled me to carry on through difficult times and to enjoy the good times and for that I am eternally grateful.

Action Learning is a powerful and engaging learning process and this is made possible through the dedication, openness and commitment of the Set. I was fortunate to work in three Sets as I completed this research and without the challenge of my Set colleagues, the guidance of my Set advisors, and the expertise of my Supervisors, the work would have been much weaker, and my development much less. Thank you all.

Finally, I would like to thank my father. He died during my research and would have thoroughly enjoyed reading this thesis and seeing how I have developed. He taught me so much about life, even in his death. Especially to you, thank you.
Declaration

This thesis contains a journal article entitled *The Five Dimensions of Change: an integrated approach to strategic organisational change management*, which was co-authored by Paul Victor and Anton Franckeiss and published in the Journal of Strategic Change, January 2002. The primary author was Paul Victor and the article describes the Five Dimensions of Change model that was developed as part of this research programme.

This is the only element of shared authorship in the thesis, the remainder being entirely the work of Paul Victor.
Abstract

This thesis explores the nature of organisational change and proposes that the majority of change programmes are unsuccessful due to their interventionist orientation. The inherent complexity of organisational change is such that the change needs to be understood from a range of perspectives and that many factors need to be fully integrated if the change is to be managed effectively.

The original proposition was a vertically integrated methodology called the Five Dimensions of Change that stratified and integrated organisational activity from strategic planning to operational processes. This was fundamentally a prescriptive and positivistic model of change management, that was subsequently developed into a more interpretive, question-based approach called the Six Dimensions of Change, which included a focus on the person-centred and socio-cultural aspects of an organisation and proposed a more integrated and generative methodology.

This approach was further refined to encompass the critical learning of the author that a change agent must take full cognisance of the personal and symbiotic relationship they have with the change programme. This holistically integrative methodology is explored through the use of the DNA helix, representing the importance of direction, task focus, people focus and the nature of engagement of the change agent.

Three case studies explore the development and refinement of the methodology and these are explored from three perspectives: researcher, change agent and
learner, thus providing epistemological relativism and ensuring that the essential elements of action, learning and research were the focus of the work.

Action Learning was central to the development, and critically to the refinement, of the integrative methodology and this is documented within the thesis, as is the personal and professional development of the author. Action Learning Sets provided opportunity for constant challenge and critical evaluation of the work and resulted in a significant personal exploration of the manner in which the author as a change agent interacts and engages with a change programme.
Chapter One

Introduction

This thesis explores my experiences as a change agent, both in-house and as a consultant, over a five-year period. It charts the development and application of my approaches to change management in a variety of organisational contexts and proposes that effective change management needs to be integrative. The thesis captures my learning throughout the period through a blend of case study, reflections and narrative.

The thesis is intended to contribute to the body of knowledge through the exploration and examination of my experiences as a change agent engaged in the action learning process. It is, then, by definition, a very personal account of my development; an account that will, I firmly believe, be of use to other change practitioners. The thesis explores how my views and understanding of change developed through time – from the development of a 'blueprint' approach to change management through to the conclusion that effective management of change is a function of the questions we ask and the understanding we seek, as opposed to simply the application of prior experience and knowledge. The contribution then is at two levels – the narrative and evaluation of my emergent understanding of change management, and the narrative and evaluation of my own personal contribution to change. Each of these contains transferable learning that will be of value to practitioners and action learners alike.
When I started the research I intended to provide a model or approach to managing organisational change that had a universal application and which would contribute to the development of managerial practice in this field. It would, had I followed my early intentions, been an objective analysis of the field of change management, culminating in a defined model which would guide practitioners through the management of a change programme, and, in all likelihood, the only mention of me would have been my name on the front cover of the thesis.

That I proposed such an approach is testament to the fact that I knew very little about action learning, and that the thesis is now fundamentally different from my initial intentions, is itself testament to the learning and development that I have gained through my research period. The thesis, then, is a narrative account of my development as a change practitioner and of my increasing immersion into, and understanding of, my own learning. It describes the approach that I took and how this approach was modified and adjusted through my engagement in the action learning process, and documents how my view changed significantly through the research and the writing up phases of my work.

My personal experiences of change are that many organisations implement change programmes or activities in response to a pressing or perceived business issue, whilst many business leaders institute change programmes as a means of establishing or enhancing their personal reputation as a leader capable of initiating change. Having recognised through the years that such approaches are rarely sustainable through time, and seldom deliver the full benefits declared at the outset, I have sought, through this research, to propose a change management methodology that is integrative and sustainable, whilst at the same
time being sufficiently flexible as to suit different contexts and circumstances, without being formulaic and restrictive.

My early thinking about change and how it is typically managed within organisations was that it needed to be integrated within a business in terms of full and comprehensive alignment with the business strategy and the operating plan. Through additional research and reflection I came to conclude that whilst this level of integration provides a more effective approach to change management, it still misses a fundamentally important element of organisational change – the people. Integrative change then, for me, means fully considering the business context, strategy, people and culture in the creation, implementation, and evaluation of change programmes.

I am fully of the opinion that this enhanced level of integration will deliver a more effective change management approach within organisations. It will, I know, challenge contemporary practice, which draws heavily on the scientific paradigm [Griffin, Shaw & Stacey, 2006] to ensure objectivity, and, through this challenge will help to develop a wider, more interpretive understanding of change management. This deeper understanding will, I hope, lead to an approach that retains structure and rational thinking whilst at the same time including a search for the understanding of change from human, social and cultural perspectives. In this way we can seek to understand not just the facts that are generally observable and agreed but also the individual and collective interpretive perspectives about change so that we may use these to further our understanding of the nature of organisational change, and of the manner in which it can be more effectively designed and implemented to deliver sustainable benefits.
This thesis, then, will provide managers involved in organisational change with a new perspective and a new approach that will contribute positively to organisational practice. The thesis also makes a contribution to learning as it deepens our understanding of change management from both research and practitioner perspectives, and, because of the action learning approach used throughout the research, it deepens our knowledge and understanding of the impact of engaging in organisational change from the perspective of myself as a learner engaged, or more pertinently, immersed in the process. The thesis moves beyond what Bourner (2002) refers to as 'objective knowledge' for I found that "action learning provides for the generation of knowledge about the learner" (p.12).

It is, therefore, a very personal account as I have learnt, through the process of research, that truly effective research involves and engages the researcher as a participant. This is fundamentally different to my prior experience of research, which had followed more logical, and impartially analytical modes of enquiry. Indeed my first forays into action learning were deeply frustrating as my experiences were fundamentally different from my expectations of research and were counter-intuitive to what I determined to be my inherently logical working patterns and approaches.

This was difficult to come to terms with at the start of my research because I had, I believed, a good idea of what action learning was and how I might use this approach to further my studies into organisational change. This understanding came from the MSc I completed several years previously in Training and Development, and I came to realise, through my action learning research, that
there is a significant difference between an academic understanding of action
learning and the practical application. It was, very clearly, the distinction Revans
(1987) makes between programmed learning (P) and questioning insight (Q). I
understood, to a degree, the notion of action learning but without the experience I
could never understand the nature. I knew of the theory but had no knowledge or
experience of the practice. This was, in itself, a vitally important piece of learning –
we need to engage and experience if we are to fully understand and learn – and
this is derived through Q; it cannot, in my experience, be acquired solely through P.

My early experience of engaging in Action Learning was quite frustrating and
problematic as I came to realise that it was a methodology that created questions
rather than answers when my whole educational and organisational experience to
date had been focussed on finding answers to problems. My education, both
academically and occupationally, had been analytically results- oriented and
implicitly based upon the premise that there was an answer to every question
asked. Through time I came to realise that this solipsistic approach was both
limiting and unhelpful.

Indeed as I explored action learning fully through research, reading and
engagement in action learning practice I came to the conclusion that this different
philosophical approach was helping greatly to extend my understanding of my
practice and change management consultancy, in a way that was more powerful
and far-reaching than the acquisition of concrete knowledge that I had focussed on
previously. I came to realise that action learning was, in fact, helping me to find
answers but that it did so in a way that was philosophical rather than scientific – I
was now dealing with a problem and trying to find a route through rather than
trying to logically solve a puzzle. In that sense there were sometimes many
answers and sometimes no answers. My education had taught me to solve puzzles, and I had previously applied the same methodology to solving problems – I was now learning that the puzzles and problems were different from an epistemological perspective, and that my approach therefore needed amending. Solving a puzzle essentially required knowledge of the puzzle or a similar puzzle or at least similar elements so that the answer can be logically derived, whereas solving a problem required questions to be asked so that the full context and circumstances can be understood and appropriate answers developed – there being a strong likelihood that more than one answer exists. At the same time I was moving from Kolb’s (1994) structured learning cycle that was ‘implicitly positivistic’ to a different ontological approach as described by the action-consequences cycle, (Burgoyne 2001).

As a change practitioner developing and implementing change programmes, I had always sought out the logical and rational response to change and addressed it as a puzzle which had an answer, rather than as a problem which had potentially many answers. Intellectually and ontologically I was now faced with a fundamentally different proposition. I was, for perhaps the first time, openly and consciously fully engaging at a philosophical level with my work.

Russell (1946) identifies that philosophy is “intermediate between theology and science. Like theology, it consists of speculations on matters as to which definite knowledge has, so far, been unascertainable; but like science, it appeals to human reason rather than to authority, whether that of tradition or that of revelation. All definite knowledge – so I should contend – belongs to science; all dogma as to what surpasses definite knowledge belongs to theology. But between theology and science there is ... philosophy.” (p.13).
The pull of the scientific paradigm is strong and seductive – the satisfying feeling of solving a puzzle is rewarding, and our experiences, both academic and organisational, lead us to seek this out. We have a tendency, enhanced by traditional academic teaching, to see the world as a myriad of puzzles, each with answers, and find it frustrating when encountering problems that are not so easily and logically dealt with. I know for sure that I understood the value of learning to provide known answers to questions raised through educational and occupational experiences, and it served me well through time. Unfortunately, it had a parallel, unnoticed, tendency to close my mind to questioning insight once the answer had been reached; the puzzle solved. I recall many discussions in Set meetings when I very purposefully said, in response to a question from a colleague, that there were ‘x reasons’ why a particular thing happened, only to be immediately challenged by the Set Advisor who would ask “how do you know there are only x reasons?”

In this way they were gently guiding me away from a strict reliance on the assumption that my prior experience and knowledge about a topic enabled me to take an expert position on a question and provide my known answer, to an understanding that I needed to seek a broader, more philosophical understanding of the issues. In essence, ‘learning is about recognising not what we know, but what we don’t know’ (Levy 2000). Gradually I learnt that I had a tendency to limit my knowledge by my past experience, and that I needed to engage in the questioning and discussion process with my Set colleagues, and with colleagues at work, to more fully understand different perspectives, different interpretations, different answers, and indeed different ways of understanding.
Unfortunately this was a double jeopardy – firstly I no longer had the satisfying feeling of ‘knowing’ the answer, and secondly I had the frustration of understanding that I didn’t, and possibly couldn’t, know the answer. This had the combined effect of making me want to hang on to my previous learning modus operandi – for therein lies safety; the safety of knowledge.

Through time, however, I came to enjoy taking a more philosophical and questioning position on issues, and this thesis is perhaps the best example of how I have sought to ask questions to develop knowledge, rather than assume a definite body of knowledge. Notwithstanding this enhanced level of understanding, I still feel the pull of my past practice and this too is evidenced throughout the thesis.

Reflection, reading, and debates within the Learning Sets have enabled me to realise that the action learning approaches did not, in reality, conflict with my typical approaches to work and research in that one was right and the other wrong; rather action learning, in a very practical sense, was simply different to my previous experiences of learning. Concluding that there needs to be no judgemental value ascribed to this difference was a fundamentally important learning point in itself, and enabled me to take full advantage of the action learning process. It meant that I was free to engage in learning rather than be constrained by the need to observe any particular research protocols – I could participate fully in my research without judging whether this was better or worse than previous approaches because the comparison was unnecessary. This left me free to fully explore both the context and content of the learning I was engaged in; to seek meaning and understanding, not just knowledge; to deal with my work on an interpretive rather than mechanistic and reductionist basis.
Change management is fundamentally about organisations and about people and therefore, it is about complexity. Through using an Action Learning approach I have been able to extend my understanding of this complexity within real-life change situations. In order to do this I have needed to engage with the situations and to engage with my own learning – a factor clearly missing from traditional, objective and scientific research programmes. At the end of this thesis I can honestly ask, “As an integral element of the research, how could I not include myself in the learning process?” yet at the start nothing was further from my mind. It is testament to the power of the Action Learning Set that I have been able to not only make this transition, but also to understand and welcome it as being fundamentally central to my research and to my development. As Heron (1981) identifies, an inquiry has little validity unless it is rooted in the experiential knowledge of those actually involved; a valid interpretation involves knowing with as well as knowing about.

The approach that I have taken meets the three essential characteristics of action learning (Morris 1994], in that the action being taken was “a real challenge, needing hard work in decision making and implementation...it required thoughtful questioning, and full consideration of alternatives... it was conducted with the support of a Learning Set” (p.524).

The ‘real challenge’ was different to my initial expectations – I originally considered the challenge to be distant from me and centred on the development of effective change strategies, and came through time to the conclusion that the real challenge was very much focussed on me and the way in which I engaged with my practice, and with colleagues. The challenge was to move from the comfortable position of ‘expert’ to the uncomfortable, but nevertheless immensely rewarding
position of learner. Engaged in what Revans (1983) terms the ‘... paradox – that the learning dynamic is the recognition of a common ignorance rather than of some collective superfluity of tradeable knowledge’ (p.5). This shift in philosophical approach has been a genuinely difficult process and has enabled me to develop my change consultancy practice in ways that would hitherto have been exceptionally difficult, if not impossible. As a self-perceived expert I would have traded on my existing knowledge which had serious limitations as well as a very short half-life, and this would have resulted in a limited approach to work and a very limited approach to development; instead I have acknowledged the importance of what I don’t know and then sought with colleagues to discover answers that are situationally and contextually appropriate as opposed to searching for universally applicable answers as in the past.

The ‘thoughtful questioning and full consideration of the alternatives’ has been part and parcel of the approach described above – asking questions to elicit and develop my understanding of the context, my understanding of others’ perceptions, and of parallels, similarities and differences between similar experiences has helped greatly. I have learnt that there is nothing quite so powerful as a well-framed question.

Of course the questions are only partially self-reflective – they are fundamentally asked of colleagues within the ‘Learning Set’, or more likely, asked by colleagues in the Learning Set. These questions and the ensuing discussion have been invaluable in both understanding the philosophical basis of action learning, and of engaging in the practice of action learning.
Action learning then, has been fully appropriate for the study I have engaged with and has provided a deep and rich level of understanding of the process, the outcomes, and, of course, many of the remaining questions that have yet to be answered. I am content that I have, in my way, contributed to the understanding of the problems of change management and not, as I first thought to do, developed the answer to the puzzle of change management.

Engaging in the process of writing up my research proved to be a fundamentally important learning exercise. I have always understood and explained to others that the process of writing helps to develop and format thoughts and, if undertaken seriously, moves one's thinking on as issues are reviewed, explored anew from a broader contextual understanding, and developed into coherent arguments. This had been my experience throughout my academic studies over a number of years and was once again apparent as I commenced the writing up phase of my research.

I found writing up my PhD research required significant time to undertake a greater level of thinking and reflection before I even commenced the writing process. I think that this was in part due to the voluminous nature of the information I had gathered, but more critically it was due to Set discussions when other Set members who were a couple of years ahead of me in their work, had spoken about the need to catalogue and structure their research so that they could establish a coherent framework for their thesis. We had also discussed the inherent difficulty of structuring the work so as to avoid a linear or chronological narrative yet at the same time provide an appropriate structure to fully explore the intricate complexities and richness of the experiences.
These discussions led my thinking through to an exploration of the nature of my own research and I concluded that cataloguing, codifying and indexing my work would perhaps lead me to an historical narrative of experience augmented by reflective observations and searches for meaning and learning. Whilst this would undoubtedly have been a useful and informative exercise I was concerned that it would in some way limit my holistic understanding of events and experiences and, thereby, limit my learning. With this in mind, I began to think through alternative scenarios to enable me to tackle the mountain of research material and to shape it into something that would enable critical reflection and analysis without leading me down a chronological story-telling route. In short, I was keen to ensure that I effectively made the transition from narrative to scholarship.

The structuring of the thesis was influenced very heavily by a Set meeting within which Ray, one of my Action Learning Set colleagues, presented his structure and received typically challenging feedback from the Set – in this instance it was that his thesis was logically structured and worked from a rational base. However, it was felt that the over-riding logic lacked the richness and depth that his discussions in Set meetings had led us to believe were inherent in his work. He accepted the comments and went away to re-work his structure to include analyses from different perspectives.

I was largely a passive observer at this meeting apart from occasional comments to support the views of other members of the Set. The reason for my non-participation being that my mind was whirring with thoughts about my own structure and chapter headings. I knew that I had a propensity to adopt a logical approach to my work and was reflecting that perhaps I would follow the same route and receive the same feedback. The way forward from this Set meeting
was, I concluded, to write up my proposed chapter headings and then to review them against the feedback that Ray had received during the Set meeting.

I subsequently set about this task and was not in the least surprised to find that the same challenges about missing the richness of the research could be equally applied. I had a difficult time over the few months that followed this realisation in that I could not adequately identify a route forward – it seemed as though I had come to a dead stop as I was unable to see a non-logical or non-linear means through which I could structure my writing.

Developing my eventual approach to writing came in response to a reflective question that asked, “What is inherently wrong with providing a chronological narrative?” After some thought I reasoned that there was nothing inherently wrong with such an approach in that it could provide a detailed review of my learning through time in a way that had structure and provided contextual understanding of my emergent learning.

Perhaps, then, the question was itself inadequate. A more useful question was, “What do you want your thesis to say about your learning journey, and what do you hope that others will learn through reading your work?” This question, discussed in full at a number of Action Learning Set meetings generated a much deeper understanding of what the thesis was intending to achieve. I wanted the thesis to document my learning in a way which was structured and which focussed my development, but also in a way which was useful to other learners and change practitioners in that they would be able to identify with the various stages that I have gone through and understand the conclusions that I have drawn as a result.
of the learning journey, so that their own learning would be informed through my thesis.

These thoughts led me to the conclusion that a chronological narrative was useful to illustrate the changes and the learning, but that a simple story-telling thesis would not enable the second objective to be achieved – I needed to include an additional perspective or evaluation of my work and experience so that the learning was transferable and useful for others.

I eventually decided that the logical chronology of the research was, therefore, important in that it provided information about the context and development of my thinking through time, but that it was, at the same time, restrictive, in that it led almost inexorably to reportage. There needed to be some way of analysing the research from different perspectives in order to more completely understand what had happened and how the experience could inform other change practitioners. I discussed the issue with my Set Advisor, who asked a question that she had asked several times before but to which I had paid scant regard. The question was ‘How does your view change when you look at your research from the position of change agent as opposed to the position of researcher?’

This question was very important in that it prompted me to consider the fact that I was concurrently operating as a change agent within my consultancy practice and as a researcher within my studies yet was, at the same time dealing with the same experiences. Perhaps the level of understanding of my work would differ according to the perspective from which I viewed it – this seemed logically right but I needed to test out the theory. This testing put took place over several weeks during which I reviewed my experiences supporting a Manchester based charity
for blind and visually impaired people in the development of their change strategy (described in Chapter 7). I found that the position from which I was operating did indeed have a significant impact upon the view that I saw and understood, just as looking at a physical object from different perspectives presents a different nature of understanding of the same reality.

My first few attempts at structuring my work were chronologically based and focused on the way in which my career had developed from corporate Change Director to freelance change consultant. When I reviewed these against the emergent understanding of using different perspectives I realised that the richness of the experience and learning was missing and so sought to view my research from a different perspective, namely a visual position.

I pictured myself looking at the whole of my research arrayed before me and imagined that I was struggling to make sense of what I was seeing. This led me to think about looking for patterns in the scene so that some order could come out of the apparent chaos. Thinking about my research in terms of patterns led me partially away from the pull of a linear narrative and helped to free up my approach. I began to consider what patterns may be found and what they might mean.

Gradually the whole visual concept of patterns began to create a problem as I considered that whilst the patterns may be visually appealing they may not provide the required structure that would enable me to move forwards in my writing. I knew that writing was of critical important: “it is not enough to engage in action learning. We must carefully monitor that which we have actually engaged in and then explain it to others. That is the basis of important research.” [Botham, 2001].
With this in mind, then, the narrative is essential. Without the narrative readers cannot fully understand the journey and therefore cannot contextualise the learning – they are simply presented with conclusions without foundation. Narrative, therefore, is an important element of the thesis and should not be discarded; rather it should be incorporated in a meaningful way.

Finding the appropriate level of structure was a process that emerged through subsequent Set discussions during which it became clearer to me that the patterns needed to serve some purpose rather than simply exist and that this purpose could be to provide order and structure to the research in a way which enabled the reader to understand my experience and my learning. Applying my mind logically and strategically, the next step from patterns was to explore the use of themes. Surely there must be key themes flowing through the research that would enable me to provide structure and which would also facilitate reflection and insight. The idea of thematically structuring my work evolved over a couple of months and I realised that this would be an appropriate approach to adopt.

Thematic structuring enables me to understand the very nature of my research experience without being confined to temporal sequence; it enables me to understand the complexity of the component parts through an integrative study; and it enables me to explore the work from a number of different perspectives without being confined to timelines. Of course, time is of great import, but by thematically structuring my work I can take cognisance of time but concurrently take equal cognisance of other, non-linear, factors, such as contexts, relationships, emotions, the multi-faceted nature of my work in different organisational contexts, and my relationship with, and understanding of, my research. In essence, it frees
me to take full advantage of the dialectic nature of action learning as opposed to being constrained by the temporal linearity of logical determinism.

Identifying the themes did, however, only provide part of the answer – another important issue had emerged that required resolution prior to engaging in the writing up phase, namely how to actually use the themes for maximum effect. Going back to the visual imagery of searching for patterns and then seeking to provide function for their form, I conjectured that perhaps the patterns, or emergent themes, would appear to be quite different if viewed from different vantage points. Once again, I imagined looking at the pattern but this time rotated it round to view it from different sides – this made the pattern look different. The central issue, however, was 'Is this simply a perceptual difference or is it a significant difference that will help with my research?'

Addressing this question with a two-dimensional pattern is, I think, quite straightforward in that the whole reality of the pattern can be seen relatively easily, even though it is open to perceptual interpretation. Addressing this issue with a multi-dimensional and multi-faceted research study is an order of magnitude different.

Having identified the need to take a thematic view of my research I set to work to explore what, precisely, these vantage points may be, and how they may be useful. Identifying the first vantage point was relatively straightforward – although my organisational positioning had changed, I had, throughout my research, been involved in organisational change. I decided that although I had been working in different roles and in different organisational contexts there was a high degree of commonality in terms of the skills and insights I brought to bear to operate effectively within a change environment. Thus the roles of Director of Change
Management and Change Consultant could be viewed as a broadly similar perspective – that of change agent. They could, equally be used as two perspectives but I concluded that they would be more useful if they became the singular vantage point of the practitioner perspective.

My search for a second vantage point came from Dianne, a Set member, and Chief Executive of the Manchester-based charity, with whom I worked to develop a change strategy (detailed in Chapter 7). During the development of the change strategy Dianne frequently asked the question as to how I viewed the work as a researcher. Initially this question was difficult to answer as I was operating primarily as a change consultant within her organisation. This was despite the original rationale for the work being to help Dianne move her work forwards and to provide me with an operational context to further validate the Five Dimensions model of change which I had earlier created as part of my research (detailed in Chapter 6). It was a very clear example of how easily it is possible to drop fully into practitioner mode. I think that the pull of the practitioner mode of operating was yet another example of the desire I felt to act and implement rather than to deal with the complexity of thinking and asking questions. Again it was the pull of the scientific paradigm – as a practitioner one is often the expert, as an action learning researcher one has to acknowledge not knowing the answer to questions raised by ourselves and others, which can be quite discomfiting. It also was a timely reminder of the equal importance of the three sides of the Botham and Morris triangle (Botham, 1999) and of the invaluable and challenging support of an Action Learning Set.

It seemed to me from this experience, that the process of positively engaging with the research from the perspective of researcher would be invaluable – it would
provide a balance to the practitioner perspective, and would help me to further resist the pull of deterministic enquiry. Thus a second vantage point, or theme was identified.

Having developed the second vantage point of researcher, I reflected on what I had learnt about myself from the process of falling into the trap of implementing as opposed to researching. I considered that I had taken the easy route – doing what one knows is infinitely easier than questioning what one does not know. Wheatley (2002) comments on complexity and notes that that “Focussing makes things fuzzier. The more we focus on a complex phenomenon, the more confused we are bound to become.” I realised that I needed to understand the complexity of my work and not take the traditional route of going for what I knew. It is this phenomenon, I think, which made me focus on the creation of the Five Dimensions of Change model for so long – this seemed to make the whole complexity of the research easy – it was an answer to a puzzle. This is explored in full in Chapter 8 but it is worth noting at this stage that the pull to simplicity and a logical answer was exceptionally strong.

Thus, the focus on learning from my experiences came to the fore. It is not possible to engage in an action learning and research programme of any nature, let alone at this level, without paying full attention to the ongoing perspective of learner, so this became, quite naturally, the third perspective. In enabled me to fully acknowledge the importance of myself as the action learner within this action learning programme, and also explicitly acknowledged the importance of Bourner’s (2002, p.3) fourth way of knowing – introspection – and opens up the learning process to the full value of my own thoughts and learning.
I found that I was actually very content with these three perspectives or vantage points, as they appeared to me to be most fundamental to the process of action, learning, and research. The three vantage points also enabled me to engage in epistemological relativism (Burgoyne 2001) insofar as one can from an individual perspective - the three positions generated different perceptions, interpretations and evaluations of events. It is important to recognise that the three vantage points are supplemented by M or Monitoring (Botham, 1999), which provides written information, exploration and reflections from throughout my research to help focus the writing of this thesis. I will, therefore, be able to explore, understand and write about all aspects of my research from the three perspectives. Additionally I will focus on both the subjective world of self and the objective world of others, which 'lies at the heart of all forms of scholarship" (Botham, 1999, p.14).

Writing this thesis has been a tremendously informative experience as it enabled me to understand more fully the nature of my experience of organisational change over the preceding five years. I had, of course, kept records of events, discussions, reflections, and learning throughout the period of my research, but sitting down with this material and commencing the writing process was nevertheless a very daunting experience. I was of the view that I needed to examine my work from the relative position of the three previously identified vantage points, but this was easier said than done.

As previously noted, I very much wanted to avoid writing a chronological narrative of my experience as I considered that other structures might be more informative and provide a higher degree of insight into the area of change management. This was, I have to say, an unproven hypothesis; yet the feeling that a chronology would
be limiting persisted to the extent that I took time to explore other ways of
documenting my work.

This led me to the process of re-searching my work, of searching through the
notes and records again, and re-living them to explore them in more detail and to
fully garner the learning. As I engaged in this reflective process of re-search, I
found that themes emerged from the experience that had hitherto been
unobserved. This was important to me as it allowed a structure to emerge that
would otherwise have been missed. I do have the tendency to move towards more
positivistic and scientific modes of enquiry and the resultant data analysis of this
approach would, I am sure, have missed the richness of understanding that has
evolved through a more creative approach to organising and documenting my
work. I, therefore, continued working with these emergent themes to the extent
that they have provided a structure that does not replace the chronology, rather it
augments it by enabling me to study experiences in a way that is temporally
discontinuous, yet thematically structured. Learning is, I came to realise, not
linear, and therefore, our writing up of the learning process needs to reflect the
reality of that process and give room to explore beyond the bounds of a simple
chronology.

Thus the thesis has two structural elements: parts are chronologically structured
to provide information about my experiences of managing and contributing to the
management of organisational change; and parts are thematically structured in a
way that pulls out the threads of the experience and binds them together to
inform and develop my understanding of the change process itself.
The chronologically structured elements describe my experiences of managing change as Director of Change Management at Rolls-Royce and Bentley Motor Cars in Crewe at a time when the company was going through perhaps the most significant change in its 80 year history – making the transition from British-owned icon creating hand-crafted luxury cars to subsidiary of the third largest automotive manufacturer in the world, with a five-fold increase in production volume, and the concomitant process and organisational changes that such a transformation necessitates. It continues with my transition to freelance change consultant, working with a variety of companies across the UK and Europe and explores how the changing nature of my position impacted significantly upon the manner through which I could influence and effect change.

The thematically structured elements of the thesis critically explore the chronology from three different perspectives in a more fluid and interpretive manner. These perspectives, or vantage points, emerged through the process of discussion in the Learning Set and reflection on the nature and process of my research, when it became clear that I had engaged in the research from three different, but connected positions: that of change agent, that of researcher, and that of learner.

Adopting this thematic approach has enabled me to evaluate the experience and the research more incisively and completely than would otherwise have been possible. I have been able to view the same experiential landscape from the three different perspectives and, in doing so, have observed different phenomena – the position of the viewer influences the view. As a researcher I have been engaged with furthering my own and others’ understanding of change through action learning research; as a learner I have been developing my own capability and understanding through reflection, study, and engagement with a Learning Set; and
as a change agent I have been enhancing my ability to facilitate organisational change through a range of interventions, using models, approaches and experience.

Triangulating these differing perspectives has provided a deeper and richer understanding of change that augments and enhances the chronological narrative. This tri-dimensional framework has proved invaluable in writing the thesis, and I am in no way surprised that I could not identify the differing perspectives without deep and engaging discussion within the Action Learning Sets.

![Diagram of three research perspectives](image)

**Fig 1: The three research perspectives or vantage points**

When I first drew the diagram above I had, in the centre, my initials, PJV to illustrate that I was central to the research process, and that the three vantage points were all from the same source, me. In a Set meeting one of my colleagues commented that he thought the letters were very appropriate as I was indeed talking about a 'Personal Journey Vehicle'. This was initially greeted with humour
but, on reflection, I think that my colleague was right – I have engaged in a personal journey in terms of my research, and it is important that it is seen as such – for in this way other researchers may find parallels to their work and thus further develop our understanding of integrative organisational change. It seems to me to be very fitting that the three vantage points can be viewed in terms of both an internal learning journey, and a shared experience of organisational change.

Central to the thesis is the creation and application of a model of organisation change called the ‘Five Dimensions of Change’ model, published in the Journal of Organisational Change (Victor & Franckeiss, 2002). The model was created through my Rolls-Royce & Bentley experience, and was built upon the preceding ten years of working within organisational change situations. I had experienced, both personally and vicariously, a number of change programmes or initiatives that were disconnected from the organisational context within which they were implemented. These initiatives were often well constructed and well intentioned but their disconnectedness from the organisation as a whole compromised their efficacy. I came, through the years, to describe these as ‘interventionist’ change methodologies and wanted to create a more holistic and integrative approach for Bentley.

The Five Dimensions model, described fully in Chapter 6, was created to connect together the component elements of the organisation and to provide a framework through which we can understand how to manage change effectively in an integrative way, thereby optimising the likelihood of sustainable success. The model connects the business at five different operating levels, or dimensions, and has been tested through case study work in several other business contexts to
validate its applicability and utility. Notwithstanding the drive for an holistic and integrated approach to change, I still found that I was operating in a deterministic and empirically based mode of enquiry when I first developed this model.

In my interim, I discounted the notion of a 'golden formula' for change and eschewed positivistic approaches to understanding organisational change. I had previously engaged in research in a quantitatively based, logically structured manner and began to explore qualitative approaches. If positivism is based on the premise that there is a 'reality out there to be studied, captured and understood' (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.5) then my experience of change had informed me that this was not applicable. The most difficult and challenging element of any change process is dealing with the people, and within this there is no central reality – each person perceives their own reality, has their own phenomenological perspective. Therefore, any approach to change has to be sufficiently flexible to deal with these differing realities.

Although I had intended to avoid creating a formulaic response to organisational change, I achieved precisely that. The model has merit in terms of practically locking together, or connecting, the component elements of an organisation undergoing change, but it was not until the latter part of my research that I came to the realisation that the model needed to be used in a fundamentally different way. It was a structured checklist or a blueprint for effective change but it, in no way, made explicit the fact that questions needed to be asked at prima facie, empirical and philosophical levels if the change is to be fully understood and managed; if the differing realities were to be acknowledged and understood.
The fault was, I believe, not in the structure of the model but in the philosophical base from which it was used. Despite the learning from my early research and engagement with action learning, I still considered the model to be the answer and so, from a philosophical and practical perspective, used it in a deterministic way. I viewed it from a propositional perspective, as the answer, and quite patently, this cannot be a valid approach.

I needed to change my position from that of expert with the answers, to that of researcher with an approach or framework which could be used, together with other approaches, for creating the necessary questions from which reality may be perceived and, hopefully, more clearly understood. This transition was achieved quite painfully through a period of time in which my research and my thinking was effectively blocked. I had come to a premature conclusion that the model was the answer and once the answer was found it became quite logical and natural to stop asking the questions. I detail this process in Chapter 8 because it is fundamentally important in terms of the learning process that I engaged in, and in terms of the resultant grounding of my approach to managing organisational change in an integrative manner.

Following significant reflection and reading I came to the realisation that the Five Dimensions model was inappropriate as a propositional model, but also that it was missing one of the central learning points of my thesis: that an effective change agent is part of the change process and as such must empathically consider all aspects of change from rational, emotional, cultural and experiential perspectives. This resulted in my development of the Five Dimensions model into the Six Dimensions Approach, which is detailed in Chapter 9.
The Six Dimensions approach has developed from the previous blueprint or ‘how-to’ model of change; instead it captures within a structured framework the questions that need to be explored. It provides the framework for questions, not answers. It promotes an interpretive and emergent approach to change. It is by no means exhaustive and it explicitly acknowledges that our thinking needs to develop through time, and that the questions we ask, and the answers we provide will themselves change through time. It is based now, in terms of its design and application, on the difference Revans identified between ‘cleverness’ and wisdom’ (Morris, 2000), in that rather than seeking to provide historically gained knowledge per se, it seeks to enhance our understanding of the current theory and practice of change through stimulating questioning and critical analysis of content, context and culture. I would advocate that we do this by using the Five Dimensions approach to guide, but not limit, our thinking so that we are supported not constrained by the cohesive and integrative framework it provides.

Perhaps the most informative and educative words that I read during my research was the ‘Principle of Insufficient Mandate’ (Revans, 1973), which posits that ‘those unable to change themselves are unable to change what goes on around them’. (p.55). On first reading, I did not understand this fully as I was seeing it from the perspective of an impartial and objective researcher engaged in positivistic study. I came, through time, to realise its deeper meaning when I explored the principle again from the perspective of a participant-researcher. If one is to create and effect sustainable change, then one needs to understand their role in the change process and modify or change their approaches and behaviours to achieve the required result through others. As Pedler (1983) identifies, “Action Learning is a flow of consciousness, of action and learning, between the inner [person] and
outer [organisational problem] and vice versa, in a continuous, iterative process” [p.67].

Thus, changing self is a critical imperative when stimulating or catalysing change in others or in our environment. This is explored in more detail in Chapter 11, and reflects the interpretations of Revans’ work by Morris [2000] who states that we should “always, always keep testing your beliefs, assumptions and presumptions in your own life. Make sure that you learn from the process, and use that learning” [p.1].

The principle has challenged me many times throughout my research and has prompted me to almost continually reflect upon my behaviours and seek to modify them as part of the change. This has meant that my learning has not been abstract but very real and very personal. Whilst researching my Masters degree some years ago I wrote about action learning and thought that I understood it well enough. Through this PhD, I have come to realise the fundamental difference between thinking something and experiencing something – the difference between being an observer-researcher and a participant-researcher. I therefore, developed my understanding from an academic appreciation at one level of knowing to an experiential understanding as a very different level of knowing. Pedler and Aspinwall [1996] identify four different aspects of knowing – about things (knowledge); to do things (skills and abilities); to become ourselves (personal development) and to achieve things together (collaborative enquiry). [p.62]. My prior learned knowledge of action learning was in the first aspect, my latter experience and understanding is very much across all four aspects. I have, undoubtedly, changed as a result of studying change and this too is documented in the thesis as a personal account of change.
As I moved towards the end of my writing up phase and particularly as I commenced writing this chapter I was quite unprepared for the frustration and anxiety that I experienced. Much of the earlier work in the thesis was a narrative commentary with insights that occurred, and were documented contemporaneously. Now as I look back over the years and over the narratives I find that there are assertions that I would now disagree with, statements that I would like to retract, and 'conclusions' that are far from conclusive. Realising this prompted feelings of almost intense frustration and, on more than one occasion, I was tempted to re-write the earlier chapters to excise the naivety that I latterly discovered.

It was, whilst struggling with this, that I read about hermeneutic circles and realised that to re-write or even to re-edit the earlier chapters would diminish the learning for the sake of final-position consistency. This thesis is much more than a final position, or statement of destination in which I write about the world as I now perceive it to be having undertaken the long years of research and learning – rather it is the narrative of a journey, in which I write about the journey, the changing perspectives, the source and context of the learning, as well as the vista at the point of destination.

I have not engaged in a piece of positivistic research, strong though the pull of the scientific paradigm has been on many occasions; nor have I been a separate, objective entity from the research; no, I have been an integral part, an important entity within this research and so to edit out my learning would be wrong on so many levels. I am an historical part of the research history and both the research and I have developed through time. As Reason and Rowan (1981) explain, "Once
this historicity of human experience is realized, it is clear that we must distinguish between some notion of an objective understanding or interpretation, which is unattainable or meaningless and reach for an interpretation which is intersubjectively valid...Understanding can be seen as a fusion of two perspectives: that of the phenomenon itself ...and that of the researcher, located in his or her own life.” (p.133).

Thus the learning that I have undertaken, which was not observed by me but experienced and concurrently influenced by me, has much validity in this thesis – one cannot fully understand the shape if one does not seek to understand the shaping process.

Kockelmans (1975) describes the 'canons' of an interpretive social science' and includes the idea of the hermeneutic circle, which he describes as follows:

"The hermeneutic circle is essentially a very general mode of the development of all human knowledge, namely the development through dialectic procedures. It is assumed that there cannot be any development of knowledge without some foreknowledge. The anticipation of the global meaning of an action, a form of life, of a social institution, etc becomes articulated through a dialectical process in which the meaning of the parts or components is determined by the foreknowledge of the whole, whereas our knowledge of the whole is continuously corrected and deepened by the increase in our knowledge of the components.” (p.85).

Rowan and Reason (1981) further explain this by commenting that
"understanding thus consists of circular and spiral relationships between whole and parts, between what is known and what is unknown, between the
phenomenon and the wider context, between the knower and what is known" (p.135). I have sought, through this thesis, to capture the parts and the whole more clearly. It is clear, however, that the notion of the spiral is much more than an extended, upwardly moving circle – the spiral grows in width at each revolution. Bateson (1979) articulates the notion of the spiral in reference to a conch shell, "The conch shell carries the snail's prochronism - its record of how, in its own past, it successfully solved a formal problem in pattern formation. It, too, proclaims its affiliation under that pattern of patterns which connects" and "The spiral is a figure that retains its shape (i.e. its proportions) as it grows in one dimension by addition at the open end. You see there are no truly static spirals." (p.11). Morris (1994) argues strongly that we should move purposefully through the whole learning spiral, and it is this which I have sought to do.

I have engaged in a spiral process of learning, moving forwards through time but revisiting my learning and my experiences many times over, each time the perspective being influenced by new knowledge and new experiences. The pattern may be similar but it, and I have grown through this research. The thesis, then does contain what may be perceived to be inconsistencies, for it provides a narrative of the learning process as well as the learning outcomes – it is an ontological fact that I am part of the research and the research therefore is part of me – the two are inextricably linked and each can only be understood by reference to the other. Similarly, the process of the research is intrinsically part of the conclusions of the research, and again, each can only be understood by reference to the other. There is then, not just a changing perspective on learning that is derived through the hermeneutic process, but also an evolution of learning that is equally important. Boddy (1981) comments that the central and distinctive element of action learning is concerned with testing ideas against a real problem
and then reorganising ideas in light of the experience. The journey, therefore, is as important as the destination, and ontologically, the thesis must stand as it was written.

As I stand at the end of this particular journey, or more aptly, rest momentarily at this particular point en-route, I am reminded of the words of Capra (1989) who commented that, “It is a characteristic of any research at the frontier of knowledge that one never quite knows where it will lead, but, in the end, if everything goes well, one can often discern a consistent pattern of evolution in one’s ideas and understanding” (p.9). This has certainly been the case for this particular journey, and although I am uncertain about the next direction, I am content with the progress I have made.

The thesis, then, examines organisational and personal change through a range of vantage points and in a variety of organisational contexts. It proposes an integrative model to support the management of change, and provides a deep insight and understanding into the nature and purpose of change agency. In doing this, it contributes to the body of knowledge about integrative change management. My learning and development has been substantial and significant and this thesis not only stands testament to that development, but also provides learning and insight for other researchers and practitioners as they undertake their own journeys.

I hope to achieve this level of contribution so that others may learn vicariously from my experiences and insights, and use these to develop their own journeys.
The key messages from the thesis are undeniably that to be an effective change practitioner it is essential that you engage with your work at a deeply personal level; that you explore your work from a range of perspectives to generate understanding; that you continue to seek knowledge and wisdom through insightful questioning; and that you recognise that, at the end of the process, you still only know the answer to those questions which you have asked – there is much more to learn.
Chapter Two

The nature of change: a need for philosophical understanding

This chapter explores the nature of change and seeks to establish a philosophical understanding of change. Without this it is clear to me that we cannot truly progress our thinking about organisational change. The chapter proposes that, as change is indeed constant and continuous, we need to establish ‘artificial boundaries’ within which we can understand the contextual nature of change. Furthermore, we need to apply systemic, empathic and logical thinking to our study of change in order to more fully understand its nature and learn thereby how to manage change more effectively within contemporary organisations.

I was asked on several occasions towards the end of this research to define the term change, and it struck me as quite improbable that I had not previously considered its meaning, given its fundamental significance to the research I was conducting. My conclusion from this awareness was that I, and perhaps others, accept change as a given; we accept the truism that ‘change is a constant’ and thereby constrain our thinking about the nature of change by not fully thinking about change at all. We do, however, spend time thinking through and developing our understanding of its context, process and consequences. Had I been asked to provide information about the process of change, the impact of change, or the drivers and constraints of change then I could doubtless have spoken eloquently and at some length. The critical question, however, is “what is the value of such responses if they are not themselves contextualised and grounded within a clear understanding of what we mean by the principle term – change?”
The question then led me to reflect upon the role of change practitioners, or indeed organisational practitioners operating within change situations, and I saw that much of the work and understanding is similar to the *modus operandi* that I had previously adopted – focusing on the process and consequences of change without taking time to understand change itself. A review of practitioner oriented literature, for example, Conner (1993), Kotter (1996), Belasco (1990), Moss-Kanter (1989) Katzenbach et al (1997) identifies that whilst many words are written about the process of change and the effective management of change, very few references are made to the nature of change itself. The literature focuses on learning from models and case studies of others’ experiences without fully exploring the nature of change.

This addresses the needs of operational managers in many respects – the job is about getting things done and so focusing the literature on getting things done rather than developing a more philosophical understanding of the nature of change appeals to the reader. I think it additionally reinforces the action orientation of contemporary leaders and has thereby a concomitant impact in terms of not explicitly acknowledging the need to stand back and more fully understand the full context of what is happening before moving to action. This approach of review and plan prior to action is central to many, if not most, leadership development programmes, and contained within Kolb’s (1974) learning cycle which is often used on such programmes as a model for group review and reflection, yet it seems to be given lower priority in practitioner-focused literature. This is unfortunate given that when we analyse the traits of the general UK management population against Kolb’s cycle as refined by Honey & Mumford (1986) we see a strong trend towards activist / pragmatist. This reflects clearly
the action-orientation mentioned above, but also identifies clearly the need for managers to be urged and influenced towards planning and reflection.

It seems to me that the role of the change practitioner, that is a line manager with responsibility for managing an organisational change at operational and/or strategic levels, could be better undertaken with a deeper understanding of change and the nature of change, hence the need to explore it fully at the outset of this thesis. Indeed this exploration has had a significant impact upon the rest of my writing as I have done it from a broader, more philosophical base than would ordinarily have been the case.

A dictionary definition of change starts to help in the enquiry about the nature of change, ‘the act or an instance of making or becoming different’ [Concise Oxford Dictionary]. Change, therefore, is about difference and we can infer that this difference is concerned with the intrinsic nature of the entity being changed or undergoing change, or developing a different type or nature of relationship with its external environment. Thus difference can be described by reference to a multitude of physical variables for example, its geographical position, its internal and/or external structure, or its relationship with other entities, to name but a few. It can also reference non-physical variables such as emotional state, psychological perspective, understanding, philosophical perspective and many more.

An important variable that we need to consider is its positioning in time. The variable of time is important for one can assume that, for something to change, time must elapse – thus there is a temporal element to change. We can therefore begin to construct a definition of change of ‘any difference between the
existing [present] state of being and the state of being at a different [past or future] point in time'.

The inclusion of the reference to time makes the word 'change' one of the most all-encompassing words; it is almost as broad in semiotic terms as the verb 'to be'. One could, taking Descartes' statement of *cogito, ergo sum*, assert that 'it exists, therefore it changes'. This means that when we deal with change we are interrupting or encroaching upon a process that is already underway due to the passage of time – thus change needs to be seen in broad processual terms as opposed to interventionist terms. Change is indeed a constant. Morgan (1986) recognises this when he comments that the Greek philosopher Heraclitus in around 500BC noted that "you cannot step twice into the same river, for other waters are continually flowing on."

Whilst this broadness is of interest philosophically, it does not help the change practitioner within an organisation who has the task of managing the process of change. The notion of change needs to be temporally bounded if we are to make sense of the situation; we need to be able to define a start point (albeit artificial in the broadest sense) to the change and, by consequence, therefore, we also need to create an end point. Thus we artificially establish boundaries within which we seek to understand and manage change. These temporal boundaries in turn reinforce the concept of organisational change as an intervention, something we do at a particular point in time, as opposed to a process of continual change which we actively participate in. It is this seemingly logical construct of change management that I believe limits our thinking about the nature of change and the change process itself.
By this, I mean that we can, too often, limit our horizon to an inappropriate point in time by focussing too narrowly on the change itself as opposed to considering more broadly the context within which the change occurs. We focus on the immediacy of the situation without necessarily considering its historicity. The time-bound nature of our approach to change means that we are frequently derive our understanding from a ‘snap-shot’ of an entity or body that is undergoing perpetual change, when, to continue the photographic metaphor, video footage would be more useful.

We do need, I believe, to operate with a time-bounded understanding of change – my point here is that we need to be very careful as to when we establish the start and end points. The perspective of this artificially created ‘fixed point in time’ can be restrictive, overly complex, or indeed, illuminating according to the positioning of our ‘fixed points’.

Let us consider a football lying on a field. The ball is kicked and so changes in terms of its physical proportions and its spatial positioning on the field – but at what point does the change occur? One could argue that the change occurred at the point of impact, the time at which the foot struck the ball and transferred inertia thus making the ball move along a given trajectory at a given speed. The ball in this sense is entirely reactive to what systems thinkers would call an external stimulus (Koontz & Weihrich, 1990). If we apply this thinking and examine the change to the ball from the very moment it started to change, then we have very little data upon which to understand the nature of the change. Our fixed point in time is inappropriate because it excludes reference to the stimulus that caused the change. Yet this is analogous to the limited perspective that many organisational change practitioners take when they deal with change as an
intervention from an immediately identifiable and close-proximity fixed reference point.

If we instead stand further back and encompass the kick into our understanding of change then we have a far broader and more informative perspective from which to understand change. We could consider the change to take place from the moment the foot started to move towards the ball, or indeed the moment the foot started to swing back to prepare for the kick. This information would enable us to understand the force of change applied to the ball and therefore its pace and perhaps direction, although the latter would also be influenced by external factors such as wind strength and direction. Nevertheless, our understanding of change is now more complete as we have access to much more information about the change process.

We could, in fact stand still further back and seek to understand the mindset of the person kicking the ball - what did they intend to do and why? This in turn would lead us inexorably to seek an awareness of the full context in which the ball was being kicked. We would now see and understand the game of football within which the act took place.

As we moved from micro-level analysis and understanding to macro-level understanding so our ability to interpret the act and process of change increased exponentially. Not only that but we now have information upon which to develop generalisable rules and principles of change of position of the ball. From this it is clear that our understanding of change would be enhanced by paying full attention to the environment and context within which it takes place, and through reference
to the stimuli that initiate the change or difference in the entity under consideration.

A further factor that paradoxically enhances yet limits our understanding of change is our predisposition to endow objects or indeed, people, with 'change characteristics', based upon our direct or vicarious knowledge and experience of them. For example if asked how the ball might change or move the typical answers would be 'bounce, roll or fly through the air'. We expect these things to happen to a football and we use these change characteristics to understand what is happening and predict what will happen next. Change characteristics can, therefore be very useful when interacting with objects for we can make fairly safe assumptions about how they will react or change. We expect, for example, a ball to roll and gradually come to a stop, for this is our experience – we do not expect it to implode for this is outside of our experience.

We therefore, plan and organise our responses according to the ways in which we expect change to take place. We learn, through this process, to adopt a positivistic perspective on change – we know that the world is not a closed system and that there are, therefore, unseen and unexpected variables but we have experience and knowledge of 'sufficient regularities to justify the belief that there is something out there underlying them' (Burgoyne 2001, p2). Unfortunately there is, in my experience, a tendency to move from what Wittgenstein (1953,p.15) calls 'characteristic experiences' where we know that something happens frequently but not necessarily all of the time, to a closed position of consistent expectation based on past experience or knowledge. This trait limits our ability to understand and manage change effectively, and also closes our minds to alternative scenarios and outcomes that have not yet been experienced.
This typically means that we discount such unexpected change and focus instead on the limited range of changes that we can reasonably expect or foresee. However, it would be unwise to completely disregard those reactions or changes which have not yet occurred or which occur sporadically as this limits our learning and understanding. It is important that we engage with our research and management practice by asking questions which take our understanding beyond what we can immediately perceive and understand. We know that the world is "an open system with emergent properties, and a dynamic process of meaning making as part of this" (Burgoyne 2002, p.2) and so we need to be open to the fact that unforeseen possibilities may occur. The fact that they may not occur frequently tends to desensitise us to the possibility that they may occur, which in turn tends to close our minds to the possibility of them occurring at all. If this happens then we are likely to struggle to plan for such an unforeseen consequence and equally struggle to learn from them when they do occur.

Our operational understanding of change, therefore, tends to be influenced by the time horizons that we place around the change, and our experience of what has happened before. It becomes an iterative process of re-applying past experience to present situations. As Senge [1990] observes, "If we focus on events, the best we can ever do is predict an event before it happens so that we can react optimally, but we cannot learn to create" [p.22]. In this sense, our learning is not generative but adaptive – we find new ways of using tried and tested practice to deal with new problems. For the most part, this seems to work, but it does not create new thinking and new understanding – for that we need to engage in a deeper level of thought.
This is all fairly straightforward when we are dealing with inanimate objects such as a football, but it all becomes much more complicated when we deal with very complex entities such as organisations. Here the changes are not simply to do with spatial positioning, points in time and physical properties; there are many more variables to examine and consider in the pursuit of understanding the nature of change.

However, some of the principles detailed above are useful to us, including:

- The usefulness of having a 'fixed' point in time as a reference, but recognising the need to explore beyond this and not be constrained in our observations and learning.
- The need to view change from a broad perspective so we may understand not just the process and impact, but also the influencing factors, the environment and the context within which it takes place.
- The need to understand how organisations typically respond to change so that we can narrow down our range of foreseeable options and thus be more ready and capable of managing the process of change.
- The need to question and understand atypical responses and reactions so that we may learn how to respond to them should they arise.

These questions however, lead us to a fairly typical empirical mode of enquiry, albeit broader in terms of scope than that normally encountered. We 'formulate a response in terms of preceding events and conditions, together with certain laws or hypotheses, which connect the event to be explained with the events that explain it' (Scruton, 2002, p.4). This would be useful were we to be dealing with a rational and logical subject and context, but we know that 'organisations rarely
behave rationally’ (Garratt, 1983, p15). Organisations are not deterministically oriented; rather they are “complex, dynamic, non-linear systems” (Levy, 2006, p.13). It is clear that ‘in practice, irrationality is generated by misunderstanding the complexities and uncertainties of modern organisations’ (Garratt, 1983, p15). If, as Garratt asserts, organisations are complex, dynamically changing and uncertain entities, then it is probable that replaying our past experiences is unlikely to help us to understand and deal with organisational change in every instance. There will, of course, be those situations where the change is similar to our past experience and we can use our existing learning to develop a route forwards, but it is also likely that there will be changes beyond our level of experience for which we need to generate new approaches and new ways of working. Central to our ability to manage such complexity will be our ability to understand and this can best be developed though our ability to ask questions and then to use the responses to these questions to both enhance our understanding of the complexity, and also, critically, to help us develop additional questions which will still further enhance our understanding – moving onwards in a spiralling processual development of understanding and learning.

I think that the questions that we ask can be classified into three areas, those that deal with the information readily available, those that look at the broader set of information, and those that enquire about the nature of change and the nature of human responses to change so that we may develop a more holistic understanding. These three domains of analysis that we can engage in are illustrated by the diagram on the following page:
Domain One
Prima Facie Analysis

Prima Facie analysis leads us to understand the change and its impact in terms of the immediately relevant and identifiable data and our personal experiences of change. It focuses on the ‘here and now’ of the change and, from a practitioner perspective, is useful in helping to devise and implement specific change management strategies.

Domain Two
Empirical Analysis

Empirical analysis leads us to understand the influencing factors and their relationship to the change in a relatively broad context. It prompts us to step back from the act of change to understand more clearly the context for the change, albeit in a logical and iterative approach. It is a deeper level of analysis than is often encountered in practitioner-led change and engagement in this process informs our knowledge of change to the extent that we can begin to make informed and logical assumptions about what is happening and indeed what will happen next. In this sense we step beyond the prima facie analysis to explore not
just what is happening now, but what has happened before and what may happen next.

**Domain Three**

Philosophical analysis leads us to develop our understanding of the nature of the change; how and, fundamentally, why it occurred and how and why the subject(s) behaved in the way that they did. This level of analysis uses much more than the deterministic modes of enquiry deployed within the first two domains, rather it prompts us to ask questions about the very nature of change itself, and to seek understanding about how we, as individuals and as collective groups, respond to change in the way that we do. This level also clearly distinguishes between procedural questioning and processual questioning (Botham 2001) for we learn to generate questions through our engagement in the process. In this way we develop our own philosophy of change and our attitude towards change. Thus, this domain again goes beyond the previous domains in that we begin to develop a more universal understanding of change concepts and philosophies. Interestingly, as we explore this philosophical domain we do so through the applied use of the philosophy of action learning – we are engaged in that middle area between dogma and science.

Through this thesis I shall endeavour to explore change from a perspective of Domain Three analysis; not necessarily following the precepts and teachings of any single philosopher, or group of philosophers, but by utilising the questioning style that is evident within Revans’ approach to action learning. This means accepting nothing at face value and questioning all aspects of the research to seek understanding at a deeper and more fundamental level than would ordinarily be
the case. In this way, I will seek to exemplify the distinction between cleverness and wisdom (Morris, 2000).

This Chapter has identified that change is a very broad term that covers virtually anything so there is a clear need to be more specific in terms of the parameters within which this thesis will explore change. I will focus very specifically on planned organisational change. By this I mean change activities within a business context that are purposefully devised and implemented to bring about a change within the business in line with the organisational strategy.

Many, if not all businesses, engage in this type of strategic change activity but my experience is that the majority do so in an interventionist way and therefore, in my opinion, do not secure the sustainable benefits of their change programmes that are potentially realisable. Therefore, adopting this focus will enable the thesis to address its principle purpose of providing support to practitioner-managers in dealing with change.

One of the clear observations that I have made is that managers tend to embark upon change programmes with an overriding focus on the operational or tactical domains within their business, in terms of process and benefit analysis. The Five Dimensions of Change model (Chapter 6) was originally designed to address this by providing a structured framework through which this operational focus could be more effectively and cohesively aligned and integrated with the overall business strategy, thus supporting the move from interventionist change through to integrative change. My usage of the model, and indeed my fundamental understanding of the model, has changed significantly through the period of my research to the extent that I see it now as a framework for philosophical enquiry.
about the nature of the business and the nature of change within that specific context.

This fundamental shift in my understanding is detailed in Chapters 8 and 9, suffice to say that this juncture, that it has become evident to me that the need for Domain 3 analysis at a philosophical level is a vitally important and central element of effective organisational change. Through this thesis I moved my research methodology from a logical and deterministic mode of enquiry through to a qualitative and questioning mode of enquiry that met the characteristics of such a methodology as described by Rossman and Rallis (1998). In doing so I recognised the iterative and emergent nature of my understanding of change and indeed of the utility of the Five Dimensions model and now have a far more interpretive understanding of the nature of change (Marshall & Rossman 1999) that I have researched and experienced.

It is clear from my experience of beneficial and structured organisational change that we need to establish a direction or vision of change so that we can mobilise the members of the organisation to move in a given direction - in this way we can seek to ensure that change is purposeful and directional. There are many examples in organisational change of companies engaging in change to move away from a particular position, or to reactively resolve a prevailing problem or issue. Changing by moving away is easy to achieve on the short term, as, in practice, any location other than the starting point will suffice in terms of meeting the objective of moving away. In reality, however, we almost always want the organisation to move towards a stated goal, so we seek to address the need for this through a vision statement or set of corporate goals.
The notion of a vision statement is addressed several times through this thesis, from theoretical and practical perspectives. One of the key issues asked by the business is ‘what do we do when we have secured the cultural change necessary and therefore achieved our vision?’ This is an important issue although it often seems that in the external world or market place changes are so significant and so dynamic through the timeframe of a typical vision statement, that the business needs to continually review and amend its strategic direction to keep pace with, or if preferred, to outpace, changes that competitors are making.

We need to recognise that there is always a difference between a current position and a desired future position, and therefore we have what Bateson (1979) refers to as a ‘lag’ (p.208). This lag, he argues, is a necessary component element in the process of change for without the lag or difference the organisation would settle into a state of perpetual inertia or stasis. The role of the leaders, therefore, is to create the lag by creating the vision or purposeful direction of the business and then to support the individuals, teams, functions, and other groups within the business to move towards closing the gap. Of course, they must concurrently pay attention to creating a new gap once the existing ‘lag’ is addressed. Bateson is clear that the lag or difference between current and future realities is a necessary dualism; it is, he argues, “an epistemological truth which will insist that the poles of contrast dividing the persons are indeed dialectical necessities of the living world. You cannot have ‘day’ without ‘night’ nor ‘form’ without ‘function’”. (p.208). In this he echoes Nietzsche’s comments about the link between pleasure and displeasure as discussed in De Botton (2000).

If we accept this premise of the inevitable ‘lag’, then the challenge of the leadership team in times of change is to manage the differing factions or groupings within the
business and to align them to moving purposefully in the defined or declared
direction, whilst recognising the necessity of the difference. Bateson (1979)
comments on this as a parallel to the evolutionary processes within the natural
world, and the organisation therefore, becomes an adaptive organism which,
through leadership, changes its form and function, its behaviours and processes
and its approaches and purpose to meet the changing needs of an external
environment. This external environment may be real or perceived, but
notwithstanding this, it has a phenomenological reality.

If we understand change from this perspective then the fact that others do not
share our vision for the organisation is inevitable and in that sense, acceptable.
That is not to say that we continue to accept it, for the role of the change agent is
to create the environment within which people have the opportunity to change, to
generate the commitment so that they want to change, and to develop the
capability through which they can change.

Effective change management, then, is the purposeful and intentional response to
the external environment such that a new direction is identified, agreed, and,
through time, delivered. This results inevitably in changes in the individual and the
organisation and these need to be acknowledged and understood as a ‘lag’
between what is experienced and what is required. Integrative change
management connects together the many strands and elements of organisational
change and uses this knowledge to develop an understanding of the process and
purpose of the change to manage its implementation effectively and on a
sustainable basis.
To manage change effectively it is necessary to do so from an engaged and personally involved perspective, and this too is detailed in the thesis. The conventional dualism of person and organisation is limiting and we need, therefore, to approach change from a position of what Senge (1990) calls metanoia,

“At the heart of a learning organization is a shift of mind –from seeing ourselves as separate from the world to connected to the world, from seeing problems as caused by someone or something 'out there' to seeing how our own actions create the problems we experience. A learning organization is a place where people are continually discovering how they create their reality. And how they can change it.” (pp. 12-13).

This engagement of self is a lesson that I learnt through my research and one that is reflected in the narrative of this thesis. I am now able to contribute as a change agent as opposed to a change architect – I am engaged as a person as opposed to being a distanced creator and manager of change programmes, and this has significantly enhanced my practice. The philosophical exploration of change has helped me to understand more fully the nature of change and the nature of responses to change so that my practice can become based on an understanding of the generalisable nature of organisational change, an emergent understanding of contextual change, and an understanding of how I relate to and engage with the change programme. This has resulted in a generative and facilitative mode of enquiry, which has undoubtedly contributed significantly to the learning process.
Chapter Three

Personal History

This chapter describes some of my formative educational and occupational experiences. It catalogues my progression through school into my first career position, and then explains how my career subsequently developed through a range of jobs and experiences to becoming a consultant specialising in management and organisation development. Additionally the chapter identifies the connection between my work and my PhD research.

I left school at the age of 18 having completed GCE’s and an Ordinary National Diploma in Business Studies. My school life had been far from exemplary in the traditional academic sense, and it was only a last minute effort that enabled me to pass my GCE’s. I had been particularly advanced at Primary School and had managed to gain a half-scholarship to a public school at the age of 11. My twin brother also gained a half-scholarship but my parents could not afford to pay for the additional fees or buy the uniforms, so we attended the local Comprehensive school.

I found schoolwork at the Comprehensive to be particularly easy and I swiftly found I could complete it with relative ease. Having completed the work, I began to mess around and found this to be more fun and more engaging than the lessons. Consequently I remained disengaged from School for most of the five years and was a regular recipient of School reports that stated, "has the ability but does not
use it", "if Paul spent as long working as he does playing, he would have an outstanding school career".

These reports had limited, if any, impact, and I continued to pass through School reasonably untroubled by the demands placed upon me. I realised in the final year that I needed to work to pass my exams and so I worked hard for the last six months of School and passed my GCE's.

I had spent very little time considering my career options and decided to do a Diploma in Business Studies at the local College rather than the conventional 'A' levels to keep my options open. I enjoyed College as we were treated more like adults although the principle approach was still didactic delivery and homework. I passed my Diploma but still, at that time, had no clear idea as to my career intentions. I passed time with various jobs and then one day saw the aftermath of a fatal car crash. I decided that I could either pretend that such things did not happen and walk away, or do something to prevent such things happening. The latter approach seemed far more appropriate to me, so I joined the Police Force.

Following my initial training period, which was spent mostly on the acquisition of legal knowledge and dealing with case studies to demonstrate effective application of the knowledge, I was posted to my first Station in the inner City of Nottingham. I spent six years at this and neighbouring Stations doing a wide variety of jobs and dealing with a multitude of incidents. I found the job to be at times incredibly boring and at times incredibly frightening, but overall, I enjoyed myself immensely. During this period of my career, I had no ambitions at all other than to continue to work as a Police Officer on the streets. My managers kept prompting me to take my promotion exams and, in their words, 'realise my potential', but I was more
than happy just doing the job. I did qualify as a Tutor and then trained probationary Police Officers on an ongoing basis for three years. This involved working with them for ten weeks immediately after they left Training School to help them make the transition from classroom to streets as uneventfully as possible.

I found this to be an exceptionally rewarding experience and felt great pride in seeing the probationers successfully develop the interpersonal skills and decision making skills that were required to augment their knowledge and understanding of the law. I was advised on a number of occasions to move into the Force Training School but declined as I was enjoying myself too much on the beat.

In July 1988, I had an accident at work that was to prove to be a catalyst for focussing my career and providing the drive and determination to achieve the career results that I have enjoyed to date. I attended a factory burglary in the early hours of the morning and slipped whilst climbing a ten-foot gate. As I fell, I caught my wedding ring on the top and severely damaged my left ring finger. This resulted in my being declared medically unfit to be a Police Officer; a statement that forced me to reconsider my options given that my career in the Police Force was effectively at an end.

I was able, however, to move to the Force Training School whilst on light duties and attended a Home Office Trainers' Course, which was without doubt the most interesting and exciting learning experience of my life to date. The Police Force was, at that time, seeking to move away from didactic delivery to experiential learning following the Scarman Report (1981) which had found that although Police Officers knew the law, they frequently lacked the interpersonal skills and judgement to relate to the public effectively and to make discerning judgements
when called upon to use their discretion. One of the results of this report was that
the Home Office decided to change the manner in which Police Officers operated
by, amongst other things, changing the training they received. Working further
upstream, this required them to change the way in which the Police trainers
worked and so the Trainers’ Course I attended helped us to learn facilitation skills
so that we could, in turn, help others to learn rather than teach.

The course followed the work of John Heron (1990) on facilitation skills and six-
category intervention analysis and through the thirteen-week residential course we
were actively encouraged to use Kolb’s learning cycle (1974) as a mechanism to
stimulate reflection and learning. I kept a learning journal throughout the
programme and found this to be exceptionally valuable as a means of focussing
my thinking and capturing my learning. Indeed, I still occasionally look at the
journal many years later. The course was my first real foray into experiential
learning and I gained a great deal of knowledge, and skill in the learning process. It
was also the first time in my educational development that I had truly been treated
as an active learner with a right to engage in the process of learning as opposed
to being considered as an empty vessel to be filled with knowledge.

Having successfully completed the Course I moved to the Force Training School in
Nottingham where I ran development courses on a range of topics, from
management skills to interpersonal skills to joint investigation of child sexual abuse
programmes run concurrently with the Social Services. The programmes all had
knowledge outputs but we were free to design the structure and learning
processes and I took maximum advantage of the opportunity to further develop my
training skills by actively engaging in the process of learning whilst training others.
I thoroughly enjoyed the training room experiences, and equally the discussions
about process and learning with my colleagues after each programme day. I found I was good at training, and regretted at times not taking advantage of earlier offers to move into this field.

Throughout my time in the Training School, however, I was acutely aware of the fact that I was still unfit for full service and that within two years the Police Force would seek to terminate my contract on medical grounds.

I decided to take active control of my career and leave on my terms rather than theirs and began to attend night school and College to further enhance my qualifications. This return to education was in no way as engaging as the Trainers’ Course had been but it was interesting to note the impact of my personal motivation on how I approached and engaged with the learning. The teaching styles were still principally didactic and relatively uninteresting but my situation was quite different to when I was at school – I was now in the position where I recognised the need to achieve and therefore had a high level of intrinsic motivation to do so. This motivation enabled me to focus and concentrate on my work and I consequently gained a number of qualifications including qualifying as a Further Education teacher.

In September 1990, I left the Police Force to join National Grid plc. National Grid was created in March 1990 when the electricity industry was privatised into three sectors – electricity generators, electricity distributors, and National Grid, which had the monopoly position of controlling electricity transmission between the other two sectors. The electricity industry had recruited a high number of people in the early 1960’s to build the transmission network and these people had remained and been integrated into the newly privatised Companies. The Company was
perceived in the City as staid and unlikely to optimise its asset base or market position, and therefore, amongst other activities, a specialist department was established to spearhead and drive a culture change programme to ‘commercialise the organisation’. I joined this department as a Training Consultant.

I was somewhat apprehensive on leaving the Police Force to work at National Grid, with my major concern being whether I was good enough to operate within a commercial organisation. These fears were unfounded, however, as I found that my colleagues had considerably less experience than me and looked to me to provide information and guidance in training situations. My colleagues were drawn from an eclectic range of occupations and organisations and we learned to work together to develop organisational change interventions. We had some success in these but consistently had difficulties in relating to many of the client group. This was, I think, principally to do with the different nature of our backgrounds, ages and experiences. On reflection, we could have done far more in terms of integrating ourselves within the Company which may have mitigated the suspicion with which we were viewed.

A particularly interesting piece of work was to analyse a representative sample of the organisation using a variety of psychometric tools and instruments and then compare the results with those of the department within which I worked. In each case, we were diametrically opposed to our client group and we were able to use this insight to further understand some of the communication difficulties that we had encountered. We used this information to refine our communication styles but the suspicion of the department being a ‘team of bright young things brought in to change their world’ never really disappeared.
During the three years that I worked for the Company, I progressed into the occupational psychology department and took over as Head of Department, which was my first opportunity to lead a team of people. I found this experience to be as rewarding as it was challenging. I particularly relished the chance to have an influence on the future direction of the organisation's development strategies but I eventually realised that I was becoming increasingly specialised and needed to decide to continue specialising, or to leave and take a broader role in a different organisation.

I chose to leave and broaden my career focus as this would also achieve one of my other intentions, namely to distance myself from the Police Force. Although I had thoroughly enjoyed my time and learnt a great deal as well as been effectively prepared for life in a commercial organisation, I did find that people expected me to behave according to the stereotype of a Police Officer, which was at times an uncomfortable situation. I was frequently referred to as an 'ex-Policeman' which I felt referenced me by what I used to do rather than what I was currently doing. To move to another organisation would, I thought, make this direct connection more difficult. This did prove to be the case, although I am still today occasionally referred to as an 'ex-Policeman'. I no longer mind this however, as I have, through the years, come to fully appreciate and value the experience of that role, and its relevance to my work with people and organisations.

In 1993, I left to join North West Water plc as a Training and Personnel Manager and found the broader remit was very useful in terms of career and professional development. I worked within the Engineering Division of the Company and had, during my two years at the Company, a range of interesting developmental
experiences. During this time, I decided the ideal role for me would be Human Resources Director, so I worked particularly hard to lay the foundations for this ambition to be realised. I had completed a Diploma in Training Management whilst at National Grid and I continued my studies with an MSc in Training and Development at Leicester University. I found the MSc to be challenging, although the interim assignments were reminiscent of essays at School. The thesis, however, was my own work, and I immersed myself in the research into project management competence and the measurement of ability through 360° assessments.

Passing my MSc was a particularly fulfilling experience for me and I was exceptionally proud when I attended the degree ceremony and was awarded my degree. I decided there and then if I could complete a Masters degree, then I should push myself further and complete a Doctorate. Consequently, I spoke to a number of people who had achieved a PhD and confirmed my decision this was an appropriate course of action for me. I was unclear about the focus for my research, but knew I did not want to have to repeat the assignments that were a necessary part of my MSc.

I did not begin a PhD whilst at North West Water primarily because I was very busy with my work and felt I was learning a great deal through vocational activity. I did not, at the time, fully understand Action Learning approaches and did not want to compromise the opportunity I had to develop professionally by engaging in all the activities of the function and the business. In truth, I perceived academic learning to be distant from occupational learning. This was in spite of the fact that I had studied Action Learning at a conceptual level during my MSc - I had clearly
not grasped the nature and value of Action Learning. This, it seems, was a lesson I
needed to learn experientially rather than conceptually.

In 1995, I left to join Rolls-Royce Motor Cars and took over organisational
responsibility for all training and development activity, together with some
personnel responsibilities. Moving to this company reminded me greatly of moving
to National Grid – I had questioned my ability to operate within the commercial
environment of National Grid and now I found myself wondering whether I had the
ability to work for such a prestigious organisation as Rolls-Royce.

Yet again, however, the expectation was not matched by reality, and I found that
the Company was steeped in somewhat old-fashioned approaches to Personnel
Management. This situation gave me the opportunity to introduce modern
approaches to the organisation such as Competence Frameworks and
collaborative industrial relations partnerships, and I rapidly gained the reputation
as a capable and competent professional. Unfortunately, the organisation had not
dealt with a number of performance issues over the years, and as I began to deal
with these situations, I found myself getting a less than positive reputation. The
organisation was very traditional and conservative in its approach to people
management and this, compounded by the underlying family culture, meant that
my approach in dealing purposefully with performance and disciplinary issues
caused some difficulties. I nevertheless persisted, as I believed the management
team ought to optimise the performance of the business through effective
management of its employees – to conform to previous poor management
practice in the interest of ongoing consistency would, in my opinion, have been a
dereliction of duty.
The way in which I dealt with these situations was quite objective and a colleague at the time said that he traditionally viewed Personnel Managers like family doctors, but he considered me to be different – he thought I was more akin to a surgeon. This feedback was important to me in terms of beginning to realise I was operating clinically and logically, and not necessarily interacting fully with people. The theme of distanced work relationships has been central since I joined National Grid and I needed this feedback to begin to learn about the important link between logic and empathy, and the need to work as a whole person. This was, however, the insight that began a process of awareness – a process that I am still undertaking today.

Through the next four years as a Personnel Manager, I continued to build on my reputation as a competent manager who could resolve issues, and who had a strategic capability. My career progressed to the point where I was responsible for the vast majority of the Personnel function across the Company. My work was, however, principally operational, and although I routinely advised the Board on strategic issues, the operational demands on me ensured I was not able to truly operate effectively in any sort of strategic capacity.

In June 1999, after four years with the Company, I was promoted to the position of Director of Change Management. This was a new role within the Company, reporting to the Member of the Board, Personnel, and was created to support the transition into ownership by Volkswagen AG, who had recently acquired the company for £483million and made clear their intention to invest further in the growth of the company. It was evident that the sale was going to present great challenges to the business – we were moving from UK ownership where the company had been treated as a ‘cash-cow’ to ownership by the third largest
automotive company in the world. The Board recognised this and wanted
somebody to manage the cultural and change transitions as we developed a
closer working relationship with our new owners.

There was, however, a lack of clarity in terms of the Board expectations of my new
role, and I was simply given the organisational remit to: -

1) Develop and deliver the required changes to ensure that the Company
achieved its strategic goals, and

2) Ensure the desired corporate culture was defined and achieved.

At the time, the remit seemed sufficiently broad as to enable me to do achieve the
organisational development that I considered essential for the sustainable growth
of the company, but the lack of role clarity caused some significant problems over
the ensuing years. My time as Director of Change Management was incredibly
rewarding and, at the same time, incredibly frustrating. I moved away from the
operational role that I had previously enjoyed and assumed what could only be
described as a corporate role. I did retain organisational accountability for
Employee Relations, which helped in terms of maintaining my relationships with
operational managers, but this was never again as strong as when I held a fully
operational role.

The role was very political in terms of managing the change expectations of the
multitude of stakeholders in the UK and in Germany. Suffice to say at this point
that the experience exploded one of the myths that I held about working in
organisations being more autonomous the higher the position one attained. I
found the experience to be paradoxically more constraining and subject to the
political whims and ambitions of others than any other role that I had undertaken.

I focussed initially on the creation of the future identity of the company, for this, in my opinion, was the most pressing concern. The creation of the Bentley vision and the process by which we engaged the workforce is detailed fully in Chapter 5.

Of significant importance, to me was the fact that I was now engaged in a process of strategic change which I considered to be appropriate for continuing my academic development – in short, it was time to start my PhD. I decided that the PhD would run alongside my work and that I would focus on organisational change as a topic for my research. This is detailed later in this chapter.

Over the next two years I created the change architecture for the business in terms of its new identity as Bentley Motors; created the terms and conditions of employment that we needed to manage the volume growth from 1,000 cars per year to 9,000; engaged the senior management in the creation and management of the change agenda; and established a clear vision of the new company that was understandable, accessible and emotionally meaningful for the employees. I also revised significantly my understanding of change and my whole approach to research.

I subsequently left the company in April 2001 to work for myself as a management consultant. This career choice was something that had been recommended to me many times over the preceding years but which I had avoided in the belief that I was a ‘corporate’ person and belonged in organisations rather than alongside organisations. Nevertheless personal pressures and the need to escape the political interference that I felt was so compromising my
position at the company, led me to make the break and start working for myself as a self-employed consultant.

The single greatest issue that this career change created was a loss of continuity in my PhD research, which had previously been exclusively focussed on the creation, implementation and evaluation of a change management strategy for Rolls-Royce and Bentley. I found the discontinuity very problematic and difficult and it took many months for me to come to clear conclusions about how to continue my research. The problem was centred on the fact that my work and my research were, in my view, inextricably linked and now the link had been severed. I struggled to re-establish a momentum for my research without the context of the organisation within which it had initially been set.

The difficulties I encountered with continuing my research were somewhat exacerbated by the coincident timing of my departure from the Company, with the creation of the Five Dimensions model of change, detailed in Chapter 6). Having created the model and used it in Bentley before leaving, I was of the view that the model had an inherent validity. Furthermore, as detailed in later Chapters, I viewed the model positivistically as the blueprint for change, even though I had worked very hard not to do this. The pull of creating the answer – of satisfying the old academic approaches of solving the puzzle, was so great that I simply stopped working; after all, in my view at that time, why continue to search for the answer to a question you believe you have answered?

I recall a number of set meetings when colleagues were talking about and struggling with their research and I just sat and thought I had finished. When challenged I found myself becoming defensive about the model, although it was not
that which the set were challenging – it was my behaviours. I had adopted a linear approach that essentially said that I had found the answer, and therefore I had stopped asking further questions. I justified this to myself on the basis that I could no longer ask questions because I was no longer in that particular company context – I had created what I thought to be ‘the answer’ and moved away from the context within which it was created. Therefore, from a learning perspective and from a contextual perspective, I allowed my work to come to a halt. Coming to terms with this and moving on with my research were very powerful learning experiences and these are detailed in Chapters 8 and 9 respectively.

Of particular interest as I reflect on this episode in my life and research, is the fact that I placed such importance on my role rather than focussing on my responsibilities. I certainly had less confidence as a consultant than I had when I had been employed and when my role was defined by the title ‘Director of Change Management’. Although the titles were undoubtedly different, my responsibilities of supporting [other] organisations to develop and deliver their change agenda were very similar indeed. Therefore, following the thought process, it seems to me that I relied for confidence on my organisational positioning as defined by my job title, when I should have relied on my knowledge and abilities.

This focus on my role undoubtedly helped me to be successful during the time in which I formally held the ‘role’ but it became very limiting once I left the role behind. It took a few years for the level of confidence to come back and throughout that time I was continuously conscious of the fact that I was never quite so comfortable introducing myself as a consultant as when I was using my old corporate titles. The resolution for this was a focus not on what I was called, but on what value I
was able to bring to my clients through my knowledge, skills and abilities. In essence, it was the function that was important, not the form.

This was the time in my research when I most relied upon the creative energy, the focus and the support of the Learning Set and, although it took me quite some time to acknowledge what they were saying, it eventually enabled me to move beyond my corporate career and to recognise that the world of consultancy was different but very much connected to my research – it enabled me to more fully understand the value and importance of my role of change agent. I came to the realisation that the career change provided an opportunity for me to work with organisational change in different contexts, and from a different position now as consultant as opposed to Director, but utilising the same skill set as before. The label was now much less important than the person.

I found that I very much enjoyed consultancy and, most particularly, the variety of experiences that it offered. Within the first six months, I had worked across the UK, in America, and in four European countries which provided me with a great insight in to the impact of culture and history on management development, which was the area in which I tended to specialise. I had checked with colleagues before making the move and they had advised me that the most prevalent difficulties were of finding customers and managing cash flow. To mitigate the risk of this I forward sold 80 days of my first year to another consultancy and worked on a sub-contract basis. Whilst this protected me to a certain extent from the competitive nature of the marketplace I did find it a little constraining in that, because of the mid-week timing of assignments, it left little time to develop new business opportunities.
I was able, however, to undertake some additional consultancy assignments within other organisations to support them in the management of change. This provided me with an ideal opportunity to test out the validity and utility of the Five Dimensions model in different organisational contexts than that within which it had been created. An example of this is the work I did within Henshaw’s Society for Blind People [hsbp], the Chief Executive of which, Dianne, was a fellow set member. This experience is detailed as a case study in Chapter 7.

I continued to run my own consultancy until mid-2002 when I started a management development consultancy with a colleague I had met the previous year. David and I had met whilst working in Europe and I found that we had a great deal in common in terms of philosophy and principles but that our operating methodologies were quite different. I was attracted to the idea both of sharing the development of a business with somebody else, but more importantly of doing this with someone from whom I could learn a great deal about myself. In many senses working with David was similar to working within a Set as he continually challenged the way I elected to do things, from a constructive perspective and from an inquisitive perspective, thereby prompting me to ask questions of myself and my practice on an ongoing basis.

The company we set up grew over the following three years until we adjudged that it was an appropriate time to separate and pursue our own careers. I re-established myself as an independent management consultant and worked with a range of companies in the field of organisational change. My work now specialises in three main areas of activity:
- Management Development programmes which we offer as both in-house and open programmes to support the development of practising managers through action-learning programmes.

- Organisational Development Consultancy, which we offer to a range of organisations to support their ongoing change management, working with such issues as re-structures, strategy development, and the design/implementation of HR strategies to support business growth.

- Executive coaching which I do on a one-to-one basis to help managers more fully understand their approaches, and their behaviours, and to develop more effective approaches within their businesses.

My role within the business has evolved greatly over the years since I established my first business and I enjoy immensely the interaction with clients on a long-term basis so that I can develop a greater understanding of their business and them as individuals thereby providing history and context for my work. The experience of working with a range of companies has enabled me to continue to develop my practice in a wide range of organisational contexts and provided me with a great opportunity to explore how context and culture act as primary influences on the change agenda. My ongoing research helped to ensure that I had, and took advantage of, opportunities to learn about contemporary changes in organisational thinking and strategic development.

Although different to my past roles, my current sphere of activity enables me to utilise much experience from the past twenty years to support practising
managers in developing solutions to their problems which are strategically oriented and which are fully contextualised in their business.

**Undertaking my PhD Research**

At the point in time when I assumed strategic responsibility for the change management of Rolls-Royce and Bentley I considered that it presented the ideal opportunity to resurrect my academic interests and so explored a range of Universities within which I could commence my PhD research. I eventually started my research at the Revans Centre of Salford University in July 1999.

I did look at a variety of Universities to identify the ideal location for such an extended period of study and found the majority focused on doing things the right way, whereas the Revans Centre focused on doing the right things. It seemed to offer the opportunity of dealing with my own personal experience in a manner that accorded value to my work rather than expected referencing and justification at every stage. Although I was principally logical and structured in my approach to my work, I wanted to operate with fewer boundaries or constraints in my PhD. Most of the other Universities that offered a place wanted me to spend a year learning research techniques prior to commencing my own research - whereas the approach at the Revans Centre was that I was already capable of conducting research and that where I needed additional support or guidance, they would provide it through the Action Learning Sets or through discussion with members of the faculty.
It still, however, took some time to become accustomed to Action Learning at the Revans Centre, with the difficulties caused mainly by expectations and conditioning from my previous educational experiences. These experiences had conditioned me to see the PhD as a programme to be completed, rather than an experience to be explored. An example of how this conditioning influenced me was when I asked, at the first Set meeting, for the programme and submission requirements to be mapped out so that I could deliver the required work on schedule and gain a Doctorate. I asked whether the five years was a minimum and whether this could be shortened by more condensed activity. I have come to learn this programme is fundamentally different – the research is not abstract but involving.

The Set was exceptionally helpful in helping me to understand issues from other perspectives and challenging my thinking and approaches. The Set came from a range of backgrounds: Dawn from Community Health, Barbara from Nursing, Gill from Nursing Education, and myself from industry. Ken, who worked at the Civil Service Staff College, was the fifth member of the Set, although personal circumstances precluded him from attending many meetings. The Set Advisor was Donna, a full-time member of the Revans Centre who recently achieved her PhD in Action Learning.

I initially struggled to understand how the Set could contribute significantly to each others’ learning other than by asking questions because I felt we had little in common. I understood from my previous experience the value of learning in groups and the importance of establishing a supportive learning environment (Slavin, 1990) although I had always worked in peer groups from my own organisation or in teaching groups with the same learning outcomes or course objectives to provide a common goal. However, as time has passed, the value of
the Learning Set became startlingly evident. We came from different backgrounds with different styles, cultures and assumptions and so viewed and understood the world differently. This enabled us to set aside any prior assumptions about our research areas and to more openly seek to understand each other and each other’s work and research. We were able to challenge and question each other openly without endangering the mutual support that is one of the most important attributes of a Set (Foy, 1974). Conversations identified many similarities and commonalities in terms of our work, experiences and research, and these enabled the questions and discussions to grow as we learnt more about each other, although we always valued the difference above all else.

The Set did, of course, have the ability to ask questions but the learning process was so much greater than that. My colleagues frequently viewed situations from different perspectives and discussing these provided insight and learning. This learning was applicable not just in my research but also in my working life.

A particularly useful example of the Set providing personal insight was when, after four months, I missed a number of Set meetings due to work commitments. I generally sent apologies to the meetings beforehand although this was not always possible due to the late nature of the pressures at work. When I attended my first full meeting after several absences, I arrived late and Dawn and Barbara told me they were considering joining another Set, as they believed I had left. I was somewhat taken aback by this and said I was now back and we should, therefore, move on.

In retrospect my logical approach, that I had been absent and had now returned so we should move on, was more than a little glib and dismissive but at the time I
had some difficulty understanding why Dawn and Barbara wanted to continue to talk about my absence. Donna made a very useful intervention that although I had accepted the situation perhaps Dawn and Barbara needed to talk about their difficulty with my absence. The insight in this situation was that I needed to understand situations from others’ perspectives, and although I had learnt this lesson many years before, and had helped others to learn it through my years in training I had, quite simply, forgotten it when I was personally involved. Thus I experienced, in the early stages of my research, the fact that seeing a situation objectively was quite different from seeing it subjectively – in this case the logic that I had returned was clearly insufficient and needed to be augmented by a discussion to generate understanding of the implications to others and to the Set caused by my absence. This need to understand situations empathically from others’ perspectives was a lesson that I was to learn many times over through my development and engagement with my research.

My work in the years immediately preceding the PhD research had primarily been logically and quantitatively based and I had thought I would continue this style of research for my PhD. However, the need to understand others’ perspectives gained more importance, and I came to consider that following a quantitative approach would not provide the insight and understanding necessary to further develop understanding about the nature and perception of change. I realised that positivistic or post-positivistic approaches would probably not provide the full breadth of understanding to enable me to fully understand the richness of others’ perspectives.

I understood positivistic approaches to be based upon a premise that there is a “reality out there to be studied, captured and understood” [Denzin & Lincoln,
This adherence to a scientific doctrine whereby objectivity is the watchword was described by Guba (1990) as “rooted in a realist ontology, that is, the belief that there exists a reality out there, driven by immutable natural laws” (p.20). Post-positivism is less vigorously scientific and assumes that reality cannot be absolutely defined, only approximated (Guba, 1990). As a research methodology, this “empirical experimentalism” (Guba, 1990, p.19) has clearly helped in many achievements and breakthroughs of knowledge.

I have previously adopted an approach to understanding behaviour that I now interpreted as being positivistic; a typical example being the competence framework I designed for the Rolls-Royce and Bentley Motors in 1996. This framework was based on the premise that if we clearly defined the exemplary behaviours that the business required within a given role or level of management, and if we enabled objective assessment of these behaviours with a structured and behaviourally-anchored rating scale, and if we supported achievement of these behaviours through aligned development programmes, then we would have a greater likelihood of developing the requisite behaviours across the given population. Moreover, a number of people could observe an individual working and form the same conclusion about effectiveness, given that the same behaviours were being witnessed and referenced against the same rating chart, or metric.

A challenge I frequently heard when developing such approaches was that we were seeking to create homogeneity and I used to counter this with the assertion that we were creating excellence. What we were actually doing was creating conformity with a blueprint or ideal to enhance consistency, but at the same time, not providing freedom or flexibility, or indeed demonstrating that we valued different, personal approaches. My view now is that we should not precisely define
exemplary behaviour, but should instead illustrate examples of appropriate
behaviour whilst explicitly acknowledging that the list is far from exhaustive. We
should, I believe, also acknowledge that our thinking needs to develop through time
and the definition of appropriate behaviours will, of course, change through time.

This paradigm shift (Guba, 1990), informed my research and approach from the
beginning and I sought to work on the basis that there could be no blueprint to
introduce and manage change – rather my approach needed to be multi-faceted
and interpretive. I decided that, in order to manage change effectively I needed to
understand the relationship I have with my research and my work, and allow my
thinking to develop in an emergent and iterative manner. Notwithstanding these
early declarations of change in my personal style and approach, I still struggled
many times through the research to rail against the pull of the scientific paradigm.

Yet, the paradox was that the different approaches were, when I reflected fully, of
significantly greater value than traditional, positivistic approaches to study. I
commented at the end of my first year with the Revans Centre that, "If I were to
rate the last twelve months in this programme against my previous experiences in
traditional academic programmes, then I have delivered very little and it probably
equates to two months work. If, however, I rate the last twelve months in terms of
personal and professional learning and development then it is worth ten years."

So, the intent to work differently was formed within the first year of experience of
engaging with action learning as opposed to academically studying action learning
as I had done with my MSc. As previously stated, I failed against this resolve many
times through the years of research and writing, yet finally I managed to come to
an understanding that the research is as much about me as it is about change in
organisations – I am a part of the research and as such, the struggles I have had to maintain this new approach are themselves worthy of writing up.

The following chapters will explain my research and my personal development in much more detail, and will chart the progress of both to an informed understanding that will contribute to the body of knowledge in a meaningful and accessible way.

I have, through this thesis, thought deeply about whether to name individuals or whether to preserve their anonymity, and come to the following conclusion. Where individuals have been members of my Learning Set, faculty members of the University, or have personally given me permission to include their names, then I have done so. Where they are work colleagues or clients I have given them the choice to be named and I have respected their decision. Hence, some people are referred to by name, whilst a few are referred to by initials, or by job title.

The question of anonymity arises also with organisations and I have concluded the following: where the organisation is one where I have worked as an employee then I have named them because they have been referred to within this Chapter. I have conducted research within three organisations that are mentioned within this thesis, and my position regarding these is as follows:

I have named Rolls-Royce and Bentley Motors Cars because they originally sponsored my research and the then Chief Executive gave permission for the Company to be included openly within the thesis. Naming them is, I think, exceptionally useful in terms of helping the reader to understand the change
agency as detailed in Chapter 5 and how it was influenced by the iconic nature of the business and its heritage.

The Manchester charity, hsbp, has been named because I was provided with permission to do so by the then Chief Executive, Dianne, who as a fellow Set member asked me to help her with her research in exchange for providing an opportunity to test out the change model that I had developed. This is detailed in Chapter 7.

The final research organisation requested that I not refer to them by name as they wished to preserve their anonymity given the cultural changes that we identified and initiated in the work and research in the business. They are, therefore, referred to as ‘X Limited’, and the Managing Director is referred to as ‘MD’. This is detailed in Chapter 10.
Chapter Four

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Four Vignettes of Change

This Chapter describes four formative experiences of change that I encountered prior to undertaking my PhD research – experiences from which I learnt something about organisational change, and which have, to varying degrees provided insights into my later work. It was clear to me when I wrote up these vignettes that my thoughts at the time were different to those when I was writing – at the time I saw the lessons as laws or rules of effective change management, now I view them more as learning from specific situations which was contextually appropriate but which need to be tested in other contexts before I can comment on their utility and applicability. Notwithstanding this they are important lessons in effective change management, interestingly each from the perspective of less than effective organisational change management, and as such they critically informed my later work and research in this area.

There were, of course, many experiences of change prior to undertaking my PhD research, but four in particular stand out as being formative and significant, not only in terms of developing my emergent understanding of effective change, but also in terms of guiding some of the principles upon which my subsequent work was based. These four experiences come from four different organisations and each is an example of how well meaning change efforts were unsuccessful because of an insufficient understanding of change or because of a lack of integration across the various strategic and operational elements of the organisation. Thus, each vignette illustrates principles of effective change derived
from my experience and which informed my research. The four experiences are
detailed below as part of the contextualisation of my experience and my research.

Change by Attrition – Nottinghamshire Constabulary

My first conscious experience of organisational change occurred when I was in the
Police Force and had completed my training and moved to the Force Training
School in Nottinghamshire. My role was to design and run a series of courses for
Police Officers of various ranks and lengths of service with the primary focus of
generating a greater understanding of the Service within a socio-political context.
The programmes were designed to promulgate discussion about the different
expectations of the public and Police Officers about the role and raise awareness
of the need for Officers to operate in a way which was more consistent with public
expectations. We additionally used the time to focus on critical issues within the
Police Force, such as stress management, cultural development, and
communication skills.

I vividly recall being involved in a discussion with a senior Officer shortly after I
arrived, and he advised me that the training programmes that we were delivering
were, in fact, part of a wider culture change programme that was of significant
importance and would “take at least thirty years to complete.” I was totally
shocked at this statement and told him that I had a whole series of questions that I
wished to ask but that foremost among them was the question – ‘On what
evidence had they based the statement that the change would take thirty years to
complete?’ He replied that the prevailing culture was a function of the people
currently employed and that we needed to get to a position where all of these
people had left before the culture change would be complete – the maximum
length of service being thirty years. Whilst waiting for this attrition to occur the
plan was to simultaneously implement development programmes for new recruits so that they would behave differently.

My response to this was one of incredulity – I had long been of the view that the greatest pressure that anyone feels when they join an organisation was to belong to their peer group and that this was particularly the case within a job like the Police Service where the psychological and emotional bonds across shifts, or teams, were so very strong. I had experienced this first hand in my time as an operational Police Officer and indeed seen it very clearly whilst at Training School.

The classroom that I used was next to a room used for Probationer Training and I recall one day seeing a new group of Probationers arrive in civilian clothes for their first day of employment. They appeared to be in awe of their environment and looked uncomfortable, presumably as it was the first time they had been on a Police establishment. They visibly relaxed over the next couple of days and then on the Thursday they went to collect their uniforms, which appeared to result in a significant reduction in their confidence. They looked to be even more uncomfortable in their uniforms than when they first arrived and had some difficulty, as we all had found in our time, becoming accustomed to wearing a uniform. Indeed their level of self-consciousness was very high and very evident. This appearance continued for the next two days until they went to a Station for two weeks to shadow operational Officers prior to going to the regional Training School for their 14 week course.

When they returned a fortnight later they exhibited quite different patterns of behaviour and emulated their perceived peer group of operational Police Officers in many respects, including the way they wore their uniform, the way they walked,
the way they talked, and the way they engaged with their Trainers. I found this quite a marked example of the power of peer groups to inculcate change and to my mind it totally countered the notion that an effective culture change programme would take thirty years – surely those who started during that timeframe would, based on the evidence and my experience, be absorbed into, and thereby perpetuate, the prevailing culture.

It was clear to me that change cannot be managed by attrition – rather, I thought, change needs to be managed and a multi-faceted and coordinated approach to change needs to be put in place. I also considered that, whilst we were talking about different styles of behaviour and approach within our programmes, there was no evidence of this being done by others at an operational or indeed a strategic level. Therefore, our work was not being re-enforced by others and, consequently, it was fairly safe to assume that the majority of people we trained continued with their pre-existing behaviour patterns once they returned to their operational roles.

I had seen this many times when people had returned from a course and behaved differently to be met by comments such as 'leave them alone, they've been on a course and will be back to normal fairly soon'. In the majority of cases, the 'new' behaviours had a very short half-life because of the need to conform to the prevailing norms and behavioural protocols of their peer groups.

The lessons that I gained from this experience were:
The pressure to conform to a peer group is very powerful and can easily override the behaviours and attitudes developed within a training environment.

Change needs to be coordinated on a multi-level approach – we should not simply expect the required cultural change to be delivered through one medium.

Change cannot be implemented solely within a training environment – it needs instead to be managed within a ‘real-world’ context, supported by appropriate, congruent training interventions.

Change by attrition does not work due to the enculturisation process of conforming to peer group behavioural norms and expectations.

**Change by non-integrated direction – National Grid plc**

After leaving the Police Force, I went to work with National Grid plc in Coventry. I worked as part of a team of 24 people who had been recruited into the organisation with a clear objective of driving the culture change programme required as the company made the transition from nationalised industry to commercial enterprise. The de-nationalisation took place in March 1990 and I joined the company in the following September.

The Company then employed 6,500 people over England and Wales and managed the super-grid network transmitting high voltage electricity between the generating companies and the regional distributors. The Board was of the opinion that the business needed to be more commercially focussed now that it had been
de-nationalised and our group’s mission was to support this commercialisation through effective development of people across the business.

The organisational context within which we worked was manifestly different to those that we had left and this caused some difficulties, but of more significance was the difference between us and our client group. A large percentage of the employees had joined the business in the 1960’s when the transmission network was built and they had remained in the business ever since, with the consequence being that the average length of service was 27 years. They were principally engineers, or had worked so long within an engineering environment that they associated most closely with engineers. On the other hand, our average age was 26, slightly less than the average length of service, and none of us came from engineering backgrounds.

We worked from a site in Coventry and although we tried very hard to integrate with colleagues across the business, we frequently encountered difficulties in doing so due, at least in part, to the differences in our age and experience, and to the suspicion with which our colleagues regarded us as we had been heralded as the proponents of change within a traditionally change-averse organisation. Indeed, I recall one conversation with a colleague from the Engineering Training School who said that he ‘couldn’t wait for the change to be finished so that things could get back to normal’. This was a fairly typical response to the change initiatives that we were engaged in, and spoke volumes of the lack of preparation and lack of communication of the change activity.

Despite these difficulties, we worked hard in Coventry to establish a future direction for the managerial style and people development of the business and
then sought to influence the business managers to adopt our ‘best practice’ by
telling them that this was the most appropriate way forward for the business. We
were fully of the opinion that we were providing leadership direction for the
business and were surprised again and again that our exhortations for change
were ignored or only passively adopted by our colleagues.

Eventually we conducted a series of profiles against us and against our operational
colleagues and found that on virtually every single dimension they were
diametrically opposed to us. We concluded from this that we were coming from
fundamentally different psycho-social positions and using different language to
secure acceptance of the changes that we were proposing. Additionally, as
Group managers we were physically and culturally distanced from the operational
colleagues that we were trying to influence.

We learnt that we had to lead from within our peer group, rather than from ‘the
front’ and changed our tactics. I, for example, moved my office from Coventry to
Nottingham where I could work directly with my Engineering colleagues by sharing
offices and thereby increasing the opportunity to get to know each other.

This paid dividends and changes that we had previously struggled with were
implemented in a relatively straightforward way. It became clear that the
development of effective relationships was paramount when managing a change
scenario, and that these needed to be managed with full respect to the others’
positions and experience – something which we had sadly forgotten in the earlier
change attempts. We had been of the opinion that we were providing a critical
element of effective change, namely leadership, but this was separated from the
reality of our colleagues and therefore seen as an external and non-integrated
leadership. To exacerbate matters we were drawing on two specific power bases to influence the business - expertise and referent power. We were experts in our fields but we found this to be of little relevance, as the client group did not value the expertise - self-acknowledgement of expertise alone is wholly inadequate. Secondly, we were leveraging the referential power of our Board sponsors, but because of the fact that our work was not fully and explicitly aligned with other business strategies, and because the Board were generally distant from our work, this particular power base was also ineffective.

My learning from this experience was that:

- Change leadership needs to be based on effective working relationships that foster mutual respect and which show due regard for the historical experiences of all parties.
- Change communication needs to be based on the pre-existing frame of reference of those affected - it needs to be couched in a language that they understand otherwise we are not moving from the known to the unknown, we are simply presenting the unknown.
- Change leadership needs to be integrated within the company, not led from what is perceived to be an 'external source'.

Change by Permission – North West Water Engineering

I joined North West Water Engineering after leaving National Grid and was responsible, among other things, for the development of the top 12 project managers in the business. I developed an approach to their development that used 360-degree assessments in both formative and summative form to provide
ongoing feedback about their behaviour changes resulting from the development programme. We developed a competence framework that overtly stated the behaviours required of a ‘world-class’ project manager, based on research that had previously been conducted in the organisation by Andersen Consulting.

The first phase of the programme was for each of the twelve delegates to undertake a 360-degree assessment against the framework, completed by themselves, their manager, several peers and several direct reports. We then used this as the training needs analysis at individual and group levels and designed a twelve-month development programme through which each of the identified needs could be addressed.

The programme was designed on a modular basis and three months after each of the four modules, the participants re-completed the relevant section of the 360-degree assessment. This assessment was, wherever possible, completed by the same people that completed the initial assessment, and enabled us to take a measure of competence development arising from the module. The three-month delay between learning and evaluating was based on the research that identified this to be the minimum timeframe within which people can synthesise the new behaviours, and observers can recognise the changes, (Bickerstaffe, 1993).

These formative evaluations were, therefore, incredibly useful in terms of measuring the efficacy of the development programme and the progress being made by the twelve participants.

One of the key points that we wanted to get across was that, as senior managers, they needed to challenge the protocols and conventions of the business and
thereby support the creation of new and more effective ways of working. The MD recognised that there was a standard way of managing projects within the business and wanted these twelve participants to challenge this, and indeed to challenge the decisions made by the Board, to test out whether the decisions being made were the best and most appropriate for the business.

Within each of the module sessions we pushed the message of challenging the norms within the business but noticed through time that, although the participants accepted our comments and seemed, in the classroom at least to be persuaded of the merits of such a behavioural change, they seldom took this back to the workplace.

After the third conversation with the MD in which he complained that the participants were still not challenging himself, his colleagues, or the way of managing projects within the business, I asked him to discuss this directly with the participants. I commented that we had advised them of the need to challenge on a number of occasions, but perhaps they did not believe what we were speaking on behalf of the MD. Consequently, he came to the next meeting of the programme and very directly confronted the participants to challenge the organisational norms. They all agreed that this would be a good idea but nevertheless this agreement did not result in a changed behaviour.

We were so exasperated by this lack of action that we scheduled another session with the MD at which he again commented that he wanted to be challenged, but again this was to no avail. I reflected on this in terms of the organisational culture and observed that there was incongruence between the exhortation to challenge and the response to such a challenge within a pressured business meeting. Far
from being welcomed, the challenger was invariably criticised in the open meeting. The participants, and others within the business, were responding more to the behaviours of their senior managers and Directors than they were to their words. Actions speak louder than words.

My conclusions from this experience were that:

- Simply giving permission to change does not, of itself, result in change – people will be subject to the cultural conditioning and peer group processes that pre-dated the permission being granted, and if the processes, systems and behaviours in the business do not also change then they simply re-enforce prior behaviours and thus negate the permission.

- Incorporating development into our everyday behaviours is possible but requires sustained effort and structured feedback - it is also influenced by the degree of motivation and commitment that individuals have in terms of them wanting to change as opposed to being told they have to change.

- Change leadership needs to be behaviourally evidenced in a consistent manner – if we behave in a way which is inconsistent with the language we use, then the actions will speak louder, and their message last longer, than the words ever could achieve.

**Change by empowerment - Rolls-Royce Motor Cars**

Shortly after joining Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, I was asked to review the role of manufacturing team leader because the incumbents were operating inconsistently and this was causing quality issues and functional difficulties. I commenced a review of the 35 team leaders and found that they were, in fact, each doing things in a different way and that the management styles deployed by them varied
enormously. Some of the team leaders were operating in a way which was
autocratic and very task-focussed, whilst some were adopting a very people
centred approach to their work and not achieving their targets. As a result of the
review I ascertained that the role had been created some 18-months previously
when the business had amalgamated the pre-existing roles of Chargehand and
Foreman into the new role of Team Leader. They had done this largely because
other companies were doing the same at that time, and it seemed to the
managers, therefore, to be a sensible proposition.

At no time did they create a role specification for the role of Team Leader; they
simply created the role and placed those who were successful in the selection
exercise, into the role. When I interviewed the Team Leaders they were, to a
great extent, confused about the role themselves. I asked whether they had
sought to resolve this confusion by speaking with the managers and was advised
that they had done so at the start and were simply told that their role boundaries
were based on the fact that they were "not Foremen". This, of course, created
more confusion – they had moved to a new role that was defined only by reference
to what they were not, as opposed to what they were actually required to do.
Some of them reported asking again for some clarity only to be told this time that
they should "push the boundaries until either they feel uncomfortable, or their
manager tells them to stop, and that would define for them their role." In other
words, do what you want as long as you and your manager are comfortable.

When I asked the managers about this they agreed with the comments but stated
that they wanted to empower the Team Leaders to create the role themselves
rather than strictly define it so that they could be as creative and flexible as they
needed to be. They did not understand the confusion this had created in the Team
Leaders, but had recognised the evidence of this confusion in terms of differing styles and approaches, and inconsistent team performance.

In visual terms this seemed to me to be akin to trapping 35 ants under a glass and placing the glass upside down in the centre of a table. At this stage the ants are within a defined area – they cannot move beyond the wall of the glass but are free to move as they please within this area. The business had then, analogously, lifted the glass and advised the ants that they were empowered. Of course the ants would move in any direction, at different paces and for differing time durations thus scattering across the surface of the table.

The team leaders had done precisely the same thing – some had stayed put and continued to adopt the behaviours and approaches that had been successful for them in the past, some had marginally moved their behaviours, and some had radically changed their behaviours – but all in different directions. The resultant chaos was the primary cause of the performance issues that had been identified within the Manufacturing function.

To remedy the situation we established a work group comprising managers and team leaders and defined the role using the best of practices that had been evidenced in the preceding eighteen months since the role was created. We then augmented this role specification with a behavioural competence framework so that the managers and the team leaders knew clearly what the role entailed, and what superlative performance looked like; in this way we focussed on the what and the how of the job and then used this information to train all team leaders. Within a relatively short period of time we began to see a higher level of consistency across the business and the performance issues began to be resolved. Of equal
importance was the fact that the team leaders and the managers were now 
comfortable with the role.

My conclusions from this experience were that:

- Change requires both focus and direction – in this case the company 
  provided neither, it simply released the pre-existing boundaries of operation 
  and expected a changed conformity to emerge through time. Instead they 
  encountered an emergent inconsistency due, in no small part, to the lack of 
  direction, and the lack of focus over the early stages of implementation.

- Simply asking for change without providing support to change will, in all 
  likelihood, result in failure to achieve the objectives. The company offered 
  very little, if indeed any, support for the Team Leaders on the basis that this 
  would compromise the empowerment they were seeking to create. 
  Instead it left those subject to change, bereft of support at a critical time. 
  Thus some did not change their approach at all, preferring instead to 
  remain within their pre-existing comfort zone.

- Empowerment needs to be within defined parameters if the change is to be 
  successful. Releasing the parameters can, and in this case, did, result in 
  an orderly chaos as each Team Leader took the approach that they 
  decided would be appropriate – establishing new parameters would have 
  helped to provide focus and boundary to the new role and, thereby, to the 
  new behaviours.

These four vignettes illustrate some of my formative experiences of change and 
demonstrate how, through experience, I had learnt some basic principles about 
organisational change that I carried forward into my later career and which 
influenced some of my research. At the time of these vignettes I was aware of the 
lessons learnt although I would have undoubtedly written them in a different
manner - they would have been written as rules of change. As I wrote them up it is clear that my experience since the events has influenced the way in which I understand these vignettes and so the lessons learned are instead couched as lessons that were the result of my understanding of those situations, in those contexts, and at that time. That is to say that the lessons need to be viewed contextually. I carried some of these 'lessons' forward to help in terms of my development and applied use of the Five Dimensions model, which is explained in the next Chapter, and I revisit these conclusions in Chapter 11 when I seek to identify the critical learning that I have gained from my research.
Chapter Five

Case Study – Rolls-Royce & Bentley Motors Limited

This chapter describes how Rolls-Royce & Bentley Motor Cars was sold to Volkswagen AG and how the sale process caused significant emotional turbulence and uncertainty amongst the workforce. It describes the approach that I adopted as the newly appointed Director of Change Management to ensure that a clear and unambiguous future direction for the Company was developed, and how we subsequently developed a launch platform for Bentley that emotionally connected the workforce to the marque in a powerful and positive way. It explores the need for change management to be emotionally connected as well as logically structured. The Chapter also describes how the creation and communication of the future direction was compromised by reticence to accept the reality of marque separation.

My role at Rolls-Royce and Bentley Motor Cars was changed significantly when the company was sold in 1999 to Volkswagen Audi AG following a somewhat convoluted sale process. It changed due to my appointment as Director of Change Management, which coincided with the company undergoing the most significant change in its long history.

The owners of the company, Vickers plc, had originally sold the company in early 1999 to BMW AG but then accepted a substantially higher offer from Volkswagen AG for £483 million and reneged on the BMW deal. This provoked an angry response from BMW who, for the previous three years, had held the engine supply
contract for the Rolls-Royce Seraph and the Bentley Arnage models. BMW immediately gave notice on the engine supply contract and thereby notified VW that in twelve months they would terminate the supply of the engine and powertrains to the current range of cars. Furthermore, Rolls-Royce plc who owned the R-R marque and who had a close commercial relationship with BMW, notified the company that they would not allow VW to use the R-R marque upon acquisition of the company. Rolls-Royce Motor Cars had originally been part of the larger Rolls-Royce plc but had been separated out in 1972 when the parent company went into liquidation. Since that date the car company had operated as a separate company but had leased the use of the name, Rolls-Royce, for a peppercorn sum each year from its former parent. VW were, therefore, in a difficult position - they had paid a significant amount of money for the company and within a short time would not be able to provide engines for its products nor be able to use the Rolls-Royce name.

A protracted negotiation process followed involving the three principals, Rolls-Royce plc, VW AG and BMW AG and, after some time, a deal was agreed and announced. VW would continue with their purchase of the company, and would acts as stewards of the Rolls-Royce marque for a period of two years until December 31 2001 when the marque would pass to BMW and VW would then continue to build Bentley cars at the Crewe factory. BMW would, for the period of stewardship, continue to supply engines to VW and would establish their own manufacturing plant in England to continue to produce Rolls-Royce cars from January 2002 onwards. Rolls-Royce plc would continue to allow VW to use the R-R marque for the period of stewardship and then pass all rights to the marque, and associated matters, such as the flying lady, to BMW.
Both VW and BMW had sought to buy the company to be a 'halo' brand within their portfolio, that is, a high luxury sector product that would, by association, lift the prestige of other products within their portfolio. This meant that the new owners would probably treat us respectfully, and this appeared to be the case with VW, who almost immediately stated their intention to grow production from c.1000 cars per year to 9,000 cars per year, with an accompanying investment of £1 billion in infrastructure, design, and product development.

As a company we had little or no involvement during the negotiation process as we were the subject, not one of the principals, in this deal. At the same time we had to deal with a high degree of anxiety from the workforce who were, quite rightly, extremely concerned about their future. The company had been owned for many years by Vickers plc who had had very little contact with the company below Board level - the perception being that we were left to get on with running our business. Now we were owned by the third largest automotive company in the world, and it was unlikely that they would take such a hands-off approach with us. The workforce had a voracious appetite for information about the sale process and the consequent negotiation - they wanted to understand where they stood.

We worked very hard to obtain information about the negotiations from those involved but inevitably our employees received the best information about their future from the press who covered the emerging story with great interest. As a consequence of this we frequently ran briefing sessions for the company in which we were obliged to state that we had no new information to brief other than that which they had already read in the press. This in itself was a novel situation but the machinations of the negotiations were such that we were firmly of the opinion that if we did not say anything we would, as a senior team, be considered to be
part of the deal and be thought to be holding information back from the workforce. It therefore seemed to be the best option to distance ourselves from the negotiation process and simply act as conduits of information to the workforce, unless the press had done this job before us in which case we would simply report that we had no news other than that which had already been subject to press releases or press speculation.

At the conclusion of the negotiations we were provided with a press release that contained the detail of the agreement and we subsequently briefed this to the workforce. The response to the announcement that we would, at the end of 2001, stop manufacturing Rolls-Royce cars was received with great shock from the majority of the workforce. The emotional response was immense as employees came to terms with the fact that they would no longer be working on what they universally considered to be the best cars in the world. At that time Bentley accounted for less than half of our production, and a very much lower percentage of the prestige with which people viewed the company. Our employees were proud to work for Roll-Royce, not Bentley, as they were wont to tell us quite vociferously at that time.

The whole workforce was shocked and very emotionally upset by the decision for very few people had envisaged such an outcome. Many employees on the shop floor used black insulation tape to make armbands to signify their feelings about the loss of the Rolls-Royce marque and covered up the Rolls-Royce name on their work wear, again with black tape. The sense of pride of working for the company was very evidently centred on the name ‘Rolls-Royce’ and had been for many years. Employees were very proud to be making the finest cars in the world, and struggled to come to terms with the fact that in two very short years, this would
no longer be the case. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that others would continue to build the cars—others who had no experience, or tradition in doing so. This feeling of shock and depression evidenced itself in the local community as well. This was perhaps unsurprising as we were the largest employer in the area and the travel to work area was quite small thus creating a large number of employees within a relatively small community. Furthermore, we had many second and third generation workers at the factory, continuing the tradition and heritage of their relatives.

At the time I commented to the Board that the emotional impact was similar to that seen on the death of a close family member, and that we needed to act very positively and supportively to re-engage the workforce in terms of generating a belief and commitment to the Bentley marque, for here lay the future of the company and of the workforce. The emotional impact of the stated loss of the Rolls-Royce marque continued for quite some time and had a very detrimental effect on the whole workplace community in terms of production efficiency, focus, motivation, and achievement of targets.

As time went by, however, I revised my opinion about the nature of the impact being akin to the death of a close relative and instead, considered it to be akin to that experienced following notification of terminal illness. The business went through many of the stages seen in Kübler-Ross' [1970] work at individual, collective and organisational levels. For example, we had many cases, particularly at the senior management levels of the business, where people denied that the sale could ever go ahead, and produced some wonderful self-re-enforcing arguments about the folly of the decision to split the company. Others were positioned in a state of anger about the announcement and wanted to protest
vociferously against the decision to anyone who would listen. Others still wanted to change the decision by building cars at higher quality levels so that we would be seen as the only people in the world who could build Rolls-Royce cars, which would then influence a change in the decision—a clear form of bargaining. A smaller number of people accepted the inevitability of the decision and wanted to move ahead to create the new future with Bentley cars.

Whilst I could understand the process that the business was going through I was also in a position where I needed to deal with the issues and to motivate the business towards the future. As the newly appointed Director of Change Management, I held organisational accountability for ensuring that the business identified a future vision and direction and then moved purposefully in that direction. Unfortunately some of the senior members of the business, including the Chief Executive, remained in a position of denial about the impending loss of the Rolls-Royce marque and were of the view that the separation was so ludicrous that it would never happen. This position compromised our progress on a regular basis and I quickly grew tired of attending Board meetings to discuss the future strategy of the business only for the closing comments to be along the lines of, “but, of course, they won’t allow the marques to be separated, so this is all academic isn’t it?”

My view was that the information we had available to us at that time was that the marques would be separated in two years time, and that we would, therefore, lose the Rolls-Royce marque. As a leadership team, therefore, I felt that we needed to deal purposefully and proactively with the emotional difficulties of the workforce and create a clear vision of the future on which they could focus their attention. Creating a Vision for Bentley was of critical importance as this would provide the
future direction for the Company, a direction which the workforce could
understand and which would help them make the transition from Rolls-Royce and
Bentley Motor Cars to Bentley Motors.

I worked very hard to gain support for this approach although many of my
colleagues were, at the time, preoccupied with other matters pertaining to the
sale process, or held a different view of our position and considered the marque
separation to be a temporary mischief to hide another business deal. It was sad
to hear, once again, the comments that I had heard in National Grid, that it would be 'good when all this change was over and we could get back to normal – making both Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars'. I was firmly of the view that to take such a view would compromise our ability to manage the business into the future and so continued to push the case for transition to Bentley Motors over the next two years so that, come the separation in December 2001, we would be prepared and appropriately positioned to manage the situation.

I was, at that time, working with a group of senior managers on an extended
management development programme and decided that they would make an ideal
group of people to support me in developing the way forwards in this transition
process. The obvious benefits being that they all held senior positions, that they
worked across a variety of business functions, and that they would present a
broader base from which to influence the Board to create a change programme
for Bentley.

This group of senior managers, called the Pathway Group, after the development
programme they were involved in, were initially sceptical about the challenge I
presented them with. They understood from a factual perspective that we needed
to make the transition from Rolls-Royce to Bentley but they did not have very much experience in managing organisational change at this level or indeed of working with the inherent complexity we were faced with. Furthermore, they engaged in regular conversations with their line managers and Directors who frequently took an opposing view about the marque separation and, therefore, the need to create Bentley.

Nevertheless after a couple of meetings in which I presented them with a proposed methodology of developing a Vision for the company and then sharing this with the Board they rose to the challenge. There was, however, continuing scepticism about the level of support we would receive from the Board. This scepticism was exacerbated when I told them that I had asked the Board to engage in the process of creating a vision for Bentley and that they had refused, because they were too busy doing other things. In truth, the Board were very operationally and tactically focussed at that time, and so were not inclined to engage with the strategic development of the business. They had, however, tacitly given permission for the Pathway Group to commence work on the vision.

I recall sharing the group’s scepticism but not discussing my own fears with the Pathway Group as I considered that this may exacerbate their own fears – instead I commented on the positive nature of the discussions that I had had with individual Board members on this topic and concluded that they were entrusting the Pathway Group to undertake this important piece of work. The Group, through time, accepted my comments and we started working on the development of the Bentley Vision.
We wanted to develop a statement that accurately depicted Bentley and could be used in both internal and external PR material as we worked through the organisational transition. We knew that the images we created through the statements would influence people’s understanding of Bentley, and could act as leverage to provide momentum for change. Additionally we had very recent experience of the fact that our employees learned a great deal about the company from the press and we wanted to ensure that there was a high level of congruence between external and internal messages.

This had caused us problems in the past when, at a time when sales had slumped, we launched a very positive press campaign announcing how strong and vibrant the company was, and how our cars were selling rapidly. At the same time, but in a disconnected way, we were putting people on short time and creating time-banking agreements to prevent the need for redundancies. The workforce could not reconcile the two images of the business and considered that the management were ‘playing games with their lives’ and creating a crisis internally so that they could ‘get rid of people’. It took us quite some time to explain to the workforce that we needed to display a positive and healthy image to our customers regardless of what was happening in reality, because these people would not buy cars from a business in trouble – they wanted to know that their cars would be produced well into the future. I concluded from this experience that if we developed a connected PR campaign, the press announcements would provide further confirmatory evidence of our push to the future and thereby act as a further motivational measure.

To create the statements about the future, we brainstormed a range of words that we thought were appropriate for the company and then clustered these into
groups. Each group of words was then expanded and explained to provide narrative text that would describe the business of the future. Our goal was to provide not only a Vision and a Mission statement, but also to be able to describe in detail how the company would operate as Bentley Motors, and importantly, how the transition to this future would be managed. These narrative texts were discussed with each of the business functions so that they could add their own perspectives, and gradually we build up a word picture of the new Bentley. In this way we secured functional understanding and commitment to our vision of the future and, in the absence of a strong Board champion, we were able to ensure that many of the functional heads were bought into the process and influenced their members of the Board to adopt a more directional approach towards creating Bentley Motors.

In the early stages of development we were focussed on the development of the statements and the description of the future with the intent of publishing this in some way within the company. However, as time passed I began to consider launching Bentley in a more positive and engaging way.

We knew that we had a large number of people who were either negative or ambivalent about the transition to Bentley and that we needed to capture their interest and create a genuine excitement about the future. Our view was that if we could create a compelling vision of Bentley Motors, people would be more predisposed to buy-into the future and then, in increasing numbers, to work with us to make the scenario we had created a reality. Of utmost importance in my mind was the need to involve as many operational managers as possible in the development process so that it became our Vision. In this way I could hopefully avoid re-creating the National Grid scenario where we had developed a new
organisational future without fully engaging the workforce and so had failed to inspire and motivate them to accept it, let alone to work with us to deliver it.

Describing a clearly delineated and structured path or route to the future was very important for my understanding and experience of the workforce was that they were typically change averse and conservative in their approach, with limited demonstrated confidence in the capability of the management team to progress the company. If we could, therefore, map out the transition in terms that would mean something to the workforce, then that would help us move towards a realistic understanding of the challenges we faced. Anything short of this would leave us with an espoused goal of increasing production from 1,000 cars a year to 9,000, but with no clear and manageable steps through which we could manage this growth. The likely outcome of such a scenario would, I thought, be intransigence and stasis, at a time when we would truly need the combined efforts of the whole workforce in order to succeed.

Accordingly, we worked closely with the manufacturing engineering function to understand how the factory would change through time and how these changes would be sequenced. This provided us with a project map for the factory infrastructure changes so that we could talk employees through it from their perspective; that is, explain when their workstations would move, where they would move to, and what sort of job they would be doing at various time stages through the following 2-3 years. We tried very hard to create a three-dimensional visual representation of the factory that had fly-through capabilities so that we could show people what the changes would look like, and what the factory would look like in Bentley livery, but this proved to be technologically beyond our grasp and so we
had to settle for artists’ representations of the factory from external and internal perspectives.

This was, I believe, of significant importance so that we could literally show people the future site to back up our words – we needed to convince them of the attainability of our future.

This was based on my belief that people need to understand the impact of change on themselves if they are to manage it effectively at a personal level. To talk positively and enthusiastically about company level changes is useful but it needs to be backed up by discussions about the personal impact of change on the individual.

Thus we started with a focus on developing a set of words and ended with a route map that would explain how the factory would change, how the sales volumes would be achieved, how VW would support us, and how the business would prosper. Each of these elements was mapped on to a project sheet so that we could see the linkages and the inter-connections and thereby more effectively manage the timelines and critical paths. This information was being used as the basis for presentations to VW to secure funding, and as the basis for internal project management of the functional and infrastructure changes that would be required. It was a very surreal experience to be developing and using a route map to the future of Bentley at 9,000 cars per annum, whilst concurrently hearing Board level conversations about the continuance of the connection between the two marques and the fact that the marque separation in 2001 would not occur.
We managed to bring all these component elements together in the Bentley Vision launch, within which we talked about the future, showed the plans and shared our confidence about achieving 9,000 cars per annum. In addition to this we created an experience, rather than a briefing, and managed to blend emotional messaging with structured plans to create a cohesive and persuasive vision of the future.

The Bentley Vision launch was, I believe, a vitally important element of the change strategy for the Company, and also a fundamentally learning experience - it was the first time that I had been involved in designing an event that was informative and emotive, inclusive and inspirational. It was a truly integrative piece of change management in that we expressly took full account of the need for change from strategic, operational, emotional and cultural levels and entwined them into the launch of a change process rather than simply an event. As we planned the Vision launch I was convinced that it would have a significant impact on the business and on employees at a range of levels and this proved to be the case.

We sought to address the needs of our employees on a number of levels - we wanted to:

- provide information about the future of the company
- provide information about how the changes would affect their working environment and working practices
- provide information about the Bentley marque through its lineage and its future
- connect them emotionally with the Bentley marque
- develop a confidence in the marque, the company and the future
Following the notification of the fact that we would lose rights to the Rolls-Royce marque in December 2001 the emotional trauma within the organisation was at an incredibly high level. I have previously commented that people made black armbands out of insulating tape as a sign of their distress which was, I believe, evidence of the fact that people associated themselves at a very personal level with the Rolls-Royce marque and, therefore, the impending loss impacted on their personal identity. In the early days post-notification I commented to the Board that the emotionality we were witnessing, and experiencing was akin to that on death of a close friend or relative. I had taken colleagues through the research of Kübler-Ross (1970) to help them to understand the process and then sought to influence them to work collaboratively to develop coping mechanisms and resolution strategies at individual and organisational levels.

I have to say that although the emotionality being experienced by the workforce was clearly evident, many of the senior managers did not seem to understand it from an empathic perspective, let alone share in the sense of loss. I thought this through and concluded that it was primarily due to the different nature of the jobs that they were doing and the lower length of service that they had with the company. Senior managers tend to be more ambitious in their career focus and to be more mobile; having less difficulty in accepting the need to move companies and, in doing so, to move regions. The shopfloor workers were much more connected to the actual job they were doing, more emotionally connected to the name Rolls-Royce, and more stable in terms of mobility.

In fact I recall a year before the sale announcement the Company had needed to invest in preparation for launch of new models; there was only a finite amount of investment money available and the company faced the strategic choice of
investing in either engines or bodies. The decision was made to invest in body technology and therefore, the engines for the Rolls-Royce Seraph and Bentley Arnage ranges were outsourced to BMW. Prior to this the company made its own engines, and a number of people were employed in a large machine shop, manufacturing engine parts and assembling engines.

Following the decision to outsource engine supply, we engaged in a consultation process with the workforce and advised them all that their employment with the company would be protected and that we would work with them on re-training to help them make the transition from engine manufacturing to body assembly. As a senior team we envisaged this being a positive news story and anticipated little if any objection from the workforce; instead we were faced with a barrage of complaints and it took a significant length of time to manage the actual transition. We had looked at the change in role as being much less significant than the workers had because we had offered job security. For the engine workers, however, the change in role was an immense change. I recall talking to some people who said that they were not interested in job security – they wanted role security. When we talked at length to them on an individual basis, it transpired that some of these people had spent up to 30 years working on the same job, at the same machine and with the same people and they thoroughly resented the fact that the company was moving them to another role, notwithstanding the fact that they were still going to be working for Rolls-Royce. This episode provided us with evidence of the change resistance of the workforce and should have forewarned us about the emotional impact of the marque separation announcement. Notwithstanding this forewarning, I was still shocked by the sheer level of emotionality experienced on the announcement of the division of the marques.
As time passed I revised my opinion about the sale notification being akin to being informed of a death, and realised that it was, instead, akin to being informed of the terminal illness of a close friend or relative. This meant that instead of coming to terms with the news the organisation went through a long period of denial and rejected the notion that the news they had heard would actually occur. Even within the Boardroom conversations took place that it would be illogical for VW and BMW to carry through with the agreement and that in the following months the decision would be rescinded and we could all 'go back to normal'.

Throughout this process it became clear to me that, whilst we as managers and leaders conceive, develop and implement change in a logical and rational manner - it is actually experienced on an emotional level. Therefore if we want to manage change effectively we need to deal at both intellectual and emotional levels otherwise buy-in and support is likely to be compromised. In short, we would be failing in our responsibilities to support people through the change transition process by neglecting the psychological and emotional state with which they received, perceived and addressed the change itself. Intellectualising the issue and dealing solely on a logical basis would be inadequate as a management response.

Part of my role was to manage the culture change of the business, and whilst this was to a great extent performance driven in terms of value-added behaviours, it seemed to me that it was at this time critical that we supported people with the transition from Rolls-Royce to Bentley in a way which adequately dealt with the emergent and very obvious emotionality.
I had spent several months working with the Board and senior colleagues on the definition of the Vision for Bentley and the Mission for Bentley and eventually we finalised the statements as follows:

**Bentley Vision** – “We are Bentley Motors – the authentic British motor company dedicated to the design, engineering and crafting of the world’s most respected high performance motor cars.”

**Bentley Mission** – “To dominate the highest price segments of world car markets in terms of brand image, product supremacy and ownership experience.”

These were both very powerful statements as befits a car like a Bentley, and I was very keen to ensure that we launched the statements in a way which helped our employees confront and deal with the notification of marque separation, and, perhaps, more importantly, enthusiastically focus on helping us make Bentley a reality. I therefore proposed that we engage in a vision launch that would be different to anything the organisation had done before and which was self-evidently an emotional experience. Persuading the Board of the merits of this approach was somewhat difficult but over time they accepted the proposition and supported me in the design and development of the event.

Predictably the launch of the Vision and Mission statements needed to be accompanied by information on the goal deployment process so that each function, team and individual knew what they needed to do to contribute to the achievement of not just the overall goal, but the short and medium term targets that would be used to measure our progress. Together with the Pathway Group we developed the strap line for company communications as “Bentley – the new
synonym for excellence” to signify that we were taking over the mantle of Rolls-Royce in terms of setting the benchmark for others to follow. Continuing to use the notion of excellence, we identified five business drivers that we subsequently went on to use as the framework for the business performance measures and cascade goal deployment process. These business drivers were focused absolutely on achieving Bentley and were excellent products, excellent people, excellent customer experience, excellent processes, and excellent shareholder value.

In recognition of the changing world that we found ourselves in we established a communication process whereby we committed to work consistently towards achievement of the Vision and Mission statements and to constantly monitor and communicate performance against the business drivers through the deployed goals in each function. We also acknowledged that we would spend time scenario planning to create alternative futures that we would then validate and test prior to making a decision. These scenarios would be kept secret until decided as a course of action at which point they would drop into the short / medium term goal planning framework and be used to drive the business forwards. In this way we were able to overtly state that we were creating stability around the short to medium term, but that we expected uncertainty in the long term and that we were working to make concrete plans to enable us to achieve our longer-term ambitions within the overall context of Vision achievement.

This provided us with a very clear structure for managing the business and enabled us to focus each year on a set of key goals, achievement of which, would lead us towards the Bentley Vision and Mission. Each of these Key Goals was stated against a business driver and was then further broken down by the various
business functions to a set of actions which they would take accountability to deliver. Cascading onwards, these functional actions were then broken down to a team or individual performance level so that each person knew how their work fitted into the overall business plan and strategy, and how they contributed to achievement of the Bentley Vision. The deployment structure is depicted below.

Fig 3: The Bentley Goal Deployment Process
Over a period of several months we created an event that we considered to be entirely appropriate as a Vision launch. Details of the event were kept a closely guarded secret so that the impact of the event would be high at both individual and organisational levels. Throughout the design I routinely encountered people, including the Chief Executive of the time, who stated that the event may well be a waste of time and money as the decision would perhaps be rescinded and we would revert to Rolls-Royce and Bentley Motor Cars Limited prior to the marque transfer date. My response to this premise was that it would be folly to manage an organisation through a period of significant change on the basis that it might not happen – because if it actually did happen then we would have no management response to the situation and would have yet more difficulties than we were experiencing at the time. Rather, my position was that we needed to plan and work on the basis of information currently known to be fact – that we would lose the Rolls-Royce marque. Should it come to pass that the situation was reversed then we would, at the very least, have increased the emotional attachment and awareness of the Bentley marque, which we all knew would be the basis for future growth of the business.

My operating premise gradually became more accepted within the business, which was itself a testament to the many hours I spent discussing the issues and influencing the thinking of my colleagues and the Board. There was still an intractable belief across the business that the marque separation would not happen but I was eventually able to secure the budget and resources to create the Vision Launch event.

The event needed to be different to anything the organisation had previously experienced and so conventional briefing sessions were discounted automatically.
I took this view because such briefings historically had a fairly low face validity within the workforce. They had typically followed a similar format of presentations by the Chief Executive and selected Members of the Board, followed by a question and answer session during which relatively few questions were ever raised. The events were essentially a one-way transmission of information at a cognitive level and were not ‘an experience’. The Bentley Vision launch had, of course, to convey certain information about the company, the marque, product development and sales forecasts and operating plans, but I very much wanted it to also to be an experience that people would live through not simply listen to.

I managed to secure a four day window within the re-development of one of the large buildings on site; coincidentally the building we used had housed the machine shop where engines were once manufactured, and, with an external events company, developed a vision launch event that could be experienced by the whole organisation over a one-day period, including the night shift. We sent personal invitations to each member of the organisation asking them to attend a Bentley Vision launch at a given time – there was very little information on the invitation apart from the time and place which caused some fairly intense speculation around the organisation as people wondered what the event would be like.

In the building we constructed a large 500 seat auditorium with roadways running through the seating area and with a large stage on which it was proposed to position the mid-sized Bentley (MSB) which was scheduled for launch two years later. It was this new car that gave us such confidence for the future – it would be positioned in a different sector to the existing Bentleys, and would generate a sales volume unheard of in the company. It was, at that time, a very closely guarded secret and although people in the company knew that we were working
on a new model, only a handful of designers, engineers, and senior managers had seen the car.

Showing the car at such an event was a very audacious plan given that no car company would ever release details of a car or let people see it so far away from launch as the commercial sensitivity surrounding a new product launch was incredibly high. Nevertheless we planned to show the car but did not actually receive permission to do so from the VW Board until the day before the launch event, which was, in itself, a very challenging situation to manage.

The Bentley Vision commenced with people making their way through the factory to a large door into one of the factory blocks. They waited outside this door which was the only thing in the factory painted Bentley green and on the appointed time were invited through the door into a large area in which were parked thirty vintage Bentley cars from the Bentley Drivers Club. The owners stood next to their vehicles and the employees had half an hour to mingle with the owners and to look at, sit in and talk about the vintage Bentleys. This element was designed to start to get people associated with the lineage of Bentley and to recognise that it was as auspicious as the Rolls-Royce lineage with which they were more familiar. After the half hour the associates were invited through into the inner stadium arena, which seated people in tiered seats around a central stage, with three roadways into the arena to allow access for cars.

The event started with the stage lights dimming for quite a time and then an old man walking onto the stage looking somewhat bemused. His opening words were:
“So this is Crewe? I remember it from my days as an apprentice railway engineer.

“Standing on the footplate, peering into the darkness, feeling power quivering away beneath the steel floor as that bloody thump from the steam engine hurtled you into the night. From time to time the searing white flash of a station, then back into darkness.

“That’s when I fell in love with big engines and huge torque, I suppose. But not on rails; on roads – and racetracks.

“Oh, sorry! How rude of me. Allow me to introduce myself. Walter Owen Bentley, of Bentley Motors. I died in 1971, of course, but they’ve allowed me out for the day. I was curious to see what you lot have been doing. After all, that’s my name on those cars you know. I wanted to see what the future holds.”

This was a high risk approach but the audience seemed to connect with him straight away and in doing so were part of the W O Bentley story – we had personalised the marque to the man. The rest of the event was designed to develop this theme through time so that we explored the lineage of Bentley, in terms of design, and racing heritage and then connected with the future development of the factory to enable the marque to continue into the future in the form of the new car.

Firstly we had W O Bentley talking about the early successes of the Bentley cars at Le Mans, and showing a sepia-toned video of Bentleys winning the race five times
between 1924 and 1930. This, together with a rousing ‘reminiscence’ from W O 
Bentley, established the lineage and stature of Bentley – it created a platform on 
which we could build the future.

We then used W O Bentley as the ‘anchor’ to ask questions of the Board and to 
challenge their thinking in a fairly rigorous manner that would reflect the critical 
analysis of the employees, whilst providing the link between past, present and 
future in a way which had integrity and connectivity.

We started with the Chief Executive being driven into the arena in a vintage Speed 
6 Bentley, the sounds and smell of the engine at close quarters being evocative of 
the past, and again connecting the audience with the cars. WO Bentley then 
spoke with the Chief Executive and asked about the current state of the company 
and the plans for the future.

Tony, the Chief Executive, informed WO Bentley about the difficulties of the sale 
process, and how we had been ‘proud to look after the Flying Lady with care and 
skill’. In this way we acknowledged positively the loss of the Rolls-Royce marque 
and then turned attention to growing the Bentley marque. He discussed the 
recent history of the marque, the launches of the Mulsanne Turbo in 1984, the 
Continental R in 1991, the Azure, and the Continental T in the mid 1990’s, and 
then the Arnage in 1998. He then announced that Bentley had been 
commissioned to build a car for the Queen, thus overtly stating the dominance of 
the Bentley marque. The section finished with Tony informing the audience that 
we had just purchased EXP2, the second car that W O Bentley ever made, and the 
oldest surviving Bentley, as well as the world-famous Blower Bentley used by Tim 
Birkin to win Le Mans in 1930.
W O Bentley acknowledged the fact that the marque had been well cared for and suggested that everything now could carry on as today. This statement was immediately challenged by Tony, who asserted the build plans of 9,000 per year, thus taking the focus into the future.

The Sales and Marketing Director then talked about the positioning of Bentley in the High Luxury Sector, which amounted to only 50,000 annual sales world-wide, and expressed a desire to capture 5% of this sector with large Bentleys. At this stage a new Arnage Black Label was driven into the arena to provide a vehicular focus. He then described how the company planned to launch a medium sized Bentley and then to move purposefully into the adjoining Upper Luxury Sector, which within five years would grow to 180,000 cars per year – a 5% market share of this would equate to 9,000 Bentley sales per year. He further discussed the global positioning of Bentley and described how the sales and marketing programme would drive sales up to the target of 9,000.

The Manufacturing Director then took the stage and discussed how the factory would change to accommodate these higher build volumes, how the factory investment of £62m would be spent and how the layout of the factory would change quarter by quarter through to MSB launch in 2002. He took care to talk about each section of the factory in turn, even those that were not intending to be moved, so that each person had a direct connection between their workplace and the information being shared.

The Design Director then commented on the design cues that had been used for the new Bentley, from the 1952 R-Type Continental, and other Bentleys through
the past forty years, showing that the new MSB would continue the Bentley lineage and tradition and enable the company to grow. Again, cars were driven into the arena so he could point out each design cue and thus bring the design to life. This section, more than any other, provided a very real link between the Bentleys of yesterday and the Bentley of tomorrow.

The Chief Executive then commented that,

“We have decided that the first showing of the project MSB – the mid-sized Bentley – should be here. Not to the press, or even our partners the dealers, but to all my colleagues in the audience: to you, the people who’ve kept the faith with this company through all the uncertainty of the past.

“We wanted everyone who works at Crewe to share our excitement at what tomorrow holds for Bentley. To see where we’re going: the future for Bentley and for Crewe.”

He then revealed the MSB to the audience – a move that was unheard of in advance of press releases, and a move for which we had secured permission from the VW Chairman only the night before. The audience were overwhelmed with the first sight of the new car, and this achieved our intention of creating an excitement and a positive energy about the future for Bentley. The final section of the event was used for the announcement that Bentley had commissioned the design of a race car and was returning to Le Mans the following year. The audience then left through a phalanx of production Bentleys to view the new acquisitions and a quarter-scale model of the race car.
The Vision launch event had evidently achieved the objectives that we had established, and which have been previously detailed in this chapter. The event was highly emotional, but positively so in a way which effectively provided counter-balance to the negatively oriented emotions at the time the marque separation was announced. The over-riding opinion of those who attended the event was that the future with Bentley would be promising and exciting. They still had the residual anxiety about the loss of the Rolls-Royce marque, but this was mitigated, at least in part, by the information they now had about the planned growth of Bentley and the information about changes to the factory.

Having completed the Vision launch session I was very excited by the response from the audiences in both the content of the presentations, and the centrality of the Bentley marque in the event. Almost without exception employees seemed to find the event to be exciting, inspirational and motivating and a straw poll of people leaving each session found similar high levels of enthusiasm throughout the day. This was exactly the response that we had hoped to create – a surge in the emotional connection of the workforce with the Bentley marque and an increase in the understanding of the Bentley lineage.

It seemed as though we were at last starting to move forwards in terms of the emotional understanding that we had sought to generate. My enthusiasm was, however, short lived when I chanced across the Chief Executive at the end of the day. I stopped to ask him how the day had gone and to provide him with the initial feedback we were receiving from the workforce in terms of their enthusiastic appreciation of the launch. When I asked him how he thought it had gone he replied that he thought it was a good event but that he was relatively unconcerned with the immediate responses as he thought there would be little or no medium to
long term impact. I replied that it would be very difficult to derive no residual value from the day and that this would only happen if we did nothing further afterwards to consolidate and build on the Launch. His reply was that he had no intention of doing anything else on the basis that we had “done the launch and now had to get back to work.”

I found his approach particularly difficult to understand and argued with him about the need to sustain the level of organisational interest but to no avail. Thereafter I encountered increasing reticence from the Chief Executive and the Board to engage in strategic debate about the change programme and consequently my level of disillusionment increased in parallel. I found that, whilst I had plenty of tasks and objectives to keep me busy, the divergence between my views on change management and those of the Board, who became increasingly focused on operational matters, became overly distracting and I therefore started to look for alternative positions in other companies.

On several occasions prior to leaving I spoke with the Chief Executive about the Vision Launch and he reaffirmed his position that it would all come to nothing “when the takeover was cancelled at some point in the future.” My view on this had not changed – the risk of the sale falling through seemed to me to be negligible despite the media hype and the desire of the Chief Executive for this to be the case, and we needed therefore to pursue a change agenda of establishing a strategy for Bentley Motors. Secondly, even if the sale did fall through there was still a need to enhance the reputation and understanding of the Bentley marque amongst the workforce and so anything that we did would not be in vain.
Sadly, I was unable to persuade him to my point of view so continued to work on
the creation of the change architecture that would enable the various business
functions to work together in a more integrated and connected manner than was
previously the case. I continued to do this under the Bentley umbrella for I decided
that regardless of the position taken by the Chief Executive, I could not possibly be
seen to be anything less than wholly positive about the future of Bentley, or to
diminish in any way the power of the Vision Launch.

The work that we had done to create the change management plan which was
integrated and coordinated across the functions was, in my view, precisely the
right thing to do. Whatever happened to the marques, it was clear that we were
set for German ownership and my experience of working with VW confirmed that
they had a very logical and structured approach to doing business, and set highly
demanding goals which they expected subsidiary companies to achieve. In real
terms, ownership by BMW or Volkswagen would have limited material significance
to the need for increased functional collaboration if we were to successfully
achieve whatever targets our new owners set for us,

Through the period leading up to the Vision launch I had started to create an
approach that would ultimately be called the Five Dimensions of Change model - a
means by which the various strategic and operational activities within the business
could be mapped and managed in a coordinated and integrated way. The creation
of the model is described in the following chapter, and subsequent chapters
discuss how the model was latterly challenged, and revised to ensure that it
became more useful in a wider range of contexts.
Reflections as a change agent

Perhaps the most significant learning for me from this episode was the critical importance of leadership and commitment to a vision at times of change. The Board were, it is clear, overly focussed on operational change and protection of the Rolls-Royce marque and so were unwilling to commit their time and energy in developing the Vision for Bentley. Even when, after much hard work and discussion, I managed to influence them to undertake the Vision launch there was a high degree of reserve from the Board and a continuing unwillingness to build on the Vision to further support the connection of the workforce with the Bentley marque. It seems to me that constancy of purpose and consistency of approach are of critical importance.

Constancy of purpose means that the leaders of an organisation need to identify their vision for the future and then translate this into a coherent strategy that can be communicated clearly at all levels of the business. Quite obviously, describing the vision and strategy needs to be done in language and at a level that is appropriate to the audience, thus there may be a number of descriptions used for the same approach underneath the overarching Vision statement. Once this has been committed to and communicated then the leaders need to focus their communication, their activities, and their strategies on this with clear and constant conviction. Failure to do this will, I believe, undoubtedly result in mixed messages being communicated to the business with the consequent result of uncertainty as I witnessed and experienced at Rolls-Royce. Constancy of purpose means being totally committed to the Vision and the strategy and taking every opportunity to reinforce it with the workforce so that, through time, they too become committed to the defined future state of the business. Leaders need to
recognise that they are under the 'managerial microscope' at all times and that all aspects of the communication and behaviour are being observed and compared against their espoused direction and values by their colleagues and their reports. Divergence in the messages, verbal and behavioural, will be quickly identified with detrimental results.

Consistency of approach is similar but translates more into the behavioural dimension of the business leaders in that there needs to be a very high level of congruence between words and behaviours - having made a commitment to behave in a particular way, the leaders of a business need to consistently do so. Again failure to be consistent will result in the confusing mixed messages that were evident in this case study.

Other factors that seemed to me to be important in a change scenario are vision, coordination and capability.

Vision – this is the clear definition of a desired future state (Lewin, 1951) in terms that are meaningful to all members of the enterprise, and which identifies, for each individual and group, how the future will be different from today. The vision provides a sense of direction and enables change activities to be coordinated and focussed. The alternative to a vision is a change programme that is based on the desire to move away from something – the burning platform discussed by Connor (1993). This can be a very powerful platform for change but it is clear that when a platform is on fire those on the platform will seek safety by leaving in the quickest and most accessible direction – they will move but not necessarily all at the same pace or indeed in the same direction. The provision of a vision helps to unite the people within a change scenario to a particular direction and so helps to ensure a
A coordinated and cohesive approach is adopted from the outset. The platform for change created by the leaders must be realistic and focused on achievement of the vision, but it must also be accessible and meaningful – there can be very few shop floor workers who would be motivated by a vision to, for example, 'increase market penetration by 12%'. Such wording may work exceptionally well within the Boardroom but would have limited impact elsewhere where notions of market penetration are less well understood. Instead the wording could be changed to focus on increasing sales through a quality drive, or ramping up production rates to meet increased customer targets with the consequent impact of company prosperity and sustainability.

Coordination means that the change programme, to be successful, needs to adopt a measured and structured approach that integrates the various organisational functions into a coherent plan of activities. There is a clear need for a logical and planned approach that takes full cognisance of the risks involved and seeks to mitigate these through effective risk management approaches and a coordinated plan of action. 'Failure to plan means planning to fail' as the old adage goes, and never more so than in times of change. We know that people tend to operate on a fairly habitual basis and that at times of change the tendency to remain in, or revert to, a comfort zone can be particularly compelling. For example, look at the relative intransigence of the Rolls-Royce Board, who, with two notable exceptions were very conservative in their approach and thereby compromised the benefits that could have been derived and sustained from the Vision Launch event. The additional obvious benefit of adopting a coordinated approach is that the route forward is broken down into 'bite-size' pieces so that all members of the business can understand what steps they need to take, and how they need to behave, in order for the Vision to be realised. Breaking the route
down into manageable steps also enables the achievement of milestones en route so formative evaluations can be conducted and used for onward communication across the business as a means of developing a sense of achievement and thus allowing the business to achieve its Vision by building on successes.

**Capability** means looking at the organisation and objectively assessing the degree to which it has the capability to manage the change transition or transformation. Many management teams are very capable at managing operational matters within a business and of managing incremental performance improvements, for that is the role required of them – fewer are those who have the ability to envision a future that is not directly and obviously connected to the present and then mobilise the organisation to achieve this within a given timeframe. Thus, leadership capability is of paramount importance, but so too is the capability of the practitioners within the business who will be required to learn new skills, new business processes, and new approaches if the Vision is to be achieved. It is often said that if we continue to do what we currently do then we will get what we currently have, in other words, to achieve a different outcome to that which we enjoy today, we need to do things differently. Let us not assume that everybody in the business has the capability to do this – instead we should seek to understand their capabilities and map these against our future requirements so that we know how and where to target our development resources. Included within this topic is also the ability and practice of a business in terms of empowering its people to achieve change within their own working practices - effective organisational change is the combined result of collective changes of many people underneath the overarching vision and direction of the leaders. Failing to establish the clear parameters and outcomes when empowering direct reports will result in
managers not securing the micro-level benefits that they need in order to contribute to the macro-level plans.

As mentioned previously, however, there is personal learning as a change agent as well as observed learning — namely that the change agent, as an immersed practitioner, must pay full heed to the emotional experiences of others, and of their own emotions so that they can fully and empathically understand what is happening, and generate responses and strategies that take the full human and organisational perspectives into account — failing to recognise the importance of either diminishes the whole change programme. In this change programme I clearly paid full heed to my own emotional responses, but cannot say that I paid the same degree of focus and empathic understanding to others.

**Reflections as a researcher**

As a researcher engaged with this process of change, I did so predominantly from an external and distanced perspective, which, on the one hand provided me with the opportunity to objectively and analytically understand the change process at an organisational level; yet paradoxically ensured that I was not really in a position to understand what was happening from a full research perspective. That is not to say that I did not see or indeed experience some of the emotionality of the change process, rather that I only perceived part of the picture. As detailed several times through my ongoing development throughout this thesis I gradually came to the realisation that as a researcher I needed to participate fully in the change process, yet did not do this within this case study. I was, on reflection, overly concerned with my role identity and operating in a way that I believed was appropriate for the
job title, as opposed to working in a fully engaged way as a person-centred practitioner, and indeed a person-centred researcher.

This distancing compromised my research so I did not learn as much as I could have done about the change process within this context – although I did learn a great deal more about myself as a change agent and indeed myself as a learner. These lessons came later in my research phase when I reflected back upon the Rolls-Royce and Bentley experience – I have a great deal of data and information concerning the nature of the change programme, its contributions to the business planning process, and its integrations across the business yet the crux of the learning is that as a researcher – practitioner, it is imperative to fully engage, and to generate an empathic understanding of the change process on the lives of others.

Having said that I was objective and distanced, I still recognised the overwhelming emotionality of the workforce which, to an extent, enabled me to see and experience something that had hitherto been missed – namely that we need to ensure that we fully address the needs of those subject to the change. Prior to this episode I would have dealt with the change process in an even more objective and impartial manner. Much of the writing on change management is written from such a perspective and takes little or no account of the change as perceived by the subject. This is, in my view, a serious flaw, especially when one considers that many change initiatives fail precisely because of the way in which people react adversely to them. The literature comments on what people ‘do’ to resist change rather than fully exploring why people behave in a particular way. Thus we can recognise the behaviours people exhibit when people resist change, but we are seldom encouraged to fully explore why they feel that way. Researchers need to
more fully understand change from a subjective and empathic perspective and this can be achieved through additional qualitative research into the experiences and feelings of those subject to change.

I recall a conversation with an employee of the organisation at the time of the announcement. I adopted a clearly impartial and distanced view about the sale process and outcome – a fairly typical management position as one would expect from someone overly focussed on role identity and role image, whereas my colleague took a viewpoint that was personal and emotionally connected. I discussed the facts and possibilities; he discussed his feelings. As I reflect now upon this conversation it is clear to see that his views influenced me heavily in the creation of the Vision Launch as a participative and emotionally connected event as opposed to a linear communication process. I do not, however, recall his position influencing me directly at the time – I was far too concerned with stating and re-stating the eventual benefits of the change. My reliance on the overriding logic (from my perception) was transparently obvious. I did, however, clearly learn a great deal from the conversation and I recall discussing it at some length with my Set colleagues who, I have to say, understood immediately what my work colleague was saying, and, importantly, how his emotions were strongly influencing his communication.

As a researcher I need to ensure that this learning becomes conscious and that I seek to understand the various perspectives from a qualitative viewpoint each time I manage change. I achieved a great deal in this experience, and need to ensure that I build upon it next time I am engaged in research prior to, and during, a change management project. The importance of thoroughly researching the background, history, experiences, and perceptions of all parties is fundamental. In
this sense the background research required for a major change programme is ethnographic in terms of its orientation – there is a need to fully understand the cultural, historical and experiential perspectives and accounts of the organisation, and to do so with a focus on both emotional and rational perspectives – only in this way can a truly empathic understanding be generated, and an aligned path forwards be generated.

**Reflections as a learner**

As a learner engaged in this episode I experienced the full range of emotionality that comes with commitment to a cause, in this case pursuing an integrated approach to change in the face of stiff opposition from more senior colleagues. It was the first time in my working life that I had connected at such a deep personal level with an issue and this provided me with the strength to challenge and argue with others in the business over an extended period of time. My experience of managing change prior to this episode was probably greater than many of my colleagues and I had learnt some very important lessons about the need to take the workforce with us, and to move positively towards a defined future. This experience consolidated my learning that it is important to change by moving towards a committed future plan – indeed the Rolls-Royce experience with team leaders detailed in Chapter 4, had demonstrated this to the business but the lesson had been lost through time.

Having the drive and determination to succeed in my endeavour to create a Vision Launch for Bentley came from my experience and my personal emotional connection with the need to do something very tangible for the employees who had previously demonstrated a strong reluctance to change. The key learning, then, is
that when I am able to blend experience with emotional commitment, I can achieve a great deal in the face of adversity.

Additionally I came to the realisation that change is perceived differently by those managing it than by those subject to it. People managing change tend to do so from a logical or objective perspective. They tend to deconstruct the change process down into its component elements and then place them together like a series of moves on a chessboard that will ultimately result in the goal being achieved. I have spoken to many change practitioners through the years and they have, almost without exception, reported their greatest frustration being when their change plans go awry because those subject to the change behave in atypical ways, or ‘behave irrationally’. I too have constructed many change programmes from a logical perspective, and expected good results, only to be confounded by the way in which people have responded to the plan. Many times I have questioned why they could not see my logic, when it was so clearly evident.

People who are subject to change, however, tend to respond on an emotional perspective with their initial position being “how will this affect me?” - a fundamentally different position from that of the change practitioner who would automatically ask, “how will this benefit the business?” Thus the impact of personal association with the change tends to create an emotional response which will, inevitably influence or drive their behaviours. I recall a colleague telling me years ago that emotionality and rationality are two different languages and in the field of change this certainly seems to be the case.

The typical response from a thwarted change practitioner, myself included, is to repeat the logic of the plan and the benefits of the change in a logical and rational
manner, but this does not, in itself, communicate with the emotionality of the subject to the change. Instead we should take Covey’s (1989) approach and ‘seek first to understand then be understood’ (p 236). In this instance we should at the outset of the change management plan, understand the impact on the individual, understand what will be beneficial to them as we move through the change, and understand how they may respond to the change before we communicate anything. In this way we can use this prior knowledge, assumptive or actual, to influence the way in which we communicate and manage the change process. In short, we manage the conflict of interests proactively by adopting a perspective that is emotionally and logically based, and which addresses the change from the different perspectives of those influenced by it.

Adopting this approach will help business leaders to ensure that the vision that they create is couched in language that is meaningful to their employees, and a shared teleological perspective can be generated (Senge, 1990).

I have learnt, therefore, that logic cannot always inform and that I need to understand the emotional and historical positions of my colleagues if I am to influence them effectively. Of course, knowing this does not absolutely guarantee success but it does help significantly in the creation and delivery of cogent and persuasive arguments that demonstrate an understanding of, and concern for, those who are subject to the change.

I made a very clear transition through this experience from a distanced and logical understanding, to a personal understanding of the change. The personal connection meant that I was able to discuss the change strategy from the position of centrality as opposed to one of dis-connection. I learnt, through this
development, that when I am in this position I can be very persuasive and influential and take people with me, whereas in my logical, impartial, and distanced mode, I can leave people behind because I do not speak with empathy and understanding of their lives and experiences. In order to do this I had to believe in the future so that I could help others believe in the same future - this is fundamentally different to logically knowing about the future.
Chapter Six

Creation of the Five Dimensions of Change model

This chapter describes how the desire to develop a non-interventionist approach to organisational change led to the development of an holistic and integrative model that connects strategic and operational activities within the business into a structured approach to enhance understanding of how to effectively manage organisational change. The model was developed through practical research in Rolls-Royce Motor Cars (RRMC) as we managed the transition of the company into Bentley Motors. The model is described at length and it is clear to see the deterministic philosophy that heavily influenced its design and utilisation in the early stages. This has been left for the purposes of gaining a full knowledge of the philosophical development that I have enjoyed, and which is explained in detail in subsequent chapters.

During the period 1999-2000 it became evident to me that the means by which we introduced and managed change, the change architecture, was of fundamental importance and that if we were to avoid the trap of interventionist change, albeit on a fairly grand scale, we would need to ensure integration at a number of different levels within the business. These levels would span the clearly obvious domains of strategic and operational activity, but would, in all likelihood, have a greater level of stratification to ensure that all possible lines of integration were explored. It was becoming increasingly clear to me that a systemic perspective (Senge, 1990) was required, if we were to effectively manage change on such a large scale.
I had previously experienced interventionist change where initiatives had been introduced into the company without full reference to the contingent circumstances, the pre-existing processes and systems, or indeed the prevailing culture. Each time I had seen this happen, the change had failed, and I did not want to the same to happen to this change programme.

Adopting a broader, connected approach was, I have to say, difficult because it was, quite simply, not the way things were done within the business at that time. The business was structured on operational lines with each line manager being responsible for the operations within their area. Although the business leaders had previously exhorted the management team to operate more effectively as a team, this had had little discernible impact. The managers were what I would typically describe as 'managers of business functions as opposed to managers of the business with responsibility for specific functions'. Consequently, with few exceptions, problems that were identified within a function were addressed within a function. Cross-functional working was evident where the functions had a mutual reliance or interface, such as between supply chain and production, but I could discern no real evidence of coordinated business management below the level of the Board.

This functional, or silo approach, was very common within UK manufacturing and worked as long as the problems encountered were straightforward or did not stray across too many functional lines of responsibility.

Senge (1990) comments that "as children, problems are never far away from their solutions – as long, at least, as we confine our play to one group of toys."
Years later, as managers, we tend to believe that the world works the same way. If there is a problem on the manufacturing line, we look for a cause in manufacturing. If salespeople can’t meet targets, we think we need new sales incentives or promotions…There is a fundamental mismatch between the nature of reality of complex systems and our predominant ways of thinking about that reality". [p63].

We need, therefore, to recognise that whilst the laws of cause and effect continue to operate within large and complex systems, it ceases to be the case that the two can be easily identified as being connected, or that they are close in terms of time. Wheatley (2002) comments that "there is no such thing as simple cause and effect within a complex system.” The level of inter-connectedness within complex organisational environments is significant, yet it seemed to me that little time had been spent thinking through how the functions interconnected at anything more than an operational interface.

This situation presented issues for me on at least two fronts – firstly, the managers responsible for the various business functions were very likely to want to retain their levels of authority and, secondly, they were likely to reject external influences from someone outside of their immediate line of authority. I anticipated that these two issues would also be exacerbated by the fact that, as the newly appointed Director of Change Management, I had organisational position due to my title, but there was significant confusion about the nature of my role and the scope of my remit. My positional authority as Director carried weight, but not so much as if I was Director of a line function, doing a role that the business understood and had some prior experience. It was as close as possible to a
Group, or corporate headquarters, role as one could come on a single site operation.

I recall working in National Grid in the early 1990's when, operating as I did within a corporate function, we repeatedly encountered difficulties in implementing our ideas. We had the authority and position to push group initiatives into the business but the regional managers were reluctant, on occasions, to take up the initiatives and put them into practice. At times it seemed that we would ask for something to be done and months later we would see the first signs of implementation, which we had expected to see within a matter of days and weeks. I found this temporal disconnect between cause and effect to be very frustrating and it was with some relief when I subsequently joined Rolls-Royce because it was a single site operation, albeit of 2,500 people.

My early time at Rolls-Royce was within a functional role, and, the business was far less complex than the multi-site nature of National Grid. There was still the temporal disconnect between cause and effect as one would expect but it was in no way as extreme as my National Grid experience. This, of course, was influenced not only by the single site nature of the business, but also the fact that I was now occupying a recognised and conventional line position within the HR Department. As a senior manager with functional responsibility I could make changes across the company within my own sphere of accountability and they would generally be accepted and implemented in line with the planned timescales. Occasionally we would encounter a recalcitrant manager but they could, more often than not, be rather quickly persuaded to 'fall in line' with, and conform to, the implementation plan.
It was clearly evident, however, that this influencing capability was intrinsically connected to my role – I could exert organisational influence within my own function, or in others’ functions when the primary driver was within mine. For example, I could change the structure of the HR team without reference to others because it was my team, and as long as the new structure continued to provide the same, or an enhanced level of service, no questions were asked. Also, I could make changes across the company in areas which affected other functions but where the primary driver or responsibility rested within mine, for example, I could make changes to the performance management system as this was ‘owned’ by me although it was implemented by my management colleagues within their own functions.

Had I tried to make a change in another function that was nothing to do with my own areas of responsibility then I would have had a much more difficult challenge, and, to a great extent, so would others had they sought to make changes within my function. We operated in an ostensibly collaborative manner as a management team, but very slightly below the surface the feudal, territorial lines were there as strong as ever.

We all tried to take an organisational perspective but our primary focus was our own area of responsibility and so, to a great extent, functionalism continued to thrive within the business, albeit in a veiled guise.

This meant that the challenge of developing a change strategy was made more complex – I was no longer in a functional role but rather had organisational responsibility for issues which mapped across all functions; I was working in a complex organisational environment where the lines of causation would be difficult
to identify and map; and I was working within a newly created role of which there was little, if any, understanding across the business.

My expectations, which were confirmed by experience, were that the role was very difficult to manage. I had the position to manage the change and to create the required culture but few understood what this meant, and fewer still understood how it should be done. Moreover, the operational managers tended to want to manage their own business areas themselves without 'interference' from myself. My role had moved from one of authority within my own functional domain where I could make changes happen to one of uncertainty, with organisational rather than functional remit, where I could only make changes happen through influence and engagement. An ideal role for a change agent to learn a higher level of skill, but nevertheless a very challenging role.

The challenge was, as stated previously, somewhat exacerbated by the fact that there was little role clarity or boundary certainty with my new position, and that the topic area of my role was little understood. I was operating truly within complexity and uncertainty, within a manufacturing organisation that was bounded and ruled by certainty in terms of its operating principles. I tended to talk to people about the fact that the world was no longer 'black and white, but many shades of grey' yet my colleagues wanted certainty – for that was their experience. In truth, I too wanted to create a level of certainty for the business – I wanted to create a 'relative stability' whereby we created an area of calm and stability which we could operate in, within a broader context of change, ambiguity and uncertainty.

As I reflect now on this period I remain of the opinion that the creation of a relative stability was the right thing to do, but that in doing so I failed to recognise and
resist the pull of the scientific paradigm - I created an approach to change that
gave the business what it needed but in doing so I presented a systematic and
structured approach that was culturally acceptable to the business and, at the
same time, was consistent with my prior learned experiences about change - that
a propositional approach was appropriate within a deterministic philosophy.

My primary objective was to provide a route map for the change that would be
acceptable and understandable by the management population, and which would
secure a high level of acceptance and buy-in so that the business could move
forwards together. I needed to acknowledge the reality of the covert functionalism
that existed within the business and manage within and around it - there was not,
in my opinion, sufficient time to challenge and secure a change in the
organisational culture as pertains this particular characteristic. Recognising this
reality significantly influenced my approach - I needed to operate in a very
consultative and collaborative manner with my colleagues, not least because I now
had hierarchical position but my ability to directly influence was very limited.

The first thing to do, I decided, was to draw together a group of senior, functional
managers who could work with me in the development of the change strategy. In
this way, I decided, we could develop a strategy that was as interconnected as
possible, in that the functional managers were collectively responsible for its
design. In fact, I secured the support of two groups of managers - one of
functional heads to develop the change strategy itself, and a different group of
managers on a senior management development programme, who would work
with me on the cultural change, with the first objective being the creation and
launch of the Bentley vision. This work on the vision launch is described fully in
Chapter 5.
The functional managers were ostensibly supportive of the approach I suggested but each in their own way worked quite hard to protect their own areas of operation from outside influence. When these behaviour patterns continued over several months with little sign of abating my levels of concern increased as it seemed that I was experiencing what Schon, (1973) calls ‘dynamic conservatism’, in that they were openly appearing to be supportive but in reality maintaining the status quo as regards their own functional interfaces at an organisational level – they wanted, quite simply, to retain their own spans of power and authority, but could not be seen politically to not engage in the development of the change strategy.

I discussed this at length with my Learning Set and we concluded that it was perhaps no surprise that the functional managers were adopting this line of defence – they were moving from the known to the unknown and, when faced with this challenge, many people work hard to stay with the known – particularly if they are unsure whether they can personally cope with the unknown. This was made more understandable when one considered the dual messages being provided by the Board – on one hand they spoke of the need to drive through change in the business and prepare for the launch of Bentley Motors with a rise in production over three years from 1000 cars a year to 9000, whilst privately engaging in conversations that focussed on the fact that the sale process would be halted for the two marques could never be separated and therefore, we would continue as we had before, although perhaps with a better investment strategy for new models.
I decided that, given these difficulties, the best approach would be to develop a structure for change prior to working on the change itself. In this way, I thought, the managers would understand the process of change; the requirement for integration; and the need for a strategic response, and that this understanding would help to facilitate a different way of working on the development and implementation of the change strategy itself.

My desire to avoid interventionist change was so great because of my previous experiences of ineffective change – where change initiatives had been conceived and implemented without, in my opinion, full reference to the organisational context and contingent circumstances. Such changes seemed to have a relatively short half-life and led inexorably to cultural and behavioural change being a transitory activity. I did not want, once more, to hear someone in the business say what a colleague from my National Grid days had said as we engaged in that cultural change programme, "I'll be glad when all this change is over and we can get back to normal."

This led me to start to think about a model of change that provided the information required to facilitate engagement and participation at strategic and operational levels and which focussed attention on integration. I, of course, referred to the most simple model of change that I know, that of, Lewin (1951) in which he used three stages – present state, desired future state and transition. Whilst, in many respects this model seemed overly simplistic, it had a high degree of face validity with the management team I was working with. The model appeals to strategically oriented people in that it prompts them to view the future in whatever terms they feel are appropriate, thus encouraging blue-sky thinking, whilst at the same time appealing to operational people because there is a clear and tangible relationship.
with the present; with the way things are already being done around here. I decided, therefore, that any change approach that we adopted would have these vital ingredients – it would have a connection to the present, it would have a definition of the future, and it would, self-evidently, have a transitional phase to connect the two.

The primary issue, here was that although Lewin’s three stage model worked in terms of understanding change as a journey, it was at least at a prima facie level perceived to be two-dimensional and, therefore, not sufficiently broad to encompass the complexity of a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional change strategy for Rolls-Royce. This issue remained even when I looked at more complex models which were based on Lewin’s work but took greater cognisance of the change process, such as Cummings and Worley (1975) who identified five component elements of effective change management namely, motivating change, creating a vision, developing political support, managing the transition and sustaining momentum (p.145).

Indeed, it seemed to me that the operational managers could understand and apply this approach at a functional level and still miss the need for corporate alignment and interconnectedness across the business. It could, in this way, result in a myriad of change initiatives across the business, which were functionally acceptable but corporately disconnected. I wanted to develop a connected and cohesive change programme and so needed to find an approach that explicitly identified the need for integration across the whole business.

I discussed this issue with the Set on a number of occasions, and some very useful questions emerged:
- Why is it important that the change is integrative?
- What specifically do you want to integrate?
- Are you talking about functional alignment, cultural alignment, behavioural alignment, or some other alignment?
- Why might the functional managers not want to secure corporate alignment - what issues might it cause for them?
- To what extent are you able to describe clearly your desired future for the change strategy?

I was firmly of the opinion that the change needed to be integrative because I had seen and experienced too many changes in other organisations, and indeed in this one, where the changes were pushed within one or two functions and then not carried through effectively, which invariably meant that the change was short-lived. The failure to fully implement a change was frequently due to people not fully accepting the need for the change, or not fully understanding the content or the process of the change, and consequently not carrying out the change in a consistent or coordinated manner.

If this happened within this organisation then the strong likelihood was that the business strategy would not be achieved. It was important that the whole business moved forward together to deliver Bentley Motors, and therefore, the approach needed to be integrated. We were facing changes to virtually every aspect of the business, from supply chain through to production, from sales and marketing through to finance, and if each function started pulling in its own direction then it would, in all likelihood, result in perceived success within some functions but failure at a business level because the business would no longer be integrated and coordinated. It would be akin to the team leader role confusion
that I encountered when I first joined the company, and described in one of the vignettes of change in Chapter 4.

We did, at that time, enjoy a level of coordination within the business, but this was, I think, the result of collective organisational experience gained over a number of years. I was of the view that this experience was a tacit knowledge within the business and that we would struggle to replicate it in a more complex production and business environment. We were about to embark on a change programme that would, because of the scale involved, be the closest thing to a green-field change that the business would face. We were, however, doing it on a brown-field site and therefore had to plan and make all the changes whilst at the same time ensuring that production volumes and quality were not compromised.

In response to the question of precisely what I wanted to integrate – this was clear to me. I wanted to integrate all of the change activities across the business. The critical word for me here was ‘integrate’ - I did not have the knowledge or experience to devise or manage the functional changes required, but I did have the knowledge and experience to ensure that each functional change was coordinated with all of the others. I wanted each functional manager to take accountability for devising their own change strategy, but to ensure that each one did so in an aligned and integrated manner. The Lewin model of change (Lewin 1951) did not provide me with sufficient depth or clarity to persuade the functional managers of the need for integration, so I decided that I ought to document precisely what the programme needed to integrate. The Action Learning Set helped enormously in this regard, through their questions and challenges. I occasionally found that I thought I knew what I wanted, but when challenged, could not articulate it cogently or concisely – clearly more thinking and research was required.
Obviously there needed to be functional integration in that the various functions needed to work together in the new business, as well, or preferably better, than they did in the time prior to the change. We also had the challenge of making the transformation from Rolls-Royce Motor Cars to Bentley Motors (detailed in Chapter 5). This gave us, I believed, the opportunity to challenge and develop the very nature of the business in the way that we would were it genuinely a green field development. We could define the very essence of Bentley and use this to focus and develop a cultural transformation, at the same time as developing the more tangible changes required within the business functions to deliver the increased complexity and higher volumes that would be required of us.

I therefore, discussed with the Chief Executive the proposition of mapping the whole of the Bentley business from a strategic and operational perspective and of, in effect, creating an architecture for the new business. We discussed the fact that we could, and I believed, should, use the change programme to challenge any issues that existed within the business and thereby ensure that we did not carry bad practice forwards into Bentley, or indeed miss the opportunity to introduce new, improved processes into the business. After some lengthy discussions he agreed, but wanted to see how the process might work – what would the change architecture of the change programme be like and how would it help us to manage the transition process?

This led me to think through at a greater level of detail the manner in which the change would be managed – the manner in which the required level of interconnectedness could be achieved. It would be relatively straightforward to create a number of functional plans to change the business and then lock these
together into a comprehensive, organisational plan, but I was convinced that simply collating functional plans would be inadequate – I wanted to create a coordinated methodology that ensured that all issues were covered, and that all possible lines of integration were included.

I started to map the levels at which we had encountered issues within the business and sought to use this as a blueprint against which any change proposal or model could be validated – if it did not address each issue area then it was unlikely to be sufficiently comprehensive.

I asked the management group that I was working with to identify the areas of concern they had about the business and which they would like to be addressed or clarified in the new Bentley business. The initial list was as follows:

- We are not sure what the business strategy is now that we have been purchased by Volkswagen – we know that they want us to sell 9,000 cars a year but do not know any more than that.
- It is not always clear how we achieve the business plan – what is the process for cascading the plan down through the business?
- Do we need to behave differently as leaders in Bentley as opposed to leaders in Rolls-Royce?
- How can we more effectively communicate with each other across the business?
- How can we ensure that all associates (employees) understand where we are going and buy in to working with us to get there?
- How can we manage the changes in a seamless manner so that we do not compromise production volume or quality?
I want to ensure that I retain control of my function – I am happy to work with others but don’t want them having excessive control or influence in my area. I am accountable for results and want to be able to achieve them.

What skills will we need in the new business and how do we get them as quickly as possible?

Do we have any real influence – surely Volkswagen will dictate what we do and how we do it?

Each time we spoke the list of concerns and issues grew – having the opportunity to discuss them was catalytic and at the same time cathartic. The managers could, in effect, normalise their feelings of concern in discussions with their peers. The level of anxiety was noticeably high and this encouraged me to create a process for change that would provide the relative stability that was required. I wanted to create a route map that would provide a structured pathway through to Bentley whilst concurrently addressing each of their concerns, and uniting us together as a strong and capable leadership team.

Having gathered these issues we discussed how they might be clustered and identified that they, quite naturally, clustered into four categories, or domains. Following on from the insights I had gained within the Action Learning Set meetings, and in recognition of our present knowledge state, we decided to populate each cluster with questions that we needed to discuss rather than definitive information. This approach prompted us to consider the future of the business from a somewhat broader perspective. It was different to our characteristic way of working but as a group we persevered and resisted the temptation to answer the questions at this stage.
The four clusters were as follows:

1. **Strategy or Direction**
   This cluster is concerned with the future shape, purpose and nature of the business. Key questions generated by the team included:
   
   - What is Bentley Motors?
   - What is the purpose of this business?
   - Where are we going?
   - What will the business look like?
   - What are the high-level business goals?
   - What is the vision for the business?
   - What are our core values?
   - In what ways will it be different from the business of today?
   - What is the most appropriate process to design and decide our future?
   - How much autonomy will we really have in the creation of our future - to what extent will we be influenced by the past, by the expectations of our new owners and by our own limitations?

2. **Functional and cross-functional strategies**
   This cluster focussed on the shape, purpose and strategies of each business function. Key questions included:
   
   - What will each function do?
   - How do we develop strategies for each function?
   - How do we manage the interfaces between functions?
   - How do we manage the interfaces between ourselves and other businesses within our supply chain?
To what extent should we align with the functional structures and processes of VW?

Are there any strategies that transcend the functions, such as communications, and if so, how do we deal with them?

How should we behave as leaders, managers and associates within the new Bentley?

How do we ensure that each function works effectively across the relevant interfaces – both explicit and implicit?

3. **Operational Processes**

This cluster was concerned with the day-to-day operational business processes to be used in the new Bentley. Key questions included:

- What are the critical business processes?
- How should we document the business processes?
- How do we ensure understanding of, and adherence to, these processes?
- What procedures do we carry forward and what procedures do we need to write anew?
- How do we involve our stakeholders in the creation and validation of our business processes?
- To what extent will the establishment of best practice hinder our future learning and development?
- How do we ensure that continuous improvement and innovative learning are embedded in our processes?
This cluster is concerned with the operational delivery of the functional tasks that collectively deliver the business strategy. Key questions included:

- How do we devolve and delegate accountability?
- How do we monitor and measure task achievement?
- To what extent is the way in which we achieve our objectives as important as actually achieving them?
- How do we feed back achievements to the operating plan and to the strategies?
- How do we ensure individual and collective capability to deliver?
- How do we define and develop the skills we need when this is new territory for us all?

These four clusters very obviously focussed on different levels of business operation, which meant that we had stratified the issues and provided a hierarchy or order for the levels, moving down the business from the Boardroom to the shopfloor. If we could connect each of these levels of activity identified through this process at a behavioural and activity level then, I considered, we would be moving towards the level of integration that I desired. We would have a clear line of action that passed through, and connected, each person and indeed each function within the business.

Moreover, separating functional strategies from cross-functional strategies and positioning them within the same level would help to ensure that, whilst the functional managers would be responsible for developing and implementing their strategies, they would be continually reminded of the fact that other functions
were doing the same and therefore, of the need for alignment at strategic and operational levels. The cross-functional strategies, such as communication, would additionally help to 'lock' the business together as we would explicitly deal with everybody in the business in a similar way — yet another explicit example of interconnectivity and integration.

We discussed this integrative philosophy over a number of meetings and gradually I was able to persuade and influence my colleagues that integration did not mean losing control, rather it meant retaining and affirming their functional leadership, but doing so within the context of the strategic development of a new business. The higher collective goal of delivering the new Bentley organisation meant that all functional heads were required to work together, for the task was too large and too complex for any single manager or indeed any single function to manage alone.

In these discussions I referred to work that we had already initiated to stimulate and indeed generate a labour market that would be able to provide the skilled labour that we would require in three years time. In this activity I had been working with business leaders from within the local economy and, although we competed for skilled labour, we had agreed that it would be beneficial for all if we could collaborate at a strategic level to increase the population of skilled workers that we would eventually compete for. Strategic collaboration and operational competition was the overriding philosophy and this seemed to provide a level of understanding amongst my management colleagues — they could each take accountability for leading their function but they needed to collaborate at a strategic level if their functional endeavours were to be grounded, integrated, and, ultimately, successful.
As we continued to work together we generated a greater understanding of the change process than we had previously enjoyed, and I was fortunate in that I could challenge our thinking at the Action Learning Set meetings that we held every couple of weeks. Through a period of several months I generated a set of five positions, or degrees of understanding about change, that I shared with my work colleagues and with the Set to help us to guide our thinking forwards. These heavily influenced our approach to the change strategy, and ensured that our thinking was aligned. They also gave us a point of reference when arguments and disagreements threatened to derail the process.

The five change perspectives are detailed below:

- **Organisational change cannot be easily defined. It needs to be managed proactively and yet the approach needs to be responsive to changing contingent circumstances**

  This position was the result of trying in vain to describe the full future position of Bentley Motors – we simply could not do it. Moreover, I came to the view that it would have been folly to try. Of course we needed to establish a vision, a direction and provide some contextual shape for that vision, but to define the future in finite detail was a different matter entirely. I often used to ask groups of managers to imagine that they could go back in time five years and then ask them to what degree of accuracy they could have described the present day organisation from that far away. All acknowledged that they would not have been more than 20-30% correct. On this basis, I would ask how they could possibly seek to accurately forecast and document the detail of the business for the next five years, particularly when that period looked to be far more
turbulent and changing than the previous five. Therefore, I reasoned, the 
vision should be sufficiently descriptive to allow the people in the business 
to understand and commit to achieving it, yet sufficiently flexible as to 
allow the business to be responsive to changing circumstances.

- **Organisational change is optimally managed through a structured yet flexible approach**
  
  If we were to manage the change process effectively then it was clear to me that we needed to have a structured approach, one that established plans and milestones, key performance indicators and evaluation measures; and which enabled us to monitor and review our performance on a formative basis. Additionally the process needed to be inherently flexible so that we could respond to changing circumstances without feeling bound to the early protocols that we established. I wanted the process of managing change to be a learning process in itself – we had never managed a change on this scale and so it would be presumptuous to imagine that we could define the management process at the outset – we needed to engage with the programme and, through our experiential and vicarious learning about change in this context, re-shape and refine our approach as we saw fit, whilst retaining the fundamental notion of structure and measurement.

- **Consistency of leadership behaviours is of paramount importance throughout the change process**
  
  We had each of us experienced the fact that actions speak louder than words when leaders say one thing and do something else. We knew that we were about to embark upon a mammoth change programme which
would take very many people out of their comfort zone and it was imperative, therefore, that we did so by constantly demonstrating consistent leadership behaviours concerning our commitment to the future, and role-modelling how we thought the people within the business ought to respond to, and manage, the change. That is not to say that we expected everybody else in the business to do likewise, but I was convinced that had we shown a lack of commitment then it would have been picked up and amplified across the business as evidence of our lack of clarity and confidence in our future.

We had experienced this in the manufacturing function when we had previously seen the effect of key players behaving inconsistently. We had decided to tighten up on timekeeping as we had begun to notice operatives standing around and waiting to leave instead of working up to the bell. We briefed all the line managers that we wanted them to control this within their own areas and fully expected the problem to disappear. Unfortunately it continued to flourish – when we spoke to line managers in whose areas the problem persisted we invariably got the response that ‘there was no point in trying to enforce the rule because the manager in the neighbouring area did not do it with his people’. Through this lack of consistency we were organisationally saying one thing about timekeeping but accepting something quite different, and it was the behaviours that carried precedence over the words. We needed to ensure that our words and behaviours were consistent and aligned within the change programme if we were not to be derailed in the process.
- **Congruence is needed at every level of the business and at every stage of the change process**
  The magnitude of this change programme was enormous and it was, I considered, essential that we sought alignment in everything we did. Establishing this as a principle meant that all the key managers would seek to secure congruence and alignment at each stage of the journey. The congruence was required at every decision point in terms of both horizontal and vertical interfaces so that the business processes and systems could continue to work effectively. It was also critically important that we secured and maintained a high degree of congruence with the high level vision and strategy statements that we had established at the outset. In this way, I reasoned, we would be able to build integration into the plan at the outset, and ensure it remained central throughout the process of change definition and implementation.

- **The interventions that deliver change can also be used to define further change and secure commitment to the required change**
  This was perhaps the most difficult to understand and explain but it was, nevertheless, very important. As a result of the first position that we identified, namely that the future cannot be easily defined and the change programme needs, therefore, to be intrinsically flexible to allow for changing circumstances, it follows that the future will become clearer the closer we get to it and therefore, the early change actions may well shed light on the definition of, and indeed the requirement for, later change action. Additionally the success of early change actions can be used
proactively to provide momentum and motivation across the business - success follows success being the maxim.

Having established and agreed these principles or positional perspectives, I started work to establish what the change process might look like. It was evident to me at the time that I needed to create a structured approach that guided the business through the various levels of activity and at the same time provided for an integrative approach. My previous educational and occupational experiences, together with my perceived need to create a clear approach to change, influenced me to generate a model of change, which is detailed later in this chapter. The creation of the model ultimately led to some of the difficulties that I have related elsewhere in this thesis. The model did, however, provide a structured means by which the managers could understand and work with the seemingly nebulous concept of change. Furthermore, it identified for them the fact that each function sat hierarchically and contextually within an organisational structure and culture, and that each needed to ensure that their approaches were integrated up-and-down through the business and across the business - in essence it provided an understanding of the need to 'lock' the business together as we embarked upon, and managed our way through the change process.

We had previously identified the four levels of stratification for the issues that were raised in the business, and I initially documented these in the form of a circle - or cycle - thus demonstrating that organisational change is a continuously iterative process, as opposed to an event that simply needs to be completed. In this way I sought to distance us from the interventionist change that I had previously experienced as short-lived and not fully effective.
The diagrammatic representation of the four clusters as stages in a process of change was very useful in that it illustrated to me that whilst review and evaluation was contained at a detail level within the clusters, it was, in fact, only implicit within the cycle itself. I was of the opinion that the business needed to take time out to measure the achievement of the change strategy and to initiate new strategic actions and responses when the strategy was achieved, or, more likely, when the contingent circumstances within which the business was operating changed and thereby necessitated a re-framing or re-focussing of the overall change management strategy.

Thus the fifth cluster, or dimension was created – a dimension that looks at review and evaluation processes, and ensures that learning is captured and fed back into the strategic planning process to enhance the capability of the business. We therefore now had five dimensions of change that spanned the full scope of business activity and are as follows:

- **D1** Direct – concerned with the overall vision and purpose of the business
- **D2** Describe – concerned with the operational and enabling strategies
- **D3** Define - concerned with the business processes and policies
- **D4** Deliver - concerned with the implementation of the business plan
- **D5** Develop – concerned with the ongoing development of the business

The visual depiction of this model is contained on the following page:
Fig. 4: The Five Dimensions of Change model

D1 - Direct

The first dimension is called Direct and it is arguably the most important dimension as it provides the foundation and context for the other four. Within this dimension the business needs to look towards the future and ensure that the overall direction and purpose of the business are thought through and articulated in an appropriate manner.

The sorts of activities that a business engages in within this dimension are vision formulation, definition of mission statements, and, for the more enlightened businesses, creation of values statements. These are the typical means by which
an organisation defines its future purpose, its high level objectives, and the way in which it wants to operate in achieving these objectives. The definition of the Vision statement is particularly useful in terms of facilitating the creation of identity and belonging across the business.

Freud (1921) identified that "in any collection of people the tendency to form a psychological group may very easily come to the fore" (p. 40). He further commented that identification of a single common trait (p. 49) and the acknowledgement of the possession of a common substance (p. 53) could help this group formation. This is part of the philosophy behind Vision statements; the other is about direction and purpose.

A business needs to understand where it is going at any moment in time—and, therefore, so do its people for they are the means of achieving the objective. It is part of the function of the leaders of the organisation to provide this defined direction (Rauch & Behling 1984; Jacobs & Jacques, 1990). Yukl (1994) identifies that “it is essential to articulate a clear and appealing vision and a strategy for attaining it. A strategic vision helps to identify the purpose of the organisation, its uniqueness and its priorities” (p.401).

Moreover, the vision needs to be shared, it needs to be understood and owned by the people within the organisation, and it therefore, needs to be described in language appropriate to the business and to the people within the business. Leaders need to inspire their people to share their vision for “people will not follow until they accept the vision as their own. Leaders cannot command commitment, only inspire it.” (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p.15).
There is a clear association between vision and organisational culture (Trice & Beyer (1991) in that an innovative culture is likely to be encouraged by a vision expressed as a radical ideology, whilst a maintenance culture is likely to be encouraged by a conservative vision (p153); thus the vision is important not only in terms of where the business is going, but also in terms of the behaviours that it explicitly and implicitly acknowledges as being useful along the route; or, put simply, how it actually gets there.

It is also clear that, as aspirational statements of the future, the vision can also provide a template or operational blueprint for the present. For example, if the business determines that it wishes to excel at customer service and that this should be evidenced throughout the internal value chain as well as interfaces with external customers, then these behavioural exemplars need to be incorporated into the performance management systems so that they can be evaluated and developed on an ongoing basis. Achieving the required behaviours does not happen once the strategy has been crafted – they need to be developed and inculcated on an ongoing basis to ensure that they become, quite simply, the way we do business around here. This cannot be achieved if the behaviours are not defined in clear terms through the process steps of this model and the first stage in this process is the definition in overview terms of the business philosophy, values and purpose. Therefore, the desire to excel at customer service needs to be included in the first dimension work on vision. Without this clarity at the outset, people within the business will do what they think is best, or what they have done previously, which will, in all likelihood, result in incongruent behaviours, mixed messages and confusion.
In addition to the visionary elements of the business strategy, this dimension also incorporates the strategic objectives of the company in terms of products, markets, customers and competitors. It is vital that the needs of all stakeholders are incorporated within this dimension to ensure that these can be understood and delivered through the ongoing management of the company.

Managing a business through change requires consistency of approach and constancy of purpose, and these cannot be achieved without clear direction. Direct, the first dimension then, is of fundamental importance to the success of the change process.

**D² – Describe**

The second dimension translates the vision and direction into enabling strategies and operational strategies. I would define enabling strategies as those organisational strategies which define and describe the fundamental operation of the enterprise in terms of people management, and which therefore transcend functional or operational strategies. Operational strategies meanwhile are those functional plans and approaches adopted by each part of the business through which they deploy their expertise and resources to deliver their part of the overall business strategy. Clearly the approach will differ across the various functions but the manner of delivery needs, as mentioned earlier, to be consistent. Achievement of the required level of consistency is determined by adherence to the overall vision and strategy and facilitated by the enabling strategies.

It was apparent to me that there are four enabling strategies that promote and ensure the alignment necessary to achieve constancy of purpose and consistency
of approach. These enabling strategies are concerned with resourcing, performance management, reward and communication.

The first of these is the resourcing strategy. This is concerned with the design and structure of the business; the manner and process through which employees are recruited; and the deployment of appropriate retention strategies. It also is concerned with the training and development philosophy and practice and the manner in which succession is managed. In this way the business pays close attention to the recruitment and development of its people. By taking this outside the functional domain we can ensure that people within the business are developed across the business as opposed to just within their own specialism or function.

The second enabling strategy, performance management comprises all activities and processes that ensure the strategic and operational business objectives are cascaded throughout the organisation so that every function, team and individual understands their role and the requirements placed upon them. The means by which the business formulates, communicates and deploys its operational targets is a fundamental element of this strategy, as is the development and application of company competence frameworks and performance appraisal systems.

The third enabling strategy, reward, is vitally important and yet the need for this to be consistent with other elements of people management is often overlooked. Component elements of this strategy include the pay structure and the composition and deployment of benefits packages and bonus schemes. Central to this enabling strategy are any actions used to ensure that the company becomes, or maintains its position as, an Employer of Choice.
The dearth of skilled and experienced people is an issue for many contemporary organisations and in order to succeed in the quest for talent, businesses must ensure that employees and potential employees choose to work for them rather than for one of their competitors. By competitors I mean other firms working either in the same field, or indeed within the same labour market. It is currently a sellers’ market in many respects and people with highly sought-after skills, such as design engineers in the automotive industry, can virtually select for whom they wish to work. The initial response of prospective employers is to increase the salary on offer as a means of attracting the best individuals.

Of course, salary is a prime driver in the early stages of a recruitment process, but my repeated experience is that salary ceases to be the sole motivator once initial discussions have commenced. Employees also want, and demand, good career prospects, development opportunities, an appropriate reward structure that meets their lifestyle requirements, and a company culture that is congruent with their personal style.

The successful recruiter can demonstrate that the company pays close attention to those other elements of the recruitment package and thereby seeks to establish a psychological as well as a financial contract. This approach works effectively for retention as well as recruitment and I think that all elements need to be considered within a well-crafted reward strategy. It is essential that organisations recognise to deal with their people holistically and address issues such as work-life balance and cultural values.
The fourth, and final enabling strategy, I would contend, is the communication strategy. This includes both internal and external communications and it is important that there is a high degree of congruence between the two. Too many organisations fail to recognise that their employees read the press and advertisements and form opinions about their employer based upon external communications media and messages. About five years prior to the sale of the Company to Volkswagen AG we had experienced a downturn in sales and needed to develop an alternative approach to resourcing, while at the same time presenting a buoyant image to the media and prospective customers. Managing the internal communications was very difficult until we realised that the media messages of success were having a greater impact on the employees than the internal messages of difficulty. In essence the employees believed what they read in the press above what they heard from management briefings.

In addition to this process of communication this strategy should also include the manner in which employee relations are managed and the means by which employee attitudes are surveyed and acted upon. Managing employee relations can be made more difficult if there is inconsistency between the espoused values of the business and the manner in which employee representatives are actually valued. Managers need to ensure that they are consistent in their approach and it is appropriate to establish operating principles that govern the way in which employee relations are managed and which are entirely consistent with the preceding definitive strategies and approaches.

These enabling strategies provide the bridge between the overall business vision and the day-to-day management and operation of the business. They provide additional supporting information, which will help employees to understand more
fully the nature of the business and what they need to do individually and collectively to contribute. Their contribution is, through this process, understood in terms of both what they need to do and how they need to do it. This dimension is without doubt the largest as it provides the vital link which in turn ensures congruent and aligned business processes and behaviours.

D³ – Define

The third dimension is paradoxically overlooked by some and overly focussed on by others in the business. Those who work at a strategic level tend to overlook this dimension and focus on the previous two, which are, by definition, strategic. Those who work at an operational level tend to overly focus on this area for it provides the structure and process conformance that many businesses demand, particularly in the manufacturing arena. Each of the above approaches has inherent weaknesses – without this dimension the work of the strategists would probably never reach its full potential because it would not be converted into operational practice; and overly focussing on this area to the detriment of the preceding two dimensions means that the business processes will probably be developed without context, or, more likely, iterated from prior experience without full reference to current context.

This, then, is an operational dimension and is concerned with the practical implementation of the strategies developed in the first two dimensions. This dimension comprises the business processes, policies, and procedures that ensure the business strategies, overarching, functional and enabling, are implemented, and that the goals are achieved in a consistent manner.
Without clear and unambiguous documentation of business processes people will inevitably revert to former practice or do what they think is best. This is perhaps made most evident within a manufacturing process where the need to follow a standard operating procedure is of paramount importance to ensure consistent delivery of product quality and volume. It also applies, however, to other, less obvious business processes. Whenever an employee does not follow a business process they are potentially compromising costs, quality, delivery, or health and safety, in which case they are potentially causing harm to the business. Alternatively they may have found a better way of doing a particular job, in which case this should be incorporated into the policies and procedures documentation so that everybody can follow this optimal process.

D⁴ - Deliver
The fourth dimension is concerned with the actual delivery of the business strategies as operationally defined through the preceding three dimensions. It is this dimension that ensures that the processes and procedures are implemented in a manner that is congruent with the overall vision and values of the company. Simply defining the business processes is insufficient to ensure commitment to follow them. It may ensure compliance but this will not, of itself, ensure that the consistency of approach and constancy of purpose are conveyed throughout the business. Communicating the appropriate approaches and demonstrating the desired behaviours as encompassed within the values statements and the competence frameworks should never be underestimated in terms of importance.

Leadership and management behaviours are fundamentally important within any organisation and this is particularly the case within an organisation undergoing change. It is imperative that the management team consistently demonstrates
the desired behaviours otherwise the inconsistencies are likely to be exploited by those not fully supporting the change process. Inconsistencies between words and behaviours of the leaders will result in the words being seen as hollow management rhetoric rather than a call to behave or act in a given way. My experience is that employees are more prone to copy the behaviours of the leaders than to follow their espoused philosophies in the absence of confirmatory actions by the leaders themselves.

Provision of exemplars and role models needs, however, to be supported by an effective goal deployment process which ensures that each individual understands their part within the business, and commits to deliver their accountabilities. In addition to this level of communication and delegation is the critically important need to ensure that the team has the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to deliver their tasks, or part of the strategy, in a coordinated and consistent manner.

Devolving tasks is clearly of limited effectiveness unless those to whom the tasks are delegated are capable of achieving the challenges placed upon them. This again links to preceding dimensions in terms of performance management systems and communication and development strategies.

At an operational level it is important that the delegated authorities or accountabilities are measured and evaluated on an ongoing basis to ensure that there is alignment with the strategy and to ensure that the tasks are being achieved. Again the measure here is not simply of task achievement but of the process through which the goals are achieved – the how is important as well as the what.
The fifth dimensions sits above the requirements for ongoing review and monitoring processes and comes into operation when of the following two preconditions apply - when the strategy and objectives have been achieved or, more commonly, when the contingent circumstances of the organisation change to such an extent that the business strategy needs to be reviewed.

There seems to be increasingly fewer instances of the catalyst for change being the achievement of the predefined organisational strategies, which itself, I believe, a function of the increasing level of change activity at the macro-economic level.

The more common situation occurs when the prevailing circumstances change beyond those known or envisaged at the point in time when the vision and strategies were developed. There is a need, therefore, to constantly scan the environment to understand the developments in the marketplace in terms of customer requirements, technological advancements, competitor actions, global and national economic conditions, and other factors pertinent to the organisation and its business. Understanding the external situation and contingent circumstances will frequently call for nothing more elaborate than undertaking SWOT and PEST analyses, and, of course a proactive approach to risk management.

Should the scanning and evaluation processes lead the business to re-evaluate its strategic positioning or operational focus then the process flows once more round to the first dimension. This time, however, the business needs to ensure that it does more than a desk-top evaluation and modification to the strategy - rather a
full and comprehensive analysis needs to be undertaken to ensure that all of the circumstances and factors are understood and catered for within the new strategy.

The Five Dimensions of Change model, then, is a cyclical process model that effectively locks together all aspects of the change process throughout the organisation. It is imperative that change is aligned with a clear vision and business strategy and that all subsequent activities and interventions are coordinated and consistent. For the model to work effectively within an organisation it requires overtly exemplary leadership behaviours to be demonstrated at all times. Leadership and effective communication are clearly critical determinants of the change process and managing change is a core competence at every level of the business. These skills need to be learned and developed very quickly indeed and this pragmatic model provides a template for this learning process, encompassing as it does all elements of business management in terms of task and process management.
Chapter Seven

Case Study - hsbp

This chapter explains how I used the Five Dimensions model to support the development of a growth strategy for a Manchester based charity led by a Set colleague. It explores the utility of the model within a fundamentally different sector to the automotive sector within which it was created, and concludes that the model has a validity that works across sectors. The chapter identifies that, whilst the model separates the change management focus into five phases, or Dimensions, they are not discrete and therefore, the application is not linear – it is possible, and in all likelihood, probable, that a business would work with two or more phases at the same time through the development and implementation of the change strategy. Notwithstanding this realisation, the Five Dimensions model was found to be a valid proposition to support this organisation through a change management programme.

In early 2002 I was asked by Dianne, a fellow Set member and the Chief Executive of Henshaw's Society for Blind People (hsbp) to help in the development of a growth strategy for the charity to take them forwards over a five-year time frame. Dianne was a colleague in my second Action Learning Set and we had spent many hours discussing our research and our personal learning. I had recently developed the Five Dimensions model and she identified that it might be a useful approach to adopt within hsbp. There was a synergy here because she would get some support in developing the strategy and would be able to spend some time thinking through her approach to strategic leadership, a focus of her PhD, and I
would be able to use the model in an applied manner to support the growth of the charity.

hsbp had been established in 1837 and provides a range of educational, residential, day-care and community services in response to the needs of blind and visually impaired people of all ages. It operates across the north of England, with centres in Manchester, Merseyside, North Yorkshire and Newcastle, with the head office in Manchester.

For the preceding five years the charity had been engaged on what Dianne called ‘a conservative strategy ostensibly intended to grow the charity, but in reality focussed on maintaining the status quo through time.’ The strategy had been kept away from the operational management team and indeed, they expressed a degree of surprise when Dianne had recently shown them how their activities over the preceding five years had delivered the planned strategy. There was clearly little or no strategic involvement from the team in developing the strategy and no overt and discernible engagement in knowingly implementing the strategy.

Dianne, as CEO, had a clear intent to drive the charity forwards into a growth phase and to do so fairly assertively having recognised that there was an opportunity in the marketplace to do so. Indeed her position was that if hsbp did not take advantage of this emergent opportunity then, in all likelihood, one of the larger charities in the sector would do so and thereby increase their share of the market – a position that she considered would result in service deterioration for their clients. She wanted to establish a five-year strategy for the charity that took them through the period 2003 - 2008. The Trustees were being very supportive of her in this regard and had agreed to release some of the £4m reserves as a
strategic investment fund, and to secure loans against the asset base to fund refurbishment of the offices. As a first stage in this new approach they had asked for a Strategy Paper to be presented to them in December 2002 so that they could comment on the strategy prior to signing it off. In this way they had overtly expressed a confidence in the management team to develop a strategy and were implicitly signifying an intent on supporting them forwards into the implementation phase, subject to it meeting their approval in December.

The charity was led by an operational management team, and they reported, generally via the Chief Executive, to an Executive Board of Trustees, which was a non-elected body of people who worked for different organisations and convened to oversee the work of the management team from a perspective of corporate governance and bringing fresh insights from other business experiences. In practice, the management team made all of the day-to-day decisions and managed the charity, but matters of strategy, finance and reporting of operational matters were discussed and decided at Executive Board level. Dianne very much wanted to develop the new strategy within the management team and then present it to the Executive Board as a means of engaging her team colleagues and by way of enhancing the value of the process by using the combined wisdom and experience of the management team.

She confirmed that she expected that a restructure would take place as part of the strategic development process and that this would probably take effect immediately following approval of the strategy, but confirmed that each of the management team would be carried forward into the new structure. Dianne had not engaged the team in strategic planning prior to this exercise but considered that doing so now would enhance their knowledge and understanding of the
charity and additionally help to increase their levels of commitment to managing the implementation phase.

As a pre-cursor to the work that I was asked to do, Dianne had asked each team member to conduct a SWOT analysis of their function together with their thoughts on the future. She had asked them to develop their thoughts on the future with an approach that she described as 'blue sky thinking with their feet on the ground'. I explained that this may have some drawbacks given that the actual process of concurrent, pragmatic evaluation would be likely to inhibit the creative thinking process and proposed that we engage in genuine blue sky thinking process about the future and then hold a separate validation session. We agreed to do this and I held meetings with each of the team.

I initially held one-to-one meetings with the functional heads of the charity and the two senior managers who sat with them on the management team. The six people were largely content with the way in which the charity was being managed and whilst each had a desire to grow their own particular area of functional accountability, there was little by way of shared understanding of the vision of the future, or a connected growth plan. This, I knew, had been thought through by Dianne but had not been shared with her team at this stage, and they had certainly not developed an integrative or connected approach themselves. This was evident in their discussions with me, and the fact that they only tended to work together at points of operational interface across the lines of functional accountability - a situation not dissimilar to the functional silos that had been prevalent in Rolls-Royce & Bentley Motors.
Dianne had stated in the initial meeting with me that she liked to have her assumptions and assessments challenged constructively but it appeared at the outset that the senior management team were not doing this in meetings, although when I discussed this them, each member of the team asserted that they challenged Dianne in private. It seemed to me that not only did we need to create a change strategy for the organisation based on a growth model in their particular sector, but I also needed to create the environment within which the various members of the management team could feel free to challenge their own and their colleagues thinking so that we were able to build a robust team capable of meeting the challenges that the growth strategy would create. This was particularly important, as Dianne had expressed the wish to operate as part of the team whilst I was managing the strategy development sessions.

Having identified the lack of cohesion and aligned strategic intent within the management team, I worked within the first meetings to understand their individual goals and objectives, and then proposed to collate these for the first workshop so that we could begin to develop the strategic direction of the business. In this way they would identify that there was, in fact, some commonality albeit centred on their functional areas rather than the charity as a whole. The points of common focus were as follows:

- Higher degree of synergy of services from both age and geographical perspectives
- More links between the various functions and service centres within the charity
- Developed monitoring and evidencing processes
- Designed rather than an evolved structure and work being focussed and cohesive
- Time and resources to be committed for development activities
- Active business plan with regular reviews by the senior team as well as the Board
- Focus on long-term sustainability
- Higher profile in regions and in the charity sector
- Increased level of long-term sustainable funding / donations
- Already very clear about the demands and requirements of the stakeholders
- Need to be very clear about who we are and what we do

This list evidenced a focus on the future and a desire to do things differently, and I was able to secure agreement from the team to use these statements as a shared understanding and view on the way forward. We therefore, explored and agreed some basic principles for 2008 as a precursor to working on the detailed plan. In this way I wanted to get them to a point of cohesion and agreement about their views on 2008 so that we had principles against which we could test any further thinking. The principles they agreed are as follows:

- Consolidate position across Greater Manchester, Merseyside, West and North Yorkshire, and Tyneside
- Create a growth platform for geographical expansion in 2008 – 2013
- Have a clear view of the needs of our service users and deliver a responsive, integrated service
- Focus on service provision not physical locations
- Focus on quality
- Increase service provision through strategic alliances and partnerships
I did not, at this stage, introduce the Five Dimensions model because I wanted to secure a commitment to the Vision in the first instance. I spoke about the need to identify a way forwards for the charity, and the need for this to be owned by the senior team and adjudged this to be sufficient at that time. My intent was to present the model through a series of workshops in which we would work through the various dimensions thus making the model more practical than theoretical – I wanted them to use the model not just understand how it could be used.

Perhaps the most significant point of discussion was about the primary purpose of the operational Board – they had each gone into the charity sector because of their principles, values or beliefs, and this influenced their operational practice – of over-riding importance was the provision of care and wealth generation was of limited importance to them. I worked hard to generate an understanding that if they did not create wealth, by maximising revenues, then they would find it very difficult to generate a sustainable business in the face of stiff competition from larger charities in the sector. In short, they had to operate as business managers as opposed to care providers.

Having agreed to be more commercially focused in their work, and agreed the common points of intent for 2008, we needed to define the macro-level structuring of the business – how best should the charity be structured to enable them to compete effectively in the sector. This was important because the structure would have significant impact upon the development of the strategy – we therefore, needed to agree this at the outset. The team initially struggled to think through alternative structures so I asked them to consider how they would respond to a competitor charity setting up care provision within their area – they
concluded that they would struggle to compete at a service level because to do so may compromise the care provision for the service users of either of the charities.

This realisation led to a debate about establishing themselves in terms of their provision and doing so in such a way that they managed to capitalise on their service lines or geographical regions to the extent that a competitor charity would derive limited benefit from encroaching in their domain. In essence a pre-emptive approach to control an area or service line, which minimised the risk of competitor activity. This could, they concluded, only be achieved if they were united, cohesive and appropriately structured.

From this debate we identified three alternative structural options that they wanted to consider further:

- Geographical approach – with regional structures working on demand-led projects and a high focus on project management capability
- Service line approach – with the charity divided into service provision areas such as education and training, housing, leisure
- Defined age approach – with the focus being on the respective needs of the various age groups of their clients, for example, 25-50.

We discussed the merits of each approach and conducted a ‘want to/feasibility’ analysis within the senior team. This mean that each person was required to rate the three approaches in terms of the degree to which they personally wanted to focus on each of the three approaches, and the degree to which they considered such an approach to be feasible. Of course, one would expect a correlation between want to and feasibility under these circumstances and this was indeed the case.
The results identified a clear preferred option of the geographical approach, the results being:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Want to</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographical approach</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service line approach</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defined age approach</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
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</tbody>
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Having completed this analysis we validated the preferred scenario through debate of the pros and cons and through construction of a SWOT analysis at both corporate and functional levels. The result of this process was a confirmation that the most appropriate macro-level structuring of the charity would be along geographical lines.

At this stage I introduced the team to the Five Dimensions model as a means of explaining the process we had already undertaken and the route that we would now be following. Their comments after the presentation and ensuing discussion were very positive, they considered the model to be logical, structured, that it helped them to make sense of the work they were doing, and that it helped them to focus clearly on the right things at the right time.
This was good feedback and helped to enhance my confidence about the model having utility in different business sectors than the one were it was created. I was particularly pleased that they saw the model as being logically structured and that it helped them to manage their somewhat complex process of strategy formulation. This was what I intended the model to be used for and it seemed to be working.

We focussed in the first instance, quite naturally, on the first dimension – D^1 Direct. This picked up much of the work we had done to date in that we had defined the macro-level structure and discussed the way in which this structure would result in them operating in a different way. We were, using this Dimension as a focus, able to discuss issues like the central purpose of the charity, what it might look like in 2008 and how this would be different from today, and how the values of the business might change in order for a more competitive growth strategy to be accepted. It became evident to the management team that they did not have a clear statement that encapsulated their strategic approach and so, in line with the first Dimension they developed a statement – 'Building on the Past: Investing in the Future' which they agreed encapsulated the need to respect the history and tradition of the charity, but also look forwards to creating a positive and sustainable future.

They also spent quite some time at this stage discussing how they would work together as a management team, as they now recognised that their behaviours would have a causal influence on the rest of the charity. They had hitherto been a fairly quiet and submissive group, challenging Dianne in private (or so they claimed) but I had seen no real evidence of challenge in the group meetings. In fairness Dianne’s approach did not demonstrate a desire to be challenged so I discussed
this with her in a 1:1 session and suggested that she be more open to challenge from the team. She accepted the feedback and at the next meeting I created the opportunity for the team to provide each other with feedback about their performance within team meetings. This proved to be a very emotional yet a very powerful meeting and had a significant impact in terms of their effectiveness as a team. Following this session they were more prepared to challenge each other, to recognise that challenges were constructive not critical, and to work together on cross-functional activities to develop the strategy and the plan.

Of particular interest was that model could not be used in a linear format at hsbp, and, presumably, in other organisations. This was principally because the management team could not develop the overall strategy in $D^1$ without first considering their functional strategies and approaches in $D^2$. I discussed this with the Set and through the debate came to the realisation that the model had been documented post-experience not contemporaneously which meant that the overlap of the various dimensions had been obscured and the model presented as a set of discrete phases of focus. Indeed, when I reconsidered the original construction of the model it was evident that their had been concurrent and parallel activity across each of the dimensions through the change programme. I had asserted that change was not a linear process when I elected to move away from the Lewin (1951) model, but then begun subconsciously to work with the Five Dimensions model in linear form. Indeed, I had missed the first clue to this when we had discussed the individual SWOT analyses in the first workshop and found them to be useful building blocks towards a strategic perspective of the charity as a whole. This was $D^2$ taking place before $D^1$, but in a way that was evidentially useful, particularly with a group of people who had previously little experience of operating at strategic levels.
Having made this realisation I re-evaluated the whole of the Five Dimensions model and confirmed in my mind that it was inherently valid as a means of identifying the necessary integrative connections within organisational change – it now required a change in use as opposed to a change in content. Thereafter I was far less prescriptive about the model needing to flow from D¹ through to D⁵, although I continued to assert that the model in its linear format should be used as the validation measure to ensure that all elements had been included.

The management team quickly understood the Five Dimensions model and we began to refer to the various elements of the model as a means of understanding what element of the business we were focussed on at any one time. In this way, the non-linear usage did not compromise our understanding of the issues at strategic or functional levels.

The plan for development of the strategy now that the structure had been agreed and the team dynamics had been addressed was to hold a series of workshops which focussed on the plan, and through which the plan and the integrated performance measures could be developed and agreed.

The first workshop focussed on answering the question, "What, specifically, are the personal and organisational changes we need to make in order to deliver our Vision of 2008?" We returned to the individual SWOT analyses from the first workshop and the functional goals and then checked each against our understanding of the strategy to date. The critical question being "Were the functional perspectives consistent with a geographically structured charity building on its past experiences to create significant growth over the next five years?" This
provided a very useful test for the functional proposals and we were able, thereby, to make clear decisions about which ones to keep, which to modify and which to discard.

The functional plans were then placed on to post-it notes and together we placed them in to work streams that were not functionally oriented. This was to ensure that each member of the management team maintained their charity-wide focus, and also to ensure that actions did not fall into one particular function where the likelihood of it becoming a silo activity would increase. Having clustered the post-it notes into work streams we were able to begin the sequencing process, initially within the work stream to establish order, and then with reference across all work streams to establish priority and scheduling.

The work streams were managing information; PR/Marketing/Communication; Staff management; Finance; SMT and Relationships; Service Development; and Planning and Performance Management. Each had actions which were sequenced in month order for the period October 2002 through to June 2003 and then, in the interests of expediency, the medium-term actions were held in work stream groups to be worked on in more detail in Q1 03. Thus we were able to establish short to medium term plans that would translate the growth strategy into actions that could be deployed across the charity and against which progress could be monitored and measured.

This first draft of the implementation activities provided an interconnected plan of action with functional heads taking responsibility for leading individual work streams and, therefore, operating cross-functionally within the charity. The implementation activities were then validity checked against the 5D model to
ensure that all component elements had been included. The model here proved exceptionally useful in that it helped to ensure that the team looked at the functional and enabling strategies that would help to deliver the overarching charity strategy and ensure that these elements were challenged for validity before being incorporated in the final plan. We did not want to carry any legacy strategies or legacy processes forwards without first critically evaluating their validity and fit with the rest of the approach we were creating.

The second workshop focussed on undertaking a validation check of the first draft implementation plan and a full consideration of any emergent issues. Again we used the 5D model as the blueprint against which we checked the component elements of the plan, and against which we validated the overall cohesion of the plan. Of great importance in this phase was the focus on D^3, the business processes. We used the model to ask the question, ‘If we are to deliver these work streams in order to deliver the 5-year growth strategy, what are the critical business processes that we need to document and follow?’ Again some of the processes were carried forward having passed the test against the future requirements, but some, such as the internal communication process, needed to be re-written to ensure that it supported delivery of the strategy.

The third workshop was used to develop the performance measures and the performance measurement plan, and so focussed on D^4, the operational implementation or delivery of the strategy. The challenge here was to break the activities down into task groupings that could be effectively delegated to others so that they too were enrolled in the achievement of the strategy. We developed a performance management process, which would enable operational and strategic
monitoring through time, and ensure accurate progress reporting against the plan.

The fourth workshop was used to sign off the growth strategy, the implementation plan, the performance measurement process, and the communication plan prior to presentation to the Board in December. In this session we role-played the presentations to the Board and it was very interesting to note that despite the significant levels of buy-in and commitment that we had secured to their strategy, almost all members of the team approached the role play from a position of defensiveness; as though they expected to be criticised and challenged unnecessarily. On exploration of this phenomenon it transpired that they had confidence in the strategy, but little confidence in their own abilities to present it assertively, consequently they were preparing themselves for a rejection.

I realised that we had spent all of our time focussing on the development of the strategy and the team dynamics of the management team, but had not committed any time to reviewing how they would actually present their work. It was fortunate that I had decided to role-play the presentations to the Trustees and we were able to address the way in which the strategy and plans should be delivered – as an assertive, considered plan that the team had developed together and which they were committed to deliver.

The management team subsequently delivered their strategy presentation to the Board and were delighted to have it accepted without amendment. They initiated the implementation plan and continued to work together as a united team to deliver. When I asked Dianne how it had all worked out she commented that,
"The response from the Board was fantastic – they appreciated the amount of work and energy that we had put into the strategy and accepted it without reservation. I think that the Five Dimensions of Change model helped us significantly in our focus and in ensuring that we captured all the relevant elements of our strategic and operational practice in the strategy. The team are very satisfied with themselves and are, without exception, committed to securing their future through this strategy."

This was, therefore a very satisfactory testing of the Five Dimensions model through application in a different sector. The realisation that the model depicted a linear sequential process when this was not how it was developed, and not how organisational change is managed, was a good insight, and enabled me to use the model in a freer and more consultative manner than was previously the case.

**Reflections as a Change Agent**

As a change agent I was concerned with the application of the model, with the contingent dynamics of the organisation and the senior team, and with finding a route forwards whereby the model could help the management team to develop and commit to their own strategy. This had, I believe, the consequential impact of causing me to focus very pragmatically on the five-year vision and how it may be expediently developed and planned. I think that this was an example of the pull of activity and engagement and indeed of seeing the creation of the strategy as a puzzle to be solved.

This meant that I was, at times, overly focussed on the procedural elements of change as opposed to fully seeking to understand the model in terms of its
application. A positive effect of this was my preparedness to move away from the linearity of the documented Five Dimensions model and deal with, for example, D^2 issues in advance of completion of D^1 activities; whilst a negative factor was that I left the team presentation issues to the very last workshop and only realised the team concerns through a fortuitously positioned role-play exercise. Had I not placed this exercise into the last workshop then the team would have gone into their presentation with the Trustees in a fundamentally different state of mind and potentially failed to secure acceptance of their strategy.

As a change agent I had a significant impact on the working dynamics of the team and recognised that I have a responsibility to ensure that the team can continue to operate in their more open way once I have finished my consultancy with them and left them to their own devices. I think that I achieved this to a large extent through creating the environment within which they could effectively and non-confrontationally challenge their own and others’ thinking within group discussions thus increasing the knowledge and understanding across the whole management team.

It was very important to learn that the Five Dimensions model can be used in other industries and sectors, and that its logical structure was self-evident to the team, for this provided face validity. Of more importance, however, was the growing realisation that the model cannot be prescriptively applied – rather it must provide the basis for analysis and understanding through structured questions – it is a facilitative tool not a blueprint.

The model was appropriate but it was my skills and knowledge in terms of organisational change and group processes that enabled this consultancy
assignment to be successful – so I ought to use this as a means of further developing my confidence as a change practitioner. The model was effective, and so too was my change practice.

**Reflections as a Researcher**

The most important realisation here was that the Five Dimensions model was a post-event construction as opposed to a contemporaneously documented process – a fact that I had either failed to recognise at the time, or had forgotten through time. This learning fundamentally challenges the inherent linearity of the model as depicted, notwithstanding the fact that it is shown as a cyclical process. The model has an implied linear proposition that is implicitly reinforced through its logicality and explicitly reinforced through its numbering of the five dimensions.

Fortunately the approach was effective when applied out of sequence and when one or more Dimensions were worked on at the same time, but that does not diminish the fact that the documentation of the process does not reflect accurately the process itself. As a researcher I can see that this compromises the validity of the model unless it is expressly acknowledged to be a construction based on experience as opposed to the documentation of experience. I had not recognised the distinction between these two points prior to this case study and now recognise its importance.

A further learning point from this perspective is that models or approaches need to be tested to validate their efficacy. Prior to this case study I was of the belief that the model was sound because it had been developed and used within the previous organisation. I had made assumptions about its transferability to other
sectors but needed to test these out through the case study. Interestingly the
field test confirmed the utility of the model yet at the same time challenged its
proposition – the Five Dimensions still need to be considered for change to be
effectively managed, but I now realise that they can be considered in a non-
sequential manner. Perhaps it is the case that the model can be used for a post-
event analysis to ensure that all component elements have been included as well
as providing a, now looser, processual methodology through which integrative
organisational change can be explored and managed,

**Reflections as a Learner**

One of the key learning points as a learner is that I still have a tendency to stand
outside the change scenario and engage as an observer as opposed to a
participant. I enjoyed the fact that I was perceived to be a change expert by the
management team but recognise on reflection that this was a pull on my ego and
in some ways it compromised my work. I need to engage more fully as a
participant in the change process – I am not of the client organisation but I am
nevertheless part of the change process. This is an issue that I explore in some
detail in later Chapters but the central realisation of it being an issue came
through this case study.

Also I recognised that I need to be more factual in terms of how I document my
work - as a researcher I had missed the issue of linearity because I had written up
a process that in fact did not take place – I had filtered events through a
rationalist perspective and established a retrospective logic that seemed to be
valid, but which did not bear full scrutiny when used as a framework for strategy
formulation. Having identified this flaw I re-evaluated the model and affirmed its
validity - it does provide a framework for ensuring an integrative approach is
taken to organisational change, but I need to recognise that in doing so, a more
circuitous route may be required that involves parallel activities across two or
more dimensions. The important conclusion is that, having recognised this
methodological flaw, it was corrected and the model worked.

The case study did provide significant learning for me; learning that was different
to my expectations and more concerned with my relationship with my research
and my relationship with my practice. I have learnt about the need for
transparency and for full engagement, and will continue to work on these issues
through later elements of my research,
Chapter Eight

Pre-emptive conclusivity

This chapter will explore the 'blockage' that occurred in my research once the 5D model had been generated due to my thinking that the model was 'the answer' and how further Set discussions and reflection moved the model philosophically from a formulaic answer to a framework for questions. The reasons for the blockage were three-fold - my inability to see the model from different perspectives, my predisposition to see change from an external position, and my satisfaction at having created 'an answer'. These three factors prevented me from moving ahead with my research and were each addressed through Action Learning Set interventions and personal reflection. The Chapter describes how the blockages were identified and addressed and prepares the way for the next Chapter which explains how resolution was achieved.

Creating the Five Dimensions of Change model was a significant achievement for me and I was very pleased with the way in which I was able to use it in the Rolls-Royce Motor Cars organisation to support the business through a significant and dramatic change process. This experience heightened within me the feeling of satisfaction of having created a model that had both operational utility and face validity, and these feelings then had the consequential effect of further increasing my enthusiasm for the model. I was proud of its creation and proud of its application. This feeling of satisfaction was enhanced through the hsbp case study (Chapter 7) where, although I discovered a methodological flaw, the inherent validity of the model withstood a test in a different sector. In fact the methodological flaw was centred on the apparent linearity of the model rather
than the content itself so this re-affirmed my belief in the validity of the model. I was able to address the flaw by accepting the notion of concurrently working on two or more dimensions which moved away from the linearity whilst still recognising the inherent hierarchical subsidiarity within the model – all Dimensions flow from the first, increasing in operational applicability and detail focus as we move through Dimensions two, three and four, and then opening up again for Dimension five. This revised approach validated the model in my view at that time, and the two practical applications of the model within Rolls-Royce and hsbp confirmed my opinion that all necessary component elements were included.

Unfortunately these feelings of satisfaction led me to a point of rigidity in my thinking in that I began to consider that the model was the answer to the issues raised by organisational change – in my mind it moved fairly swiftly from utility to universality. I cannot easily recall the process or timing of my fixation on the model but I do recall thereafter being somewhat dogmatic in recommending it as the best approach to a range of colleagues at the time – for I knew that it worked. The consequent impact of this was that I closed my mind to other approaches, methodologies or philosophies as regards managing integrative organisational change – the answer, I believed, was contained in the Five Dimensions Model.

I think that there were several reasons for me adopting such an approach, not least of which was the fact that it appealed to the deterministic and logical approach that prevailed for me at that time, and had done so for much of my life. As previously discussed, I enjoyed establishing certainty in my work and also viewed much of my work from an impartial and distanced perspective. Focussing on the model enabled me to deal with my work at arms length to a certain extent, and creating a model that was accepted by others and which had worked well
within a challenging environment, provided me with an opportunity to establish a relative certainty within the complex dynamics of organisational change. This appealed on a number of levels although I did not, at the time, recognise the impact it was having on my work and on my research. I had set out, when I commenced my research, to explore a range of approaches to change management and indeed, had positively eschewed the notion of a golden formula for change within my Interim Assessment. Paradoxically I had then gone on to create a model of change, and furthermore, for a while at least, considered this to be the answer - a blueprint or golden formula for change.

The difficult and challenging circumstances in which I created the model had, I believe, a significant impact in leading me to view the model so positively. I had worked so hard to find a way of uniting the various functional factions within the company to focus on an integrated approach and outcome, so the sense of relief when the model was accepted and used was immense. Suddenly my political difficulties began to diminish and I was able to exert influence in the business through my change agency, which was deployed through the pursuance of the Five Dimensions model of change. A positively reinforcing cycle had been established and it was difficult to avoid being caught up in the enthusiasm and energy that it created.

This self-reinforcing cycle was given further strength, and the model further credence, when, in January 2002, together with a consultant colleague, I published the model in the Journal of Strategic Change [Victor & Franckeiss, 2002] and received confirmation of its utility from others outside of my organisational environment. This publication confirmed, in my mind at least, the validity of the model – for if it were not valid they would not have published. I had
published articles before but they centred on my thinking or approach to work in a
more general sense, this one focussed exclusively on the model, and therefore
was, in my opinion, more significant.

I recognised that I was becoming increasingly emotionally connected to the model
to the point of being quite defensive when anyone challenged it or, even raised
questions that seemed to challenge the inherent structure or content of the
model. This was quite unlike my normal practice of being open to discussion about
my ideas. I now found that I regarded questions as criticisms, either open or
implied, and this prompted me to become even more defensive about the model.
Although I did not fully realise at the time, I was becoming fixed and rigid in my
thinking about the model. I came through time to recognise that the level of
emotional commitment that I had to the model was very significant and that this
was preventing me from moving on in terms of either using the model in different
ways, or more fundamentally of exploring other change methodologies.

During the time it took me to recognise that I had become constrained in my
thinking I used the model widely and spoke about it extensively with a great feeling
of satisfaction – it appealed to my ego considerably that I had created a model of
change. This feeling of self-satisfaction was also contrary to my conventional way
of working but such was the power of the pull on my ego that I enjoyed the
experience and continued to enthusiastically progress the marketing of the model.
Unfortunately I was pushing the model as the answer to organisational change,
and, even more unfortunately, arrived at the view that the Five Dimensions model
completed a significant part of my research.
It took a particularly interesting and emotionally difficult series of Set meetings to raise my awareness of what was happening, and to begin to address the situation. Through these Set meetings I was challenged to consider the impact of three elements that had together combined to create an understanding, or rather a lack of understanding, about myself and my research. Through these meetings it gradually became apparent that I needed to operate in a fundamentally different way in terms of continuing my research. I recognised that creating the Five Dimensions model of change was a pre-emptive conclusion and that it had stifled my thinking and ongoing development. It was as though creation of the model was in fact the culmination of my PhD research, even though it occurred at just over two-thirds of the way through the research phase. I found myself locked and indeed blocked by the model but did not realise this until these Set meetings.

The three factors that we identified as having contributed to this pre-emptive conclusivity were in addition to the ongoing issue of trying to move away from a deterministic and definite approach to research. This continued for some time, and is still there in some measure, as illustrated in later Chapters of this thesis. The three factors were:

- My inability to recognise what was happening in terms of my research coming to a halt
- The difficulties I encountered in making the career change from corporate life with Bentley to freelance consultancy
- The distance that I maintained between myself and my research
Following completion of the model, and specifically following publication of the article I recall going to a Set meeting and describing the model to my colleagues - they were very impressed with the model and informed me that they considered it to be a good achievement in line with my research and academic ambitions. The feeling of satisfaction that I had previously enjoyed was, in this meeting, endorsed by their acceptance of the model as a valuable tool for helping change practitioners integrate change activities. Unfortunately the combination of these plaudits and the consequent feelings of self-satisfaction meant that I found myself in a position of what I subsequently called 'pre-emptive conclusivity'. I had come to the premature conclusion that the Five Dimensions model was the answer. I had, in effect, achieved what I set out to not achieve in an unintentional way. Had I sat back and reflected on the above elements in a measured way I like to think that I would have realised what was happening – but that would be an objective analysis of the situation. The prevailing logic would have been perhaps evident, but I feel that it would have been somewhat clouded by the emotional perspective from which I was viewing, and indeed experiencing this situation.

Having mistakenly and somewhat prematurely arrived at the conclusion that the model was the answer I temporarily withdrew from Set meetings in terms of my full and active participation. Of course I continued to attend and to contribute to others' work and thinking to the best of my ability but each time it came to my turn to present work I re-introduced the Five Dimensions model and said that I had the fundamental element of my research completed and simply needed to document its creation and use. That I continued this attitude for as long as I did is regrettable in terms of the lost opportunity to develop my thinking within the Set. In fairness the Set continued to challenge me in terms of what I now needed to do with my writing and continuing research, but I was resolute in my desire to not
move forwards at this point in time and so my research drew to a temporary halt. When I reflect fully upon this stage I am of the opinion that whilst I failed to take full advantage of the Set, I was going through a fundamentally important process that was, I have come to realise, a significant learning point for me.

Fully recognising this situation arose in a Set meeting where Ray was presenting his Chapter headings for discussion and feedback by the Set. Donna, the Set Advisor, was interested in his structure and, when he had finished presenting his thoughts, commented that the chapter headings were fine in that they logically reflected the work he had undertaken but that they missed the richness of the debates that we had engaged in through the various set meetings. We discussed this as a Set and others also provided Ray with the feedback that he had consistently contributed to Set meetings with expansive commentary about his research and had done so in a way which made the research come alive for each of us, yet the richness and understanding of the issues that he so clearly demonstrated and articulated in the meetings was somehow missing from his structure, which appeared comprehensive yet somehow uninteresting.

Ray agreed with the feedback and, through the ensuing discussion he identified a different perspective on his research – a perspective that brought in all of the issues we had discussed and dealt with his work not as a chronologically detailed and interpreted chain of events but as a holistic and evaluative review of the same events. The evaluative review focussed on interpretation and understanding rather than narrative and explanation. In essence he had, through this debate, begun to make the transition from empirically centred writing to philosophically centred writing – moving from domain 2 to domain 3 that I described in Chapter 1.
I left this Set meeting with a vague feeling of doubt that perhaps I would find myself in a similar position to Ray and, in order to test this, I began to write the Chapter headings for my own work. The headings were, indeed, structured and historically connected and this appealed to the logical structure that I find comfortable but at the same time writing the headings down stimulated the doubts that had begun in the Set meeting. I was clearly writing a chronological sequence of events and therefore, I reasoned, would probably be in a similar position to Ray in terms of missing the qualitative debate and dialectic learning that had taken place through the Set meetings.

However, of more pressing concern was the fact that the sequence of events culminated in the definition of the Five Dimensions model, some ten months earlier. It was the shock of this realisation of the fact that I had not progressed my thinking for ten months that caused me to review what I had been doing. I reflected quite deeply and realised that I had spent much of that period talking enthusiastically about the model and the fact that I needed to write up my experiences and research. In reality, however, all I had done was talk about the model and resisted challenges to the model or my lack of progress. I had not even commenced the writing up process, relying instead on the fact that the model had been published. Even had I written up my achievement to that point, however, it was clear that there was little philosophical content – it was practically sound but only covered part of the answer.

Subsequent to that Set meeting I read Revans’ distinction between cleverness and wisdom (Morris, 2000) and realised that I had been ‘clever’. I had been using the Five Dimensions model as the answer and in doing so had stopped developing. I
had ceased to ask questions of myself and of my research – in effect my learning had become stymied. I think that this is because I had narrowed my thinking down to the resolution of a puzzle and having found the answer there was little point in thinking about it further. This is, perhaps, the clearest personal example I have experienced of being ‘clever’ and having that ‘cleverness’ restrict significantly my ongoing thinking, development and learning. The quest for a conclusion is so deeply rooted in the management culture and reaffirmed in the educational process that it can be very difficult to avoid.

Without the challenge of the Set I would have remained in this position of relative immobility for much longer – but I was fortunate to be reminded of earlier Set meetings when I had said quite purposefully that there were ‘x’ reasons for a particular occurrence, only to be asked, ‘how do you know there are only x reasons?’ As this conversation was relayed back to me it struck me with a flash of the blindingly obvious that I had done the same thing again, but this time on a fairly dramatic scale. The naivety with which I had been stopped astonished me – again it identified the difference between understanding something at an academic level and truly understanding it at an experiential level.

This episode demonstrated to me the seductive nature of being an expert, and how the truly effective challenge of an Action Learning Set can encourage and enable a person to set aside their preconceptions and indeed their conclusions, to explore an issue further, and thus develop their thinking and understanding to a more significant level.

Recognising that I had come to this stop and that I had justified it so clearly in my mind was an important learning point, but it took further Set meetings to provide
me with the insight to move forwards. I had started to put together a plan to help me to move onwards and found it to be quite difficult. The Set were, as usual, very supportive and challenging, and John commented that he had noticed that I frequently referred to my research in two discrete phases – the Bentley phase and the post-Bentley phase, and he wondered how significant this was.

I immediately understood his point and recognised that he was absolutely correct – in fact I recalled specifically using the term ‘post-Bentley’ because I could not, at the time, quite understand how the two phases were interrelated. Therefore, a separate label was required. I knew that I had developed my thinking and myself through that period but I could not see how this time period related to what I perceived to be the ‘real’ research phase at Bentley.

It was clearly evident that the Bentley phase was so intrinsically important in the research and development of the Five Dimensions model, but I could not attribute any significant importance to the post-Bentley phase. Even the hspb case study (Chapter 7) was, in my view of that time, a means of validating the Bentley research. In this sense, it was, therefore, less important. In reality, however, it was a separate and very much connected phase of my research, but I could not see it at the time.

Associated with this was, I believe, an important issue about personal identity – at Bentley I occupied a formal and senior job role and now I was a self-employed consultant. I certainly placed higher value on the former than the latter and this further prompted me to give additional credence to the Bentley research as opposed to that which followed.
I discussed this at the next Set meeting and commented that I was having difficulty in understanding the thread of my research because it seemed that I was “engaged in applied research at Bentley but that since leaving I could not recognise as easily the process or outcomes of the research.” I had, of course, kept notes through the year about reflections and Set discussions, as well as the reading that I had done, but I experienced great difficulty in using this information to engage both periods of research and, more importantly, to understand the interconnectedness of the two. In fact I had, once again, taken an external, deterministic approach to my work and was seeing them as somehow disconnected from me. A phrase I often used was that the post-Bentley phase did not seem as important and that I understood the second phase as linked to the first but that I could not clearly identify and articulate the linkages.

At the set meeting in July 2002 I again raised the issue of not being able to integrate the two elements of my work – one seemed to me to be applied research, whilst the other seemed to be conceptual development only. I had already come to the conclusion that the model was, in some way, restricting my thinking, but I could nevertheless, not identify a route forward. I recall re-iterating the difference in importance of the Bentley phase and the post-Bentley phase and asking the Set to help me in terms of integrating my work.

The Set questioned me quite carefully from a variety of different perspectives, with key questions being:

- Why is the post-Bentley phase less important?
- To what extent do you understand the restriction of the model on your thinking?
Have you considered that you are viewing your research as discrete elements rather than as a whole?

What about the changing nature of your relationship with organisations - how is it different now you are an external consultant?

You are operating in a different context but using the same skill set as before - so why not focus your research on your understanding and development rather than on the model you have developed?

How are you different since leaving Bentley and what does this tell you about managing change, and your personal ability to cope with change?

The thought processes stimulated by these questions led me to confirm in my mind that, whilst the generation of the model was of importance to me, it had nevertheless, restricted my development in terms of learning about and understanding change. I had, with great enthusiasm and limited wisdom, reached a point of pre-emptive conclusivity.

Furthermore, it was very much related to my relationship with my research - I had distanced myself from the research and held it at arms length, which meant that because I placed so much emphasis on my role identity and experience at Bentley, I was experiencing such difficulties in moving forwards. The research belonged to Bentley, not to me.

I began to understand that I had so deeply associated my personal skills and professional reputation with Bentley and the work that I had done there, that it had taken on a level of importance in my mind greater than should have been the case.
Some of this, I think, was about role identity. At Bentley I had had a senior level position and was very proud of being a Director in such a prestigious organisation – since leaving I could no longer use the job title to establish my credibility and in my mind I perceived that at some level I was less important as a result of leaving. I had long recognised an underlying lack of self-confidence, which I had masked over the years, and I began to realise that I had used the job title of Director of Change Management as part of this mask. Now that the title was no longer available to me I struggled to create a new identity – to create a label by which I could refer to myself. I could use the term ‘consultant’ but I had not, at that time, grown in to the role.

It also shed light on my previous experience of closing the engine manufacturing plant at Rolls-Royce when people were, as previously noted, less interested in job security and more interested in role security. If those people had been doing a role for many years and identified themselves as not just Rolls-Royce employees but engine manufacturers then, in moving them, we had possibly created the same sort of destabilisation that I myself had encountered when I left the Company to take up self employment. The logic of the strategic decision had overridden the need for empathic sensitivity to the emotional impact of our actions in that whilst we offered support we didn’t fully understand the emotional sensitivity of what we were doing to those people. Of course, had we done so we would still have made that decision and closed down the engine manufacturing plant, but we would have engaged the workforce more sensitively in the process and perhaps carried out the transition more seamlessly than was the case.

In a similar way, the wearing of black armbands and the heightened emotionality of the workforce at the time of notification of the separation of the marques was
symptomatic of the identity they felt with the company – an identity that was being unilaterally taken away from them. This we did understand a little more, for it was this that led us to create the Bentley Vision launch described in Chapter Five. However, the important learning here is that people invest themselves in their roles and their roles become part of their identity – therefore great care and sensitivity needs to be taken when managing change that fundamentally impacts upon the role and role identity of people within organisations.

I did not fully appreciate at the time the significant impact that this career change had on my research. I have long recognised that people attribute a significant part of their social identity to the role that they perform in their work, and was somewhat taken aback when I realised that this was similar to the degree of association that I felt about my research – it was developed within the company and was now, in some respects, a model without a context. I explore this further later in this chapter, but it is important at this stage to note that this caused me to focus still further on the model as a completed piece of thinking that was not really open to challenge, because the original context in which it was developed was now no longer available.

Given the underlying lack of personal confidence in my employment status and in my own abilities it was perhaps understandable that I often harked back to the ‘glory days’ of Bentley, and in so doing, raised the level of importance of all the work I had done there. This lack of confidence meant that I was also not really comfortable with the notion of myself being a central figure of my research. Others in the Set used to talk about how they placed themselves and their learning at the centre of the research but I always struggled with that as a concept – surely a contribution to learning needed to be about something that was
transferable and more universally applicable than my own experiences. The foregoing sentence described, very succinctly, my lack of confidence in myself and my research.

This realisation addressed probably the most important question raised by the Set, namely, “You are operating in a different context but using the same skill set as before – so why not focus your research on your understanding and development rather than on the model you have developed?” I did not feel comfortable focusing on myself and my own development and consequently had distanced my research to focus on the model. The Five Dimensions model was an objective and, at that time, deterministic approach to help understand the necessary component elements and interconnectedness of organisational change. In this sense it seemed to me that it validated my work – it was far easier to say to friends and colleagues that I was working on, or had developed, a model to support organisational change than to say that I was researching change on a more personal level. I was operating with a scientific separation between the research and myself – the research was something that I had engaged in from an objective, analytical perspective as opposed to something that I had been very personally involved with.

This observers’ perspective, of course, belied the reality of the emotion that I went through in creating the Five Dimensions methodology in the first place; it ignored or diminished the tremendous energy that I had needed to pursue the approach within an organisation riven with functional silos and politics. At that moment, however, it seemed that time had lessened my emotional acuity and I felt comfortable adopting such a distanced position. It felt, at the time, to be a valid
position to take and, in truth, provided me with certainty at a time when many other aspects of my life were becoming uncertain.

I had, throughout my life, placed inherently more value on others than on myself and felt that the distancing of myself from the research via the medium of the Five Dimensions model was appropriate because surely this was more valid as a research focus than me. I have now realised that this approach was in itself limiting because it meant that I was paying less attention to my learning and my development, and was not fully engaging with my research. This was, again, a good learning point of the difference between intellectually knowing something, and fully understanding what it meant to truly work in this particular way.

The initial realisation of this glaring methodological error became apparent in a Set meeting when the Set had asked me to present a structure for my thesis. The idea had been born out of the need to lock together the various phases of research, and to provide a route forwards from the impasse in which I found myself. I thought about the earlier Set meeting when Ray had presented his structure and determined to avoid the same experience of adopting a logical structure.

Moving away from logic was particularly difficult and I recalled Dianne asking me whether my research was different when viewed from the perspective of a change agent as opposed to the perspective of a researcher. This had not meant very much to me at the time but now resonated deeply as I struggled to find a way forwards. I discussed the issue with Donna and she advised that it would probably be a useful approach if only for the fact that it would create momentum in my
research and provide a focus for not only re-evaluating my prior experience, but also to providing a link to future research activities.

I thought about the value of looking at the research from different perspectives and concluded that this could be a very informative process. In my work on developing relationships I often used to ask people to view visual images that presented different information if looked at from different angles to help them to understand the importance of perception, and the fact that others can share the same experience but have a quite different interpretation of the event. If I was able to do this with my research then, I reasoned, I would probably be able to see more than would be the case from a singular perspective. As this was an action learning and research degree I decided that I would use these three perspectives – action, the perspective of the change agent, learning, the perspective of the learner, and research, the perspective of the researcher.

Consequently I constructed a diagram that would depict these three thematic perspectives and presented it at the next Set meeting. This approach parallels closely with the Botham & Morris triangle (Botham, 1999) where the three sides of the learning triangle are denoted as Work, Set and Information. From a personal perspective I wanted to more expressly connect my perspectives with my work and learning and so used labels that were more appropriate within the context of my research and my personal development. The diagram, which linked the perspectives together and provided an integrative view, is shown overleaf:
Almost as a matter of course I placed myself at the centre of the diagram with my initials, PJV. This was because I was of the view that I needed to be central to the research notwithstanding the fact that my actions and overriding approach was to do precisely the opposite. In this way, I thought, I could begin to adopt a similar approach to that of my Set colleagues, and focus on my development and learning as opposed to focussing on the model.

Fig. 5: The Three Perspectives with role detail
Placing my initials at the centre of the diagram was, given the contextual description above, not a fully internalised view – it was more a recognition that this was what was expected of me. Acknowledging the need for personal centrality in my action learning and actually doing it were quite different propositions.

One of my colleagues in the Set, Ray, spoke at length about the diagram, saying that it presented him with a clear and unambiguous vision of my research and that he particularly liked the central element as that was of fundamental significance to the action learning methodology that I was using. I didn’t quite understand why he was so very enthusiastic until he commented that he thought that PJV stood for Personal Journey Vehicle.

This placed a different and more significant emphasis on the centrality of me as a person to the research and caused me to focus deeply on my own learning and development. The questions that arose from the Set meeting were catalytic:

- I was happy to write my initials at the centre of the diagram but would not have considered writing the words ‘Personal Journey Vehicle’ – what is the difference between the two?
- To what extent had I distanced myself from my research and what were the consequences of doing so?
- What factors had caused me to act in this way and how might I deal with these?
- How might I move forwards with a more appropriate positioning of myself as an action learner, fully engaged in the learning process?
- What were the full implications of adopting the three perspectives as a means of further enhancing my understanding of my work?
Through these questions and the ensuing discussion I came to the realisation of the significance of distancing myself for my research. I had placed myself at the centre of the diagram but would not have considered writing the words – personal journey vehicle. That would have required me to fully engage with my research and to do so in a very personal way, which at the time was not my *modus operandi*. Identifying the three perspectives was, I think a good step forwards but there still remained the danger of doing this from a distanced perspective. In order to be effective I would need to do so from a position where I truly was the learner, the change agent and the researcher, and where each of those roles was directly connected to me as a person, and consequently influenced my development not just within the three role identities, but as a person.

The way forward emerged slowly and was helped significantly by a presentation from Professor Botham entitled ‘Making the Most of Research: Food for thought’ [Revans Institute 2002] in which he quoted something that Reg Revans had said to him in 1978, namely, “Well, David, in order to understand the very nature of action learning you have to enter into it yourself.” I realised that I hadn’t really entered into it myself – I had entered into it as the Director of Change Management for Bentley Motors Limited. Therefore, once I was no longer in this position, albeit of my own volition, I perceived that I had no real place within my research, when, in fact, I was fully entitled to be there as Paul Victor. This realisation meant that the Bentley phase and post-Bentley phase of my research were not, in fact two discrete elements but rather connected parts of a whole; connected through my Personal Journey Vehicle.

Following this period of reflection and discussion within the Set I decided that I needed to move forward and do something. One option seemed to be to disregard
the model and try to engage in organisational change at a deeper and more philosophical level without the now-perceived constraints of the model. This was, I have to say, tempting in the short term, but I then realised that to do so would mean that any inherent value in the model would be lost and may not be regained in a new research direction. To ignore the research would be to make a statement that it was wholly invalid and my firm belief was that this was not the case – rather the way in which I was using the model was invalid at worst and restrictive at best.

The scientific paradigm draws one to a conclusion and in real terms to the position of ‘cleverness’ (Morris, 2000). In fact, so great is the pull that in an earlier draft of this thesis the final element of this chapter entitled ‘pre-emptive conclusivity’ was entitled ‘conclusions’. The use of the word conclusions is inherently satisfying in that it speaks of a job completed, a process brought to an end. Unfortunately it also signifies ‘thinking finished’ and just as the earlier position of ‘concluding the model as expert’ was methodologically and philosophically unsound, so is the inclusion of an element in the chapter called ‘conclusions’. The thinking is not yet finished.

In fact if we refer once again to the football in Chapter 2 when we delineated a time period within which change took place for the football but recognised that this change was set within a broader context of the football game we were still being restrictive – the game itself is set in a somewhat broader context of multiple lives and experiences. However, the change does not stop when the ball stops – the game and the change continues. So there is a point in time at which we artificially draw a temporal halt to the change process but this is to enable our understanding – it does not in full reality end. In this sense, then, our approach to
change tends to be episodic in that we draw time boundaries around the change that we wish to examine – therefore there can be no conclusion, only a temporary understanding of the circumstances and experiences up to that point in time – although it is likely to be incomplete as it will be limited by our understanding of the full process including that which goes before and that which goes after the episode that we are studying.

Reflecting deeply on this point I considered that if the distinction between cleverness and wisdom was that the former provided answers whilst the latter asked questions then perhaps the model could be used in a quite different way – I could use it to focus the questions that could be asked in times of organisational change as opposed to providing the blueprint for the change itself.

This paradigm shift meant that the methodology of the Five Dimensions model moved from expert to coach – a reflection of my consultancy style. I have always believed that the most influential way to support learning in others is to facilitate their thinking [Heron 1990] and using the model in this way seemed somewhat apt.

A critical question is the extent to which using the model as a basis for questions is still using the model as an expert. I think that it does maintain a position of expertise by the very fact that it provides questions to be asked, however, in many ways it philosophically addresses the issues in a different way. Asking questions is vitally important – instead of telling people the answer it asks them to use the model to ask themselves a number of questions which will, through critical enquiry, facilitate a development of their understanding of the context and focus of the organisation undergoing change. As Goldberg [1998] so clearly states “Because
questions are intrinsically related to action, they are naturally also at the fulcrum of change” (Page 9).

Using the model as a basis for questions then, is a positive use that moves beyond the formulaic and deterministic nature of the model in its first iteration.

In this way I made a significant step forwards and realised that in order for this research to be of value I had to fully engage in the process of action learning and, fundamentally, in my action learning. Achieving this was, predictably, much more difficult to achieve than simply recognising it, and this episode of the Journey is described in the following Chapter.
Chapter Nine

Challenging the Model – Discovering the Flaws

This chapter describes how I began to challenge the Five Dimensions of Change model, and, in doing so, realised that the more significant challenge concerned my own behaviours and experiences. I realised that the model was, in fact, a projection of my logical and deterministic view of the world, and as such, was limited in its efficacy. Further research and reflection helped me to identify that in order to manage change in a full and effective manner, one has to be personally engaged in the change – not an objective and impartial architect who initiates the change and then observes the consequences. This helped me to identify a more effective way of using the, now refined, model.

Following the realisation that the creation of the Five Dimensions model of change was not an end in itself, as detailed in the previous chapter, I spent quite some time thinking about the model and how it could be more effectively used within an organisation undergoing change.

The Five Dimensions model is, without doubt, a connected and coordinated model of change that guides an organisation through the various elements that need to be addressed within a change activity, at either macro or micro levels. It is also, without doubt, logical and positivistic in its design. Indeed, if we examine the words I wrote at the time in my Learning Journal, concerning the need for integration, the positivistic assumptions are clear –
'We need, therefore, to recognise that whilst the laws of cause and effect continue to operate within large and complex systems, it ceases to be the case that the two can be easily identified as being connected, or that they are close in terms of time. The level of inter-connectedness within complex organisational environments is significant, yet it seemed to me that little time had been spent thinking through how the functions interconnected at anything more than an operational interface.'

When I looked anew at the model I saw that whilst it had a fundamental level of utility, it seemed to be lacking something. I looked long and hard at the model to try and discern what was missing for the assumption that it was not complete was intuitively based rather than the result of robust analysis and evaluation. I looked at the model many times and each time I did so, I followed the logical process steps through the various hierarchical levels of organisational operation but to no avail – it seemed sound but somehow, paradoxically, I knew it to be unsound.

The awareness of an omission grew as my thinking developed and began to broaden beyond the logical positivism that had guided much of my life; or rather, that I had allowed to guide much of my life. I used to frequently say that ‘logic was my watchword – it had guided me through life and was the one thing that I could rely on.’ However, as a result of this research, and significant changes in my personal life I was beginning to doubt the veracity of this statement.

In order to find the answer I realised that I had to challenge my own thinking – logic, it seemed, was preventing me from finding the answer. I was, at that time, urged, through reading, to “open yourself to the unknown” [Chopra, 2004] in which the author stated that:
“Who you think you are is not real but a concoction of past events, desires and memories. This concoction has a life of its own – it motors forward through time and space experiencing only those things that it knows. A new experience isn’t really new; it’s just a slight twist on very familiar sensations. To open yourself to the unknown means cutting the ground out from under your familiar reactions and habits. Notice how often the same words and phrases come out of your mouth, the same likes and dislikes dictate what you do with your time, the same people fill your life with routine. All this familiarity is like a shell. The unknown is outside the shell, and to encounter it, you have to be willing to welcome it in.” (p.57)

This helped me to realise, and confirm, that the logical approach that I had adopted was, in fact habitual and limiting. I think that we each enter into routines in our behaviours, which provide us with stability – they help us to remain within our comfort zone and make us feel more secure in an uncertain world. These habits are, very often exceptionally useful, but they can also be restrictive, as I found when I re-visited the Five Dimensions Model. Knowing that I now believed the model to be lacking something, I thought it would be useful to look at it from another person’s perspective, so I re-appraised the model from the perspective of a researcher, asking the question, "What changes would I make to this model so that it could be more useful and more effective for managers of change?"

Automatically, and habitually, my mind followed through the logical steps an organisation needed to undertake to develop and implement change effectively and my conclusion was that the model was logically sound. This was, however, an habitual analysis – I had sought and found logic where I expected to find logic. It seemed that knowing that a behaviour is limiting and habitual does not stop the
behaviour from occurring, or indeed stop the resultant satisfaction of having, once again, completed the circuit of habit.

As a researcher I had followed my own route map and, unsurprisingly, validated my own thinking; except that the thinking cannot be validated by the test-retest methodology in this instance. My evaluation was limited to what I expected to see and not open to the unexpected, the unknown. I needed to step outside of what I knew and explore this from a different vantage point – to understand the model from a broader perspective.

I was unsure how to do this for quite some time – habits are long in the forming, and hard to break, particularly when their usefulness has been re-affirmed on such a regular basis through many years of experience.

Then, in a period of reflection, I recalled going for a job interview in London several years previously when the interviewer had asked me to relate a difficult conflict or argument I had had with a work colleague. I spoke about a disagreement I had had with an engineering colleague in National Grid who was very resistant to the changes that we were implementing, and who seemed to go out of his way to prevent the changes from being implemented. He and I argued at every opportunity which I found quite difficult and frustrating to deal with – my approach was logically sound and accepted by many, so why not by him. Eventually, in a triumph of inexperience, although I didn’t realise it at the time, I tired of the arguments and simply pushed the changes through. He, of course, continued to argue and resist, but I had committed myself to a course of action and felt that I now had no time to continue the arguments. Consequently I moved around him rather than engage in further arguments with him.
After I had related the story in a little more detail, the interviewer asked me “How did you feel about this situation?” I gave what I believed to be a coherent and comprehensive answer, at the end of which she repeated her question, prefaced with a “Yes, but...” This confused me a little but I gave the answer again in a slightly different form of words. After I had finished speaking she said, “You have just told me logically what happened three times; twice in response to my question asking how you felt about it. You seem to be unable to discuss your feelings.”

This confused me a great deal and after the interview I reflected quite a lot on what she had said, but couldn’t really make any, logical, sense of it. Needless to say I did not receive a job offer and so carried on working with my then employer.

The question and comment of the interview statement remained with me over the following months and years and, of all the interview questions I have ever been asked, it is only this one, together with her response, that sticks in my mind.

I thought about this interview as I was re-viewing the Five Dimensions model and I realised that the question and comments provided me with the answer. The element missing from the model was indeed hidden by my logical and objectively distanced approach to the world. It was something that could not be written in ‘if...then’ statements. It was something that was not fully part of my life, and as Chopra (2004) identified, ‘outside my shell’. It was, very simply, feeling.

The model dealt with organisations and change like moving pieces around on a chessboard. Yes, there was an occasional foray into the human relations aspects of a business, but nevertheless, it was a contemporary version of the scientific and systematic deconstruction of organisations into component elements conducted
many years ago by Taylor (1911); an approach which typified organisations as mechanistic entities, or machines (Morgan 1986). I had developed a logical model but it dealt with change as a mechanistic process within a business – it paid scant regard to the feeling and emotions of the people who populated the business. Moreover, the way that it was documented paid scant regard to the feelings and emotions that I had experienced as I developed it.

There was, I began to understand, a parallel between the nature of the model and the nature of my change practice. I had, in many ways, projected my deterministic and objectively distanced approach into the model and the way in which I used it. Whilst it had proven its worth in several businesses, I was sure that I could, through this emergent realisation, make it yet more effective.

I concurrently realised that I was used to dealing with organisational change as an observer, rather than as a participant. I had, through my research and experience, created an architecture for change that was logically and empirically derived and which worked, but felt now that its functionality was compromised by its limitation. Perhaps more significantly, I realised that, as the model was a projection of my approach, then the route to resolving the issue had to be to consider my approach rather to than to, yet again, engage in an objective analysis of the model.

My role as a change agent, I had thought, was to provide the route forward for the business, and the people within it, to change. As I thought back over my experiences in change I realised that, from an organisational perspective, I had typically been either in charge, or one of the leadership team devising and implementing the change, and so my perspective was, to say the least,
exceptionally limited. I could recall very few occasions when I was personally subject to changes developed and implemented by others that affected me at anything other than a superficial level. My behavioural preferences are to view the world logically, and, for much of the time, to do so as a relative outsider and this had, I realised, been a formative characteristic in my understanding of change. Indeed, even though I had been exposed to highly charged and clearly evident emotions in the Rolls-Royce and Bentley change programme (Chapter 5) and had recognised the emotionality sufficiently to use it to design and deliver the Bentley Vision, I had, in many senses, consigned this to history as an episodic memory, not taken it forwards as an experiential learning process to inform my future practice.

Throughout my career I had always placed myself in the position of role model – of doing what I thought was right and presenting the 'right' image of the organisation. For much of the time my perception, or belief, was that, as a senior manager, I had to behave in a professional manner at all times. My definition of this was that I needed to be objective, analytical, impartial, and able to make tough decisions when necessary. I saw the business and its people as two separate elements, and, on every occasion, I considered the business to be the most important. That is not to say that I operated in a way that was devoid of humanity – I was able to be very sensitive and caring, but this was always done in private when I felt the other person needed a higher level of support. This must have been clearly evident for I was referred to as the 'robot', and my team used to ask if I downloaded at night as opposed to sleeping. I recall one time going for an ECG as part of a routine health examination at work and my team asked the Doctor for a copy of the report so that they could prove, once and for all, that I did not have a heart.
All of this appealed in a macho sort of way, and those close to me used to say that ‘most of the people in the business did not know or understand me’. I was unconcerned by this as, by my definition, and from feedback from my managers within the business, I was doing a good job. I was seen as capable within my role and my personal style obviously appealed within the businesses that I worked within, as I was able to progress my career significantly over a relatively short period of time.

I had had glimpses of the need to see things from different perspectives in my training practice when I used to talk with senior managers who would complain that the people under them were averse to change, unlike themselves who relished change. I used to ask how they coped with change when they were subject to it, as opposed to driving it, and their answers usually changed to be more akin to those that they encountered from their direct reports. Being the subject of change, they realised, was quite different to being in control of the change. Even asking this question, however, did not prompt me to reflect upon such issues myself – I was the teacher, the expert, and so was guiding their thinking not my own.

I had, of course, considered the people aspects of change in my work, but did so from a logical and, therefore, from an incomplete, perspective. What I now realise, in retrospect, is that I was repressing or denying my emotional side, with all but very few people. I was making decisions that were logically and rationally sound, but which, in many cases probably lacked an emotional element. I believe that, had I engaged fully with the businesses that I worked in, and with the people I worked with, then my work would have been more acceptable to most people, and more
sustainable through time. Logically driving change into a business is likely to result in compliance rather than understanding and acceptance.

The other main point here is that I drew the clear distinction between the business and myself – change was something other people did to make the business more effective. I simply created the format and structure for them to change. Operating as a change architect, impartially planning for, and then observing the change and its consequences, enabled objectivity but I now feel that it very much limited my understanding of the true impact of the change. One has to question, therefore, the true effectiveness of changes developed in such a manner.

I have, through time, come to realise that in order to be a truly effective change leader you have to fully engage with the business, with the people and with the change – one cannot be an impartial architect and observer – the change agent is also, critically, a participant. As a participant, the change agent has to engage fully, which means using both logic and emotion to understand and establish effective and sustainable change. This is a deeper level of involvement than that proposed by Schein (2001) when he identified the conceptual error of separating diagnosis from intervention in organisational change consultancy and suggested the use of ‘diagnostic interventions’. In such a scenario the consultant still remains detached from the organisation but closely monitors the effects and impact of his or her work within the business. What I mean by ‘the change agent as a participant’ is that we need to take full cognisance of the change agent’s experiences, as well as those of the organisation and individuals within the organisation, and that we need to seek to more fully and empathically understand the emergent reality that develops through such interaction. In this way we
experience the action-consequence cycle proposed by Burgoyne (2001) as a very real learning experience.

I had not realised the importance of either emotions or indeed of full engagement and participation for many years, although I frequently used to reflect often on my performance and behaviour. This was probably because each time I engaged in reflection or analysis I did so from a logical perspective. If you look for logic and find logic, then you have found what you are looking for. Engaging fully with people means taking time to understand them empathically as individuals, rather than understanding how people generally behave.

I think that there is a huge difference between genuinely understanding people as individuals and scientifically 'knowing' how they will respond and why. The former requires us to deal at an individual level with people, and at an emotional, relationship level; the latter requires us only to understand how people typically behave and then extrapolate this into the general population. I needed to genuinely understand people if I was to understand change, but in order to do that I had first to genuinely understand myself.

Exploring and developing an understanding of myself, that stood outside of logical analysis was, without a shadow of a doubt, the most difficult, and longest, journey I have had to take. It was a journey of several years, and, I believe, one that is still ongoing. It is, however, the singularly the most useful and enlightening journey as well. It has provided fresh perspectives on my research and on my understanding of organisational change.
My understanding of this whole issue of emotional connectivity, of being a whole person, only truly developed when I was subject to change - when things which I had previously thought to be certain became uncertain; when things that I took for granted disappeared; and when my faith and confidence in myself was shaken to its core. For perhaps the first time in my life I was no longer in control and I didn't know what to do. My past experiences and realities were of limited use, for this was a new experience. I wallowed in self-pity and confusion for quite some time and lost my drive to achieve. My research fell by the wayside, my work suffered and I struggled to raise the motivation to achieve a task for anything other than a brief period of time. At that time, I came to understand feelings more than ever before in my life - to realise that they truly are the driving force within us and that we deny them at our peril.

I was experiencing the emotional roller coaster described so eloquently by Kübler-Ross [1970] and had become stuck at the point of depression. I could not understand fully what was happening to me, but, in truth, I didn't spend a great deal of time analysing my thoughts or experiences. I was running my business, but, on reflection, was coasting along doing the bare necessities in terms of meeting my financial obligations and, when additional contracts came in, spending the revenue quite profligately. I was struggling to raise the energy to find new work, and my PhD was something that was always going to happen tomorrow or next week, or at some stage in the future.

The reality of the situation was that I was trying to deal with a great deal of emotion from previous years, that I had never really explored - the breakdown of my marriage, the change in my employment status from employed to self-employed, the heart attacks suffered by my twin brother, the death of my father, to
name but a few. I had, of course, experienced emotion at these events, but fairly quickly bottled it back up. I failed to understand that emotions are there for a purpose, and that we should enter into and experience them fully if we are to learn and move forwards.

I also came to realise that, over the years I had worked very hard to separate my work from my life and that the two are intrinsically linked - emotional difficulties in one have a profound and significant effect in the other.

The realisations occurred following conversations with others about the meaning of their lives. I recall speaking to my twin brother about his business as a self employed sales person - at the time he was experiencing a sustained loss of orders and was starting to wonder what to do next and how to survive.

In conversation he discussed being depressed and that from this position it was very difficult to motivate himself to do anything. He felt that he was trapped in a downward spiral of negativity and depression and could see no way out other than resorting to a different career. As he spoke I listened fully to the words he used and the underlying emotion of self perceived failure. He said that his failure was exacerbated by the fact that his lack of motivation meant that when he sat down at his computer to work he ended up playing cards on his pc or wasting time in other ways. This had the compound effect of firstly not engaging him in work and secondly he felt that he was now actively contributing to his own demise - yet he could not see a way forward.

As I reflected on the conversation I recognised that I was doing precisely the same thing - I too was trapped in a downward depressive cycle and could not engage
the energy to break out. When I was with clients I could raise the energy and enthusiasm to conduct meetings but this was more a case of tapping into the Jungian extravert (Myers & Myers, 1980) rather than a driving focus and desire to run the business. The situation became suddenly worse when a fairly large contract, which had actually started, was cancelled due to pressures within the client organisation and I was faced with a financial shortfall that meant I was unable to meet my obligations. Rather than causing me to re-energise the business and focus on new sales to fill the gap I drifted into a more depressive state, which I would not admit, to myself or others.

This continued for some time and my occasional forays into business development or thesis writing inevitably only lasted an hour or so before I became distracted and lost the energy and enthusiasm.

Through reflection, and inspired by reading, I had realised that the situation my twin brother was describing mirrored my own very precisely, and it was much easier to see it in somebody else and then seek the parallels in my own life. I was at such a low point that although I could logically and rationally identify the issues and some of the causes I had not reflected on the problem as a whole person - therefore my emotions were disconnected from the analysis and were, therefore, not able to be fully engaged to really find the problem and generate not just the solution but the energy, strength and courage to face it. To move forwards I had to ‘let go’ of the logical constraints that I had so effectively placed upon myself, and move into the unknown. I had to embark upon a journey, which subsequently provided me with more questions than answers, but one which enabled me to understand change at deeper, more philosophical level. Change is about the person, not about the organisation.
Of course, we need to drive change into businesses to refresh them, to meet the challenges of our competitors, but we are changing the way in which people work, the way in which they think, and behave. We cannot achieve this by moving pieces on a chess board, we need to understand who they are, not what jobs they do, and then use this understanding to develop beneficial and integrative change that has a full and complete human dimension.

One of the many interesting factors about the experience was that my previous thinking about change management had identified that change is generally conceived and developed logically and rationally but experienced emotionally. I had taken this premise forward in my consultancy to advise clients that they needed to think through the emotional impact of the changes they were about to implement in order to more effectively understand the way in which the changes would be perceived and experienced by their employees. Now I reflect on my own personal experiences and realise that this advice is woefully inadequate - emotions cannot truly be understood from a rational perspective. I had, once again, been leaving out part of the person in the change process. In fact when I look at the words I used “think through the emotional impact” they say a great deal about the limited focus of my understanding of change at that time. How can emotions be understood simply by thinking them through?

What I had so painfully experienced was that, if change is to be managed, then it needs to engage the whole person – the rational side helps to create understanding and order, plans and processes; and the emotional side helps to create understanding and acceptance, passion and drive.
So what can we learn from this in terms of change management? I think that when I talk about integrative change I now mean not just the integration across the various levels and functions of the business, but a much broader integration of the whole person – adopting an approach which embraces thought and feeling and pays equal regard to them both.

My experience over the years has been that it is quite possible to create change programmes that move a business forward in a way that does not take account of the emotional impact on people. I myself have done so on several occasions and the business has valued the approach. The foremost evaluation of success has always been better measures on the key performance indicators – increased profitability, reduced waste, reduced costs, improved through-put times, higher volume of work etc. Businesses, it seems, seldom measure the people dimension at anything other than the process measures of performance appraisals conducted, briefing sessions held, or similar. There is an apparent disconnect, therefore, in terms of emotional understanding and this is particularly evident when the emotions are perceived to be negative. When people are positive and enthusiastic about the change the business welcomes them as part of the process, yet when the obverse applies and people are unhappy, demotivated or angry, the business tends to label them as ‘problems’. I think that the integrative connectivity that I have come to understand through this research can help in this regard. It can help organisations and change leaders to plan, prepare, and implement change more effectively than a simple, logical process would allow.

This is, in my view, broader than the concept of emotional intelligence developed by, Salovey and Mayer (1990 and 1997) and popularised by Goleman (1995) in that they talk about a four branch model of emotional intelligence being the
abilities to perceive emotion, use emotions to facilitate thought, understand emotion and to manage emotions. This work differentiates emotions as a separate form of intelligence that we use to ‘facilitate cognitive thinking processes’—whereas my view is that we should work to understand issues from a holistic perspective, fully integrating a cognitive view of the world with an emotional view.

The notion that emotions contain information about relationships was developed further by Mayer, Salovey, Caruso & Sitarenios (2001). They confined their thinking to the fact that a person’s relationship to another person or object is intrinsically linked to their emotion to that person or object, whilst I would contend that this applies beyond the relationship with definite articles or people to relationships with abstract notions such as change.

This means that as change managers we need to be fully cognisant of not just a person’s intellectual or rational perception of the change being proposed or implemented, but also their emotional perception. To ignore one or the other is to deal with only part of the picture— we need to deal with the whole person.

My own experiences of the depressive state of mind detailed above, illustrate this point well— I was cognitively aware of what was happening but felt emotionally incapable of doing anything about it, even though I could logically have deduced an appropriate course of action. My emotional state fundamentally affected my cognitive processes.

It is clear that emotional information is biosocial (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso and Sitarenios [2001]) and therefore elements of it, at the very least, can be codified in terms of their physical or vocal representation, and that these representations will
be generalisably applicable within given cultural populations. What is not as clear are the factors which give rise to the feeling of the emotions prior them being manifested according to socio-cultural norms. This is the area within which the effective change manager needs to operate – they need to be able to discern what emotional impact their changes will have on the audience and determine how best to manage the subsequent manifestation, as well as think through the logical and procedural elements of the change programme. In short, they need to ensure emotional and cognitive connectivity – a totally integrative approach to their work.

The problem is that we see the world from our own perspective and fail, at a fundamental level, to see it truly empathically from another’s. In times of change this can be very dangerous – for we run the risk of assuming the organisation and its people will operate as the machine would - function with deterministic linearity, and simply deliver what we expect. Then, when they don’t, we find ways of blaming them because they are ‘averse to change’ or ‘don’t understand what we are doing’ or ‘don’t have the skills to change’.

What we are, in effect, saying is that our capacity for change is greater, or better than theirs – when, in point of fact, this is an entirely unproven hypothesis. Our capacity for change is not tested when we create change – that only tests our capacity to make change, which is only half the picture. A full and comprehensive test for change would include the capacity to devise change and implement it effectively, as well as the capacity to understand how change affects people, and deal with people effectively through the change process. The Five Dimensions model simply does not do this – it needs a sixth Dimension – one that transcends each of the others at the same time as being included absolutely in all others - the human dimension.
The Sixth Dimension of Change

The Sixth Dimension of Change must, by definition, sit at the heart of the Five Dimensions model – it becomes a meta-dimension, for without it the whole change enterprise is restricted in its definition and orientation, and, in all likelihood, in its efficacy.

If this sixth Dimension is truly the ‘human dimension’ then it will require us to focus on it throughout the change process from inception through to design and implementation, and to consider the emotional impact on people as well as the rational impact on the business, the processes, and the people. This leads us genuinely to what I would refer to as ‘double-helix change management’, which I shall explain over the next few paragraphs.

We often see people or organisations that deal with task management and people management as though they were at either end of a continuum. If they are at opposite ends of a continuum then there is, by definition, a mutual exclusivity at the polar extremities. For example, if I were in high task mode, to the extreme edge of the continuum, then I would pay scant regard to the emotions or relationships of the people I was working with. This is what I would call, first generation thinking about task/people integration.

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\text{Task Focus} \quad \text{Continuum} \quad \text{People Focus}
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*Fig 6: Task/People continuum (single)*
I have a personal experience of this when, on a management development programme some years ago, I was leading an exercise which required us to locate pieces of information hidden around our location, translate these through a code into elements of a logic puzzle, and then solve the puzzle. I had read and understood the task and delegated the search to my team, whilst I remained in the group room to coordinate the search and to solve the puzzle.

The exercise took place at 11pm so we were tired from the day and I took this into account at the start of the exercise as I divided the exercise into task elements. One of the later task elements was to locate a date on a gravestone and I sent one of my colleagues to search the graveyard with a small hand held torch. I was fully immersed in the task by this stage as information was starting to come in, so I made no checks as to his concerns about searching a graveyard at midnight and simply despatched him to get the job done. He returned over an hour later and was, I realised later, in quite an emotional state. At the time, I did not see this and so simply took the answer from him, ignored his attempts to engage me in conversation and returned to the puzzle – having, of course, despatched him to the next task.

After we had eventually solved the puzzle and completed the exercise, I was on a high having found the logic puzzle very challenging, but my colleagues were in an entirely different place. They did not want to talk about the answer to the puzzle at all, much to my annoyance. Rather they wanted to talk about what they had done, how they had felt out in the dark alone, and how they had received no support from me as I was totally task focussed.
I must say, that at the time, I thought they were being somewhat illogical – we had solved the puzzle, and completed the exercise successfully, but through the subsequent debate I was somewhat chagrined. I realised that I had been operating fully at the task end of the ‘task – people’ continuum and, importantly, that completion of the task was only part of the exercise. I had fundamentally failed to manage and care for my team.

Leading a team does, of course, necessitate a high task focus, but it also requires the leader to have a high people focus as well. In this instance, had I demonstrated an empathic understanding of how my team were feeling about the experiences that they had gone through then this would have made a significant difference to the way they felt about the exercise and their overall feeling of satisfaction at having completed a challenging task. As it was, the lack of empathy, care and consideration for them meant that the whole exercise was devalued in their view, and, therefore, I had not fulfilled my responsibilities as a leader.

Whilst this was a good learning point for me on the development programme, it took many years to consolidate into a full understanding of how to manage and lead teams effectively.

I have experienced this continuum a number of times through the years – with typically heard statements being, “we haven’t got time to involve everybody, we just have to do it”, and “I know I have to do performance appraisals but I am too busy doing my job”. And, at the opposite end of the continuum, “Don’t worry about the job, just get yourself sorted”.
This *modus operandi* seems to work for some aspects of life and so is confirmed as acceptable by our own experience, just as viewing the world entirely through a logical filter was confirmed as acceptable to myself. In organisations we tend to think it acceptable to oscillate between the two extremes. We do, of course, favour the task end of the continuum so the oscillation is seldom even or indeed regular in its rhythm and depth.

When managers view the workplace from this one-dimensional bi-polar perspective then they tend to focus on the task as opposed to the people end of the continuum. I recall working with one very task-focussed manager and coaching him about the need for a concurrent people focus. He returned the following week to inform me that the people focus I was talking about didn’t work because when he had tried to be, in his words, ‘nicer’ to his people, he had noticed that they all became friendlier but that the work ethic had slipped so he had to quickly revert to being a taskmaster. It took quite some time to explain to him that he needed to have a concurrently high focus on task and people, and maintain both through time.

In order to explain this to the manager, and others like him, I started to talk about the fact that task and people were not on either end of the same continuum, but instead were on parallel continuums. In this way one could operate with high task focus whilst at the same time, operate with a high people focus. This, I considered, was more effective in terms of management and leadership style. I referred to this as second-generation thinking, in that it was more appropriate than the simplistic, bi-polar first-generation model referred to above, and I depicted it as follows:
Although this second generation model recognised that it was possible to focus concurrently on people and process, it also recognised the behaviours mentioned above in terms of people operating at a 'high task / low people' or indeed a 'low task / high people' position. It is also better than the single continuum model in terms of reflecting reality, in that it recognises that it is possible to operate at a 'low task / low people' position. I found that the model was useful in explaining the need to focus on the people within a business and encouraging people to see that doing so was not necessarily done at the expense of the task. As Joiner (1987) stated: "effective change requires skilled leadership that can integrate the soft human elements with hard business actions." [p.1].

The significant weakness in this parallel continuum model in terms of my developing understanding of change is that it is inherently dualistic; task and people are seen as separate or discrete entities within the business. My learning is that this is not the case, the two are intertwined and interconnected – delivering the task of the business, achieving the purpose of the enterprise, is the role of people. Task and people focus therefore are not mutually exclusive as in the single continuum model, or indeed dualistically separate as in the two-continuum model - rather they are mutually inclusive.
This level of connectedness can be depicted using the helix similar to the DNA helix, in that both task and people are each intertwined around the other. They are separate but connected – each relies on the other for the business to deliver its goal. A task focus is, then, only half the equation; as is a people focus – both are needed. The relationship is symbiotic. This is ‘double-helix change management’.

![Double Helix Continuum](image)

Fig. 8: The Double Helix continuum

Effective change managers, then, need as a higher level competence, the ability to understand change in themselves, in others, and in the organisation and to take full cognisance of this understanding when devising and implementing change programmes. They need to understand, and operate within, a double helix change management approach, which requires an understanding and acceptance of the inter-dependence and interconnectedness of people and task. That means having a concurrent objective focus on task and an empathic focus on people whilst recognising that each is needed by, and needs, the other.
This would mean, then that the Five Dimensions of Change model becomes a Six Dimensions of Change model, with the double helix sitting at its centre to signify that throughout the change management programme there needs to be integration across the various strategic and operational domains of the business, and also integration between the task and people elements at all times.

![Six Dimensions - The 5D model with the double helix within](image)

Fig 9: The Six Dimensions - The 5D model with the double helix within

Having developed my thinking to the extent that I recognised the need for such multiple integration I reflected on the model and recognised that it needed one further amendment for it to fully reflect my learning to date. The term 'model' signifies that the methodology is an exemplar and infers, thereby, that it should be followed: it is prescriptive. As a label it was appropriate when my thinking about
the, then, Five Dimensions, was deterministic and logically structured. In that sense, the model was not only prescriptive, but also restrictive. There was a given way of using the model to manage change effectively, or so I thought, and therefore the approach moved, as previously stated, from utility to universality.

My current understanding about managing organisational change is that we need to adopt an integrative approach, but that we do so by fully researching the current situation in terms of experience, perceptions, understanding, and emotions, as well as the more objective understanding gained through studying business plans, balance sheets, performance measures etc. This integrated understanding can only be gained by asking questions and genuinely listening to the answers in terms of their meaning as well as their wording. As our understanding of organisations undergoing change is that they are non-linear dynamic systems that evolve through time, albeit with some inherently characteristic traits, then our approach to generating a contextual understanding can, I believe, only come through asking questions rather than providing a prescriptive model or approach for the business leaders to follow.

With this in mind, the word I would now choose to label the Six Dimensions model is ‘approach’, which I feel identifies it as but one of a number of ways of understanding change. An approach is softer and less prescriptive than a model – it is suggestive of alternatives rather than an exclusive or deterministic methodology. Furthermore, I think that the approach should be used as a basis for identifying and forming the questions that will help to generate our understanding of the organisation, its people and the change process.
Thus I have, through this rather emotional experience come to the realisation that the nature of change, or rather the nature of my understanding of change was limited by my logical and externalised view of the world, and this was so powerful that even when I encountered situations where emotionality was high, such as the marque separation at Rolls-Royce and Bentley, I failed to take this learning forwards in my change practice. The true essence of change is not how it can be objectively analysed in others, but also how we understand its impact and consequences for ourselves as part of that process. We cannot divorce ourselves from the change process – we are a part of the process and only by accepting this can we begin to truly develop our understanding of change management.

For the Six Dimensions Approach to be of value, we need to use it to guide the questions that we ask – to use it as a facilitative tool to help ourselves and others more fully understand what is happening in the business and to develop, thereby, a more holistic and appropriate change management strategy. The component elements of the original model were sound, as indeed is the sixth element that I have recently added; the flaw in the model was in the manner in which I used it, which itself was a function of my logical and deterministic philosophy when I designed it.

Fortunately I think that the approach can have value, but we ought to use it in a way that generates understanding of context and purpose rather than one that prescribes a route forwards. The Six Dimensions Approach identifies some of the questions that need to be asked to ensure that change is soundly based and integrative; and of course, those questions and their answers, will lead to further questions emerging to provide a spiralling array of understanding.
This spiralling notion of emergent awareness and understanding is important within the context of organisational change, particularly as we recognise the inherent complexity of the change process. It is, I think, entirely in keeping with the change principles that I had previously identified when I was initially creating the Five Dimensions model, as detailed is Chapter 6. Most specifically that it is frequently, if not always, difficult to precisely define the change process and the change plan at the outset, rather we find an emergent understanding of both the process and the outcome is developed through time, and particularly through the change journey. Given this premise, it is important that the depiction of the Six Dimensions Approach is shown not as a procedural methodology, akin to the waterfall approach to systems development [McCormack and Conway, 2005], or indeed the more refined version with iterative feedback loops at every stage of the model. This means that Figure 9, above, is misleading in terms of its representation of the approach.

Instead of the linear sequencing provided by the above the Six Dimensions approach model needs to be shown as a spiral with the direction provided by D^1, with the other Dimensions held in a structured array around D^1, thus demonstrating the interconnectedness of the Dimensions, yet at the same time recognising that, at any time, any of the Dimensions can take precedence or priority as in the hsbp case study when I first recognised the problem of rigid linearity of the original model. This diagrammatic representation is far more appropriate for the Six Dimensions approach as it provides for emergent growth and development around a centrally structured and planned direction (D^1).

Two additional features are clear within the Six Dimensions Approach. Firstly that the Direction, D^1, is challengeable throughout the change process as opposed to
being inherently fixed once initially defined, with the challenge arising from the knowledge and experience that is created and which emerges through the spiralling development of the change architecture and the change process; and secondly, that the sixth Dimension is philosophically central to the processual methodology of the approach. Thus the platform of the spiral is the embodiment of the sixth Dimension, \( D^6 \). This can be shown diagrammatically as follows:

![Diagram of the Six Dimensions Approach](image)

*Figure 10: The Six Dimensions Approach*

This refined approach, then, has an inherent fluidity and a spiralling structure that enables the development of strategy to emerge through time as more information comes to light through questioning and experience. It is more akin to the spiral model of software development suggested by Boehm (1988) and recognises the
fact that the questions that promote understanding and learning themselves emerge through time in a spiralling array structured around, and dynamically connected to, the central change direction.
Chapter Ten

Case Study – X Limited

This Chapter explores how I used the experiences and learning from my research to support a manufacturing organisation through a change programme, which was initially emergent and finally planned and strategically oriented. My approach was, as a result of previous learning, much more adaptive and flexible and I used my knowledge of change and change management in a far more facilitative manner with the Six Dimensions approach, than my previous prescriptive adherence to the Five Dimensions model. The results were significant and I explore these fully from the three perspectives of researcher, learner and change agent to gain as much learning from the case study as I could. In essence, then, this Chapter provides the summary case study of my research in which I seek to apply the learning and understanding gained through my research.

Towards the end of the research phase I started to work with a manufacturing organisation that was a subsidiary of a national home improvements business. The manufacturing business, X Limited, was based in Yorkshire and employed 560 people, primarily in line manufacturing jobs. X Limited manufactures windows, doors and conservatories solely for its parent company. The business had recently appointed a new MD, as an internal transfer from the Group Financial Director role, and, following his induction process into the company and to his new role, he declared an interest in ensuring that the business started to develop its people. He had little prior experience of development but had recognised that there was a need to develop his managers and foremen if the company was to successfully grow and develop.
He was unsure as to how to undertake a development programme and stated at the outset that he wanted to discuss development options that were cost effective. It was, therefore, clear at the very beginning of the relationship that the driving factor in the business was money and that any intervention needed to deliver a positive, measurable return on investment (ROI).

My first proposition was that I spend a little time getting to know the business and discussing the development programme with a few managers. When I did so, it quickly transpired that, although the business managers claimed that they were operating a well run, tightly managed and efficient production organisation this was not quite the case. The evidence indicated that the business had been built up over the years by adopting an industry standard approach to manufacturing and then adapting this in response to emergent pressures or changing demands - at no point was there evidence of a clear vision to drive the business forward other than micro-economic measures of increasing the average output per employee by a stated amount each month, and of reducing quality defects by a different value each month.

There was evidence of a ‘command and control’ management style with centralised decision-making, a fairly high level of risk-aversion, and little evidence of the workforce engaging at anything other than a level of surface compliance. There was an overt rigidity across the business that was stifling innovation and creativity and it seemed that there was a substantial disconnect between the senior management team and the rest of the business. Moreover, the managers, foremen and indeed the operatives seemed to be environmentally and experientially conditioned not to take risks and to maintain the status quo – it was,
in effect, a classic mechanistic controlled organisation which focussed on adherence to production processes to achieve defined targets that were increased on an ongoing basis as soon as they were achieved. The workforce appeared to be very demoralised as did the management team, and internal communication was very poor. Additionally a high blame culture prevailed which further diminished the likelihood of anyone straying from the path of experience to suggest new or innovative strategies to enhance the capability of the organisation.

When I reflected my observations back to the MD he agreed with me and stated that, "I see the same thing every day but don't know how to change it - I thought that if we put a management development programme in place then at least the managers would start to operate differently and then other things could follow". Following this we had a wide-ranging conversation about the various approaches that we might use to help him change the business. Although the MD was supportive, it was clear that he had not engaged in strategic development of a business himself and that he needed to have some experience upon which to build - discussing theoretical models and approaches, or even case studies and other experiences did not convince him of the validity of what to him were unknown approaches. There clearly needed to be an opportunity for the MD to experience organisational change at a personal, not vicarious, level so that he could start to move forwards by developing a strategic vision and approach for the business.

I sought, therefore, to identify an approach that would meet their stated needs in terms of a management development programme, whilst concurrently creating the opportunity to address some of the strategic and cultural issues within the business. In this way I reasoned that the bigger issues could be addressed on an emergent basis through time. Emergent basis in this sense means that I intended
to draw them to the attention of the MD and his team gradually, having first
established the credibility and efficacy of a strategic consultancy intervention and
then use this experience to help secure their understanding of both the need and
the approach required to address the strategic and cultural issues more fully.

The issue became more problematic when it transpired that the MD was himself
arguing with the Group Board about the development programme because the
company had seldom invested in training and development for anything other than
acquisition of technical skills and they did not see the need for such an investment.
The basis for this position was that they had started a company and grown it to a
£100m turnover organisation in ten years so were considered by most measures
to be successful - therefore, why change?

The organisational culture was, as described above, very tough and seemed to be
fundamentally based on the approach of the two founding Directors when they
started the business a decade previously. There was, within X Limited, a strong
element of what Bjerke (1999, p7] refers to as “intersubjective mental
programming”. He identifies that this is the level of mental programming or
conditioning that occurs at a societal or organisational level, as opposed to that
which occurs at a universal level or an individual level. Clearly people working
within the same business and sharing common experiences about the rules,
protocols, language, and accepted behaviours become conditioned to that culture.
Indeed it is this 'enculturation process' that ensures both the continuance of the
culture and the acceptance of the new member.

Schein, (1984, p.3) describes organisational culture as, “the pattern of basic
assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning
to cope with its problems of external adaptation in internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to these problems.” Brown [1988] identifies cultural norms as “the range of acceptable (and unacceptable) attitudes and behaviours for members of a social unit (p.42). Bjerke [1999] further defines the process of acquiring or becoming immersed in the culture as not necessarily a formal educative process – it is often simply the interaction of relationships in everyday life.

It seemed to me that the cultural norms in the business were very clearly defined and that changing them through a management development programme would be a difficult challenge. The challenge would be made much more difficult because we were intending to do this in the absence of a defined vision or strategic objectives that encompassed a revised cultural description that we could focus on, and in the absence of any form of support from Group level.

I continued several times over a few meetings to explain that they needed a strategic vision and plan but they seem to struggle to understand what I was talking about. The senior management team focussed exclusively on cost reduction and increasing the commercial capability of the management team but did not seem to understand that the cultural web within which the managers operated would be a far more powerful force for conservatism than the development programme could ever be a force for change. It was evident to me that the senior team had no experience of devising or implementing a strategic change programme and very limited understanding of what it might entail or indeed what it might achieve. This, then, was both a challenge and an opportunity; the challenge being to help them understand the need and acquire the necessary
skills to develop and drive the strategy; the opportunity being to test my skills of facilitation and influence on a group of people who had openly stated that they did not want to do this.

As mentioned previously, I decided to ensure that the development programme delivered what they had defined as their objectives, nebulous though these needs were, and also ensure that, through the programme, they saw and experienced a demonstrably different way of doing business. In this way I may be able to influence them through time of the merits of taking a more integrated and strategic approach.

The MD was convinced that a development programme was needed so argued his case forcefully and secured the necessary budget. He wanted to begin to challenge and change the prevailing culture and the only approach he knew of and understood was to train the managers to do things differently. In fact, he could not truly articulate the difference he wanted to create - it was a case of moving away from their current position from rather than moving towards a new, defined position in every sense.

When we explore the idea of change by moving away, we find that it is patently problematic. Connor (1992) talks about the 'burning platform' whereby the need for change is so great that it becomes a self-evident necessity - “the price of maintaining the status quo becomes too high.” (p.92). Where such a burning platform exists he identifies that businesses and more importantly, people within businesses, invariably move away from their current position. There was no such platform here – rather an intuitive belief by the MD that a training programme would help to change the business by helping the managers to manage differently.
Therefore we had limited understanding or acknowledgement of the need to change and no defined destination.

When I discussed this with him at a later date, some eight months in to the programme which is described below, the MD acknowledged that he ‘knew he wanted to do something but did not know what would be most effective so went with what he considered to be the traditional approach – training’. He then went on to say that experience had been a great teacher and he would now approach the whole change programme in a fundamentally different way. This is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

If we review the prevailing situation against Connor’s ‘Stages of Change Commitment’ model (ibid, p.148) it is clear that the MD and his team accepted the need for a development programme but were not at the same stage in terms of their position on a cultural change programme. It is, in my experience, quite a common scenario and, in fact, many organisations pull away at this stage because they do not understand the greater strategic requirements on their business. In this instance the MD intuitively rather than intellectually and experientially understood the need for change and was prepared to start to move in order to both secure some benefits of change and also to broaden his experience of what might be possible – a courageous position to take.

Of course, the challenges did not reside just within the organisation – I needed to find a way to provide support and my primary approach for doing so was typically to use the Six Dimensions of Change approach as means of securing direction and integration through the change process. I had, on several occasions used the previous iteration of this, the 5-D model as a blueprint for managing the change
process in terms of ensuring that all the component elements of successful change were included, and integrated in an appropriate manner. In this instance it would clearly not be possible to commence at the start of the process with the Vision definition - we had no evidence of, or desire to create, anything within the D\(^1\) dimension of Vision, and therefore the use of the model or approach was perhaps compromised at the outset. If you cannot define the destination, I reasoned, then how can you ensure that you are taking the right journey?

Notwithstanding this issue I was absolutely confident that we could achieve a great deal of beneficial strategic change within the business if I was able to provide demonstrable evidence of success within the development programme that the company has requested. It was clearly not going to be possible to use the model in the way it was initially designed, but I had, as detailed in previous chapters, already reached the conclusion that the model should be facilitative rather than instructive.

Here then was an opportunity to use the 6D approach to guide my questions and challenges to the business, to guide the development of strategic thinking within the senior team, and to support the emergent realisation of the need for a strategic framework for the business. To achieve these objectives I would need to use the approach to inform my thinking, and to help format my questions, so that I was facilitating the development of the strategy and the strategic thinking processes of the senior team. This was contrary to, and indeed infinitely better than my early thoughts on the 5D model when I thought we could use it to say to a business 'here is the answer, let's follow this logically through from A to B.'
The opportunity here was a little more complex than I had first thought in that not only would it be a good test of using the 6D approach as a facilitative tool, but I would also be using it in a non-linear order. Given the initial positioning of the MD and the senior team I could clearly not go back and say that we need to develop a vision before we moved any further forward. I needed to use the approach to guide my practice but do so behind the scenes, as it were, and to maintain the mental schematic of the structured and integrated approach but deploy it in an adaptive way. The test would be two-fold – could the approach be used facilitatively and could it be used adaptively in a non-linear format.

The first issue was to propose a management development programme and it was to this that my attention turned. I had previously developed a three-element methodology to develop managers in organisations and this had had a beneficial effect in terms of developing knowledge and skills and, critically in this case, delivering a positive return on investment to the business. The programme was called the OPAL Development Programme, which stood for Organisation Performance and Leadership and through its title overtly stated that the programme was focused on enhancing business performance as well as leadership capability. It seemed to me to be entirely appropriate to use this programme within X Limited given the cost-focus and ROI requirements of the MD.

The programme had three integrated elements, which were:

1. Knowledge workshops, in which we introduced participants to management and leadership skills, as well as providing them with the opportunity to practice some of their newly acquired skills within a safe learning environment.
2. Group coaching sessions, in which we discussed the real issues that the participants were facing in terms of their developing skills and managing their teams. These were very much akin to Action Learning Sets in that we worked with the managers in groups of 5-6 over the period of twelve months and encouraged them to increasingly manage the process of challenge, reflection and discussion themselves.

3. Business Improvement Projects, where each participant was required to devise develop, implement and evaluate a business improvement project that was related to their area of work and which delivered a positive return on investment of at least twice the programme costs. These projects were also discussed within the coaching sessions.

Given the cultural scenario described above, one of the principal objectives of the programme was to help the participants move away from a Model 1 routine (Argyris, 1992) whereby they do not challenge other people’s thinking and work to avoid creating the conditions where their own thinking and assumptions are exposed and open to challenge. This position, or routine, seemed to be endemic within the business that corresponded very closely to the machine paradigm explored by (Morgan, 1986). The overriding purpose of the business was to make money, and the sole business measures were concerned with costs, profitability and cash flow. The only challenges seemed to be functionally related to non-achievement of the targets with no challenge or discussion about how managerial behaviours may influence operatives’ performance.
I wanted the managers to begin to challenge the way that things were done in the business, and, importantly to challenge their own behaviours and routines so that they could develop more effective ways of managing the business. I wanted them to move to a Model II routine [Argyris, 1997], in that they would open their thinking to critical analysis and questioning, constructively challenge and question others actions and arguments, and discuss the range of thoughts, feelings and emotions that are customarily hidden. In short I wanted them to develop their critical thinking skills, their self-reflection skills, and their team working skills within the context of a changing organisation. If I could achieve this, I reasoned, then they would be more likely to recognise that the business could change and that they had an inherent power to catalyse that change and thus begin to lead beneficial change into the business.

At the first workshops I asked each group to describe the business at that moment in time and was somewhat horrified by the responses that I received. Each group spoke about a hostile, hard and challenging culture within which the only thing that mattered was delivering their business objectives. The business processes were described as disconnected, and the internal communication as non-existent. The management style was typified by a bullying approach at all levels with little questioning other than for clarification of the direction being provided by the senior management team. One group summed up the line managers role as 'we are there to bully the people on the shop floor to make sure they do what they are paid to do. Our managers bully us and they are, in turn, bullied by the Directors, who are themselves bullied by Head Office.' I checked this out with the other groups, fully expecting the view to be challenged but on each occasion I was informed that this very accurately described the business.
It was very clear from this and other early experiences that the business placed little or no value on people and saw them not as assets to be engaged and developed, but as a disposable commodity that could be readily replaced if they failed to perform at an acceptable level of service. A cultural symptom of this type of organisation is that decision-making is almost always top down and this was the case here. People were very uneasy about making decisions because they may get it wrong and then would have to face the adverse consequences. The degree of overt control within the business was very significant and, consequently the degree of creativity, and proactive problem solving was very low. Therefore, it was increasingly evident that to secure change through the management development programme alone would be exceptionally difficult.

The managers were in a very real sense victims, and products, of their prior experience within the company and, indeed the very first challenge was to help the managers to recognise and then start to overcome the ‘learned helplessness’ (Hall & Hall, 1988) that was endemic within the business. I spent many hours explaining to them that they could make positive beneficial change; that they could take responsibility for their own areas of work, and for their own development; and that they could, appropriately, challenge the business and their managers.

I recall, in one very exasperating session, asking the group, ‘why do you think you are on this development programme if not to challenge and change the business and the way in which you work?’ Of all the answers I was expecting, the one I received was not one of them – the answer was that the development programme was probably a ‘tax dodge’ for this was the only way in which they could understand the business spending money on their development. I found that through time whilst most of them recognised the need for change, only a few were
initially prepared to, in their words, 'put their head above the parapet'. I considered asking the MD to come and talk with the groups to give them permission to challenge and change, but reflected that this had not worked in the more managerially enlightened context of North West Water, so was unlikely to work here.

During the next workshop and coaching sessions I continued to discuss the opportunity that they had to change the business, and to achieve quite different relationships with their direct reports, but it was clear that the prevailing business culture was overwhelmingly oppressive. I decided, therefore, that we should press ahead with the development programme and try to generate understanding of their ability to devise and implement change through the business improvement projects. At least in this way, they would, like the MD, experience the process at first hand as opposed to hearing somebody from outside the business talk about the need for change.

Slowly, the participants rose to the challenge of identifying a business improvement project that they could work on within their area. We had to push some people quite hard to get them to identify a project as they were clearly unwilling to rock the boat, but very quickly it became clear that the opportunities to save money were abundant. People were working in functional silos that were so small as to contain only their immediate work team or, on occasions, themselves and they were concerned only with achieving their own objectives to the extent that they would knowingly incur costs and waste to ensure that they delivered their numbers. Additionally the business processes had been iteratively developed from the original systems so there were opportunities to re-look at them with the
benefit of more experience, and to explore their effectiveness with a more creative insight than had previously been allowed.

One participant identified that product was frequently ‘lost’ at his workstation, due to the somewhat disorganised system in place for interim storage. When this happened he would re-order the product and the manufacturing process would start again. He would not record this anywhere so if the next shift manager found the same product missing, they would in all likelihood also re-order it. Consequently, some product was being partially made, and then re-ordered and remade several times because of a poor stock management system. The raw materials were relatively low priced so when the ‘lost’ product was eventually found then it was scrapped and replaced by the re-ordered product.

Persuading the participants to fully participate in the management development programme was in the end, I think, a function of the business improvement projects. The projects were incorporated as perhaps the most important element of the whole development programme – for they enabled the participants to devise and implement beneficial change in a supported environment, and additionally, the projects met the over-riding focus of the business, namely to reduce costs and improve profitability. In this way we were creating a new reality for the business – supporting its transition from mechanistic cost-driven business to a supportive and developmentally focussed business. In doing so we were spreading the intellectual knowledge base of the business by including a wider range of managers in the business development process, albeit at a micro-economic, functional level. Prior to the programme it was clear to me that the business was run on the combined intelligence of about four people – a travesty when one considered that this was less than one percent of the workforce.
I think the key to achieving acceptability of the projects, and thereby the whole
development programme, was involving the senior management team in the
projects so that they were overtly seen to initially participate in the process and
ultimately seen to own the process. In this way they not only endorsed the
business improvement projects, they also implicitly gave people permission to
challenge the pre-existing paradigms within the business, and indeed to challenge
themselves.

In order to secure the release of the centralised management decision making
power within the business, and thereby genuinely delegate accountability to deliver
the projects, we needed to ensure that the whole process had high face validity
and, importantly, had sufficient checks and balances as to not destabilise the
existing power bases and decision-making frameworks. At the same time we
needed to ensure that the creativity and problem solving processes that we
wanted the programme delegates to engage in were real and substantial.

To achieve this we asked the participants to engage with the projects in a
structured manner that commenced with them writing a project proposal form
that was then discussed with a member of the senior team who had been
identified as their sponsor. The sponsors’ role was to help the participant develop
their argument and their project proposition so that it could be authorised by the
senior team. In reality they also worked hard to establish a closer relationship
between these two tiers of management. By doing this they helped to ensure that
the project management methodology was owned by the business rather than
imposed by the consultants.
Once the project proposal was signed off by the participant and the sponsor it was discussed at a senior team meeting and, if of the appropriate standard, given the go ahead to progress to the next phase – writing a detailed project plan. At this stage of the process the participant again worked with the sponsor to work the project detail up so that accurate investments, timelines, risks and outputs were documented. Again, once the project owner and the project sponsor had agreed and signed the documentation, it went to a senior team meeting for authority to proceed.

At each signature point the participant was stating that he or she was prepared to deliver the defined objectives of the project on the basis that the requested resources were made available, and the sponsor was stating that the business would provide the required resources and support the implementation of the project. In this way the projects were integrated across the business and, more significantly, owned by the business. The participants had, through the project sign-off process, a voice that would be heard by the business. Many had commented that prior to the programme their experience was of suggesting changes in business processes to their senior manager, but finding that these were almost invariably rejected as being unworkable or inappropriate without any apparent analysis of the proposed change. Having had suggestions dismissed out of hand, they had learned that it was pointless making suggestions and so had stopped making them.

Now with this programme, they had a methodology to make suggestions that was guaranteed to receive a fair hearing and through which they were subsequently supported to develop the business case for their ideas. We had, through the programme, challenged the managers to consider that their prior experience was
useful in parts but unhelpful in parts and that they should consider it as learning rather than a rigid blueprint that constrained their thoughts and behaviours. Rather, they should seek to proactively learn from their experiences and, if they had been unsuccessful in their attempts to challenge or change the business then they should use this as learning to inform their next approach. In short, they were encouraged to shift their paradigm from one of learned helplessness to 'learning how to help'. By adopting this approach we were able to create a new set of experiences for the managers: to begin to shift the prevailing expectations in the business so that the myths and stories (Handy, 1985) illustrated success rather than outright failure and lack of respect.

The business improvement projects also engaged the managers at an action level - they not only thought up the projects, they also enrolled a team and implemented the project. In doing so they were supported through coaching and meetings with the business sponsors so that any hurdles or difficulties that they encountered could be addressed in a supported manner, thereby creating a positive experience of change. Additionally the managers were engaged in group coaching sessions, which were akin to Action Learning Sets, within which they were able to discuss their approaches, their projects, their behaviours and their experiences in order to understand more fully the learning experience they were engaged with.

The Set meetings were initially quite difficult to run, as each Set would rely on me, the Set advisor, to guide the discussion and to provide the critical analysis of their approach. As a population they were incredibly averse to providing feedback to their colleagues, whether it be positive or focussed on areas for development. In fact, part way through the programme we ran a series of one-day courses to provide skills in delivering a monthly briefing to their work teams. In the afternoon
of the course, each participant was required to give a five-minute briefing based on information provided in the morning and, after each such briefing we asked for comments or feedback from their colleagues. In virtually every case the feedback was so anodyne as to be of virtually no value at all, or else it was non-existent.

When I asked a group of participants whom I knew quite well why they were not providing feedback even when a briefer was making a clear mistake the answer was ‘out of respect’. I questioned further and discovered that the group were of the belief that they would be disrespectful if they said anything that was less than positive about their colleagues so they chose not to say anything at all. We discussed the notion of respect and the fact that if they did not receive feedback then they would not know that they were doing anything wrong and would, therefore continue to do so when briefing their teams. Laying out this causal logic helped some of them to understand that they were not providing respect by not providing feedback but even then it took some time within the Learning Sets for the levels of challenge and feedback to rise to a more useful level.

Gradually over the course of the programme the Action Learning Sets became more participative and the managers progressed along a developmental continuum of experiencing education to managing learning. As the participants developed their knowledge, understanding and experience of the learning process, the Learning Sets became more centred around collaborative enquiry (Pedler, 1997, p62) and participants worked more effectively together to progress their thinking about the organisation, about change and, crucially, about themselves. The notion of collaborative enquiry was critically important in terms of ensuring that the various projects and development activities were integrated together and integrated with the business plan. One of the underlying principles of the
development programme was that of business leadership with functional accountability. By this I meant that the managers were functionally accountable for their functions but above all this were business leaders – prior to the programme they simply viewed themselves as functional heads with no organisational responsibility.

By stressing the point of business leadership I was able to challenge the participants to examine and understand the impact of their projects not just on the circumstances that they were seeking to change within their function, but also on their colleagues’ projects, on the business culture and on the whole business performance. In this way the learning outcomes were focussed not just on project return on investment (ROI) and individual participant performance improvements, but on the improvements across the business secured by the combined efforts of all programme participants.

Encouraging this process of increasing participation and overt collaboration was particularly interesting as the participants prior experience was of being educated as opposed to engaging in learning. Consequently they fully expected to be spoken at for the duration of each session and asked the occasional question. In the early stages of the process I elected to adopt a more interventionist approach, pragmatically because had I not done so we would all have sat in silence. Whilst I appreciate that silence and observation can be a useful approach sometimes, I adjudged that it would not be for these particular groups. Rather they needed to be guided through the process so that their emergent experience was positive and fruitful and so that they would, through time, begin to want to take personal responsibility for the process.
Indeed it was clear that they progressed their level of comfort and participation in the process as they developed their experience and understanding of learning being concerned not just with the acquisition of knowledge and skills, but also about personal and business development. In this way we engaged them at all four levels of learning (Pedler and Aspinwall 1996).

Additionally, we created a meaningful dialogue between the levels of management and created a means through which first line managers could successfully initiate beneficial change into their working environment.

The programme focussed on the design features identified by Ashmawy and Revans (1972, p17) in that:

- **(a)** It must constantly challenge each manager to draw upon and to re-interpret his previous experience
- **(b)** It should be action oriented but concerned more with the apprehension and treatment of a real situation of the future than with an emergency of the present
- **(c)** In doing this it must exploit the latent admiration of the managers for other successful managers
- **(d)** It should also force the manager into positions of dependence upon the knowledge and abilities of subordinates, in which he is obliged to share significant responsibilities with those whom he would normally consider unqualified either to carry responsibility or to display initiative.

The management development programme ran for a year and through this time the vast majority of the managers began to fully participate in the process. The
programme participant mentioned above who had lost product at his station created a project that would quite simply track the movement and re-ordering of work-in-progress. This was a straightforward project that required very little change to working procedures and he estimated that this alone would save around £70,000 per annum. In that one project the business had recouped the cost of the development programme.

Indeed one manager came to a coaching session and said that he had saved the company £27,000 year on year savings by changing the way in which a certain product was packaged and shipped. He had implemented this in addition to his business improvement project, and when I asked him what had led him to make such a change, he replied that he now realised that he could, and therefore, he should be looking for opportunities to save money.

Overall the business improvement projects returned just short of £0.5million in terms of cost savings, waste reduction, process improvement, and capability enhancement. I stated, on numerous occasions, however, that I considered the changes in management style and the development of management capability to be of far greater real value to the business. Notwithstanding this, however, there were still some fundamental issues in the business and the MD, through his involvement on the projects and his closer collaboration with the broader management team was becoming increasingly aware that more needed to be done.

During the delivery phase of the development programme, the MD asked if I would support him and the senior management team in developing the business in response to the issues that had become evident through the programme. I
agreed to this and said that in order to work effectively together I would like to conduct a Myers-Briggs profile of the senior management team to help them to understand that people view the world differently and that these differences have a marked influence on our behaviours.

The team agreed to the use of Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) profiles (Myers and Myers 1980) and we established that they were very strongly oriented around the ISTJ profile, meaning that they were Introverted/Sensing/Thinking/Judging.

The typical behaviour traits that occur with this personality type are that they:

- Use experience and knowledge of the facts to make decisions
- Build on reliable, stable and consistent performance to take charge
- Respect traditional, hierarchical approaches
- Reward those who follow the rules whilst getting the job done
- Pay attention to immediate and practical organisational needs

The potential management issues for this personality type are that they:

- May overlook the long-range implications in favour of day-to-day operations
- May neglect interpersonal niceties
- May become rigid in their ways and thought of as inflexible
- May expect others to conform to standard operating procedures and thus not encourage innovation
The knowledge of this profile confirmed to me that engaging in strategic development would not have worked – individuals and teams of this type profile tend to base their understanding of the world in very pragmatic terms on what they can see or have experienced – strategy is often seen to be nebulous, unclear and lacking in focus. They will, however, engage in operational planning but this tends to be iteratively developed from the present-day situation therefore the culture tends to be modified on an incremental basis.

Moving from the prevailing culture on the basis of what Quinn (1980) calls 'logical incrementalism' would, I considered, have been very problematic because whilst there was an acceptance that elements of the existing culture were unacceptable, on a business level the company was performing well against its competitors, and against its own operational plans and forecasts. This, coupled with the profile of the management team described above, led them to the conclusion that there was little they could or would do differently. Indeed, although the MD had wanted to engage in more training and development, he had no driving focus to change other aspects of the business or its performance. Even at this stage he simply wanted to address the issues that had become self-evident through the projects, namely increase communication, and increase morale across the company. Again these were seen to be interventions that he could make to resolve identified issues without the need for an overarching strategy.

I adjudged, however, that now was the right time to start to introduce strategic approaches more forcefully, and link strategic approaches to the successes we had achieved through the development programme – in this way we could build on the known to the unknown as regards a longer term approach.
We had arranged bi-monthly review sessions at which the senior team, the sponsors, the MD and myself would review each of the projects to ensure that they were on track and receiving the level of organisational support that they required to be successful. At each of these meetings we developed our understanding of the business and of the need for further change in the business. The focus was invariably on the fact that if we had achieved so much by engaging forty managers, then how much more could be achieved by involving and engaging the remaining 500 people in the business.

Once this had been realised in the meetings I began to ask a series of questions:

- To what extent do you think the shop floor employees have similar experience to the line managers at the start of the management development programme?
- What is the likelihood that they will willingly engage in business improvements given that their managers needed so much support?
- Do they actually understand the full business context and the reason why you want to continue to develop the business?
- Will they perceive efficiency improvements to be a precursor to job losses, and if so, what will be the effect of this?
- How do your business strategies and processes enable the involvement of more people in improvement activities?
- How can we effectively link all of the activities together into a coordinated approach?
- How important do you think it might be to define the future of the business clearly so that people have a view of where you are going?
These questions prompted long conversations about the prevailing organisational culture and the fact that, although we had worked to change the culture at the management level we did not really know how effectively this had been cascaded down through the rest of the business. Nor indeed did we know how effective we had been at the managerial level. I was still convinced that had we looked closely we would have seen a significant difference between what the managers stated they were doing, and what they were actually doing – and a difference between what they did in the development programme and what they did within the rest of their working week.

As a result of these discussions, the MD decided to conduct an Opinion Survey to ask the views of the workforce. His reasoning being that if we asked them to tell us what they really thought about the business and how they believed it could be improved, then he could respond to that and thereby involve a greater number of people in moving the business forwards.

Having worked in this field for some time I could see great dangers in simply asking for views from the workforce without a sound and well-considered implementation plan to enable the Company to respond quickly to whatever was suggested. Indeed, it seemed to me that as this was the first such communication with the workforce as a whole, we should use it to provide information about how the management team wanted to develop and guide the business in the future. In essence the format of the Opinion Survey should reflect the company that the senior team wanted to create – in that way we could use the Survey to gather baseline views about the current perceptions and use subsequent surveys to measure progress along the route of strategic organisational development.
I organised a meeting with the senior team and asked them at the outset to define the business they wanted to become: to create their vision of the future. It came as little surprise, given my experience of working with them, and their MBTI profiles, described earlier, that they had very few ideas about how the business could be different from today. Their typical responses were an incremental or iterative development from today – an approach Quinn (1980) refers to as 'logical incrementalism'.

I was firmly of the view that an incremental approach of this nature would not have the required impact on the business because historically and culturally it paid such little time and attention to people that a small iterative improvement in this would have had little effect. Through the conversations I was able to persuade the team to take a more radical approach and to adopt what I refer to as a double helix approach. This is explained in full in Chapter 9, and means that the business pays equal cognisance to task issues and people issues such that the focus of the two is intertwined like the DNA double helix as opposed to being seen as opposing ends of a bipolar continuum where focus on people issues is seen to be to the detriment of focus on achievement of the task.

After asking for their views in several different ways and getting the same incrementalist responses, I began to openly make suggestions like, 'wouldn’t it be good if everyone understood the overall aims of the business and how their work contributed?' Each time I made a suggestion of this nature the team tended to agree and through a process of suggestion and discussion I led them through the enabling strategies of the Six Dimensions Approach by asking questions about how their people should be trained, developed, rewarded, communicated with, and engaged in continuous improvement activities. The use of closed and direct
questions led their thinking and we were able, through time, to create a vision of
the future based around the Six Dimensions Approach, but written in the form of
an Opinion Survey. They still very much resisted the suggestion to write a Vision
for the business so I decided that we would move forwards, at this time, with the
future encapsulated within the Opinion Survey statements.

I was exceptionally careful to provide time for the team to individually and
collectively reflect, consider and finalise their agreement with the statements, so
that they owned them as their view of their intended future. I did not want to
create what Bowman and Asch (1996) call a consultant's strategy, whereby we
developed a high quality strategy with low levels of senior management
commitment.

I was comfortable with taking a more directive approach, of using my knowledge to
guide their thinking, as the likely consequence of not doing so would have been the
development of what Bowman and Asch (ibid) call a 'blinkerated strategy' in that it
would have been a 'poor quality strategy that the team was strongly committed to
... the strategy debate is heavily constrained by the limited past experiences of the
team (p.6). In fact this was also a good acknowledgement of the fact that using
the Six Dimensions approach as a facilitative approach worked well, and that in
doing so, one could effectively use valuable knowledge to guide thinking, rather
than to use it as a blueprint which, in all likelihood, would restrict thinking. This
valuing of knowledge was an important learning point for me and is explored in
more detail in Chapter 11.

We consequently developed their strategic approach in the form of the Opinion
Survey, which was clustered into seven areas and is detailed below:
Workplace Environment

- The facilities provided by the Company are generally very good
- My working environment is clean
- The factory environment is better than it was a year ago
- My work area is well laid out to enable me to work efficiently
- I have the tools and equipment I need to do my job
- The Company is working hard to improve our working environment

The Business

- I fully expect the Company to continue to grow and develop
- I think recent changes by the Company have been well handled
- I speak highly about the business outside of work
- I see plenty of evidence that the Company is planning for the future
- I think our future direction will keep us competitive
- I have seen improvements in the business over the last 12 months

Communication

- I understand how my job contributes to the aims of the business
- I would like to regularly receive more information about the Company
- I understand the direction the Company is taking
- I always feel able to discuss work issues with my manager
- I am confident in the way the Works Planning Group represent my views
- I usually have the information I need to do my job effectively

(The Works Planning Group was the employee representation body)
Development

- I receive appropriate training to do my job
- I am encouraged to contribute to changes in my work processes
- I have the opportunity to use my skills and abilities to the full
- If I wish to develop further, the Company will support me appropriately
- I have the skills I need to do my job properly over the next few years
- I feel X Limited has a good policy of promoting from within

How We Work

- We have a high level of focus on Health & Safety at X Limited
- I feel the cooperation we get from other departments is good
- I feel part of a team here at X Limited
- We always strive to deliver quality products
- I feel comfortable asking for help from others in my team
- I believe we have an appropriate work life balance

The Management Team

- My manager has a positive attitude towards my development
- My manager will take time to discuss my ideas
- My manager is a good leader
- My manager gives credit for a job well done
- My manager encourages me to solve problems that I encounter in my job
- There is a willingness within the Company to experiment with new approaches
Your Job

- I believe my job is secure
- I feel more committed to X Limited than I did a year ago
- I would recommend X Limited as a good place to work
- The Company treats people fairly and consistently
- My work gives me a sense of personal achievement
- If I were offered a similar job elsewhere for the same pay I would not leave

We then asked three questions directly about the Opinion Survey,

- I think that asking our views is really important
- I believe positive action will be taken as a result of this survey
- I would like to do another survey in the future

Respondents were asked to rate each statement against a four-point scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

The survey went out to all employees by post to their home addresses and we received a 22% response rate, which was better than expected. In fact, 80% of the people who responded went on to make useful comments in the additional three comments we included on the Survey, namely, “What I like most about X Limited is...” “What I like least about X Limited is...” and “My suggestions to improve the Company are...” This was a high response rate to narrative questions and evidence to the management team that employees in the business cared about the future and wanted to make their comments known.
The Company was in a good position to respond to the Opinion Survey findings because of the work we had done previously in defining, at a more strategic level, the intended future of the business, in that the company wanted a high rating against each of the statements. It was, therefore, prepared to initiate actions and activities that would address any low ratings, and also to respond to the narrative comments made in the Survey, particularly those in response to the question concerning suggestions to improve the Company.

The critical issue at that time was deciding how to respond in an integrative manner and in a manner which was congruent with, and acted as a role model for, the intended future culture of the business. A culture that had, for the first time, started to be defined.

We decided to do this by engaging the workforce as much as possible to illustrate the collaborative and indeed consultative ways of working that we were working to create. The first thing we needed to do was to create the environment wherein people could feel able to support the Company in developing towards its future, and this, we decided, required us to respond to one of the issues identified within the Survey.

In response to the statement, “I would like to regularly receive more information about the Company” 82% of respondents had stated that they either agreed or strongly agreed. This was very encouraging and we used this response as the reason to introduce, for the first time, a monthly briefing for all staff. This had never been done before in this organisation, despite it being widely held to be best practice for quite some time. The management team decided that if they were going to do this then they ought to do it properly and so committed to stopping
production once per shift per month to enable a monthly briefing process to be rolled out. We trained the foremen and managers in briefing skills and used the first briefing session to declare the results of the Opinion Survey.

These briefings went down very well and we established a business process to ensure that all people received a briefing and that all questions asked of the briefer were fed back to the senior team, together with the answers provided. This meant that the senior team were able to adjudge the knowledge of the management team in answering questions about the business and also to provide answers to those questions that could not be answered by the briefer.

The response from the workforce was positive in that they welcomed the opportunity to hear more about the business and to ask questions to which they were guaranteed a response. They also respected the fact that the management team had openly, and quickly responded to one of the issues raised by them within the Opinion Survey – the management were listening to their views and opinions at last. It was imperative that we demonstrated this as the Opinion Survey had identified a lack of trust or confidence in the management team to do anything following the survey. This was evidenced in the following questions, the responses for which were rated against a scale running from -2 (strongly agree) through to +2 (strongly agree).

- I think that asking our views is really important = +1.54
- I believe positive action will be taken as a result of this survey = -0.26

Interestingly, given the lack of confidence that the company would do anything about the survey the response to the follow-up question of “I would like to do
another survey in the future" was +1.19, the second highest scoring question in the survey.

The Monthly Briefings began to address the issue of communication but many other issues were raised in the Opinion Survey and the management team needed to address these in an appropriate and coordinated manner. During a facilitated senior management team meeting we generated the idea of creating working parties or taskforces to address the issues in a priority order. In this way, the management team were not taking sole responsibility for resolving the problems or issues raised – rather it was seen as a collaborative approach to addressing the issues, and was further evidence of the fact that everybody in the company had a voice and a responsibility to resolve issues that compromised business performance and motivation.

Each priority issue was communicated to the workforce, together with the senior management team sponsor who would lead the taskforce. We asked for volunteers for each taskforce and then trained them in how to problem solve and implement their solutions.

The task forces ran for as long as it took for the issues to be resolved and then they were disbanded and another one set up to deal with the next priority issue. In this way we were able to engage and involve a wider number of people, and the task forces were demonstrably seen to be effective in addressing the issues raised within the survey. The monthly briefings were used to update the workforce on the actions and results of the task force so that a positive message was circulated within the business.
Through time it became increasingly evident that the culture within the business was starting to shift – we were getting more volunteers for task forces, the managers reported that people were being more involved in continuous improvement activities, and the staff reported back that the managers were less inclined to bully and more inclined to listen and pay attention to the needs and requests of their teams.

It was particularly interesting at this time that the MD decided that although the survey had been useful in helping them define a future direction, it was, he now thought, insufficient and he asked for my help in supporting him to write a 2010 vision for the company. After all the work we had done on developing the management team and addressing the pressing business needs in several dimensions of the model, we could now begin to work properly on the first Dimension of Vision.

The initial meetings were difficult in that I would explain what was meant by a vision, and he would struggle to understand what I was talking about. He understood the words I was using but could not ‘see’ the intrinsic value of a vision statement. I asked him to try writing a statement that would describe the overarching purpose and philosophy of the business and although he agreed to do this on several occasions he always came to the next meeting empty-handed.

I referred back to his MBTI profile (ibid) and recognised that he would need to physically see an example if he were to fully understand what I was asking for and so showed him several examples of vision statements that had been developed by other organisations. The response from the MD was remarkable; we had arranged a two-hour coaching session to discuss vision statements and once I had
shown him examples he stated that he now understood what I meant and did not need any further support in writing the vision statement. He ended the coaching session after twenty minutes and purposefully left to start writing the vision. A good example of a 'sensing' person needing to experience the world through the senses in order to understand it.

His subsequent Vision statement for the business was that "We are a Home Improvements company committed to the growth of our customers and our employees through outstanding performance and innovation". This is, in my view a very powerful statement in that it explains the market the company operates in and commits the company not to the growth of itself but to the growth of its customers and employees whilst establishing the benchmark for performance, and innovation as outstanding. The statement fundamentally challenges the existing business that focuses on process compliance rather than customer satisfaction or growth, and on task achievement rather than employee development. At the same time it defines the notion that ongoing sustainable growth of X Limited is a direct function of the ongoing growth and development of its customers (and hence demand) and its employees (and hence capability).

It was particularly encouraging to see that the financial aspects of the company were not stated in his vision, whereas had he done this at the start of the work, it would have been the sum total of the vision statement. In fact now he went further and developed a set of principle focus areas that the company needed to focus on if the vision was to be achieved. These were as follows:
1  People
We will ensure that, as teams and individuals, we are aware of our goals and objectives, that we understand the need for customer focus; and that we are fully aware of the contribution we make to business performance. We will work to ensure that each person feels encouraged to own and improve their area of the business and to ensure that professional standards are reflected in the individual's pride for their work.

2  Communication
We will create and sustain two-way communications that are comprehensive, effective, and regular. We will ensure that, in all our dealings with people we will be non-political and non-discriminatory, and we will create a challenging environment, where people feel free to express their opinions and are keen to learn from others.

3  Performance Measurement and continuous improvement.
We will seek to recognise our performance measured against relevant and simple standard measures that relate directly to our business strategy. We will demonstrate a relentless determination to continuously improve.

4  Customers
We will always recognise who our customers are and what they need, both internal and external. We will work hard to get to know and anticipate their needs, listen to their feedback and use this to deliver quality products and exceptional service.
These statements were very clearly set in the D\textsuperscript{1} domain and articulated a business culture that differed markedly from that which currently prevailed.

The attention of the MD then turned to the engagement of his senior team with the Vision statement and the principle focus areas. We had discussed the conventional approach of developing the vision as a team activity but he, quite rightly in my opinion eschewed this notion on the basis that he would probably get an iterative version of today – the team had not gone through the same level of critical thinking and development as he had.

I agreed with his position and saw that the business needed clear leadership if the advances that had been made were to be successfully built upon. Already we had seen some slippage in the management team, and evidence once again of collusion by the first line managers with their teams when the senior team asked for performance increases across the business. Additionally it was evident that many people did not see the recent activities as being joined up or connected in any strategic way and so they had retreated to their comfort zones on the basis that it was simply the latest management fad or intervention that would soon disappear and things would then revert to ‘normal’.

The MD recognised the need for involvement and engagement by his senior team and then the rest of the business and knew and that, if he simply told them the Vision he was likely to simply get surface compliance as opposed to understanding and shared ownership.
As a consequence of these discussions he invited the senior team to a meeting to discuss the vision. He was, however, uneasy in discussing such a topic and so instead asked them to come to a meeting to discuss business issues. He published an agenda for the meeting that was totally operational in terms of its orientation, and then asked for my views.

I questioned him about the agenda and asked where, within the structure he had defined, could people discuss the Vision or contribute to the strategy of the business. He acknowledged that this was not possible and then when he went into the meeting advised his colleagues to ignore the agenda as "it had been put together by an accountant and not an MD". In this statement he openly confirmed to his team that he was making the transition from accountant to MD and that it was a difficult thing to do at times. The team were supportive and engaged in an open discussion, for the first time, about the future of the business. They bought into the vision and the set of operating principles upon which they committed that they would manage the future business.

The team considered that the operating principles were fully aligned with the vision and, more importantly, that they could identify with them on a personal and collective level. They are now in the process of managing the rollout of the Vision and Principles, and ensuring alignment of business practices and behaviours through commitment generation as opposed to compliance. The senior team own the Vision and Principles and want to work hard to generate the same feeling of ownership by everybody else in the business. They are calling this new piece of work their 'Employer of Choice' strategy as they want people within the business to positively elect to work there, and for people in the local labour market to want to work there. They want to move from a compliance culture to a commitment
culture (Kouzes and Posner, 2002), and now recognise that their own behaviours as leaders have a significant influence as a driver of organisational change (Duffin, 1992).

Of course, there are still a myriad of issues within the business, not least a residual disconnect between the senior team and the rest of the management team – but they now realise the need to work strategically on the growth of the business to achieve a stated Vision as opposed to securing compliance with the rules and procedures.

In summary, I started working with the Company with a clear understanding of the Six Dimensions approach of integrative change and used it in an unexpected way, culminating with $D^1$, the Vision, whereas I would previously have thought that we would need to start with this. It demonstrated to me the fact that the model has efficacy as a tool to guide questions rather than as a tool to provide answers – philosophically this was a very satisfying and appropriate point at which to write up my research – I have not generated a golden formula, although I had been in danger of doing so on several occasions. Instead I have developed a framework that can guide organisational thinking in the effective management of strategic change but which is sufficiently flexible as to work in a range of organisational contexts and which is adaptive to each particular context.

In the introduction to this thesis I stated that I thought it would be useful to seek to more fully understand my experiences from the three perspectives of change agent, researcher, and learner. The first being specifically in terms of practical application of my research and the development of practice in change management; the second being the relationship of my research to other research
and thus to share knowledge in this field; and the latter being my personal learning from the experience. This is depicted pictorially as follows:

![Diagram showing the three perspectives: Change Agent, Researcher, and Learner.]

*Fig. 11: The Three Perspectives*

As I set out to understand my experiences and learning from these three perspectives, I recognised the degree of overlap – how could I comment on learning in my change practice without there being some relationship with my personal learning; similarly how could I comment on furthering learning through research without there being some relationship with my practice. It was evident, therefore, that far from being three discrete perspectives, depicted as above they are, in reality, three co-joined perspectives that ought to be depicted as follows:
Thus there are lessons that pertain discretely to each of the three perspectives, lessons that pertain to two of the perspectives, and of course, lessons that pertain to just one perspective. Separating these out proved to be a difficult task but I have tried with the following reflections to capture the essence of each perspective without intruding too much on the remaining two. Any overlap that is evident is there because the reality of the situation is that the overlap exists and in this way, I feel that I would rather include the overlap and reflect reality than do otherwise.

Reflections as a change agent

As I reflect upon this case study it seems evident to me that the achievements were only possible because we operated on an emergent basis – had we tried to introduce the comprehensive change programme that we ended up with, at the start of the consultancy exercise, it would undoubtedly have been rejected. I think that this is principally due to the fact that the business and the senior team were very structured in their approach and whilst the MD knew that he wanted to engage in development, he did not know how to do this, or indeed what the
definable benefits of such a programme would be. In this instance, it is very unlikely that they would have committed to a programme of organisational change that established a management development strategy, defined a company strategy for 2010, restructured the business into more effective lines of operation, commenced working proactively in the local labour market, introduced elected representatives to negotiate with, and influence the views of, the management team, or indeed embarked upon an Employer of Choice strategy. It has been useful to take the management team from the known to the unknown in a way that minimised their exposure and risk to the Board, and which gave them ‘wins’ along the way.

The management team had a suspicion that things could have been better but did not know how to achieve this so working closely with them to coach and facilitate their thinking over a period of time meant that I was able to establish credibility to suggest wider and more strategic initiatives, such as the Employer of Choice strategy.

If change agency, in a consultancy context, is the ability to help the management team to devise and implement beneficial change then it is clear that this change agency was efficacious, but needed to be delivered on a gradual and incremental basis. As a change agent one needs to be attuned to the organisational situation as well as the individual experiences and expectations of the client group.

Whilst addressing the issues on such a basis meant that we were able to start work in the business and to gradually increase the scope of that work, it was, in my opinion, still detrimental to operate without the benefit of an overarching strategy. This fact is now realised within the business but it was not recognised at the
outset. The resultant process of managing the emergent thinking of the senior team and developing the journey en route meant that some activities were seen as interventions rather than as aligned processes, and the alignment is only evident in retrospect.

Received wisdom will state that it is important to know the destination and mode of travel prior to commencing a journey but we have, through this case study shown that it is possible to do these things en route. It may not conform to ‘best practice’ and it may compromise the change programme but, when circumstances are such that no other way is possible, then this way can deliver a satisfactory conclusion that can itself in turn be used as the foundation for other strategically integrated change programmes.

The other key learning point here goes back to the design of the original Five Dimensions of Change model – when developed I made the statements that ‘change is an emergent and iterative process that requires proactive management’ and that ‘the interventions that deliver change also help to define the change’.

This case study exemplifies those two statements – the changes that we introduced emerged through time – they were not evident at the outset, and, whilst they could have been reasonably foreseen in that they are good management practice, the starting point of the business was such that I certainly could not have anticipated that they would have embarked upon such a comprehensive process of cultural change. Also it was only by having the management participants deliver projects that the business became accustomed to the fact that the intellectual base of the business ran all the way through the
levels and did not reside solely in the senior team. Once this realisation had been made then some of the other change initiatives that we engaged upon became common sense. It is the case, however, that the later initiatives were defined by the earlier change activities – for example, had the managers not shocked the senior team by their description of the business culture it is unlikely that the Opinion Survey would have been launched, and without that it is unlikely that the task forces would have been launched. Working in this complex environment provided further evidence that actions sometimes have surprising and unintended consequences. In the early stages it seemed that there was an emerging understanding of the need to move the business to a different cultural domain even though this could not have been articulated at the outset, and perhaps some of the managers could not articulate it now, but they can feel it.

Wheatley (1997) suggests that the true measure of success for a change initiative is to ask whether people feel more committed to the business now than they did before. We did this through the Opinion Survey which was conducted half way through the original management development programme and then again towards the end of the change programme when many of the Employer of Choice initiatives were underway. The survey went to all employees and the rise in commitment to the business was quite marked – the employees did feel more committed so in that sense, we had achieved a successful change strategy.

However, I think that there are other measures that are important to understand and measure the effectiveness of a change programme – harder, more tangible measures about business performance, such as – is the business operating more profitably? Are the margins as good or better than they were previously? Are costs and waste reduced? Are we operating more efficiently and more effectively
than previously? Are the management team demonstrating more competent leadership behaviours? Is communication across the organisation more effective than previously? , to name but a few. It seems to me that the basis for the business change programme, and therefore, the basis for any change measures must be concerned with 'whole business performance'. We need to be cognisant of both the quantitative and the qualitative perspectives and measures.

One of the most interesting consequences that had not been foreseen emerged towards the end of the first year of activity within the business. We were sitting in a management meeting and discussing how the business 'felt' better, how the bullying culture was no longer prevalent and how the managers were taking more care when managing their teams, when a senior production manager walked in for the next meeting. I took the opportunity of a break in proceedings to ask him how he was and he commented that he was OK but not really happy with the way the business was operating. When asked to explain he said that the business was more structured six months ago and he was sure that at that time people would do the things they were asked to do, whereas now he was not so confident.

On further discussion it transpired that the managers were, indeed, not bullying people any longer and that the teams had identified this and were happy about it - however, there was a dawning realisation within the teams that if their manager did not bully them if they failed to perform, or indeed to coerce them to perform, then he or she probably had less power. The culture of bullying had provided the business with a culture that ensured conformance and compliance. I had worked very hard with the team to help them to realise the limitations of this approach and to enable the management team to engage with the business on a different level and therefore, make changes to their working behaviours and operational
practices. In doing so, however, the managers had recognised the fact that their old ways of managing were wrong, but they had not fully developed new ways of managing the teams – ways of consistently managing collaboratively and assertively instead of aggressively. We had started to take out the bullying but, through the management development programme, had not comprehensively been able to replace it with the new approaches.

Of course, this was a generalisation – many of the managers had learned and acquired new skills and they were using these in their daily routines and conversations, but they were fledgling skills, not fully developed and, therefore, applied with varying degrees of uncertainty and hesitation at times. Moreover, the new skills and new or modified behaviours were deployed on an individual as opposed to a collective basis so the impact on the management culture was diminished.

Bjerke (1999, p.70) discusses the impact of societal culture on organisational culture and identifies five determinants which can affect management behaviour, namely:

- The extent to which power is centralised or decentralised
- Willingness among people to take risks
- How people are rewarded and on which criteria this is done
- To what extent people are interested in change
- How loyal employees are to their place of work

When one considers this organisation against these criteria it is clear that power was very much centralised with a comply or leave culture for subordinates at all levels; there was a very low willingness to take risks; rewards were minimal other
than a basic salary – there were few intrinsic or extrinsic rewards for adding additional value to the business; people were generally disinterested in change and their was a significant lack of loyalty to the business as demonstrated in the Opinion Survey results.

Given this scenario, the pre-existing culture is explicable, and we can begin to understand why the senior production manager experienced the 'loss of control' described above, and indeed why, as mentioned previously, the participants on the programme did not fully buy into the process. I would draw a level of understanding from this that we need work hard to try to ensure that the cultural aspects of any change programme are understood at the beginning, and that, having taken time to define the desired culture, we proactively create opportunities for the 'new' culture to be normalised and embedded.

One of the issues inherent with the emergent nature of this particular change programme was that we had not, at the outset, been able to define the culture that we wanted to develop, and so we had done little work to positively create the culture – instead we had been intent on achieving a quite different objective; we had focused on moving away from a pre-existing culture.

Indeed this process of cultural development by moving away was exacerbated by the cost focus evident at the very start of the programme. The MD had specifically asked for a demonstrable ROI so my response had been to satisfy this requirement with a programme that had a focus on enhancing the commercial capability of the management team and encouraging them to use their increased commercial awareness to take responsibility for developing aspects of the business – the focus being to increase profitability, and reduce costs. We had, at
the same time, focussed on behaviours, but if the prevailing culture was cost focussed, then it is likely that this is the element of the programme that the participants would focus on – again evidence to them that the business was perhaps not really changing.

Moving away from something is very different than moving towards something. When moving away, almost any other destination will suffice, whereas when moving towards something, only one destination will suffice.

It is clear that, at the start of this change programme, we could not define the behavioural culture that we wanted to create, but I was aware of the need to do so throughout the work within X Limited and it seems that we experienced some downside consequences by leaving it as late as we did. Of course, we can rationalise this and say that the business was not ready for a Vision, but the learning as a change agent is that we need to perhaps work harder to engage the management team at a strategic level so that when changes do take place it is not happening within a strategic vacuum.

Reflections as a researcher

As a researcher I was very interested in this case study because it was a very demanding field test for the Six Dimensions of Change Approach as a facilitative model. It had previously been used as an 'expert' resource but now was used to guide the thinking of the management team. At no time did I introduce the senior team to the model as they had previously commented that they were practically based and not interested in management theories – they wanted to do things that delivered results. It was clear that the business was not ready or indeed willing to
engage in such strategic development at the outset, or during the early stages of the management development programmes.

Interestingly, I did not use the model in the linear sequence of its design, by starting at D¹ and moving through to D⁵; rather I started with the enabling strategies in terms of development and gradually built out from there in line with the growing awareness within the business leaders of the need to change in an aligned and integrated manner. This is, I think, a great strength of the model as a facilitative guide to organisational change as opposed to an expert approach to change – the thinking is developed within the business and the change owned within the business rather than a process that is superimposed onto the business and complied with.

I realised, through time, that the senior team needs to be both strategically aware and strategically capable if they are to use a strategically oriented methodology like the Six Dimensions approach overtly within their business. However, if we use the model as a questioning process that gradually builds their awareness and knowledge from the known to the unknown then it can still be an efficacious model, notwithstanding the fact that it has not been explicitly introduced and worked to in terms of driving the change agenda.

The principal questions that I used to generate the team’s strategic thinking in line with the Six Dimensions approach are detailed overleaf:
1. What do you want this business to be like in 2010?
2. How will you know you have achieved your objective – what will people see?
3. What will it feel like to work in this business at that time?
4. What are the key features of the business that attract new employees and persuade existing employees to stay?
5. Describe a typical day in the life of the business in 2010.
6. How will the business be different than today?
7. Why is it important that you make these changes?

2. How do you want to engage and involve your people?
2. What development approaches will deliver the goals that you have described?
2. What are the key functional strategies that you need to develop, e.g. supply chain, manufacturing, sales and marketing?
2. How do these strategies interlink and support each other?
2. Describe the management style that will deliver sustainable success?
2. How will you reward people to maintain their active participation in the business?
D3 Questions

- What are your key or critical business processes and why have you chosen these?
- How could we improve these processes to make the business more efficient or effective?
- Who owns these processes and who should own them in the future?
- How will you make the transition of ownership?

D4 Questions

- How will you monitor the delivery of these plans?
- Who will own and drive through the delivery?
- How will you make allowances for changing circumstances?
- How can you deploy decision making to the lowest possible level?

D5 Questions

- How will you continue to develop your strategy?
- What steps can you put in place to monitor its ongoing appropriateness?
- What development is needed in terms of your managerial capability to ensure that you continue to operate strategically?
- How can you effectively monitor your environment to review the competitive positioning of your strategy?

D6 Questions

- How can you ensure that you engage fully as a management team - as people not as management post holders?
- To what extent is the culture of the business different now to your intended Vision?
- How have you, as a management team influenced the present culture through your behaviour and attitudes, and how can you influence the development of the desired culture?
- How can you ensure that you take full cognisance of the emotional impact of change on your employees?
- How can you fully engage your employees in the change process so that they are genuinely participative stakeholders?

Of great interest to me as a researcher was that there seemed to be, within the organisation, a deep cultural paradox – each manager spoke of the autocratic and controlling management style within the business and described the prevailing culture as ‘exploitative – authoritative’ [Likert and Likert 1976] and yet each manager claimed to operate in a different style with their own people. It was as though they saw themselves as being subject to a culture that they disagreed with and did not perpetuate; a culture that was different to the one that they demonstrated through their behaviours. In such a case one would expect the organisational culture to be different and to reflect the stated behaviours of the managers given that management style and behaviour is such a significant cultural determinant. When I asked the subordinates of the managers they, with a few notable exceptions, agreed, stating that their manager was OK but that the management team as a whole was autocratic and controlling. Thus I think we have two experiences of organisational culture happening concurrently – an individual perception and a corporate perception.
Individuals within the business related to their manager and to the management team separately. Through time I came to understand that, generally speaking, each layer of management within the business had a tendency to apportion blame for anything that was less than positive, on their own managers. Thus at an individual relationship level the first line manager colluded with his team and distanced himself from the collective or cabinet responsibility that goes with the role of manager. This collusion occurred not only at the level of the individual manager talking with his or her team, but also with each level of management across the business. In that sense each management level considered themselves to be blameless and victims of the higher levels of management above them.

This realisation explained some of the intransigence of the managers to fully engage with the programme – the overtly stated purpose of the programme was about management development and cultural change but at an individual level there was limited acknowledgment of the need for change. Yet it is evident that each manager or layer of managers would undoubtedly completely support the need for a training programme for the levels of management above themselves. Thus the degree of personal connection and alignment with the programmes was not very high.

There was, therefore, a cultural plurality within the business – each level of management saw themselves as belonging to the organisation, but also, critically, to their own level, and to their own team of direct reports.
We can, in this way, identify three distinct cultural levels:

- **Level 1** Organisation
- **Level 2** Management team (level by level)
- **Level 3** Manager and team

As we come down through the business layers from organisational to management team to manager and team we see a higher degree of explicit acknowledgement of belonging that correlates with the power and influence the individual manager has over their interactive relationships and their own behaviours. Where a manager feels disempowered or relatively helpless (at level 1) then there is an acknowledgement of belonging in the sense of 'I work for this business' but little acknowledgement of personal accountability or responsibility for the way things operate or the prevailing culture – that is, it seems, perceived to be somebody else’s fault. When, by contrast, the manager has a higher degree of power and influence over the relationships (level 3) then they appear to take responsibility for, and pride in, the way in which they manage.

A narrative description of the three cultural levels would, of course be quite different. If we use Blake and Mouton’s managerial grid [1964, p10] then we would see that the level 1 culture would rate at 9.1 and be described as ‘autocratic task management’ – a high concern for task achievement and a low concern for people. Level 3 culture would rate as 9.9 and be described as ‘team leaders’ with an equally high regard for task accomplishment and welfare of the team. Level 2 would sit part way between these two extremes with an explicit
acknowledgement that, as a group, they are unable to effect change and are
themselves victims of higher levels of management.

Level 3 descriptions are, I would assume, in the managers’ own opinion, the true
descriptor of their style and approach – the cultural ties are strongest here and
personally identified and owned. If culture is a function of interaction [Bjerke
1999 p.9]] then the level of cultural association or belonging is, I believe, a
function of the level of ’owned interaction’ – by this I mean it is the interactive
behaviours that an individual does because they wish to, as opposed to those
interactive behaviours they do because they have to.

This means that the higher the level of owned interaction the more positively an
individual personally identifies himself or herself as being part of that particular
culture. Correspondingly, the lower the level of owned interaction, the less
positively an individual associates with the culture – they may still feel a part of the
culture but in this instance it is an unwilling part that they take and this will,
generally speaking, have an adverse impact upon the way in which they corporately
or functionally discharge their responsibilities.

That is not to say that the level of owned interaction is absolute at Level 1 – but
when the managers have to pursue task achievement goals to the detriment of
the team welfare then they seem to have a tendency to apportion the blame for
this on the higher levels of management and so, in their minds at least, absolve
themselves from responsibility. They rationalise , thereby, that the harder, more
autocratic behaviours are not theirs by choice they simply have to do them and so
would believe that it was ‘unfair’ to use these to describe their style or approach
because left to their own devices they would assume a higher responsibility for the welfare of their people.

So it seems that we have a high cultural association due to high levels of owned interaction at level 3, but a reasoned 'excuse' for non-consistency. Thus the three different cultural approaches are phenomenologically interpreted by the individual managers and normalised within their interactions with others.

When we observe the development programme from this pluralist cultural perspective we can, perhaps, understand why it did not fully deliver its behavioural change objectives within the management team. The managers were placed on a programme by a senior team whom they distrusted and were encouraged to challenge their own behaviours and the embedded organisational processes. In doing so they came to the conclusion that the positive, supportive, and collaborative leadership behaviours that they were being encouraged to adopt were important, but that they themselves did them anyway within their own teams and, therefore had limited need to change. At the same time they identified that the managers above them did not demonstrate these behaviours, which may have been factually incorrect but was certainly phenomenologically the case. In this case there was a divergence between the espoused behaviours of the development programme and the observed and experienced behaviours within the organisation – a clear recipe for maintaining the status quo. Furthermore the proposed changes at an organisational level were seen to be progressed by the senior management team, or, in more impersonal terms, the organisation. This meant that they were seen within the context of a level 1 culture as defined above with a consequent low level of owned interactions. The response, in these circumstances, is likely to be one of compliance rather than acceptance and
ownership so these too did not get progressed to the full extent. In effect the managers on the programme understood the need for change but considered it to be either somebody else who had to change or changes imposed upon them (unfairly) by the organisation which prompted the collusive behaviours between themselves at level 2 and with their teams at level 3.

This is, of course, itself an interpretive view of what is happening based on exploration, dialogue, observation and analysis. It is clear that human behaviour can only be understood through contextual research – as sentient, intelligent beings our behaviours are influenced by many factors, not all of which can be seen or understood within the research field – after all we are only seeing people in the workplace and have no understanding of the rest of their lives and experiences. Notwithstanding this relatively narrow perspective it seemed to me that there was a significant degree of commonality on the behaviours and perceptions across the management team – commonality that could be described with reference to culture.

The world is not rationally and objectively structured so that it is not possible to take a positivistic or explanaticistic (Arnbor and Bjerke, 1977 p.45) approach to this situation and describe it in terms of 'if ... then' statements. We can, instead, only seek to understand what is happening by seeking to understand the context and the complexity of the interactions that take place and then hermeneutically draw learning relevant to that particular set of events.

In this case it appears to me that the three cultural webs within the managers operate are but three of many, but that their existence and their associated behaviours have had a profound influence on the efficacy of the management development programme as a change process.
What is also very clear is that one of the primary explanations of failure was that, due to the contingent circumstances described at the outset of this chapter, we used the development programme as a lever for change within a business that had no clear change agenda or change strategy. Thus the messages of change that were introduced and reinforced through the development programme were themselves countered on a routine and insistent basis by the prevailing cultural norms that the participants experienced, enjoined, and perpetuated though the rest of their working lives.

A development programme cannot, therefore, drive change within the business, for the pressures to conform to the cultural norms outside of the training programme are too great. Rather the development programme can be used as a platform for change within the overall context of a strategic business change programme – it is a support activity not a driving force.

At the end of the work detailed in this chapter I thought it appropriate, as a researcher, to understand the situation more fully from the perspective of the MD, and consequently had the following discussion with him:

P    "What do you believe to be the successes of the development programme?"

MD    "I think that we achieved a great deal in terms of introducing the managers to different ways of doing things; we enabled them to do projects that moved the business forwards; and we encouraged interaction and conversation between the various levels of management. Having said that I would do things differently if we were starting again."
“What would you do differently?”

“I had no real understanding of what we were doing when we started – I wanted to change the management behaviours but we did it in an ad hoc way – first the development programme and then the communications, and then the opinion survey and then the employer of choice work – none of this was strategically aligned and focussed so it was only held together in my head – others in the business did not see how they activities connected.”

“So you are saying that a vision and a strategy would have been useful?”

“Definitely – prior to this I managed by moving incrementally forward to improve the operational performance of the business – now I see the need for a strategy and for a vision. Back then I did not know what you meant by vision – they were, in my opinion, just fluffy statements that sounded good and meant nothing.”

“And what do you think now?”

“I think that they have value in terms of directing the focus of the business and everyone in the business. The vision statement has to say clearly where we are going and what sort of organisation we will be, sitting underneath that we have the operating principles that describe how we will behave and run the business and then we have the operational plan. Before we just had the plan and people didn’t see the future direction – so how could they do anything other than do what they did yesterday but
slightly better? Now people can see what they need to do differently, and importantly, why they need to do it differently."

P "To what extent is alignment and integration important?"

MD "Critically. If we do not ensure alignment across the business then we cannot be successful and it is important that everything we do is integrated so that people see it as progressing us towards our goal. The vision, the principles and the plan form a pyramid that describes and drives the business and promotes alignment. It also helps to secure integration because each time we want to do something new we ask ourselves – how does this align with everything else and help us to achieve our vision?"

P "Can you give an example of this?"

MD "Yes – several months ago we started a new course and I forgot to tell one of the directors that he was on the course. My mistake. We then addressed this as a problem that we resolved by informing him about the course, arranging a catch up session and ensuring he could attend the rest of the programme. Now with a vision and set of values that drive our behaviours we look forwards to decide our approach rather than look backwards to resolve problems that we have created."

P "What do you mean by that?"

MD "Well if the same thing happened now, our values about developing people and communicating effectively with people would mean that we would want
to discuss the course with the director beforehand - looking forwards to helping him develop and involving him in the process. In effect working with him rather then talking at him or in this case, not talking!"

P  "How do you see this approach affecting the culture of the business?"

MD  "As you have explained there are several cultures within the business but we need to ensure that the overall culture is aligned with our vision and principles. We can achieve this through time by working hard to ensure that the managers understand what the vision and principles are and want to adopt them. As a senior team we need to consistently demonstrate those behaviours and support others who do likewise. It will take some time I think but we now know where we are going and have a plan to get there."

P  "You are moving towards a defined goal as opposed to moving away from something that you don't like."

MD  "Absolutely - we want people to want to come with us not be forced or coerced into coming - our leadership approach has to be focussed on generating commitment as opposed to ensuring compliance."

P  "That is a significant change in approach."

MD  "Yes it is - and it needs to be that way if we are to be successful in the long term. We cannot afford to be distracted by doing things that we want to
do but which aren't aligned and integrated with the vision, and we can never get there if our people don't want to take the journey with us.

P “So how do you foresee the way forwards in the short – medium term?”

MD “We need to continue talking with people about the vision and the principles, to let people know how good the future can be, and to continue to align the management team so that they all belong and all take personal accountability for delivering the plan in the way that we want to deliver it. The way forwards has to be about communication and involvement as a means of ensuring business success. But we are driving it ourselves – we used the first development programme to drive change but were really asking you to do what we should have been doing anyway. What happened was that you suggested one way of behaving and the business valued and supported a different way. Not that we disagreed with your approach, on the contrary we thought it was the right way – but we didn't seek to modify our own behaviours or the way things were done in the business so in terms of behaviour change the programme didn't achieve everything I wanted. Now that I understand more about strategically leading change I recognise that we should, as business leaders, drive the change forward and ask external people to support us where appropriate, not do it for us.”

P How then could we have arrived at this conclusion earlier – say at the outset of the work for then we could have re-shaped our approach and perhaps have achieved more?”
MD  “That would have been great – but I honestly believe that it would have been impossible. I needed to go through the experience to understand and to see what needs to be done – I couldn’t have done it without the experience. Next time I will do it very differently but that is based on my experience of doing it this time.”

This conversation is typical of many that we have shared over the period of my involvement with the business and demonstrates the fact that using the knowledge of the 6D approach as a means of facilitating thought and experience to develop and approach to organisational change was the most appropriate course of action in these circumstances. It was clear at the outset that the business did not want to even discuss strategic change let alone embark upon a change programme, and this was largely due to the fact that such a process or programme was unknown territory to the MD and his management team. There was, in effect, little shared understanding of the task, the process or the principles behind such an undertaking and therefore, little likelihood of starting let alone succeeding in this endeavour.

As a researcher, or indeed as a change agent, it is important that we seek to understand as fully as possible the environment and context that people are operating within, and also their prior experiences and knowledge. In this way we can sensibly and meaningfully take an adaptive approach that introduces people to the concepts in a measured way whereby their new knowledge is matched at each stage of development by corresponding experience.

The 6D approach may well have had the answer to some of the issues within the business, but if the business is not prepared or able to listen – then what value the
answer? As the personality profile illustrated and experience confirmed, the managers needed to understand through their own experience not be told by an expert or an expert model. The key here then is about seeking to understand people within their context and their cultural webs, and using knowledge to guide thought processes not to teach the answers.

Reflections as a learner

As a learner engaged in this work I have learnt many things, but of utmost importance in terms of my own personal development is that there is nothing inherently wrong with knowing or having knowledge. As mentioned in previous chapters, I had, on a number of occasions, come close to entirely discarding the Five Dimensions model because I saw it, rather than me, as being responsible for the pre-emptive conclusion I reached, and therefore, for bringing my research to a temporary halt. Through this case study more than any other experience, I have learnt that it was not the model per se that was at fault - it was my restrictive thinking and application of the model. Notwithstanding this, the realisation of the need to fully engage, and to integrate at a deeper level as detailed in the previous Chapter enabled me to develop the model into the 6D approach and consequently use this in a facilitative manner to develop an emergent understanding that was contextually appropriate, rather than as a prescriptive model that need to be used in a linear format at all times.

The Six Dimensions approach is a means of focussing on the need for integrating change activities within an organisation and, as such, has an inherent knowledge content. This is not wrong per se, and indeed, unless and until the content is challenged and proved to be incorrect, it must stand as valid knowledge. I have
learnt that there is nothing wrong with possessing or indeed demonstrating knowledge that is not in the everyday domain of practising managers – what potentially is wrong is the manner in which that knowledge is used. The model can, I now realise, be correct but used in a way that is methodologically flawed.

Such was the case in my first use of the model when I considered it to be ‘the answer’ and therefore stopped thinking about the model and how it could be further developed, and limited my thinking about needing to fully understand the organisational or operational context within which it was used. This is the pre-emptive conclusivity that I discussed in chapter 8.

Through this case study I have re-learnt the power of the facilitative approach – of using knowledge to guide questions, and using questions to help develop understanding. This was necessary from a pragmatic perspective – had I not done so I would not have secured the original X Limited contract for the management development programme – but it was also necessary from a methodological perspective. The management team could not have developed their understanding of strategic change and the need for alignment without my taking this facilitative approach. Knowing is ok as long as the knowledge is used wisely and not used in such a way that it constrains ones’ own or another’s thinking and development.

I have developed a significant amount of confidence from engaging in this case study and it has helped me to recognise my capabilities in a more open and appreciative light. I have had, for most, if not all, of my life, a strong tendency to underrate my abilities and achievements, and, whilst I am able to mask this well in my professional work, it does undoubtedly have a detrimental impact. This case
study has helped me to learn that I am capable of understanding strategic organisational change and of facilitating the development of individuals, management teams and organisations in a strategic and integrated manner.

In fact it was, in all honesty, engagement with this case study and the concomitant thinking that I had to do to facilitate the development of the business that finally encouraged me to complete this thesis. I had, as a number of Set colleagues had done, considered not completing the thesis and walking away. When colleagues did this in the past I could not fully understand their motives – they had completed their research, they had written up part of their thesis, but then stopped. As I reflected on my PhD studies prior to the case study, however, I could understand completely how they could have arrived at that decision for I was there myself.

I had developed the change model, used it and found it was useful but at the same time, knew that I had used it in a positivistic manner which limited its efficacy. I knew conceptually that it could be used differently and more effectively but had not really had the chance to fully test this hypothesis in an organisation. I had used part of the approach with other clients and it had informed my practice through the years since it was created, but I had not had the chance to use it fully. Therefore, I was faced with the arduous task of writing up an historical narrative that I no longer fully agreed with, and which I knew that I had not taken to a full and proper conclusion. Therefore, why would I seek to gain a doctorate with this work – it was incomplete and, I knew, not worthy of submission. It would, in my view, have been laying a false claim to my PhD and I knew that this would have fundamentally affected the manner in which I viewed the degree, should I have attained it, for the rest of my life. The easy option, therefore, was to procrastinate
until the time limit expired, so that I was not fully culpable, and live with the regret of not completing.

Engaging with X Limited has very much changed my perspective and my feelings about my work. I have been able to use my research to very beneficial effect within an organisation and to fully test out my thinking on using the model as an applied facilitative methodology to support integrated organisational change. I have re-kindled my enthusiasm for my research through the period of this case study, and writing has become a pleasure. I recall David Botham some years ago talking about writing a PhD and saying that it was a great, and possibly the only, opportunity of being able to use 100,000 words to fully explore your ideas and thoughts. At the time the task ahead seemed incredibly daunting and I struggled with the notion of it being an opportunity. Perhaps this related back to my school days and the completion of my MSc when I had to write assignments of a given length and used to spend as much time counting words as I did writing words. I now fully understand what David was talking about – taking such an opportunity to fully explore my experiences, to garner as much knowledge as possible, and to seek as much understanding as I am able, does require that many words, but more than that it requires full ownership and commitment. I have re-learnt this through this case study and now write because I want to learn, not because I have to achieve a specific word count. I have, I believe, finally made the transition from student to scholar.
Chapter Eleven

Critical Learning

This Chapter reviews my learning through the period of research and seeks to capture the critical learning points. These critical learning points are structured as they occurred to me through my reflections about my research rather than in any form of prioritised order. This Chapter provides a useful summary position of the development of my ideas and philosophy about the nature of change, of change agency, and of change management within the context of contemporary organisations. The learning is written, in each case, as a statement of understanding followed by a narrative that describes the learning within the context of my research.

Having completed the research into my PhD it seemed prudent and, dare I say, wise, to review the work and extract the critical learning that I have gathered. The aspects of change that I have learned through this research are detailed below and provide, I believe, a useful summary for the thesis. Some of these learning points are written as a summative position on learning, albeit with the overriding caveat that the learning is only the summation of answers to questions asked thus far, it clearly does not reflect the answers to the questions that I and others have not yet thought to ask. Others are written as ongoing questions or points of conjecture – issues that require further thought and analysis – packaged as a summary of the lessons to date with an explicit acknowledgement that this is not yet the finished position.
The learning points are not written in a priority order, or even sequentially as they occurred during the narrative of the thesis – learning does not quite happen that way. Rather they are listed as they occurred during the reflection and review sessions I conducted towards the end of the writing up period of my research.

1. **Knowing is OK**

I have, through this research, oscillated on this more than any other issue. My start point was very positivistic and logical for that was how I viewed the world, and as such, the view had had a significant influence on my intellectual and emotional development. For much of my life I have been of the opinion that there was an answer to most questions and, when I started working with organisational change, this view was carried forward so that I considered that there would be a formulaic and logical approach to organisational change that would have a high degree of validity and utility in most circumstances. Early experiences in the Learning Sets prompted and indeed persuaded me to move from this position – the world, I came to understand more fully, was not as structured as I would have liked it to be – it is not a closed loop system (Jackson, 2003) and we cannot, therefore, ascribe reasons and meanings objectively. Such a positivistic, or as Bjerke (1999) would have it ‘explanaticist’ approach, is aimed as providing "objective, absolute and causal pictures of reality" (p.11). It became clear to me that this was not the case – rather a more dialectical, interpretive approach is required – one that assumes nothing and seeks to understand what is happening within a given context, within a given set of relationships and experiences, and within a given culture. In this sense, there is no right answer – there are many answers; and as David Botham would often point out to me with a wry smile, “they are only the answers to the questions we have asked, not the universal truths”. It is within this context that I
came to understand the distinction that Revans makes between cleverness and wisdom (Morris, 2000).

Unfortunately my understanding of this was again influenced by the positivistic approach that had so strongly influenced my perspective and understanding of the world – I reasoned that if being wise was better than being clever then there must, ipso facto, be something inherently wrong with being clever. This prompted me to take a polar opposite approach to knowledge and, in particular, to the, then, Five Dimensions model. I began to work on the basis that the knowledge was of limited value and that we should be asking questions to gain further understanding as opposed to using the knowledge to provide the answers. For this reason, and at this time, I walked away from the model and struggled to come to terms with the impact and implications of this new perspective on my research. If I had worked so hard to create a model and now I discovered that there was something inherently wrong with the cleverness of knowing the model – then where next?

Eventually I came to the viewpoint that the model was fine if we used it to generate thinking and used it to influence the questions I asked of others – in essence used it to stimulate and guide their thinking. The model thus became a facilitative and generative tool rather than an instructive and didactic tool. This change came about through my reflections about my own behaviours and approaches as detailed in Chapter 9, and resulted, amongst other things, with the development of the Six Dimensions Approach. The methodological change that came about is reflected in the language that I used to describe the Six Dimensions – it became an approach rather than a model. The word model is in itself symbolic of a positivistic understanding of the world – the word approach, however, suggests that it is but one way of many, and, it therefore implicitly provides the user with choice.
In this learning process I had moved from a 'hard, logical positivist perspective to a strong constructivist/post modern perspective' (Burgoyne, 2001) and found both to be lacking. I settled in the mid-ground which Burgoyne describes as critical realism wherein reality is a 'non-deterministic but probabilistic open system' in which 'the elements of reality have potentials, but whether they are exercised and with what effect depends on how they interact with other elements' within the open system and 'hence they are not deterministically predictable' (p.11). This critical realism approach is useful in that it recognises probabilities such as those described in Chapter 2 on the nature of change, but does not close these down deterministically to definitely occurring, causally determined effects. This means that critical realism is a vertical as opposed to a flat ontology in that there are 'generative processes 'behind' and 'underlying' experience' (p.10) which provide the richness and depth of my research.

It was with this changed perspective in mind that I approached the X Limited case study (detailed in Chapter 10) where I wanted to try this revised methodology to understand how it would work in an organisational change scenario. The need to take a different approach was also, I have to say, influenced by the initial positioning of the management team in that they had no interest in theoretical or academic approaches, or even in practical approaches that had worked elsewhere – they understood the world through their own experiences and struggled to understand anything that they had not personally experienced. In this context, talking about a model of change would have had no value at all, and in fact would have resulted in not gaining the contract in the first place.
Through the X Limited case study I applied the ‘revised’ Six Dimensions approach and discovered that it was very useful as a facilitative methodology to stimulate thinking and understanding about organisational change. Through my experiences and reflections I came, once again to reaffirm my revised perspective on the utility of knowledge. I came to realise that the situation is not so clear, distinct and bipolar as wisdom being acceptable and cleverness not. That was based on an inadequate and inarticulate understanding of the distinction that Revans was making. There is, I now realise, nothing inherently wrong with possessing knowledge and therefore, there is an inherent validity in the Six Dimensions approach – for this contains knowledge. It was not the existence of the model that stymied my thinking – it was the way in which I had proposed to use it.

Using it as a globally applicable blueprint of change is, I came to realise, foolish for such a propositional and deterministic view of the world of change was, itself folly. The Six Dimensions approach provided answers, in David Botham’s words, ‘only to the questions that I had asked’ – on this basis alone, it cannot, even from a positivistic mode of enquiry, be a complete and comprehensive model of organisational change.

It is how we use knowledge to enable us to help others to learn that makes us effective. Through this case study I have learnt that the model was not ‘wrong’ by demonstrating a knowledge that was not in the everyday knowledge domain of practising managers – there is nothing inherently wrong with ‘knowing’. What is wrong is how we may use that knowledge. If knowledge is used to identify the rights and wrongs of a situation and to define the optimum route forward without full understanding of the context then that is inherently flawed, if not wrong. If instead we use knowledge to help us to ask the right questions, and thereby
understand the context more fully, prior to offering options that are subsequently taken (or not) by the true participants in the organisation then we have used knowledge appropriately – to inform and guide rather than to direct.

It is, therefore, the use of the model, not the model per se that influences the appropriateness of the intervention. The model can be correct but used wrongly, or indeed the model can be incorrect but applied correctly. It is after all, simply a documentation of thought and experience with no inherent power. My thinking was stymied because of how I responded to the model, not by the model itself.

As documented in previous chapters, I came to regard the ‘model’ as expert, instead of seeing the model as a representation of my thinking – in doing so I invested the model with a power to influence my thinking. Thus, the root cause of my problems was not the model at all; rather it was me and the paradigm within which I was operating. I had worked so long, both academically and vocationally, under the spell of the scientific paradigm, that I ‘wanted’ to develop an answer - for therein lies comfort. Having decided, once again, that I did not want to create an ‘answer’ I felt that the only thing to do was to move away from the model, whereas the most effective thing to do was to learn to use the model in an appropriate manner. In order to achieve this I discussed my difficulties at length with my Set colleagues and they asked the following questions which challenged the appropriateness and efficacy of my approaches:

- Why does the thought of a model which provides the answer to organisational change appear so seductive?
- If the model is not a ‘golden formula’ then how else can it be used?
- What are your experiences of using the model and how have these influenced you?
What can you learn from your research about yourself?

I think that the answer to the first question is undoubtedly concerned with the need to be right – the need to provide an answer. I have discussed this elsewhere in the thesis, and have been quite astonished at how the pull towards knowing is so strong, even when I was working hard to not do so. This was particularly prevalent in the research phases which were most action-oriented, such as the hsbp case study (Chapter 7). I cannot discount my ego from this exploration as I have thoroughly enjoyed being in a position of expert and this too has motivated and influenced my approach in a way which provided a mask to my underlying lack of confidence. I have, through the position of expert, been able to operate in a role position as opposed to a personal position and, have come to realise and understand this more thoroughly through this research. Reason and Rowan (1981) talk about the underlying assumptions and beliefs that are embodied in any investigative approach and which may not even be known about consciously (p.223). My experience has borne this out and now, from a perspective of knowing about myself I am able to welcome knowledge, welcome learning and most critically, operate as myself not as a role.

Through significant reading and research I have, as discussed previously, moved my ontological perspective and this has enabled me to more fully understand my approach to knowing, and my approach to learning. This will enable me to continue to grow and develop, treating knowledge appropriately and contextually, and seeking always to develop it further whilst valuing both the process of knowing and the process of learning.
2. Organisational change is more than a journey.

Much of the literature about organisational change (Lewin, 1951; Connor, 1993; Katzenbach, 1997) uses the metaphor of the journey as a means of explaining the transition from point A, or the prevailing situation, to Point B, or the intended situation. Lewin’s model (1951) does this more simply than most. The focus suggested by these approaches, is to understand where the organisation is currently, define its intended future or vision, and then to manage the process of what Lewin (ibid) calls ‘transition’. In my experience, this metaphor works well with operational managers, but it has a downside in that it also guides the thinking to that of the deterministic or scientific paradigm. If we take the model of the journey at its most simple level, I am at point A and wish to get to point B, a matter of three paces away. I therefore simply have to take three strides in the desired direction and I will arrive at my intended destination. Furthermore, each stride is a causal link in the chain of the journey, so that if I have taken stride one I must simply now take stride two, and then stride three. In order to make this journey I need to know my start position, my desired end position, and something about the mode of transport that I will use to convey myself between the two positions. It seems to me that this metaphor is overwhelmingly simple and, in real terms, overwhelmingly attractive because of its simplicity.

The attractiveness is, I think, what appeals to operational managers, for the world of work is increasingly about systems and proceduralised routines. These have become, in other words, steps that lead from A to B, from customer identification to customer service. Fast food restaurants even have the process of service broken down into manageable steps, ‘now smile at customer and ask if they want
to go large,' for example. Indeed, try to step outside of the closely controlled structures of customer service and frequently the manager will need to be called because the system, and the inevitable computer, does not allow variation from the norm.

Thus we are working and living in a world that has taken the precepts of linearity and logic and used them to prescribe modes of behaviour, ways of doing things to deliver consistency in, for example, customer service. This does, I believe, restrict our thinking about organisational change, for we have generated an underlying presumption that it too can be adequately managed through a sequence of linear steps or processes that take us from start to finish. Indeed the initial creation of the Five Dimensions model is a classic case of this – written and used originally as a process guide for change, as a prescriptive tool for managing the process in an integrative manner.

In reality, however, organisational change is much more complex, much more variable and much more dynamic than we first think. We need to look at the whole perspective, from a number of different vantage points, logical, literal, cultural, individual, emotional, factual, ideal, to name but a few. It is only by doing this that we can begin to more fully understand the nature of the ‘system’ that we are seeking to change, and therefore, the process of change is much more dynamical than a straightforward journey from A to B; even though we may, in fact, start at A and finish at B.

Thus we need to acknowledge that there is an inherent complexity in the change process that cannot be explained in simple linear, logical and deterministic terms. Again the ontology of critical realism (Burgoyne 2001) is useful here in that it
provides for probabilities based on prior experience, and concurrently allows for an interpretive and emergent approach to be taken through the change process. Wheatley [1997, 1999, 2002] talks about complexity and interconnectedness and we need, in my view, to pay full heed to her views. Change is indeed a journey in that we move from a start point to an end point, but the route between the two is complex and contextually specific, it is a process of managing complex interconnections and relationships both within and outside the enterprise, and requires integration at all levels. Gaining this level of understanding can only be gained emergently and is a blend of knowledge and learning that requires holistic thinking and understanding [Senge, 1990] and, importantly, requires the full and active participation of the change agent.

3. Change is developed and implemented logically but understood and reacted to emotionally

When change is formulated as a programme or indeed as an intervention it generally seems to be the case that the architects or business leaders do so from a logical and rational perspective. This is no surprise given the preponderance of what in Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers and Myers, 1980) terms are called Sensing-Thinking managers within contemporary UK organisations. Such a psychological type will typically understand the world from an experiential / analytical perspective and seek to deconstruct the change programme to its constituent parts which, when assembled, form a cogent and structured plan. Indeed, as mentioned previously in this chapter, the use of models of change that describe the change process in linear and logical terms, promote the expectation that an analytical approach is effective.
Here again, we need to draw a clear distinction between change and improvement. Contemporary approaches to continuous improvement (Tague, 2005) advocate the use of a ‘plan – do – check – act’ cycle, which focuses the effort on understanding what is happening at any given time within, say the production process, and then refining the process before checking and acting on the feedback received. In this way improvements are dealt with in a cybernetic or closed loop system (Jackson, 2003). It is evident that this approach works well for continuous improvements for these are generally incremental changes that gradually improve the effectiveness and/or efficiency of the process. Within such incrementally based iterations the causal logic of if ... then works much of the time. The other critical determinant to the effectiveness of such approaches is that they are focussed on a system of, for example, manufacture – an organised, logical and task based system where people are but constituent parts of the process – there to do a particular task at a particular time in a particular way.

Organisational change is fundamentally different from continuous improvement – change deals not just with the structures, processes and systems that exist within an organisation; it also deals with the people, their culture(s), their behaviours, their patterns of work and their emotions. Thus we are outside the iterative domain of continuous improvement – we are dealing with perhaps the most complex and dynamic variable of all – people.

I think that the structured approach within a business tends to operate in a self-supporting cycle – for much of the time a structured approach works so we learn to be more structured and this helps us to develop more structured approaches which work for much of the time etc. Then when we engage in change as opposed to continuous improvement we have become conditioned to taking a logical and
formulaic approach, and have expectations that such an approach will, once again, work. Thus the overriding tendency seems to be to use the same methodology for change as is used for continuous improvement and change programmes are, therefore, generally developed and implemented from a logical and iterative position.

This then leads to the failure of many change programmes for they take too little cognisance of the impact and implications for people – they focus instead on numbers, systems, and processes.

I recall one HR manager saying that they were going to “implement a change programme which would result in the loss of jobs but that this was OK because the business would be more efficient and save money, and, in any event, it was only seven jobs.” I gently pointed out that it was, in fact, seven people not seven jobs and he realised that even the language they were using was impersonal and led them to discount the people in the planning and implementation process at anything other than a logical, ‘part of the process’ level. Whilst I can understand, in this particular instance, the employment legislation leads HR managers to think of jobs not people, it is still the case that he had not really considered them as people with a career and a history, life expectations and commitments, values and beliefs, friends and families at all. Rather they were a sequential element in the change programme, components not people.

Thus there seems to be a fundamental difference between the way in which change is conceived by the architects and the way change is perceived by those people who become subject to it. As Moss Kanter [1984] comments “Change is exciting when it is done by us, threatening when it is done to us. (p.675). Those
people who are subject to change will frequently, if not typically, approach the change from an emotional perspective – seeking to make sense of the change in terms of how it will impact upon their lives, their relationships and their value structures. None of these are logically determined but sit instead within a complex and rich network of values, emotions and relationships. These emotional factors consequently influence attitudes and behaviours which in turn, determine the success or otherwise of the change programme.

As change architects or leaders, therefore, we need to ensure that we seek to fully and empathically understand the impact of the change on people from their various perspectives (or as closely as we can approximate their perspective), for only then can we begin to understand how they may react to the change – for it will surely not be in a logical manner that can be forecast and expected based on our previous experiences.

All of this makes the creation and successful communication and implementation of change a particularly complex and difficult process.

4. The power of emotionality

In the early stages of my research I took a scientific approach to my work and this was, as described previously, greatly influenced by the fact that I had learnt through time the power of logic. I took a very logical view of the world and sought to be able to explain it, and changes to it, by reference to causes and effects. I worked on the basis that knowledge was derived through objective analysis of the variables, the stimuli and responses, and the operating context. Whilst this now seems to me to be particularly sterile and limiting, it worked (or rather appeared to work) for many years. One of the most significant consequences of adopting
this externalised approach to the world was that my understanding was limited to that which I could observe - it did not enable or indeed require me to be part of the process and I was not, therefore, able to fully experience the process and thereby generate a more complete understanding. It was not an intersubjective mode of enquiry and took little account of that which I could observe but never fully and empathically understand – the emotions of the participants of the change.

Consequently I, like many other change agents and business leaders, made logical decisions about how to move the business forwards, and then expected the business members, or employees, to follow along the defined path because that was their job. Such a logical approach to change is common and is self-evidently reific. The fundamental flaw with this approach is that people cannot be reified – even though much of the work in contemporary organisations seeks to do just that.

Adopting a different approach is documented elsewhere in this thesis, but the key learning to explore here is that, when subject to change, people tend to operate on an emotional level that has the power and efficacy to transcend our logical assumptions or interpretations about their responsive actions. Thus change programmes which are logically derived, are frequently limited by their failure to understand (because they cannot be objectively understood) the emotional responses that may be forthcoming when they are implemented.

The emotional responses that we may likely experience though change have been well documented, most notably by Kübler-Ross [1970], and Connor [1993] but change leaders still seem to fail to take emotions into account when devising change. We certainly failed to understand its importance in the name change
from Rolls-Royce Motor Cars to Bentley Motors until faced with the overwhelming evidence of black armbands and widespread depression. How easily could this have derailed the whole of the change programme and certainly the acceptance of the new name could have been put back by some considerable time. Instead we used emotional connectivity to develop an emotionally powerful, and historically-contextual narrative that the people within the business could relate to, feel pride in and eventually, want to accept.

As people we are sentient beings, who bring ourselves to the workplace as whole entities, we bring along our culture, and our identity and we create new cultures and new identities within the working context or environment. These do not take the place of those that pre-existed before we came to the workplace, rather they co-exist in our own personal plurality which we manage at a seemingly subconscious level. These cultures, subcultures and identities are managed through interaction and through our use of language and any changes to these that are imposed upon us, or which appear to take little or no account of our individual or collective needs, are likely to met with an emotionally derived response. It is this which derails many change initiatives – for instead of seeking to generate an understanding of the people we are seeking to impact by the change we have devised, we seem to focus almost exclusively on seeking to generate in them an understanding of the change we want to make. As though doing so will positively ensure that they will respond in the way that we have deemed to be appropriate – the way that can be explained by a series of if...then statements. This reification process is fundamentally detrimental to the achievement of successful and sustainable change. Instead we need to develop change programmes which, through dialectic and hermeneutic processes, understand and engage with the employees of a business, which overtly
demonstrate that they are seen to be an important part of the business and the future, and which rationally and emotionally take everyone from the known to the unknown so that they may embrace the change – only in this way will the change be enculturalised and therefore, be sustainable.

5. Creating growth as well as conformity

The overriding focus of many organisational structures and business processes is concerned with conformance to the system, which is often achieved to the detriment of creativity. Adherence to a procedure is a well-practised management approach within for example, manufacturing. I recall an early experience at Rolls-Royce Motor Cars when I was asked to look at the process for building seats. On examination each craftsman building the seats did so in their own way, for they were craftsmen. They built to a standard design but the process they took was unique for each person. Consequently, the build detail was often different and was noticed by customers in terms of squeaks and rattles, which they found unacceptable. We decided to formalise the seat manufacture and introduced a process that had been embedded in the Japanese manufacturing industry for some time, standard operating procedures. This means that there is a defined procedure for building a car or component and that each step of this procedure is detailed to ensure that every person involved in the process does so in exactly the same way. Through this process, we re-defined craftsmanship as the ability to conform to a standard operating process so that there is no variation in process, output or quality.

In doing this we achieved the objective of conformity and the customer complaints about seats dropped markedly, however, we had dealt with the problem at a micro-level. We had secured conformity at the expense of creativity because we
had seen the two as polar opposites. In point of fact, they are quite different attributes and both are very much required within contemporary organisations. The increasing focus on quality and consistency by consumers means that products such as cars, need to be manufactured with zero defects, which means that process conformity is essential. At the same time, however, organisations need to be able to tap into the creative energy of its people if they are to identify new and more effective ways of conducting their business. Stifling creativity by only calling for conformity will inevitably mean that the people within a business cease to contribute their ideas and thus the business enters a state whereby it loses its capacity for change. It then finds that, through time, its 'productive capacity is dissipated into useless entropy' (Wheatley 1999, p76).

This dissipation of the capability and capacity of an organisation is frequently heavily influenced by the management style. For example, if the management style is oppressively focussed on conformance and negatively re-enforces this by admonishments when conformity is not achieved, then the capacity of the individuals within that organisation dissipates very rapidly. The managers' capacity for growth and generative activity is lost because of their need to spend undue amounts of time and energy on ensuring compliance, whilst the workers' capacity is lost because of the negative spiral within which they find themselves; where every piece of negative feedback reinforces the 'I told you so' mentality. Thus the business, in crude terms, is focussed on driving compliance from a group of people who feel no real compunction to comply other than to gain their salary each week. Perhaps this states the case in too stark and critical terms, but the reality is there to be seen in many organisations.
It is the case that this management style treats people as though they were machines within a closed system, where feedback on performance will inevitably result in corrections to that performance. In such an instance, the management style fosters resentment and anger, not two of the most useful forms of creative energy. In fact, these two emotions are far more likely to foster destructive energy, where the focus is on non-compliance, or worst, on damaging the enterprise as opposed to securing its growth. Curle (1949) acknowledges that when tensions cannot be dissipated in congruent activity they otherwise emerge in anti-social or disruptive forms.

There is a great deal of literature concerning the limitations of this management style (Morgan, 1986; Arbinger, 2000; Kouzes & Posner, 2002) yet it still persists. Perhaps this is in part due to the conditioning that we encounter in organisational life, to the ego of some managers, to our over-reliance on systemised procedures to deliver a zero-defect product, or some other reason. What is important, I feel, is not the reason for how business arrived at that state, but the route to get them out – the route by which they might focus on growth and creativity instead.

Kouzes & Posner (2002) call for shared commitment to the business vision, and assert that enabling employees to see the personal benefit that enrolling in a shared vision will help to deliver a different business proposition. Their focus in making these statements is on leadership and I think that this goes some way to resolving this issue. Of more significant importance, in my opinion, than the vision, shared or not, is the culture that exists in the business and the degree to which that is influenced by the prevailing management style.
If people are treated as mechanistic entities within a larger mechanistic system then they will seldom respond to urges to change - for there is seldom a personal benefit to them. Rather this type of organisation tends to make improvements as opposed to changes, and these changes are generally a series of successive, iterative and logical changes to, for example, tighten the production system so that the process becomes more efficient. Translating this to the shop floor means, in their experience, working harder with fewer people; itself a fairly sound reason to challenge the need for change and to maintain the status quo.

If instead we sought to capture the creativity of the workforce, to positively engage them in change so that they become participants in, not subjects of, the change process - then we are beginning to value them as people engaged in, and not parts of, the process. If we did this then we would, in all likelihood, see employees more interested in participating in the change programme and, through their active participation, helping the organisation to grow and develop as opposed to simply conforming to the requirements of the change architects within the management team,

Achieving such a culture, focussed simultaneously on order and change is akin to what Stacey (2006) calls the ‘paradox of effective management’ in that “managers must operate in a hierarchy using formal planning systems and analytical processes to conduct their business efficiently, but they must also operate in an informal network that seeks to undermine those hierarchies and systems in the interests of creativity and changeability [p.95]. I think that there is a way of avoiding the inherent instability of this paradox, of avoiding the guerrilla warfare that it suggests managers engage in to destabilise the system albeit in the interests of the business. We can achieve this by overtly and explicitly
acknowledging that our business systems and processes are only as good as we can make them at that given time and they can and should be positively challenged and changed if we can find a better, more efficient or more effective way of operating. At Bentley we called our standard operating procedures ‘best current practices’ to signify this position – they could always be challenged, developed, and changed as our knowledge and experience grows and develops. The key to success is, in my opinion, enabling and encouraging challenge of best current practice so that it is not a covert or underhand activity, and then ensuring that the business is sufficiently open and receptive to change that the revised thinking is structurally incorporated into the business processes to present a new approach for all. In this way we engage in a cyclical yet structural approach to change that does not, of itself, challenge the need for conformity.

6. The power of the question

It seems to me that there is nothing so powerful as a well-framed question. Goldberg 1998, comments that questions are the "primary means by which doing, having, accomplishing and growing are catalysed - and often even made manifest - in our lives" [p.10].

Very often in my coaching practice I will speak with managers who want to develop their team and seek to do so by telling them of how they would personally deal with a situation, or how they dealt with similar situations, or indeed simply telling the direct report precisely what to do. I typically then ask what issues the managers are facing with their direct reports and almost invariably get the response that they are not proactively developing, or that they do not seem to be fully buying-in to the vision or direction of the business.
The critical learning point here is that their experiences parallel mine in terms of the creation of the Five Dimensions approach in that I created the model and then used it as a source of knowledge to be passed onto others undergoing organisational change programmes - knowledge that was used to inform others of what they do not know, or to guide their behaviours and practice to do what they previously could not. This is a very similar approach to traditional, didactic educational approaches where the learner is presumed to know nothing until the expert teacher has imparted the required knowledge.

Whilst this can have some benefits as a teaching methodology, it seldom, of itself, engenders confidence and ability, focussing as it does primarily within the cognitive domain [Bloom 1956]. Einstein once wrote that “the function of a true educator is not to provide answers, but to pose stimulating questions which demand personal investigation and resolution”, The same proposition applies equally to the change agent – and the questions must operate across the affective domain as well as the cognitive domain to ensure personal attitudinal learning.

Of greater efficacy, therefore, is the use of knowledge in a facilitative style, using it to guide others’ understanding by asking questions that help them to more fully understand their context and choices. In this way we can, as line managers, operate in a way that is similar to the Learning Set and become a constructive challenge for the direct report as opposed to the expert with all of the knowledge. It is important, therefore, that we begin to ask questions of our reports instead of telling them the answers.

Of course, simply asking questions is not the entire approach – we need to think very carefully about precisely what questions we wish to ask – by focussing on
what we want to achieve by asking them. For example, if we wanted to generate understanding of a process or a problem we would ask questions focussed on that particular issue – operating within Revans’ System Alpha or the diagnostic phase of Action Learning, and System Beta, or the problem resolution phase (Revans 1982).

Given the previously documented preference for continuous improvement as a driving managerial philosophy it is no surprise that many of the interventions of a line manager are within this domain or system. Thus the typical questions will be, centred around what we are trying to do, what is stopping us and what can we do about it. It is a definite, if iterative, problem solving approach that deals with the world as we understand it, with variables that we make assumptions about, and experience which we bring to the fore from yesterday to help solve today’s problems.

From a praxiological perspective (Bunge, 1999) such a focus can enable us to address the overall efficiency of the managerial or corporate process but it does omit to focus on the personal development and overall learning of the participants. I have identified several times through this thesis that such a logical and impartial understanding of our experiences is limited as it separates out, by omission, a focus on the impact on the individual as a whole person.

Effective problem solving means seeking to understand not just the problem and solution within the context of optimal efficiency, but also the person or people within the problem, their cultural context, and their attitudinal perspective of the issues at hand. Action Learning is concerned with much more than an effective problem solving process. Pedler (1983) argues that Action Learning is
fundamentally concerned with 'changing the external world and self development' (p.67) and indeed quotes on the same page Revans rather sternly criticising an Action Learning student for not recognising that she had to do both.

Revans (1971) confirms that he is searching for a 'general theory of human action, for a science of praxeology' (p.58), which Ulrich (1998) defines as "the science (or general methodology) of effective and efficient action" (p.93). Such a science must, according to Ulrich, include a focus on science and people, or according to Pedler (1983) on both the 'scientist/operational researcher and the discovery and clarification of the person and their values' (p.66). Within Chapter 9 I wrote about the period of my research when I recognised the importance of this holistic perspective and in doing so moved my research on to a different level. Without such a recognition, which I believe needs to learned through experience rather than reading so that it truly is a participatory process, then I think the inevitable consequence is to focus on one or the other, when for truly effective action learning it is essential to focus on both concurrently.

This point is made eloquently by Pedler (p.67) when he comments that "The entity which is Action Learning is a flow of consciousness, of action and learning, between the inner (person) and outer (organisational problem) and vice versa in a continuous, iterative process." My research would, undoubtedly, have been limited had I not made this realisation and generated a deeper understanding of the need to engage fully in the process, and to use this full and empathic engagement to address organisational problems through the application of the Six Dimensions Approach.
Bunge (1999) identifies this and refers to the need to have a conjoined praxiological and ethical focus. Smith (1998) extends this to cover efficiency, effectiveness, economy and ethics within an Action Learning context, and Vaartjes (2005) further focuses the debate on learning when she asserts that “action learning has two praxiological aims: the first to help managers to learn to take action and the second, to learn what action is effective” (p.6).

That there needs to be such a holistic focus was recognised by Revans when he identified that questioning needs to extend into the realms of System Gamma. Revans developed System Gamma as “a learning process based on the changes he or she [the manager] experiences within himself/herself and observed and tested using System Beta” (Botham, 1993, p.115). Thus we have a connection between the procedure and the process, between procedural understanding and processual understanding.

This is, it seems to me, the most efficacious means by which we can support another’s learning as a whole being, to help them develop as a person. When we ask questions of this nature we help managers to understand themselves within the context of their practice and so support the development of a symbiotic relationship between the two – where the manager is both participant and learner.

In this way the manager develops a more complete understanding of the problem that is presented, based on their empirical analysis, their personal values and beliefs, and their practical experience. The manager can then express their understanding of the problem not as an objective or distanced perspective on an external issue, but rather as a problem that affects themselves, and the
perception of which is influenced by themselves – the manager and the problem interact. The manager in solving this problem uses both 'conjectural creativity' and 'experiential evaluation' to resolve the problem and, importantly, to learn about the problem, the resolution and themselves. (Revans 1982, p.347).

This symbiosis of manager and problem is concurrently experienced with a connected approach, which uses both quantitative approaches and qualitative approaches. Vick (1999) describes this as a philosophical confluence whereby the rational approach of the scientific paradigm is merged and used with the hermeneutic approach of dialogue and experience to develop learning and change. (p.103).

It is in this critical realism blend of ontological approaches that the question assumes its full power, ensuring an integration of the known and the unknown to broaden knowledge and understanding from a holistic and experientially-interpretive perspective, generating as it does so, both formative and summative knowledge. Expanding this into a multi-perspective questioning process delivers exponential benefits for the learner; which cannot, I believe, be replicated by any other methodology or process.

Questions lead, inexorably, to dialogue and it is through this dialectic process that ideas are formed, alliances and commitments developed, and futures envisioned. As Isaacs (1993) states, "Dialogue ... is a discipline of collective learning and inquiry. It can serve as a cornerstone for organisational learning by providing an environment in which people can reflect together and transform the ground out of which their thinking and acting emerges" (p. 576). Through effective questioning and dialogue the combined and collective wisdom and experience of the whole
organisation can be harnessed and focussed on delivering powerful and purposeful change.

7. Compliance is not sufficient

That compliance is insufficient was made evident many times during the research - particularly in the early stages of the X Limited case study (Chapter 10) where it was evident that the management culture was focussed exclusively on securing compliance amongst the workforce. The whole approach was focussed on managing the organisational achievement of task objectives through efficient use of resources, including people. We saw many examples of surface compliance whereby people did as they were asked to do whilst their work was being observed or otherwise monitored, and then did not continue to work to the stated process when they were not being observed. It struck me that it was akin to watching a car drive along the outside lane of a motorway at 80mph and then slow down to 70mph when passing a Police car, only to speed up again when the Police car was out of sight. The driver obeys the speed limit whilst monitored but not otherwise. If, however, we encounter a driver who intrinsically believes in the value of speed limits then it is more likely that they will obey the limit at all times and not just when observed by the Police - they are not compliant because they have to, they do so because they want to.

It seems to me, therefore, that we should seek to develop in organisations, the desire to want to follow a process, so that people will do so at all times because they believe in the intrinsic value of that process. Instead we see, as in X Limited, a focus on securing compliance. It can be difficult, in my experience for managers to make the transition from securing compliance to securing commitment. I recall
coaching one manager who said that his people were starting to be too relaxed in terms of working hours and that he wanted to 'sort them out'. His intended approach was to say that they needed to work for the full day, to point out why they needed to do so and then, as a final rejoinder, to tell them that if they failed to work for the full day he would 'deal with them through disciplinary action.' When I asked him about the merits of this approach he commented that he was telling them of the reasons so they would understand and therefore compliance would be secured through understanding rather than the fact that he simply told them.

He had no idea of the strength with which the threat of disciplinary action would be perceived by his people, and the fact that this took him right back to the point of coercion, albeit in an initially roundabout and thought-provoking manner. I suggested that instead of telling them the reasons why they need to work for the full day, he might ask them so that they generated the answer themselves. He duly did this with one group who thereafter complied without further comment, whereas the group who had received the threat, needed to be told several more times before their behaviours fell in line with their colleagues. Generating understanding of the issues to secure an informed acceptance of the need to do something was, in this case, much more powerful than generating understanding of the consequences of non-compliance. The threats, albeit with a contextual explanation, created only surface compliance that needed to be reinforced at frequent intervals whereas the engagement of the workforce created a genuine commitment and desire to succeed. We need, through change programmes, to create this desire to engage and deliver success as committed participants as opposed to engendering the need to comply for fear of the sanctions or consequences.
8. The Need for Purposeful Intent

It is, in my opinion, an imperative that the leadership team of an organisation approach the task of change with *purposeful intent*, by which I mean that they are clear in their minds, both individually and collectively, of what they are seeking to achieve and, in broad terms at least, how they will achieve their objective. From my research I have identified that failing to have a clear focus for the change process, results, it seems almost inevitably, in the failure of the management team to be able to operate with purposeful intent – for they cannot be intent on achieving a vision that they have not defined. In this sense, the purposeful intent must be directional as opposed to a declared intent to move away from a given state or set of conditions.

The consequences of not having operating with a purposeful intent were made clear in the X Limited case study (Chapter 10) where a series of well-intentioned reactive responses to prevailing circumstances gave the appearance of moving forwards but, in reality, resulted in a higher degree of confusion as the management team and the members of the organisation were unclear as to what they were ultimately seeking to achieve. Similarly, the Rolls-Royce vignette contained in Chapter 4 concerning the creation of team leaders within their manufacturing structure demonstrates that a lack of directional purposeful intent can result in uncoordinated change and unexpected consequences. The change was conceived and planned in a way that simply sought to 'move away' as opposed to 'moved towards'. My experience and understanding of change is that it is much better to move towards something than to move away. If the overall objective is to move away from our current location then travelling in any direction, at any speed, and for any time duration will suffice for this will carry us away from our current
position. The self-evident flaws in this approach are that the team will probably take divergent paths and so lose contact with each other, and that the journey is inherently directionless, as was evident in this vignette.

The case for purposeful intent is contained within the D^1 – Direct phase of the Six Dimensions of Change approach and is critical in terms of its overriding importance to the change programme. Many times I have seen change interventions or change programmes where the leadership team are either unclear or disunited in their approach or objectives. Almost inevitably the resultant outcome is one of scepticism or disbelief from the workforce who can see only too clearly the divisions in the leadership team. All too frequently individual members of the leadership team seek to curry favour with people within the business by seeking to identify with the views of the people subject to the change – this form of collusion is very unhealthy as it overtly demonstrates the divisions that exist and will frequently result in a lack of focus or drive from the change team. This was clearly evident in the Rolls-Royce to Bentley name change when members of the Board were publicly stating that the change would go ahead but privately stating that they did not believe that it would – of course the private message had much more credence amongst the workforce than the public message.

The leadership team needs, therefore, to operate with a high degree of public unity in their espoused and behaviourally supported intent to achieve a given outcome or destination with the change programme. That is not to say that dissent is ignored – it is vital that all perspectives are heard and understood at the appropriate time and place, but when it comes to leading a business through
change, the leadership team need to speak as one with a directional purpose and a constancy of approach.

9.  *Short term wins (low hanging fruit)*

It is imperative that, in the early stages of a change management programme, the organisation seeks to identify and secure short-term wins. These are often referred to analogously as 'low-hanging fruit' in that they are frequently easy to spot and relatively easy to gather. The value of doing so within a change programme is to ensure that the employees see evidence of the change being successful on an ongoing basis – rather than waiting for the end of the programme for the results or benefits to be announced. The effective change manager will identify these short-term wins at the outset of the programme and schedule them over the early stages of implementation so that there is a regular supply of gains or benefits from the programme. This will help to prevent a regression to prior behaviours or business processes as people seek to remain within their comfort zone.

These short-term gains should, I believe, be geared towards delivery of the overall change programme and thus be seen to be clear evidence of progress towards the objectives declared at the outset. Additionally I believe that the gains at short, medium, and long term levels should be described and measured in terms which are meaningful to the whole population not just the senior team. In this way the needs of all sections within the workplace are addressed through beneficial deliverables which are meaningful within their sphere of interest. Not many shop floor workers would be interested and motivated, for example, in a change programme that delivers an increase in market penetration of x%, whereas they
would be interested if this can be explained in terms of the impact on themselves, for example in increased orders or the ability to learn new skills.

10. **Set Dynamics need to be explored and understood**

I understood the power of a question and its relationship to the person asking it from a Set meeting when John questioned the depth of our dialogue. We had been together as a Set for a little time – this was the second or perhaps third Set for each of us and I was quite surprised at how quickly we seemed to get to a clear focus on what we were seeking to achieve. It is axiomatic that groups go through a fairly common process when forming for a given purpose. Tuckman (1965) refers to this as the ‘forming – storming – norming – performing’ process, yet I did not recall us engaging at the storming level within this Set – we simply seemed to relax and focus on the task at hand and seemed to be quite accepting of challenges from our colleagues.

At the time I put this down to four factors which seemed evident within this Set, namely,

- We each had a clear and strong personal commitment to being there
- We each had a good understanding and skill set in terms of managing the interpersonal dynamics of the Set
- We each had a clear agenda to learn and access as much support as possible from each other
- We each had prior experience of Learning Sets, which helped us to understand the climate of learning and challenge and develop it fairly quickly.
There were, of course, times when we each behaved in a less than positive way, for example being defensive about our own research, but overall there seemed to be a fairly rapid acceleration of the group formation process to a point where we were all comfortable in challenging ourselves and each other within the Set. Or so we thought, or assumed, for we did not talk about the Set dynamics at any level of detail until John raised a particularly important point.

At one Set meeting John stated, "We need to get to a deeper level of discussion in order to get the best out of the Set and help us develop our thinking". This statement was not a statement of a problem or indeed a question as to our views, but was instead a statement of intent. We each agreed with John and, through the ensuing debate, thought it would be useful to turn the statement into a question. Thus it became "We are not discussing our research in a sufficiently challenging manner as a Set and therefore we are not maximising the learning for each of us. What is preventing us from behaving like this and how can we move forward to become more effective as a Set?"

When we had re-framed John's statement as a question it became apparent that whilst we had thought we were at the performing stage – this was patently not the case. We revisited Set meetings and realised that our questioning had been very polite and non-confrontational; when we answered a question with less than a full response, it was unusual for anyone to challenge this and push our thinking further forward. This approach served the purpose of establishing relationships and forming as a group, but we had been deluded by the comfortableness of the Set into thinking that we were performing. The question challenged the basis for this belief and helped us to recognise that we were, in point of fact, still at the forming phase. The statement and ensuing question were very catalytic in terms of
helping us to move to a deeper level of understanding as a Set. We discussed how the levels of challenge needed to be increased and that we each needed to take a higher degree of personal responsibility to ensure that the learning processes for ourselves and for the Set were being attended to for each person within the Set. The polite, friendly challenge of the previous meetings were pleasant but not helpful in terms of developing our thinking, and we realised that we had not been operating as full participant members of the Set – the thrust of our approach, we concluded, had to be the development of ideas and thinking not the development of friendships and relationships.

Interestingly over the ensuing Set meetings we became more critical of our own and each other’s work, more challenging, and more willing to engage fully in debates at deeper and more philosophical levels. We had extended the use of Q in our learning (Revans, 1982) and realised that formulating and asking a question develops the thinking of the questioner; responding to a question develops the thinking of the colleague, and debating it develops the learning of the group. As an interesting by-product of this change through increased questioning, we each reflected at a subsequent session that we thought that our work had a greater intrinsic value and that it was being valued more highly by our Set colleagues than in the days of polite conversation. Thus questioning has a concomitant impact upon how we valued our work and how we perceived that others valued our work.

In order to reach this position it was important that we took the time to discuss the Set dynamics and the processes of formation that we had been engaged in. Typically we initially overlooked this, concentrating as we were on our research, yet it was the processual development of the Set that provided the impetus and energy for real learning far more than the development of our knowledge of the
content of each others’ research. Through this ongoing processual dialogue we recognised and acknowledged that there are quite specific skills that need to be developed and exhibited by Set members (Pedler, 1996; O’Hara, Bourner and Webber, 2004) if the Set is to function effectively and that we needed to focus on these as well as on the task elements of our work in our Set meetings.

11. Revisiting the Lessons from the Vignettes

The four change vignettes described in Chapter 4 predated my PhD research and I thought it would be interesting at this stage to revisit them to explore the degree to which they are still valid given the learning and development that I have undertaken since they were first experienced. Interestingly I am still of the opinion that the lessons learned from the vignettes are valid and find them to be entirely consistent with the learning from the later Chapters of this thesis, although I would, doubtless approach the situations differently having recognised the importance of full empathic engagement in the change process.

Through these earlier experiences I formulated the views that change needed to be integrated and that it needed to involve employees at an appropriate level of interaction and engagement. My learning through this research has to an extent consolidated this position and strengthened the depth of understanding. For example, I am now more keenly aware of the need for multifunctional and multi-processual integration through a change programme than I was at National Grid when my thinking was more linear and my approach was more systematically and logically structured,
Perhaps the most significant learning point has been the identification of my propensity to use self-referential logic within my early change practice, to test logic with logic and find that it was logical. I adopted what Argyris (2003) calls a ‘defensive-reasoning mindset’ for this was the means through which I could avoid being personally involved or engaged in the change programmes or interventions. I learnt, through my experiences over the period of this research, of the need for full engagement as a change agent and this has enabled me to manage change far more effectively than was previously the case, as had been demonstrated through the development of the Six Dimensions Approach as a generative and facilitative methodology, as opposed to the prior Five Dimensions model which was more didactic in its orientation.

It is clear that we all work on the basis of assumptions and presumptions about the world and that we frequently seem to accept these as ‘givens’ without challenge. This was evident in my early research when I operated from a ‘role position’ as opposed to a ‘person position’ in my management practice. Challenging these personal orthodoxies was a painful but enlightening process brought about through discussions in the Set meetings, and through personal reflections. That we operate with mental models or approaches that guide our thoughts and actions is clear, and that these are sometime assumptive and presumptive is also clear.

Argyris (2003) asserts that: “It is not possible for human beings to engage de novo the full complexity of the environment in which they exist. Life would pass them by. Human beings deal with the challenge by constructing theories of action that they can use to act in concrete situations. Such theories of action are master designs that specify the actions and their causal sequencing required in order to
act effectively, and they are normative because effectiveness is a concept of personal or societal choice" (p.8).

It has been important to recognise this fact, and to understand the implications of such an approach, for it can both restrict and illuminate our learning. The critical success factor is a preparedness to challenge and be challenged on our thoughts, beliefs, perceptions and practice - and to use these challenges to deepen our knowledge and understanding of our environment and our practice. Thus, the continuous, iterative process flow of action learning between the person and the context and vice versa, to paraphrase Pedler (1983) has been a powerful and insightful means of learning.

This awareness and openness to change, together with the concomitant preparedness to fully immerse myself and empathically engage in the process has resulted in changes to my methodological modes of action and enquiry with the resultant impact that I can now be more open to different meanings and different levels of understanding. I now find myself still relying on logic but not the fixed-point perspective that I used to adopt, rather an interpretive and contextually specific rational understanding of the situation combined with an empathic understanding of the persons involved. This was lacking from my engagement in the four vignettes for it emerged and developed through my PhD research.

Therefore, although I would still concur with the output lessons from the vignettes, I would do so from a different philosophical perspective, and with a deeper level of understanding about the nature of change and the nature of my involvement in the change process.
As I now reflect upon the RRMC experiences I can see that it was a tremendously informative learning experience. It was the first time that I was involved as a change leader at that scale and it was also the first time that I had combined both occupational and academic experiences into my work to inform my approaches. Having the support of the Action Learning Set was critically important in that they frequently challenged my views and supported me in making the transition from expert to learner. Left to my own devices I think that I would have become more fixed in my views and I certainly would not have continued to question my approaches after the creation of the Five Dimensions Change model. It was hard enough to challenge the validity of my methodology from within the context of a Learning Set and a PhD research programme: it would have been virtually impossible without these support networks.

It is evident to me that the pull of cleverness, of knowing the answer, was very strong and, as documented in the Chapter 8, I came to a pre-emptive conclusion about change at that stage of my learning. Having the work published was undoubtedly a contributing factor but, in truth, I need to acknowledge that the real issue was myself – I liked to be the expert with the answer, and it appealed to my ego to have developed a model of change. These two characteristics, which I think are connected, may well be quite natural or indeed quite common, but nevertheless it is important to reflect on how they influenced my behaviours at the time, and as importantly, how they continue to influence my behaviours – for explicit acknowledgement of a behavioural or attitudinal characteristic does not make changing it any easier. It does, however, mean that I can recognise the signs and be wary when in similar circumstances.
It is clear to me that creating the model meant that I could position myself as 'expert' and, quite frankly, I enjoyed this immensely. As I reflect upon my attendance at Set meetings at that time I can recall being quite smug and really not paying too much attention to the learning process, for I knew the answer. I developed a form of words to give the appearance that I was continuing to work but in reality I had stopped. Interestingly, it was the Action Learning Set that prompted me, through continual challenges, to review and subsequently modify my approach. My colleagues refused to accept my comments at face value and wanted evidence that I had continued to develop my thinking; they sought my participation in Set meetings at the level that I had previously engaged; and they wanted me to continue to challenge them on their work and learning. My preemptive conclusion, and retreat into 'cleverness' precluded me from doing any of these at a reasonable or indeed acceptable level of practice and so I let me colleagues down as well as myself.

That they persevered is testament to their commitment to the Action Learning Set process; and that they achieved their outcome is testament to their aptitude in finding the right levers and the right questions, for left to myself, I think I would have remained in that position for quite some time.

Without doubt, the critical leverage for my changing position on my research was the discussions about Personal Journey Vehicle – I realised, as described earlier, that I had been engaging in my work and in my research much more as a 'role' then as myself. I had not fully immersed myself in my work and this as evident from the discussions in the Set. It became clear that I relied overly on the role title of Director of Change Management and focussed on this instead of my skills and abilities. This was doubtless influenced by my previous conditioning and my
respect for organisational hierarchies, yet it was constraining in two ways. Firstly it resulted in me adopting a distanced position from my colleagues in the business as I sought to behave and operate in the way that I thought a Director ought to operate instead of operating as myself within that role; and secondly it mean that I struggled for an identity after I left the business to set up my own consultancy. Each of these difficulties is, I think, clearly evident through this thesis.

Through time I have come to recognise that it is my skills, abilities and experience that enable me to operate effectively not the roles that I have fulfilled in the past, or indeed occupy at the present time. This has been a key learning for me, and one that has freed me to operate effectively within my consultancy practice. I no longer talk about the jobs I used to do when talking with new or existing clients, rather I talk about the value that I can add to their enterprise. This has had a very positive impact in terms of client relationships. I think that moving away from a reliance on the role or organisational positioning has been a direct result of my engagement in this research and is one of the most significant personal development aspects that I have experienced. It has been accompanied by a concomitant increase in self-confidence, which was never there in my Rolls-Royce and Bentley days, although the vast majority of people that I encountered and worked with would probably think otherwise. I had fairly adeptly created a confident persona that I adopted at work but this was based on role identity not personal identity. Now my confidence is centred on an open acknowledgement of my strengths and weaknesses as a person rather than as a role incumbent.

I would, I believe, fulfil the role at Bentley quite differently now than I did then, but the same can be said of much of my work roles – the focus is not to regret that I could have been better, but to focus on how to use this new confidence and
knowledge to continue to further my learning and career focus, and to create value within my change practice.

Interestingly, as I re-read the reflections from the case study I note that I commented about making the transition from observer-researcher to participant-researcher and that this was a significant step forwards in my development. My reflections and writing at the time identified this as a 'step taken' as opposed to a 'journey started'. My later experiences, in particular those discussed in Chapter 9, really illustrate the fact that I had not really, at the time of leaving Rolls-Royce, made this transition - I had acknowledged the need to make it and explored to a certain degree the process of making it but not truly done so. It has been, and to a lesser extent continues to be, a difficult approach to synthesise into my practice - it required the explicit acknowledgement of the importance of me as a person as opposed to the importance of the job role that I was fulfilling. This is, I think, a classic illustration of the need to acknowledge change and development as a processual journey and to continue to reflect and challenge my own practice, and encourage others to do likewise, so that my emergent understanding of myself and my practice, evolves continually. In this way I believe that it is possible to mitigate the risks of pre-emptive conclusivity.

Constantly questioning and challenging practice, knowledge and assumptions, then, is the most effective way of retaining an open mind to other realities and perspectives - together with an explicit acknowledgement that, at any time, we can only know the answers to the questions that we have asked and that even then, our knowledge of our perceived reality will itself be filtered through our experiences and emotions to provide not a general or universal view of the world, but rather an individual and contextually specific view of the world.
This can, however, provide us with a deep insight of the situation that is empathic and holistic and through which we can develop useful and sustainable change strategies.

13. The Three Perspectives

Adopting the three perspectives of researcher, change agent and learner has undoubtedly helped significantly in terms of generating a broader, richer and more in depth understanding of the case studies and of the nature and process of organisational change. It has to be the case however, that even with these three vantage points, the resultant understanding of the experiences is still incomplete.

Jackson (2003) comments on the four aphorisms developed by Churchman (1968, 1971) and identifies through his narrative explanations that the systems view of the world is about seeing through the eyes of as many people as possible, yet still realising that all such views are, ipso facto, restricted. It is most certainly the case here that the three vantage points have generated a view that too is incomplete.

The view is, however, richer for having adopted the three perspectives for this has enabled me to generate a deeper understanding than would otherwise have been possible. Morgan (1986) comments “People who learn to read situations from different ‘theoretical’ points of view have an advantage over those committed to a fixed position. For they are better able to recognise the limitations of a given perspective. They can see how situations and problems can be framed and reframed in different ways, allowing new solutions to emerge.” [p.337]
Even though I adopted only three different perspectives it was clear to me that doing so provided a greater level of understanding about change management than would ordinarily have been the case.

The first of these roles was that of change agent, which was first coined by Lippitt, Watson and Westley (1958) when they stated that, "...the planned change that originates in a decision to make a deliberate effort to improve the system and to obtain the help of an outside agent in making this improvement. The outside agent is a change agent" (p.10). Later writers refer to change agents as predominately external consultants or specialists supporting change within an organisation (Hall & Williams 1973, Argyris, 1970) with a specialism in behavioural sciences, which they bring to bear within their practice. Whilst there is an acknowledgement that any party involved in change has a change agency role (Zaltman and Duncan 1977, Beckhard, 1969) the generally accepted premise is that a change agent is someone who specifically fulfils the purpose of facilitating organisational change. Indeed, Havelock and Havelock (1973) identify four critical functions performed by change agents as catalysts, solution givers, process helpers, and resource linkers, thus identifying the role of change agent as being particularly focused on supporting organisational change through the application of specific skills.

Much of the literature about change agency refers to the Lewin model (1951) of change and, in doing so, makes either express or implied acknowledgement of a positivistic approach (Chin and Benne 1969, Ottaway 1983), with very limited reference to the nature of process consultancy with the management of change. Later works on change (Obeng and Crainer 1994) refer to the need for a more emergent approach to change and refer to the more dynamic and complex elements of organisational change – elements which cannot be adequately
addressed through the Lewin model, as discussed elsewhere in this thesis. It is this complexity which emerged through my research and which prompted me to move away from the seemingly conventional change process developed by Lewin (1951) to map a new change architecture which deals with integration across all levels of the business. One could argue that this still follows the Lewin approach but at a far greater level of detail, although I would additionally contend that the Sixth Dimension (Chapter 9) and the emergent use of a fundamentally different methodology from the positivistic approaches that I began with, have moved my approach to change management away from Lewin et al.

Understanding this from the perspective of change agent has been particularly illuminating because of the additional level of integration that I identified through my research, namely the need to engage as a change agent in terms of being part of the process, as opposed to being a distanced and objective external consultant supporting others through the change programme or process, whilst remaining aloof and untouched by the experience. Thus the Revans quote (Botham 2002) about the necessity of entering into action learning yourself is equally pertinent to the role of change agent. As a change agent I have worked at a distance from the business and latterly as an integral element of the business, there as myself as opposed to being there in a particular role with the need to conform to the expectations of that role identity. The latter was far more effective as evidenced in the X Limited case study (Chapter 10).

I have, through this perspective, learnt a great deal about change agency, and the nature of change management, but also I have learnt a great deal about myself and the need to operate fully within a change situation, seeking to understand the contextual scenario within which I operate, and using my knowledge and
experience to support others in generating and developing their understanding of
the change so that they can more effectively manage the process.

Change agency then is much more than following a prescribed set of processes,
or indeed of adopting a defined set of behaviours - although each are undoubtedly
useful.

The second perspective of researcher has also been useful in that it has taught
me a great deal about the difference between traditional scientific research where
the subject is distant and removed from the researcher, to Action Learning
research where the subject and the researcher are intertwined and integrated. In
the early stages of this research I adopted an external position but this was more
to do with my over reliance on my role and lack of confidence in my own abilities,
than a deliberate adoption of a particular research position. I have learnt the
importance of engagement in my work and in my research and seen that when I
do this more fully, the results are greatly enhanced. This is undoubtedly because
my understanding of the change programme, the change context and the change
subjects is greater through an empathic and shared view of the world (as far as
such a thing is possible). Thus the learning from this perspective has been two-
fold – it has been concerned with the nature of integrative change in organisations
and concerned with my relationship with my research. Each of these has been the
source of significant learning – the former enables me to develop my practice and
contribute to learning – the latter does the same but in a more sustainable and
useful way. It enables me to continue to develop and grow as a person, as a
researcher and as a change agent.
The third perspective of learner has been the most illuminating as I have developed a close and intimate relationship with my research and change practice and, through this, learnt more about myself as a person. This has been catalogued through the thesis, most notably in Chapters 8 and 9, and continues to be a great source of insight for me.

It is clear as I review the three perspectives that I have used them in an interconnected way as opposed to three discrete roles. The relationship is definitely best illustrated with a Venn diagram (see Figure 12, Chapter 10) than the original diagram that separated out each of the roles. The connectedness is readily identifiable when I consider the nature of my research and the nature of my focus on learning. Action research has been described as 'systematic self-reflective scientific enquiry by practitioners to improve practice' (McKernan 1996, p.5). This means that the self is central to the research, as was the case in the development of my change agency, and that the methods used to further the research need to be systematic, and scientific. I consider that the generation of data and information throughout this research programme, together with the structured and focussed Action Learning Set meetings were indeed systematic in that they occurred with a rigour and discipline, and that my work was completed according to the structural processes espoused within an Action Learning programme. This has been detailed previously in the thesis, and it is clear that my research has been conducted with rigour and discipline which has generated a deep insight and understanding of my practice and, paradoxically, enabled me to move away from 'scientific logic' to a more dialectic and interpretive position from which to draw understanding from the research. This has, by necessity, entailed my full and active participation in a central, self-reflective position.
Furthermore, Cassell and Johnson (2006) argue that the action research process is an iterative processual methodology that focuses on developing an interpretive understanding of members' 'theories in use' as opposed to espoused theories (Argyris and Schon 1989). Given this approach, the central element of my change agency, my research, and my learning has been myself and it is therefore, fitting that the Venn diagram has myself at the centre even though I would have resisted this at the start of my research. That I now position myself at the centre is testament to the development of my practice through this thesis.

Notwithstanding the limitation of adopting just three interconnected perspectives, it is clear to me that I have gained a great deal of insight by adopting these three vantage points – as a change agent I have been able to focus on the nature of the change and the efficacy of the interventions to support the change, as a researcher I have been able to focus on the linkages between my work and others, and to learn about the change process, and as a learner I have been able to focus on myself and my own development.

14. **Integrative Organisational Change**

Through this research I have developed my thinking and understanding about organisational change and about myself and although I have, for much of the research held the view that change needs to be integrative I have revised and adapted my view of this through the research and the writing phases. In the creation and utilisation of the original Five Dimensions model of change I suggested that integrative change means locking together the various elements of a business, from strategic through to operational and procedural, to ensure that all elements are understood and managed cohesively.
In asserting this position I was working from a positivistic and distanced perspective and subsequently learned that integrative change means far more – it means locking together the factors described above, but also integrating the human dimension of change – the culture, experiences, expectations, histories and futures of the participants, and also integrating myself as the change agent – the person who facilitates the change process.

The learning on the issue of integration has been important – in order to manage change effectively we would be advised to understand the prevailing context and circumstances of the business as fully as possible. This diagnostic phase should explore the strategic and functional elements built into the Six Dimensions approach but additionally explore the socio-cultural aspects of change from as many perspectives as possible. This can be a difficult challenge but I believe that failure to understand these areas within the business could be potentially catastrophic in the implementation and engagement phases.

The questions raised by the initial Five Dimensions model are useful as a start point to generate information about the business but additional questions need to be asked as well, focussing on the socio-cultural experiences, history and expectations of the people within the business. Generating a more complete level of understanding about these issues will enable a full and comprehensive feasibility assessment to be undertaken. Thus questions need to be structured around the sixth dimension as described in Chapter 9 so that this information can also be included.

Even though we should perhaps not assume that there is an end-point to any organisational change process (Obeng and Crainer 1994) I would still advocate
establishing a direction or end point so that those engaged in the change have something to work towards, something to help motivate them away from the prevailing status quo.

The structured and integrative change management process would include the following phases:

**Phase 1  Vision / Goal Setting**
Establishing the overall direction of the business using, as an initial template, the $D^1$ questions from the Six Dimensions approach, and ensuring that the resultant vision is shared and not just owned by the senior team or the change leader.

**Phase 2  Diagnostic Phase**
Understanding the prevailing circumstances from strategic, functional, operational, procedural, and people dimensions, again using the 6D questions as an initial template. This will ensure that we have a comprehensive understanding of the prevailing situation.

**Phase 3  Change Plan Definition**
Creation of the first draft change plan which must take full cognisance of, and integrate as far as possible, the various elements explored in the diagnostic phase.

**Phase 4  Impact Assessment Phase**
Structured assessment of the impact of the change plan against the factors evaluated in the diagnostic phase, and any others that
may have emerged to ensure that all interconnections are understood and the causal influences of changes to any part of the process are visible in terms of their impact on any other part of the process or organisation. Any revisions to the change plan based on this impact assessment are made at this stage.

**Phase 5 Implementation Phase**

Implementation of the change plan, with full reference to the need for integration and alignment at behavioural, strategic and operational levels. The implementation is monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that quick wins are identified and communicated at an appropriate level of detail, and that the progress towards attainment of the goals is measured and purposefully achieved with a constancy of purpose.

This reflects the recognised need for a structured approach to managing change (Bullock & Batten, 1985, Kotter, 1996; Ulrich 1998), whilst the use of the Six Dimensions approach as a facilitative methodology, recognises that change is a flexible and emergent process. As Meyerson (2001) writes, “There is no one right way to effect change” (p.100), all we can do is to try to understand the environment as much as possible so that our change programmes are as integrated and connected as possible with as many supporters positively engaged as possible.

The integration of socio-cultural experiences, perceptions, expectations, and practices will help to secure engagement of the workforce in a very real sense so that they are active participants in the change process. To achieve this I would
recommend that a number of projects are devised within the overall change management architecture which can be used to focus on the various areas of the business in a way which is congruent with the overall plan and which are managed and implemented by people from various levels and sections from within the business. In this way the employee stakeholders can take a very real and active part in the change process.

Integrative organisational change, therefore, is an approach which explores, understands, and manages the interconnectedness of all elements of a business, from strategic to operational, from procedural to processual, and from task to people, and, in doing so engages all stakeholders in the co-joined management of the change agenda for the good of the business. It is an emergent process in that we will learn about the change as we undertake the change, but it has some probabilistic elements that we can use to format a structured, yet flexible change programme. At the heart of the approach is the fundamental process of asking questions and generating increasing levels of knowledge and understanding, which in turn inform the latter stages of the change programme.

Furthermore, my learning through this research has been that the integration of the change agent as a whole person, as opposed to a role identity with defined accountabilities, enables the change agent to fully engage with the programme and to develop a higher level of empathic understanding which can only serve to promote a greater efficacy through the development and implementation of the change programme. Only by doing this can the change agent truly establish themselves as the person who has the right to question, challenge and support others through the process. As Revans puts it, “to be obliged ... to answer the
question, ‘And who do you think you are?’ in return for the right to put it to others (1983, p.55).

This integrative engagement will, I believe, result in a higher level of attitudinal commitment, in “the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and their involvement in, the organisation” (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982). This is likely to evidence itself in what Meyer and Allen (1997) identify as the two areas of commitment behaviour, namely in performance of their required duties (in-role performance), willingness to fulfil additional tasks and take on additional responsibilities (extra-role performance or organisational citizenship). As a consequence of this increased alignment and engagement, therefore, businesses can access not just the structural capital and the human capital of the business but also what Seemann et al (1999) refer to as the social capital, when individuals and groups within the business work collaboratively in sustainable networked relationships for the good of the enterprise. For that is the true essence of effective, integrative organisational change.
Chapter Twelve

Moving Forwards

My PhD research has been the most significant learning episode in my life and I am keen to ensure that I use it as a foundation or basis to move forwards, as opposed to seeing this as a point of arrival. Achieving a PhD is critically important to me, but I am fully of the opinion that the process of learning is as important as the outcome. How then do I move forwards from what has undoubtedly been a life-changing experience - an experience that has fundamentally challenged my thinking and operating assumptions? Perhaps the first step is to continue to challenge my thinking and explore the extent to which my proposed approach to change can itself be subject to spiralling development.

Central to this thesis has been the notion of change as an inevitable and continuous process, one that we package into defined timelines or contextual frameworks to enable us to work with something that has a defined beginning, middle and end. Of course, this division is arbitrary for the change certainly begins before our timeline starts, and certainly carries on long after we have drawn a close over the proceedings. So it is with my PhD research. Some of the learning carried through this thesis was the result of study and experience that predated my joining the University, and much more development will continue to take place in the future and so cannot be recorded in this thesis. This need for a time-constrained, or a time-defined, research process is important for the thesis to be written, but of equal importance has to be the explicit acknowledgement that my
learning and development has to continue after the thesis is completed and accepted.

When I think through and try to evaluate the effectiveness of the learning process that I have engaged in through this thesis I can identify particular modes of challenge and learning, such as action research, reflection, engagement in Action Learning sets, reading, and, of course, interpreting and making sense of my experiences. These approaches or learning processes occurred in a number of different ways and some, at various times, took precedence over others for a short while. At times they seemed to be connected and integrated, perhaps serendipitously, perhaps planned; and at times they seemed to be disconnected and discontinuous. Prior to commencing and concluding this research I know that I would have sought, at this summative stage, to identify the causal factors of the learning, the relative value of the various approaches, and the lines of logic that held the structure and process together. Such a deterministic and logical analysis seems now to be as pointless as it would be impossible. It cannot be the case that the learning can be deconstructed into the knowledge and understanding gained through the various approaches, for the process of learning was never clear cut, and the individual elements needed to interact with each other to provide a holistic synergy that could not, I believe, have been planned or structured in advance.

Perhaps the most fundamental reason why I cannot, and indeed would not, now seek to deconstruct the learning to its component elements is that the central locus for the learning has been myself, and no other person could possibly tackle the same journey or indeed share the same experiences, let alone come out with the same conclusions. In essence I have engaged with my learning in a way that I would not have thought possible prior to this research, and in a way which has
continually challenged me throughout. I have engaged not as an impartial and objective researcher, but as a participant of change – I have engaged fully in the process. The thesis has been much more than an exploration of change – it has been an exploration of me as a change practitioner, as a researcher, as a learner (to use the three perspectives) and, most critically, as a person.

Many things have happened to me through the years of research, some planned and some unplanned; some in which I was the leader, and some a follower; some in which I was able to use my prior knowledge and experience, and some where I was totally at a loss as to how to proceed; some resulting in profound sadness and some in inexplicable joy. Each of these experiences have shaped me and been central to my learning. It is my experiences that have resulted in this thesis – not the coordinated utilisation of a range of learning approaches. The learning is as central to me, as I am central to it – and this is perhaps the most fundamental level of integration that I have learned through this work: in order to maximise learning it is essential to fully and holistically engage with the learning process in an open, honest and reflective manner.

That is not to say that the learning from this work is entirely personal and of no value to others – on the contrary, I firmly believe that the progression I have made is of value to others as they make their own, unique journeys through the learning and development process and develop their ideas and understanding about organisational change practice. I sought, at the outset, to contribute to the body of knowledge and I believe that I have achieved this objective albeit in a way that I would not have forecast.
I commented in Chapter 8 that one of the Set colleagues had seen my initials at the centre of a diagram about my research and been enthused about the initials standing for Personal Journey Vehicle. At the time I thought that I was central to my work, but on reflection, this was not the case hence I had used my initials – a somewhat detached way of referring to myself. I understand now that Ray was absolutely right in his comments and indeed in his enthusiasm – it has been a personal journey and that enables the learning to be profound at a personal level, and concurrently valuable at a sharing level. I recall smiling at what I perceived to be the humour of Ray’s observation – I would have reacted far differently had I had his prescience and wisdom. Instead I would have recognised that I was still distant from my research; that there was a divergence between words and actions; and that I needed to more fully engage with my research. As it was, that lesson took a little longer to learn and required me to challenge myself and my operating principles and assumptions on a number of different levels, as explained through this thesis.

As a fully engaged participant in my learning I have come to realise that I have a dynamic and integrative relationship with my experiences and my learning, and that I hold a position of centrality to my processual, and sometimes emergent, development. Integrating and synthesising my learning into my practice has enabled me to increase the rate and depth of my learning and to more purposefully and effectively manage the ongoing process. Perhaps the most significant focus of integration, which genuinely required me to work and learn as a whole person, has been the blend of emotional and rational thinking. I can identify times where I have used various modes of learning, such as reflection, action learning, questioning, and critical analysis but have done so as an observer not a participant. Similarly I can recall times when I have fully engaged in an experience,
at an emotional level, but not sought to fully challenge and reflect upon the experience to extract and understand as much learning as possible. The most fruitful times have been when I have done both. Therefore, of fundamental importance to the learning process, is the need to engage fully in the experience and to know and use the learning approaches to full effect in a purposeful manner.

My understanding at this stage, therefore, is that the various learning methodologies and approaches have enabled me to more fully understand the development process that I have engaged in – they have provided the framework through which my experiences could be explored, questioned, challenged, interpreted, compared, contrasted, and, ultimately, learned from.

In the early chapters of this thesis I commented on the realisation that to view my work from different perspectives would be useful and, indeed it has proved to be an invaluable methodology. Adopting various perspectives, such as researcher, change agent and learner, helps to refine the process of reflection and to take the learner out of their preferred perspective (or zone of enquiry) so that they can begin to understand the situation or experience more fully. This is similar to the way that NLP practitioners use the first, second and third positions to understand an issue (O'Connor & Seymour, 1990, O'Connor and McDermott 1996). In that case they recommend trying to perceive the issue from your own perspective, the perspective of the other person and the perspective of an independent observer. This triangulation process helps with interpersonal relationships and I think the triadic framework that I used within this research achieves the same effect within a research context. On a personal note, it also has helped me to avoid my deterministic roots and, what I have occasionally referred to as the 'pull of the scientific paradigm'. I have thoroughly enjoyed the process of moving to a more
interpretive mode of enquiry and of recognising that ‘the methodologies that support the program of objectivist science no longer constitute the only means for doing credible research’ (Lindlof 1995).

It has been invaluable to look at the same information or experience from different perspectives and to see how the change of vantage point sometimes validates a prior held view and sometimes provides contradictory or challenging information – thus I can as an individual proactively engage in critical reflection of my own work. This is an invaluable process which can only lead to higher levels of intellectual rigour and experiential understanding than would have been the case had I continued to adopt my prior behaviour of using a singular vantage point – that of the distanced and objective observer.

Being able to adopt the various perspectives very often requires the involvement of another person or preferably, as we are in a learning situation, an Action Learning Set. The support and challenge of the Set has been truly invaluable throughout this research and indeed the experience and the learning would have been much diminished by their absence. The Set processes were conceptually straightforward but experientially complex and provided very real opportunities to explore, challenge and learn from my experiences, from my reading, from my reflection, and of course, importantly, from others’ experiences, reading and reflection.

My experiences are illustrative of the need to explore and question one’s own approach on an ongoing basis; of the need to continually challenge behaviours, opinions and attitudes in the light of new experience and new knowledge; and thereby of the need to be fully open to change. Being fully open to change does not
mean freely learning about new initiatives or changes from an intellectual perspective, it means being fully open, as a person to change, and to its concomitant consequences. Learning this is worth the research of a PhD, for this will enable me to continue to grow and develop through time – it provides the foundation upon which I can build in any direction I choose. Action Learning has been absolutely central, and pivotal to this learning for me. I learned, through the Action Learning process, to respond openly, to question myself and to allow others the freedom to do likewise. I began to value and appreciate doing what I wanted to do as opposed to what I felt I should do. This learning has made me stronger as a person, more confident about myself, and more prepared to challenge myself and others to seek a deeper and more reasoned understanding of experience.

Developing the Six Dimensions Approach was, I believe, central to the overall purpose of this thesis, for it is this change management methodology that provides the organisational context for my work. Additionally, through the developmental process that I personally went through in identifying what I increasingly knew from an intuitive perspective to be the 'missing element'; it provided the context for much of my personal learning.

Pedler (1983) argues that action learning is fundamentally concerned with "changing the external world and self development" (p.67) and indeed quotes on the same page Revans rather sternly criticising an Action Learning student for not recognising that she had to do both. The Six Dimensions Approach has enabled me to meet this requirement – I have developed a model that can support organisational change in the external world, and focussed on my self-development as a change agent.
Revans (1971) confirms that he is searching for a 'general theory of human action, for a science of praxeology' (p.58), which Ulrich (1998) defines as "the science (or general methodology) of effective and efficient action" (p.93). Such a science must, according to Ulrich, include a focus on science and people, or according to Pedler (1983) on both the scientist/operational researcher and the discovery and clarification of the person and their values (p.66). Within Chapter 9 I wrote about the period of my research when I recognised the importance of this holistic perspective and in doing so moved my research on to a different level. Without such a recognition, which for me needed to learned through experience rather than reading so that it was truly a participatory process, then I think the inevitable consequence is to focus on one or the other. This would, I believe, diminish the learning process for truly effective Action Learning requires us to focus on both concurrently.

This point is made eloquently by Pedler (p.67) when he comments that "The entity which is Action Learning is a flow of consciousness, of action and learning, between the inner [person] and outer [organisational problem] and vice versa in a continuous, iterative process." My research would, undoubtedly, have been limited had I not made this realisation and generated a deeper understanding of the need to engage fully in the process, and to use this full and empathic engagement to address organisational problems through the application of the Six Dimensions Approach.

I have, through this research, moved my position on change quite significantly - from a process that could be observed and managed objectively, to a process that requires our full and active participation at emotional and logical levels. I commenced with some principles of change that were derived through prior
experience, and used these to support development of a change strategy within Rolls-Royce and Bentley Motors. This led me to the development of a change model which I subsequently tested in hsbp and found that whilst the content was sound the methodology required refinement to allow parallel working in the various dimensions. The real breakthrough in the research came not in the application of the model, however, but in the realisation that there was something missing from the model. This required significant personal learning at an emotional level and enabled me to see that change management does need to be integrative but that the nature of the integration was not as I had originally envisaged - it is a far broader and more complete integration that can only be gained by fully immersing in, and engaging with, the change experience.

This point was captured very succinctly by Senge et al (2005), when they wrote, "An empowering awareness of the whole requires a fundamental shift in the relationship between 'seer' and 'seen.' When the subject-object duality that is basic to our habitual awareness begins to dissolve, we shift from looking 'out at the world' from the viewpoint of a detached observer to looking from 'inside' what is being observed. Learning to see begins when we stop projecting our habitual assumptions and start to see reality freshly. It continues when we see our connection to that reality more clearly."

It is clear that habitual assumptions and presumptions influenced much of my understanding about myself, and the way in which I approached and managed change. This research has enabled me to become aware of my habitual and conditioned responses and I am now more open to explore, to accept that I do not know and to seek understanding through questioning and reflection. In this way, my learning can continue unabated.
As I now review my research and thinking about integrative organisational change, it has become apparent that there was a clear evolution in my thinking about the level of integration required, and, importantly, that my thinking and understanding can continue to evolve and develop. Interestingly, and very pertinently for this thesis, the recognition that there was a further level of understanding came about by challenging my thinking and seeking to ensure that I did not, once again, rest at a relatively comfortable, if further advanced, position of pre-emptive conclusivity. Having reached such a point earlier in my thesis, as documented in Chapter 8, I have always been keen to ensure that I would recognise the prevailing circumstances and conditions and thereby be able to identify and use ways of challenging my thinking rather than rest at a seemingly appropriate point.

The challenge this time was initiated through discussions with my thesis Supervisors about the nature of the model which I was using to depict the Six Dimensions Approach, and focussed on the spiralling nature of the questioning and insight-generation process and, importantly, the use of the double helix as a means of diagrammatically representing the need for task and people focus. The sum of my work until this point was contained within Figure 9: The 5D Model with the double helix within (Chapter 9) which was intended to illustrate the fact that the task and people focus was central to the approach that I have developed. Indeed, in an attempt to convey the centrality of the 'double-helix approach' I had further refined this diagram as Figure 10: The Six Dimensions Approach [also in Chapter 9] within which the double helix became the platform of the spiralling development of the integrative change approach.
It has become clear to me that there are two significant flaws in this diagrammatical depiction of the approach: firstly, notwithstanding the fact that the task-people focus is central to the rest of the diagram, it is still, in some way, disconnected and therefore separate from, the other elements of the proposed methodology; and secondly, and more significantly, the double-helix approach is based on the first generation thinking that I discussed in Chapter 9 and has itself not generated to a deeper level of insight or understanding – rather it is simply the two, parallel continuums rotated around each other with the inherent assumption that their form may have changed but their function remains the same.

To address these in order, having a separation between the ‘sixth dimension’ and the other five implies that it is in some way different and that the rest of the approach can be performed, perhaps at a sub-optimal level but performed nevertheless, without this sixth dimension. On further reflection, this seems to be inconsistent with the principle of integration I have proposed. On this basis then, Figures 9 and 10 cannot be seen to be a truly representative depiction of integrative organisational change.

Of more significance is the second issue – the assumption that the double helix itself represents two intertwined continuums with the inherent proposition that there are two defined ends for each continuum, and that there is the previously explained mutual exclusivity at the polar extremities. I am not suggesting that the continuum is not a useful means of depicting the possibility of a range of focus or indeed capability on a task, or on people; rather I am now suggesting that the notion of a continuum is inappropriate within this model – depicting as it does both high focus and low focus when my research and learning has led me to the understanding that effective integrative change management requires a parallel
and consistently high focus on both the task and the people. In this sense the
double helix in this form becomes a redundant metaphor – it has helped to
develop my thinking about the interdependence of task and people but it has to an
extent, constrained my development of the model and indeed, within my current
level of understanding, it contains an inherent inaccuracy.

It is clear to me, therefore, that the diagrammatic representation of the approach
requires re-thinking and comes as a suitable reminder of the seductive nature of
knowledge and knowing. In this case I have, I believe, avoided the trap of arriving,
and remaining, at a point of a premature conclusion and the learning here is to
continually challenge any thinking or indeed feeling, that can be summed up as 'the
answer'. Further challenge through an additional spiralling array of questions, will,
more often than not, lead to a deeper level of insight and understanding. We
know, after all, only the answers to those questions we have asked.

Addressing the inconsistencies of the aforementioned diagrams led me to a very
significant realisation that is not a conclusion in the final, summative sense of the
word, but which is, I believe, a suitable and appropriate resting place in my
continuing research and understanding about organisational change.

J C Masterman once said, “How often it is that what we need is not new
knowledge but a new perspective on that which we already know”. I read this
quote in a foreword to a now forgotten book at the very start of my research
programme and recall writing it down in the belief that at some stage over the
forthcoming years it may prove to be useful. It seems appropriate that now, at the
end, it can serve a purpose.
The double helix is, as discussed above, redundant as a metaphor for the intertwined task and process continuums, yet it remains for me a powerful image which, if I look at anew, from a fresh perspective, is very useful as a means of summarising my learning about change agency. The double helix is without doubt most commonly understood through the research of Watson and Crick (1953) into the nature of DNA.

They depicted the DNA structure as a double helix in the following diagrammatic form, which they describe as "two helical chains each coiled around the same axis" (p.737), and further comment about the nature of the perpendicular bases which hold the two helices together in that these are fundamental to the effective functioning of DNA.

![Fig 11: The DNA Helix depicted by Watson and Crick in 1953](image_url)

Using this diagram as a metaphor for effective change agency, we can propose that one of the helices represents a high task focus, whilst the other a high people focus. These are no longer the continuums of previous models for there is little point in depicting a low task or people focus when this would inhibit as opposed to enhance change management efficacy, rather they now represent a continuing focus on task and people respectively, a high level of focus through time. Importantly they are intertwined and interdependent – one cannot have half a double helix so we can represent the need for competence, capability and focus on both simultaneously, whilst explicitly accepting that they are different. Managing a task to completion is different to managing a person through to excellent performance – they are not exclusive in terms of the behaviours that one would adopt, but they are nevertheless different in terms of the focus and application of those behaviours.

The diagram here goes further, however, and includes two significant points. Firstly the helices are centred around a directional axis, and secondly the two helices are bound together and held positionally relative by the perpendicular bonds. In Watson and Crick’s research these bonds were the “purine and pyrimidine bases” (p.737) but for my purposes I shall refer to these bonds as the change agent[s] – the person or people within the enterprise or endeavour who are effectively managing the change process and ensuring that the high task and people focuses are integrated and maintained throughout. Without the effective bond of the change agent the two helices fall apart or become disproportionate to each other as opposed to being held in a position of relative equality. In this way, the change agency is critical to the growth and structure of the change programme – it provides the cohesion to ensure the integrative approach is maintained through time.
The diagram, therefore, depicts four categories of behaviour necessary for effective integrative change.

1. A clear direction that is central to the purpose of the other categories - without the direction the other elements have limited or no focus. This direction from a change perspective is that described earlier in the thesis as $D^1$ - Direction, whereby the future vision of the enterprise or change activity is clearly and purposefully defined in terms that are meaningful for all participants.

2. A strong focus on defining and delivering the task in hand, which is often defined in contemporary organisations as part of the competence or capability framework which describes the behaviours, skills and attributes that a person needs to demonstrate in order to effectively achieve their objectives, [one of the interdependent helices].

3. A strong focus on leading and motivating the people in the team or organisation, which is, generally, also contained within competence or capability frameworks, [the other interdependent helix].

4. The locking 'bond' of the change agent exemplified by attitudinal and value-based characteristics which support the competencies or behaviours contained within the two helices. Such characteristics would include, empathy, understanding, openness, preparedness to challenge and develop ideas; inclusiveness, and valuing of all people within the business, as well as an overriding focus on developing a generative learning process through which the people within the business, and the business itself, learns and develops its capability on an ongoing basis. The overriding modus operandi of the change agent has, I have learnt, to incorporate these characteristics and be based on
the principles of constancy of purpose and consistency of approach, for these provide relative certainty within a changing world.

The Six Dimensions of Change can, I think, be effectively subsumed into this ‘DNA approach’ in that the strategic and operational stratifications of change management, \( D^2 \), \( D^3 \) and \( D^4 \) can be considered to be levels of focussed action-enquiry within the task and people focus helices: effective organisational change needs to be focussed at strategic, functional and operational delivery levels and these can be measured within each helix. This can be summed up in task focussed questions, such as “To what extent is the task being managed strategically, aligned across the various business functions, and delivered at an operational level in line with the goal deployment process?” and in people focussed questions, for example, “To what extent are the people in the business being led, influenced, and engaged at strategic, functional and individual levels to ensure that their endeavours are focussed and appropriate, and combine synergistically to create added value for the enterprise”.

\( D^5 \) - *Develop* is encompassed within the characteristics or attributes demonstrated by the change agent in terms of applying a learning focus from a holistic perspective, whilst concurrently encompassed within each helix as they twist and spiral onwards through discussion, debate and questioning of practice such that the change continues on an ongoing developmental process. This ‘DNA of Integrative Change’ therefore, provides for continual and indeed continuous change and has the inherent principle that all four elements are required if the change is to be truly effective and truly integrative.
Throughout my research into organisational change I have developed my thinking, developed my practice, and developed my understanding of the change process. I have, at the end, arrived at a point of realisation that sums up my learning and development to date, and provides a springboard for further exploration and research into the nature of effective organisational change. Furthermore, the use of the DNA model as a metaphor to explain the integrative nature of effective change management is exceptionally useful in terms of helping other practitioners to consider and understand the necessary component elements of organisational change.

All four elements are fundamental to the success of the change process yet each of the elements can be identified and understood separately to help facilitate the learning process at individual and at organisational levels, and, in particular, for the change agent who sits at the heart of the process and provides the support, focus and structure to enable the change to be effective. The diagram incorporates the notion of spiralistic enquiry whereby each rotation holds the fundamental shape of the previous rotation yet builds on through insightful questioning to develop the organisational understanding of change yet concurrently provide the shape and platform for the next spiral of questions and learning, which will be focussed on both task and people dimensions through the intertwined helices and which will explore strategic, operational and tactical elements through the incorporation of the Six Dimensions Approach.

Each successive turn of the spiral as it moves upwards in a vertically ontological progression, provides an ascendant development of knowledge developed through generative inquiry into experience and practice. In this way, the learning is a continual and progressive process.
Summary Discussion from the Viva

The three perspectives or vantage points have been exceptionally useful throughout this thesis and it is clear to me that I have been able to make a contribution to knowledge which can be located within each of these three vantage points, although this statement carries the caveat that it needs to be understood from the Venn diagram perspective whereby the three vantage points are not discrete positions but instead are conjoined personal perspectives. Bourner (2000) identifies the three domains within which a PhD needs to make a contribution and comments that these mirror the three missions of higher education. These three domains are knowledge of practice (i.e. research within the domain of professional practice), personal and professional development (reflecting HE’s student development mission) and a direct contribution to professional practice (related to HE’s service mission). I believe that these three missions correlate very closely with my three perspectives – knowledge of practice becomes 'researcher', personal and professional development becomes 'learner', and contribution to professional practice becomes ‘change agent’.

From the perspective of researcher I have contributed a framework and methodological approach to change management that enables the practitioner to understand and engage with the holistic integration discussed in the previous paragraph. In my literature searches I was unable to find a model of integrative change that was as comprehensive as the Five Dimensions approach, nor indeed find mention of the need for personal and organisational integration proposed through the Six Dimensions approach. My thesis, therefore, directly and significantly contributes to knowledge of practice.
From the perspective of learner I have contributed through a deep and personal reflection and understanding of the Action Learning process from the perspective of one engaged in learning sets. I moved from a theoretical understanding of the process gained from my MSc through to an applied and experienced understanding through this PhD and recognised the need for full and personal integration within the process. The thesis contains a narrative of my processual learning journey, which I believe will be very valuable to both action learners engaged on their own journey, and to researchers keen to understand Action learning from the perspective of the learner. Additionally, and as importantly, I have engaged in a tremendously beneficial personal development process that has enabled me to become the person I now am – confident to be myself and to engage in change management from a very personal and immersed perspective – I have made the transition from change architect to change practitioner, and in doing so through my research, have made the transition from student to scholar, and demonstrated a high degree of personal and professional development.

From the perspective of Change Agent I have contributed knowledge about the change process and the need for holistic integration, by which I mean the vertical integration originally proposed by the Five Dimensions approach, the human integration proposed by the sixth Dimension, and the personal integration proposed by the DNA approach to change detailed in Chapter 12. The practitioner narrative throughout the thesis will be very helpful to other change agents working on developing their understanding of the change process and how they, as individuals, impact upon, and are impacted by, organisational change. In this way I have made a direct contribution to professional practice.
I conducted this research from a perspective of action Learning and Research - a methodology which helped me greatly as I made an ontological shift from a deterministic understanding of the world to a more interpretive position recognising the need to more comprehensively understand and interact with the world. There have, of course, been many contributors and participants within this research and the action learning and research methodology has helped me to assimilate and involve this multiplicity of perspectives and contributions. The writing is mine, but the contributions are many. This has meant that my perspectives and understanding of myself and of change management have been tried and tested with many colleagues throughout the research - with my Learning Set colleagues, with colleagues and clients within organisations, and of course with my research supervisors. This process has ensured that the thesis accurately reflects the learning process that I have engaged with and contains within it the processual journey that I have undertaken.

Action Learning has been invaluable then as a methodology and has helped me to make the transition that is clear through the thesis. It is evident that Kolb (1974) is the prevailing model against which the learning process is managed and it is exceptionally useful in terms of prompting learners, particularly practitioners, to reflect and interpret their learning and thereby resist the temptation to engage simply in the planning and action phases (not necessarily in that order). Inherent within the Kolbian cycle, however, is the temptation to consider experiences in an introspective and personal manner, namely, what do I understand from this experience, and how might this influence my practice?

This reflective analysis and search for meaning are important, but I firmly believe that we need to understand our learning from a broader perspective. My thesis
has explored learning from three vantage points which has enabled me to an extent to engage in epistemological relativism, and I think that this is critically important in furthering the understanding and learning for the individual as part of the world – it encourages an integrated and holistic meaning-making as opposed to a learner-centric perspective. Burgoyne (2001) contributes the action-consequences cycle as a means of augmenting the inherently introspective nature of Kolb’s cycle, and in this way separates out the ontological and the epistemological perspectives in a very useful way. Focussing and learning from the impact of action as well as the action are vitally important elements of the action learning process.

The Set advisor was a very useful contributor to the action learning process and helped on many occasions to move the group forwards by asking relevant questions or by challenging statements that were made without sufficient rigour. Revans (1998) was opposed to the ongoing facilitation of Sets yet in my experience the presence of the Set advisor is vitally important to help maintain the progress and focus of the Set. That is not to say that they should adopt an overtly interventionist approach as the functioning of the Set should be managed by the participants, rather the Set advisor should be available to provide guidance and focus when required. It is often the case that identifying the need for intervention is often more easily done by an adviser than a participant. In my experience of managing Sets within management development programmes there is a higher need for intervention at the outset of the programme which diminishes as the participants become more used to the Set process and dynamics, and begin to take more control for themselves over the direction and content of the discussions. It is my experience as a Set participant, that even after we were very
accustomed to each other and to the Set processes, we still found great value in the occasional intervention of the adviser.

In fact the Set advisor is, of course, taking part in the action learning process simply through their presence – and by being present they influence the nature of the debate and help prevent participants derailing the debate to avoid difficult issues. This I see as a positive contribution and so would assert that, in my experience, a Set advisor is a necessary part of the action learning process.

It is clear that at the outset of my research, in spite of my espoused intent to “not create a blueprint or golden formula for change” I worked to achieve precisely that. Within my research I focussed of course, on Revans’ $p$ and $q$ but I predominantly used $q$ to augment $p$ without recognising that there are two types of $p$ – that knowledge which is fixed and constant (in so far as we understand the world) and that knowledge which is particular or specific to a situation or the prevailing circumstances. In this way we may postulate the existence of $p_1$ and $p_2$.

Part of the role of $q$ must, therefore, be to not only augment $p$ but also to test which type of $p$ we are dealing with – is the knowledge we generate universally or generalisably applicable or is it pertinent to a particular circumstance or indeed a particular time? This distinction is, in my opinion, vitally important to the debate as it asserts the importance of $p$, which is often neglected in favour of $q$ by action learners, when in fact, such a dualistic interpretation of the methodology is unhelpful and can lead, as in my experience, to a denial of the importance of knowledge in favour of questions. The fact is that both are important.
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