Every change is not an improvement . . . but every improvement is a change

What to change?    How to cause the change?

To what to change to?
What is improvement?

- Every system/organization has a goal
- Improvement is the ability to achieve more “goal units” — now and in the future
- The focus of real improvement has to be the constraint of the system — it’s “weakest link” (The TOC perspective)
- Despite a required focus for real improvement . . .
  - Proposals for improvement can come from anywhere, and they have to be sold, because . . .
  - Very few improvements can be put into effect without the collaboration of others

Another view of the process is involved when change requires someone other than yourself

- Construction
  - Design of a proposed solution
- Communication
  - Open dialogue, not monologue
- Collaboration
  - Ownership, buy-in, and support

*Sometimes constructing the initial solution is the easy part.*
Problems with making changes happen

- Apathy and indifference block ability to get buy-in
- Difficulty communicating vision of a proposal
- One person’s improvement is another’s disruption
- Other initiatives conflict with the change
- People prefer to focus on their own problems
- Analysis paralysis - Too much second-guessing
- Lack of a sense of urgency
- Unexpected obstacles pop up
- Unexpected implications pop up
- Efforts are abandoned before achieving expected benefits
- Efforts are implemented with less benefits than expected
- Value of proposed solutions are not widely recognized
- Needed breakthroughs are hampered by a lack of intuition
- Necessary intuition and information is missing from the solution

What is a problem? (The TOC perspective)

- Being put in a position of having to do something you would rather not do.
- A conflict between two conditions/observations, often related to necessary conditions of the system — a dilemma.

TOC Perspective: In the context of coherent systems, conflicts do not exist in reality (i.e., something is wrong in our understanding . . . often faulty assumptions).
Problems with making changes happen

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People prefer to focus on their own problems

Objective

Manage effectively

Necessary Conditions

- Get maximum benefit from change efforts
- Assure that my piece of the system works smoothly

Prerequisites

- Focus time and attention on global improvement (someone else’s issues)
- Focus time and attention on responding to (my) local issues

Conflict!
Difficulty communicating vision of a proposal

1. Demonstrate efficacy of change
2. Pilot the solution to prove concepts
3. Successfully implement change
4. Maximize speed of change (quicker benefit)
5. Don't pilot - Get buy-in for full rollout

Conflict!

Unexpected implications pop up

1. Improve system's capability
2. Fix whatever needs to be fixed
3. Manage change effectively
4. Avoid adding new problems to the system
5. Don't change anything that will create new problems

Conflict!
Organizational culture is the accumulation of how we deal with our conflicts

A “generic” core conflict — a potential common root cause of the problems

Focus time and attention on global improvement
Pilot the solution to prove concepts
Fix whatever needs to be fixed

Use time and attention on developing a complete solution
A “generic” core conflict — a potential common root cause of the problems

Focus time and attention on responding to local issues
Don’t pilot - Get buy-in for full rollout
Don’t change anything that will create new problems

Conflict!

Use time and attention on developing a complete solution

Assure smooth implementation

Assure my piece of the system works smoothly
Maximize speed of change
Avoid adding new problems to the system

Conflict!

Use time and attention on buy-in and collaboration
A “generic” core conflict — a potential common root cause of the problems

Get maximum benefit from change efforts
Demonstrate efficacy of change
Improve system’s capability

Get desired “bang” for the change effort “buck”
Use time and attention on developing a complete solution

Conflict!

Assure smooth implementation
Use time and attention on buy-in and collaboration

Get maximum benefit from change efforts
Demonstrate efficacy of change
Improve system’s capability

Get desired “bang” for the change effort “buck”
Use time and attention on developing a complete solution

Conflict!

Assure smooth implementation
Use time and attention on buy-in and collaboration

Manage effectively
Successfully implement change
Manage change effectively

Manage improvement effectively
A “generic” core conflict — a potential common root cause of the problems

Can this conflict be at the root of our problems? How can we be sure?

What do we want to manage? Symptoms or a system of cause and effect?

Deming’s Profound Knowledge

“Management is prediction.”

(Can we really manage symptoms?)
Is the conflict at the root of our problems?

- Other initiatives conflict with the change
- Value of proposed solutions are not widely recognized
- Proposal succumbs to analysis paralysis and second-guessing

- People/functions prefer to focus on getting their own problems fixed, rather than supporting the change
- Solution details often take precedence, minimizing attention to buy-in and collaboration

- Different people or functions face different problems, perhaps not addressed by the solution
- Pressure to do something without enough planning often turns into an exercise in politics and power

- Time and attention are very limited commodities
- Pressure to use time and attention on buy-in and collaboration

- There is difficulty communicating the vision of the change

- There is a lack of a sense of urgency for the change
- Apathy and indifference block ability to get buy-in and collaboration

- Proposal succumbs to analysis paralysis and second-guessing
- Necessary intuition and information is missing from the solution

- Time and attention are very limited commodities
- Other initiatives conflict with the change
- Value of proposed solutions are not widely recognized

- One person's improvement is another's disruption
- Collaboration of others is necessary to fully understand the effects and requirements of the change
Is the conflict at the root of our problems?

- Efforts are implemented with less benefits than expected
- Efforts are abandoned before achieving expected benefits
- Needed breakthroughs are hampered by a lack of intuition
- Unexpected implications pop up
- Unexpected obstacles pop up
- Necessary intuition and information is missing from the solution
- Significant and valuable changes usually require new ways of thinking about the situation

What perpetuates the core conflict?

- Assumptions -
  - 1. Not enough time to do both effectively
  - 2. Buy-in and solution building are different

- Manage improvement effectively
- Get desired “bang” for the change effort “buck”
- Use time and attention on developing a complete solution
- Use time and attention on buy-in and collaboration
- Assure smooth implementation
- Conflict!
Are buy-in and solution-building really different endeavors?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solution Building</th>
<th>Buy-in for Collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Define the problem</td>
<td>Agree on the problem and its value (WIIFM?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify a breakthrough</td>
<td>Agree on a direction for solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flesh out details of a solution</td>
<td>Agree that solution will deal with the defined problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and deal with side effects of the solution</td>
<td>Agree that no undesirable (side) effects of the solution will occur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure out how to make it happen</td>
<td>Agree on an implementation plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement the solution</td>
<td>Agree to act</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What replaces the core conflict?

Develop buy-in with a process that is aligned with, supported by, and maybe even included in the process for problem solving.

Assumptions -
1. Not enough time to do both effectively
2. Buy-in and solution building are different
The Theory of Constraints
TOC - What is it?

- A systematic approach to managing and improving human-based systems by adapting and applying proven methods used by the hard sciences to understand and manage the material world.
- A systematic process of on-going improvement

- A comprehensive and coherent set of logical thinking tools and applications designed to maximize effectiveness of the improvement process
  - Problem Solving - the TOC Thinking Processes (TP)

- Daily Management Skills - taken from the TP, used to enhance vital management skills
- Proven Solutions - generic solutions in various functional areas, created and customized through the TP

“If..., then...” and “In order to..., we must...”
- Sufficiency and necessity-based logic

Sufficiency
“If..., Then...”

Necessity
“In Order to..., We Must...”

Categories of Legitimate Reservation
Clarity, sufficiency, additional cause, etc...
The Thinking Process “roadmap” — What to change?

1. Generic Cloud Process:  
What is the core conflict responsible for all the UnDesirable effects (UDEs)?

2. Current Reality Tree:  
Is the core conflict responsible for all the UnDesirable effects (UDEs)?

Getting agreement on the problem — Symptoms, Root Causes and a Core Conflict

- An undesirable effect (an UDE) is usually a symptom - a resulting effect of some set of causes.
- Most UDEs have a conflict or dilemma associated with them. Taken together, they often have much in common - the “generic conflict” of the system.
- Current Reality Tree (CRT)
  - Bonds of cause and effect
  - Connects all major undesirable effects and the core conflict.
- Underlying the problematic system is usually the “generic” or “core conflict” that perpetuates its existence, and therefore the existence of the full set of UDEs.
- And assumptions underlie the dilemma.
The Thinking Process “roadmap” —
To what to change to?

3. Evaporating Cloud:
What assumptions are we going to challenge?

4. Future Reality Tree:
What injection and other tactical objectives will lead to desired effects (DEs) and Strategic Objectives (SOs) without creating new UDEs?

Developing a direction for a solution —
Why hasn’t the core problem been solved?

- The core problem is often readily recognized and admitted once verbalized.
- A systemic conflict.
- To solve the core conflict, define it precisely:
  - Clearly state the desired objective - the opposite of the core problem
  - Highlight the two necessary conditions
  - Verbalize the resulting conflict
- It is necessary to overcome the tendency to look for a compromise - if there were an acceptable compromise, the organization would have found it a long time ago.
- Raise and scrutinize assumptions “under the arrows” to find an approach to “evaporate” the conflict

Evaporating (Conflict) Cloud
The thinking process that enables a person to precisely present the conflict perpetuating the core problem, and then directs the search for a solution through challenging the assumptions underlying the conflict.
Fleshing out the solution —
An idea is not a solution

- Finding an injection - a breakthrough idea that can free us from the devastating grip of the conflict - is just the first step.
- Our original intention was, and still is, the removal of many, specific, undesirable effects - and even go further to replace them with desirable effects.
- Usually the original injection turns out to be insufficient, but the process of building the future reality tree leads to the missing elements - additional tactical objectives that are needed to reach the desired outcomes.
- Also carefully examine that the solution will not cause new, devastating undesirable effects.
- These additional efforts complete the solution, the set of things that should be injected into our environment.

What to we want instead of our symptoms?

- There is difficulty communicating the vision of the change
- People/functions prefer to focus on getting their own problems fixed, rather than supporting the change
- Those involved with the problem/solution are willing to listen to and contribute to the vision of the change
- Value of proposed solutions are not widely recognized
- The target problem is widely understood to be important across the system
- People/functions support addressing the core problem as a possible path to getting their own symptoms dealt with
- One person’s improvement is another’s disruption
A piece of a high-level Future Reality Tree

We develop buy-in with a process that is aligned with, supported by, and included in the process for problem solving.

A possible “way out” of the problem space is seen by the target collaborators

The target problem is widely understood to be important across the system

Most symptoms that people care about can be quantitatively or qualitatively valued

The process provides a method for developing and communicating breakthroughs

People/functions support addressing the core problem as a possible path to getting their own symptoms dealt with

Those involved with the problem/solution are willing to listen to and contribute to the vision of the change

The process distills a range of symptoms suffered by needed collaborators to a common cause that is easy to communicate

Do you ever hear “Yes, but . . .” when you’re making a proposal?

- How might one react to short-sighted sniping at the proposal that you’ve worked so hard on?

- Have you ever seen a question about a proposal trigger a defensive or dismissive reaction?

- Resistance is in the eye of the proposer. Maybe the reservation has merit, and if addressed, can actually strengthen the solution.

- Maybe understanding the cause-and-effects associated with the reservation can help . . .
Communicating concerns for collaboration — Use “yes, buts” to strengthen the solution

- It’s not uncommon for your audience to raise reservations that you have not seen yourself.
- The key is to avoid the typical defensive posture, and accept these new reservations as additional thing to address before you can have a truly successful change.
- Accept, clarify, and clearly define the logic behind “yes, buts.” - Add new tactical objectives to trim them.
- Makes your solution stronger.
- Also instills ownership in some who would have been otherwise concerned about your change.

Negative Branch Reservation
The thinking process that enables a person to communicate a concern that a particular action will lead to an unforeseen negative consequence.

The Thinking Process “roadmap” — How to cause the change to happen?

5. Prerequisite Tree:
What currently prevents the implementation of the tactical objectives?

6. Transition Tree:
What actions have to be taken to effectively implement the Intermediate and tactical objective(s)?
Planning to make it happen — Overcoming obstacles

- It is usually necessary to break the implementation task into smaller increments.
- Use the obstacles to identify an intermediate objective that will be sufficient to overcome each corresponding obstacle.
- To complete this step the intermediate objectives need to be sequenced; which one is first, which ones can be accomplished in parallel, etc. The connections are provided by the fact that any time dependency is due to the need to overcome an obstacle.
- The power of the prerequisite tree stems from the fact that it doesn’t ignore the obstacles, on the contrary, they are used as the main vehicle for this entire step.

Prerequisite Tree

By relying on everybody’s “expertise” at pointing out obstacles, this thinking process enables dissection of the implementation task into an array of interrelated, well-defined, intermediate objectives (IOs).

The devil is sometimes in the details — A “results-oriented” action plan

- Some intermediate and tactical objectives are easy, some require detailed action plans.
- In determining the needed actions attention should not be on what we plan to do, but on what we want to accomplish.
  - The "backbone" of the transition tree is the description of the gradually evolving change we envision will occur in reality.
  - The "ribs" are the actions needed to cause that change until the objectives are met.
- This method forces us to carefully examine which actions are really needed and if they are sufficient to guarantee the required change.
- It also helps to communicate the “whys” — the rationales behind the needed actions and invites alternative approaches.

Transition Tree

The thinking process used to construct a detailed action plan.
A set of obstacles to change . . .
The Six Layers of Resistance

Layer 1 - “We don’t agree on the problem”
Layer 2 - “There’s nothing we can do about the problem”
Layer 3 - “That idea won’t solve the whole problem”
Layer 4 - “Yes, but…”
Layer 5 - “We can’t do it because…”
Layer 6 - “Unverbalized fear”

The TOC TP provides a coherent process to both derive a solution and achieve buy-in

What to change?
Generic Cloud Process
Current Reality Tree

To what to change to?
Evaporating Cloud
Future Reality Tree
Negative Branch Reservations

How to cause the change?
Prerequisite Tree
Transition Tree
Six Layers
Informed Leadership

Layer 1 - Agreement on the problem
Layer 2 - Direction
Layer 3 - Details
Layer 4 - “Yes, but…”
Layer 5 - Dealing with obstacles
Layer 6 - Unverbalized fear
Questions?

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Appendices

- The “Jonah Program”
  - Learning the Thinking Processes by applying them to a real problem
- More about the Six Layers of Resistance
The Jonah Program

The Jonah Program is for individuals and management teams who want to accelerate the improvement process in their area of responsibility or in a subject matter of primary interest to them.

The combination of the participants’ intuition and common sense and the mastery of the TOC Thinking Processes (TP) provided by the Jonah Program results in a detailed action plan to apply to your current environment as well as the skills to apply it to other subjects encountered in the future.

The Jonah Program is available both in scheduled sessions open to diverse participants as well as in dedicated sessions for management teams from specific organizations.

In addition to the Jonah Program, exposure to key diagnosis and planning tools of the Thinking Processes are also available to an organization’s management team in a facilitated process for strategic alignment of an organizations resources and tactics.

Resistance — Layer 1
“We don’t agree on the problem”

- Different players have different perspectives and are impacted by different symptoms.
- Views are colored by the symptoms that impact us the most.
- We’ve attacked symptoms individually, but either they keep coming back, or the system as a whole has not seen significant improvement because the core problems hadn’t been identified or addressed.
- We need to build a common sense of the system as a whole and of how the symptoms are linked to each other and to a true core cause -- the real problem.
Resistance — Layer 2
“There’s nothing we can do about it”

- Typically, we feel powerless to act when the demands on us are in conflict...
  ... when we’re caught in a tug-of-war
  ... when we’re on the horns of a dilemma
  ... when we’re stuck between a rock and a hard place
- It’s out of our control, something we must live with and continue dealing with by addressing symptoms.
- We don’t even have a direction for a solution.

Resistance — Layer 3
“That idea won’t address the whole problem”

- Sometimes when presented with a proposed solution or change, the relationship between the proposal and the desired results is not clear.
- The changees can’t quite see the full strategy and don’t really believe that you can get where you want to go by taking a particular action.
- Can the future reality be described in terms of how the proposed solution turns around the original symptoms (the problems felt by the individual participants) into new desired effects?
Resistance — Layer 4
“Yes, but...”

- Little yes, big but . . .

- Resistor sees some negative circumstance that can come about and fights the change.

- Need to be genuinely open and responsive to concerns raised by others through the design and presentation of the proposed change.

Resistance — Layer 5
“We can’t do it because...”

- Implementing the tactical objectives of a proposed strategy/solution is not a trivial task—at least one of them is often a breakthrough, a departure from the currently prevailing tradition.

- Resistance often takes the form of identifying obstacles that are in the way of implementation.

- Too many obstacles
- Some are beyond our current capabilities.
- “That’ll happen when pigs fly”
Resistance — Layer 6
“Unverbalized Fear”

- A special case obstacle, sufficiently important to deserve its own layer
- Uninvolved with construction and communication to this point
  - Intimately involved
  - Directly responsible
  - Other people
- Leadership - Supported by coherent communication of a valid solution - Repeat Layers 1-5
- Lip service - Inaction is often supported by additional conflicts and reservations

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