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The forum for sustainable change





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What we do

We help individuals and organisations to enhance the ways in which they meet their stakeholders' needs so that they continuously flourish through successive business cycles.

We do this by helping our clients to rethink the ways in which they acquire knowledge; change mindsets, behaviours and motivations; and break the personal and organisational default behaviours, or 'blocks to performance', which are so often reverted to when pressure looms.

We are an Organisation Development consultancy and our services include:

- Strategic advice.
- Development of innovative strategic processes.
- Facilitation of strategic planning processes.
- Organisational design.
- Board and team effectiveness.
- Culture change programmes.
- Leadership development.
- Executive coaching.
- Conflict resolution.
- Design and implementation of new Business Development approaches.
- Organisation and individual behavioural, attitudinal and motivational change.

These are all standard change consultancy services. But we have a different way of approaching and delivering them – and a different way of describing them. Our intention is that we should, from the outset, coax and goad organisations and their leaders into questioning the meaning of change, preparing them to think more deeply about how they could, and should, be doing things differently.

This brochure is the first stage of this process. We hope that it makes interesting – and thought-provoking – reading.

The drive to productivity

Business is a social phenomenon. Things only get done when the right conversations take place. Productivity is stifled when people don't or can't talk and listen to each other. In a volatile economic environment, it is essential for organisations to initiate and sustain new, more profound, conversations with their stakeholders – all those with a vested interest in the long-term future of the business. These stakeholder conversations are a catalyst, enabling the transformational change needed if organisations are to achieve the significant increases in productivity routinely expected of them by an unforgiving market.

Typically, businesses' failure to match stakeholder needs on a consistent basis, and realise continuing gains in productivity, can be attributed to breakdowns in communication across one or more of their stakeholder conversations. This can lead to various outcomes, for example:

- They do not have a good grasp of what their stakeholders want from them (this can be as fundamental as a fashion retailer misjudging its customers' taste in clothes, or as complex as a financial services provider misreading conflicting regulatory trends); and/or
- They understand stakeholder needs, but their approach to meeting them has become outdated (perhaps they have failed to update their channel or supplier strategy as more purchasing has gone on-line, or they have failed to take advantage of outsourcing opportunities ahead of their competitors); and/or
- They make a reasonable day-to-day job of meeting stakeholder needs, but have no mechanism or culture for challenging themselves and driving improvement (maybe rigid hierarchical management structures restrict positive change initiatives, or complacent managers are failing to look beyond their own retirement plans).

Core Context Consulting – the forum for sustainable change

Core Context Consulting works with organisations as trusted business advisers. Our goal is simple – to help organisations to become exceptional. Our commitment is to move clients on to new change agendas, helping leaders to fulfil their legacies by successfully embedding **regenerative change** within the organisation.

The sum of our experience reinforces our passion for shifting fundamental perceptions, before helping to build self-aware, self-governing and regenerative organisations – organisations which stand out as benchmarks for innovation. Instead of selling our clients 'solutions', we supply them with new perspectives, enabling them to communicate with each other in ways which encourage them to become more productive than ever before.

The first, most crucial, stage in this process involves establishing forums where people can ask themselves who they are, what they aspire to and what they do, as well as questioning how and why they change/need to change. The successful process of co-creation that flows from this linkage between individual motivation and organisational aspiration drives the business forward. It provides a stable platform for regeneration by keeping all stakeholders in touch with the deep-structure values and legacies underpinning their environment.

We handle assignments worldwide and, where necessary, we work with our network of international associate firms to achieve global results. We lead and facilitate large-system strategic and cultural change programmes for multinational organisations, including professional services firms and major consultancies. Assignments include helping these clients to move from being transactional to relational-based businesses, as well as designing and running leading-edge individual development programmes.

In more conventional language, these are the services we offer – strategic advice; executive coaching (C-Level); culture change; leadership development; board and team effectiveness; approaches for building client relationships and partnerships; and facilitation of business meetings dealing with complex business issues. Our consultants can therefore provide depth and breadth of consulting experience leading to significant shifts in the purpose, mindset and behaviour of organisations and individuals – resulting in enhanced business performance.

Wherever assignments take us, we bring to bear our unrivalled high-level experience in organisational development, assisting business leaders and their organisations to navigate their stakeholder relationships in pursuit of high-value, sustainable market positions.

Building a legacy

The legacy that we pass on to the next generation – the heritage we leave behind – is what defines our significance. This deep-seated driver, in an organisational context, adds long-term value, over and above the more immediate shareholder value priorities of day-to-day business. These priorities can be broken down into outputs (percentage increases in turnover/headcount/production) and outcomes (alignments of those percentage increases into financial measures such as EBIT, PBIT and EBITDA which could result in a share price movement).

Legacy-based transformational change is often overlooked because people are being driven by a short-term shareholder value dynamic. Knee-jerk cost-cutting mentalities spawned by the recent prolonged downturn have embedded themselves in corporate cultures to deleterious effect. Propelled by the need to exhibit short-term gains in productivity, management has confused change programmes with reflex reorientation and, as a

result, longer-term, legacy-based transformational change has often been overlooked.

By initiating and sustaining the appropriate stakeholder conversations, business leaders become capable of fulfilling their primary function – identifying patterns and recognising what needs changing, before promulgating and embedding positive, long-lasting change throughout the organisation. This legacy-based change can take a number of forms. It may mean shifting the geographical orientation of the business from multi-local to multinational. It may mean shifting the position of the business in the value chain from audit to strategic evaluation, from software provider to systems integrator, or from contracts draftsmen to legal risk consultants. Or it may mean changing the nature of the competitive marketplace in which the business operates, perhaps by initiating joint ventures with erstwhile competitors, or by outsourcing non-core functions.



Transforming value

Key to the quest for building and transforming the value of a business's assets is regeneration – a cycle of constant change and improvement driven by applying innovation and creativity to the processes, products and services through which the organisation strives to meet market needs profitably.

Building stakeholder relationships that are sufficiently strong and supple for today's market means that new dialogues must take place, both within and beyond the business unit.

The ability – and courage – to take their organisations forward into this process are continuous prerequisites for business leaders. Instead of having their time taken up with the clamour of impetuous wishes and immediate wants that can dominate day-to-day organisational life; business leaders must learn to balance attention to these short-term drivers with the long-term needs defining the

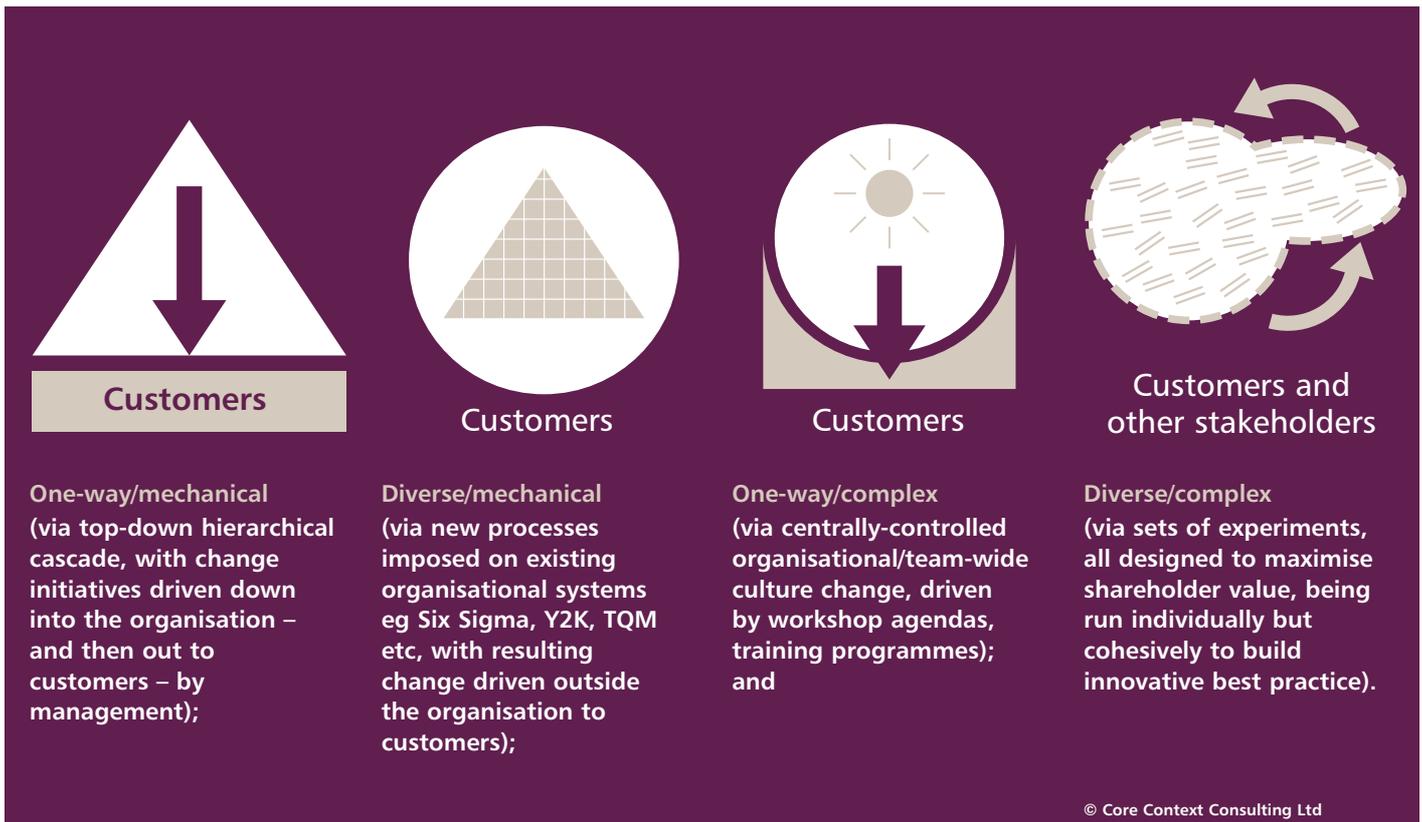
organisation's future direction. By being willing and able to identify the fundamental aspirations that drive their own performance – and the organisation's – their short-term decision-making will move into alignment with long-term strategic logic.

The key to successful active engagement is the series of conversations that leaders, teams and individuals have with all their stakeholders. Before initiating these conversations, however, organisations must be capable, at every level, of articulating their own goals and aspirations – their needs, which must be informed by an understanding of all their stakeholders. Without taking positive steps towards understanding – and, where appropriate, changing – their own cultures, organisations will find that productive stakeholder relationships remain elusive.

Making a difference

Change agendas are a must-have in any 21st century business strategy. And the consultancy profession has been driving hard to push these into the market, predominantly looking to impose established change mindsets onto organisations.

Often, these agendas are imposed on a whim, as organisations react to short-term external stimuli. These four key methodologies will be familiar enough:



All these are right(ish) – until now, there has been nothing else – and individually (or inter-connectedly) they have each achieved beneficial results, more often than not geared to short-term rebrandings and market reorientations. But they need a regenerative context if they are fully to achieve what they have been designed to do within the organisation.

If deep-level regenerative change is to take place, elements of all four methodologies must be fused together, creating a new organisational mindset – one which recognises the porous boundaries that exist between organisations and their stakeholders. However, it is rare for more than two of these processes to be combined in any one change programme, meaning that organisations miss out on the power for change that flows from the properly balanced integration of all four.

What we add is the regenerative change cycle within which these processes can and should take place. We help organisations to tap into the inspiration flowing from the appropriate integration of all these processes, taking transformational change beyond established agendas. We understand that transformational change is not a bespoke external template and cannot therefore be rigidly imposed on existing organisational fabrics. To transform effectively, change should be understood as a **regenerative** process. At its most potent, it builds on existing structures and cultures, managing (and drawing strength from) the deep-structure cycles of development that lie at the heart of all organisations, and, in the process, creating sustainable embedded value.

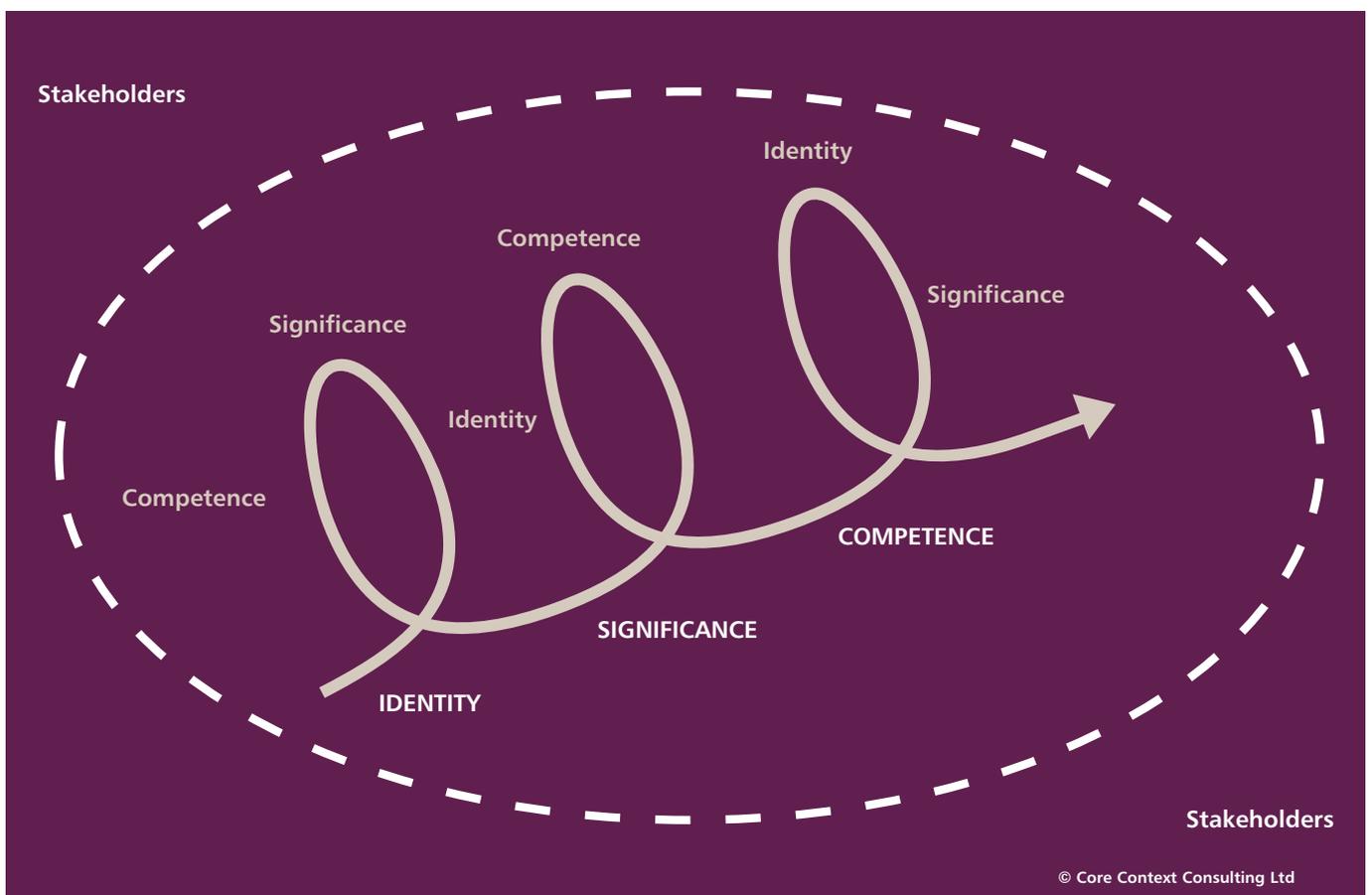
Regenerative change

So what do we mean by 'regenerative change'? This is the continuous cycle through which we move between the states of **Identity** (who we are), **Significance** (the impact we have) and **Competence** (what we do). At any given moment, business leaders and their organisations are negotiating change from one state to another. As opposed to the rebranding 'shaking the corpse' change mentality employed by so many organisational change programmes, it promulgates deep-level, profound shifts of emphasis and orientation.

When our methodology comes together with the ones most often in use – one way/mechanical, diverse mechanical, one way/complex and diverse/complex (see earlier pictograms) – we assimilate the strengths of these pre-existing methodologies into a cycle of continuous

change. Regenerative change takes into account, and draws strength from, foregrounds and backgrounds, for example – identity might be the most urgent need, with significance and competence still operating in the background and needing attention. Unlike the template-style methodologies so often used to impose change agendas on organisations from outside, regenerative change is a process through which organisations and their leaders bring about deep-structure change from within.

This cycle is one which leaders and their organisations must tap into and work through. It is powered by developing an identity, becoming competent at expressing that identity, and deciding how significantly that competency is to be expressed – and doing this again and again over generations.



To understand this linkage, and how it forms the basis of all regenerative change, it is important to understand what each state signifies for leaders:

Identity (Brand/Culture)

An organisation's external identity is its brand and its internal identity is its culture. Looking in, customers should be reassured to see the brand values being lived out in the way the organisation conducts itself. And looking out, employees should be proud to see their brand values reflecting the way in which they work together.

The fuel of the organisation, which must be constantly revitalised and refreshed in the light of current surrounding circumstances. This calls for ongoing self-examination by a leader of his/her instincts, values and beliefs, what s/he stands for/against, his/her deep motivations and his/her ongoing purpose within the organisation and more widely. Without leadership, Identity's shadow, anomie, takes precedence, and the frameworks holding organisations together begin to break down (the defunct moral compass at Parmalat, and the resulting anarchy, are a good example of what happens when anomie moves into the foreground).

Significance (Vision/Prophecy)

Vision is what we would like to happen and Prophecy is what we expect to happen. The two must be married up, otherwise the organisation will either find itself chasing unattainable futures, or failing to deliver its promises, ending up with short-term, incremental target-setting based on previous years' performance.

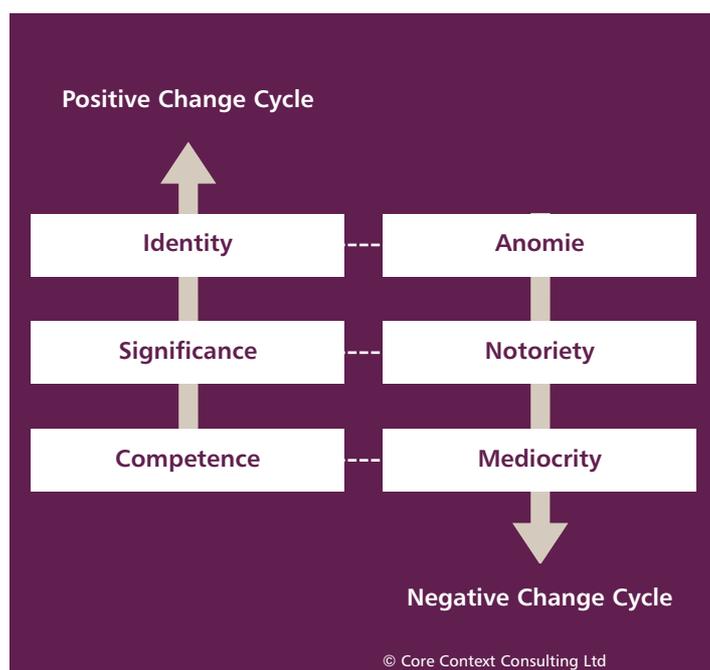
The gravitational pull, shaping organisational and individual behaviours, which must be regenerated and reignited in the light of what is now seen to be possible and necessary. This demands continual attention by a leader to the legacy/heritage that s/he wants to create, the period during which s/he wants to be involved, the footprint s/he wishes to leave behind and the style s/he wishes to be recognised for. Again, without moral guidance from the business leaders, its shadow, notoriety, moves into the foreground (an example of this being Citigroup's position, as it strives to regain significance from the notoriety caused by its association with Enron).

Competence (Services/Products/Organising Capacity)

If there is no balance between an organisation's products/services and its organising capacity, it will either be delivering sub-standard services/products to the market, or failing to deliver excellent services/products for which there would be a real demand.

Essentially how and what the organisation and the leadership delivers, should be continually honed, expanded and made more flexible. If outputs are not to become mediocre, they must be fundamentally reinvented every two to five years, depending on the inherent deep-structure rhythms of the organisation and/or sector. Competence should react to the problem/opportunity in hand, be fuelled by identity and be focused on stretching significance. An organisation's competence – what it delivers – is the normal entry-point for consultants, looking to boost outputs and raise productivity. Taken out of context, however, an output-oriented change programme cannot succeed fully – needing the accompanying contexts of identity and significance to effect any organisation-wide regenerative transformation.

Benchmark organisations succeed because their leaders have made it a priority to ensure that identity, significance and competence are aligned and interconnected at every level. As a consequence, these organisations have spent time understanding their instincts, motivations and purpose (identity), before articulating and defining their aspirations (significance), meaning that what they deliver to the market (competence) is what the market needs and wants. These organisations grow through positive change cycles. Those that fail to align identity, significance and competence degenerate through negative change cycles characterised by anomie, notoriety and mediocrity [see chart below].



How we work

We help leaders and their organisations to become more aware of the need for change, generating energy for that change and staying with the organisation through at least one managed cycle of the change process.

The outcome of our work is to create a fundamental 'shift' towards change, rather than advocating the use of pre-cooked solutions for change. We concentrate on creating shifts in the client's thinking, feeling and behaviour with all its stakeholders. Identifying and building on shifts generates an accumulation of energy that enables real, regenerative change to take place across the organisation.

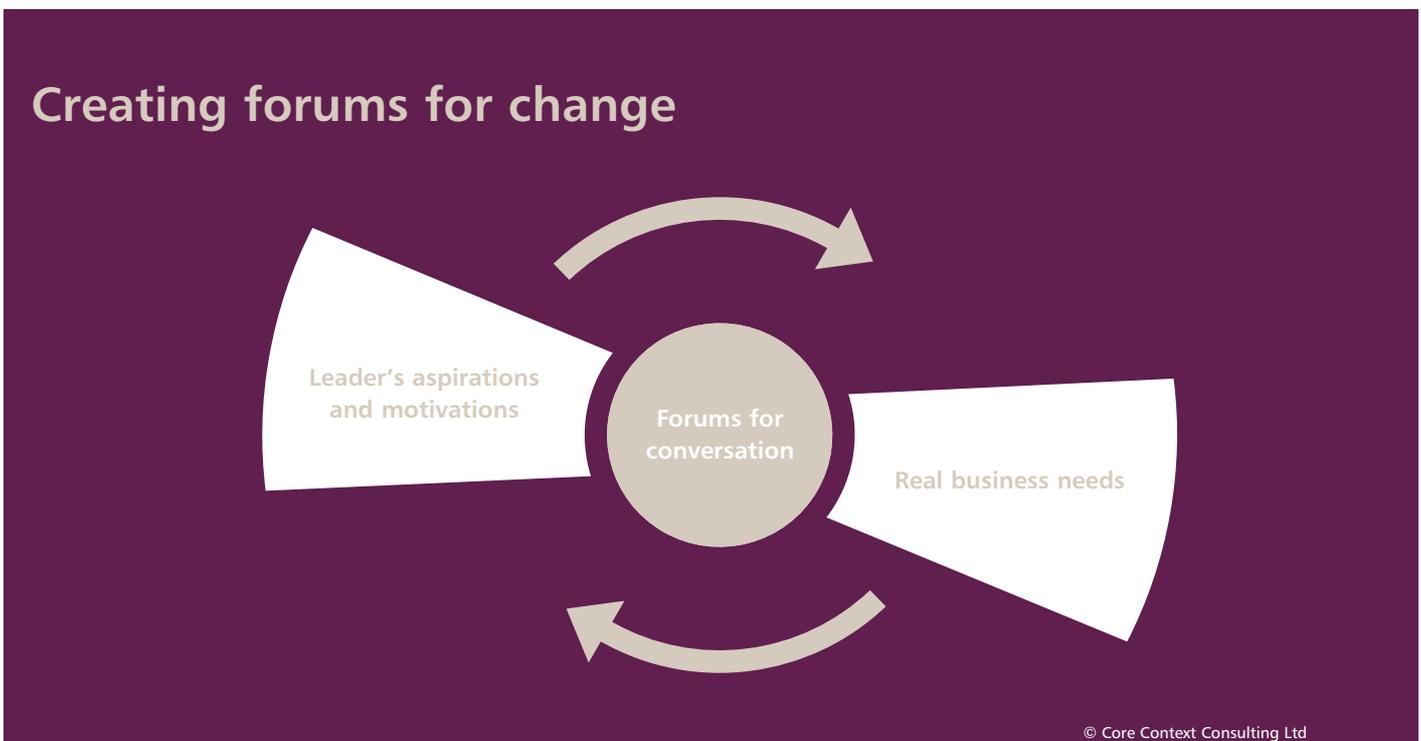
As the catalyst for change, we work with all four fields to align these parallel forums, to enable the conversations that connect an organisation's underlying dynamics with those of its business leaders. Short-term reactive change initiatives are replaced by long-term sustainable change processes that move organisations forward towards their goals.

Rather than implementing agendas that enable organisations purely 'to stretch in the moment', we encourage them to be exceptional over a prolonged period of time.



Perhaps the most important leadership attribute is the ability to create the right forums for change – and we look to ensure that the right people within the organisation are talking to one another. By doing so, leaders generate lift – pulling together the height of the organisation's aspirations with the depth of its leadership's motivations. If this process is successful, then the propeller in the illustration below will begin to spin, fusing the fundamental motivation of the leader and the expressed need of the organisation into

a single conversation with one direction and destination, and the potential to accumulate enormous momentum over time. Provided that the twin blades are joined by forums that facilitate communication and co-creation, it becomes possible for individual leaders' aspirations to be indissolubly tied to the legacy of the organisation. Where there are disjoints, power is dissipated – where there are connections, productive, energised cultures can be created.



Managing the relationship journey

We help leaders to understand what is required of them – depending on what stage they have reached in their Relationship Journey (as regards their relationships with the organisation, with external consultants, and other stakeholders).

At each of the three principal staging posts of this journey – Joining, Achieving and Moving On – leaders and organisations face some profound challenges as they progress through these interconnected regenerative cycles of experience. Whether these are issues arising from joining with new technology or launching a new joint venture business, embedding new lateral hires or cementing important client relationships, outsourcing non-core services or preparing for one's own retirement, these are all perpetual, if subconscious, drivers behind leaders' awareness of, and need for, legacy. It is, however, rare for them to acknowledge the perpetual momentum generated by these three stages, as well as their own progress towards the 'innovation of closure' – their eventual and inevitable departure from the organisation. Our work with leaders and their organisations focuses on creating and building awareness of change as a rounded process where beginnings and endings are afforded equal stature. While we encourage leaders, as appropriate, to invest in new business acquisitions, new office networks and new teams, we also help them to keep these key developments in tune with their own departure (and the legacy they expect to leave behind).

It is in most of our natures to seek out a satisfying state of existence – whether personal or professional – and

then seek to maintain it, without looking ahead to the fact of departure. Just as people find it hard to acknowledge the inevitability and finality of their own deaths, so business leaders find it hard to acknowledge their retirement from an organisation. And, by refusing to accept that they must eventually move on, they stifle momentum and invite stagnancy.

In a personal context, leaders will have different priorities, depending on whether they have just arrived at the organisation (making a mark), whether they are achieving (making things happen), or they are considering their departure (establishing a legacy). And in an organisational context, they must understand intuitively which conversations they should be joining, which they should continue to engage with, and which they should leave. For both the personal and the organisational contexts, leaders must work through measured and managed cycles, addressing contexts, legacies, values and programmes for change.

Of course, the stages of this Relationship Journey also apply at other significant levels – dictating the interaction between different business units, between teams, between organisations and brands and between brands and markets. It also dictates the dynamics of our relationship with the client – depending on whether we are conducting preparatory analyses (joining), already engaged with the organisation (achieving), or close to the end of our involvement (moving on), we will be intent on facilitating forums that promote regeneration in contexts, legacies, values and programmes for change.



Guiding the change process

There are no 'typical' assignments, but our involvement in an organisational change process might include:

Stage One

Developing an understanding of the organisation's present identity and its relationship with its stakeholders, as well as what identity it would like to develop, its present and hoped-for significance and the competence that must be developed to achieve these goals.

Stage Two

Building a programme for change that enables the organisation to move towards these future states.

Stage Three

Understanding the shift required to achieve this and how blockages to this shift need to be accommodated, subverted or removed.

In working through these processes, every organisation, and every individual, draws power from the conflicting instincts that lie at their heart. We help our clients to identify the optimum space between these positive and negative polarities – and we teach them how to occupy that space convincingly. Just as over-confrontation can be too aggressive, so over-creativity can be too chaotic. We help clients adopt priorities to achieve balance, empowering them to shift their organisations to fulfil and substantiate their identity/brand.

At all times, we ensure that leaders chart a course between creation and consistency. We do not ask or expect that wheels should be reinvented, but we do expect outdated icons to be shattered. We coach leaders to understand that consistency can be a byword for complacency and creativity a euphemism for mayhem. We show, at all times, that integration between extremes generates leverage.

Our clients include:

The BG Group

Boehringer Ingelheim

Coca-Cola Company

Coca-Cola HBC

Coca-Cola Enterprises

IBM Business Consulting Services

Premier Automotive Group

PricewaterhouseCoopers A7 (AsiaPac)

PricewaterhouseCoopers Eurofirm

PricewaterhouseCoopers UK

Roche Pharma

Starbucks Corporation

Volvo Car Corporation

Next steps

Core Context Consulting works with organisations as trusted business advisers, helping them to become exceptional.

Our assignments are all different. But they all begin the same way – with open discussion leading to frank assessments of how and where change is needed.

To initiate a discussion, or simply to hear more about what we do, contact us at:

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