



This private newsletter is for my clients who lead change. All content is based on my real-world experience working with world-class leaders. I stand ready to make a contribution to your efforts. Email [Seth@SethKahan.com](mailto:Seth@SethKahan.com) or call my office, 301/229-2221

## COLLABORATIVE CHANGE LEADERSHIP

Many people see large-scale change as the execution of a well-formed idea – a clear set of objectives that are carried out through a project. However, change is not that easy. A project plan is required, but that is only the road map and *the map is not the territory*.

To drive change successfully you need *change leaders*, those who face the reality of uncertain and unforeseen events. The change leaders steer day-to-day experience. They may adhere to the roadmap or they may decide to deviate, doing whatever will achieve the best possible outcomes. It is change leaders that wring the highest returns from the realities of circumstance.

Further, change involves multiple constituencies. What the change looks like from one group's point-of-view is not what it looks like from another's. This is especially true of transformational change; i.e., those change events that prompt the system to move to a new level of performance, fundamentally shifting the nature of work.

Here it is helpful to have a Collaborative Change Leadership Team working under the project's leadership. This group of champions is assembled from many points in the system, all the key constituencies. They work together and individually.

Individually they reach out into their home constituencies, learning as they go along, getting involved in the details of implementation. They identify challenges, issues, and unique value opportunities.

Periodically they reconvene to share what they are learning and build a robust, holistic model of the change which is conveyed to the project leaders. This model is drawn not from what they imagine or believe. Instead it comes from first-hand experience. What they have gathered from the source is critical to assembling a powerful understanding of the reality of the change. Collaboratively they compile the future, piecing together a whole that will thrive on the rigors of implementation, rather than suffer from it.

### Running the Collaborative Change Leadership Team

1. Identify and recruit the champions
2. Bring them together and educate them on the transformation, helping them learn, question, absorb, and articulate the change from their constituency's point-of-view.
3. Collaboratively develop a plan of action, for each member to go out and communicate the ideas to their people. Plan to reassemble and compare notes
4. Periodically convene the Collaborative Change Leadership Team to update everyone on recent developments in the project, listen and reflect on what has been learned, identify themes and places in the system that require special attention. This attention generally falls into one of three areas:
  - a. Specialized action – a particular group requires a customized application or approach to implementation.
  - b. Troubleshooting – an issue or warning has emerged that needs to be addressed to either resolve a problem or address it before it culminates
  - c. Harvesting unique value – one or more groups is in a position to make a significant contribution to the project's success and action is required to take best advantage.

*The Collaborative Change Leadership Team is an ally to any complex change, providing the community that will carry the responsibility of implementation. Their collective experience, political good will, and group intelligence are invaluable in the inevitable ups and downs of implementing difficult change.*

#### Change Leadership clients include:

Alberta Provincial Government, Canada • American Public Transportation Association • Association of Independent Corrugated Converters • Braintrust International • Ernst & Young  
Federal Executive Institute • Institute of Management Accountants • International Coaching Federation • KM Pro • NASA IV&V • NASA Leadership Alchemy Program • NASA Masters Forum  
National Institute on Aging • National Institutes of Health • National Park Service • National School Board Association • Oklahoma Nurses Association  
Ontario Public Housing Association, Canada • Peace Corps • Project Management Institute • Royal Dutch Shell • Trillium Health Centre, Canada • USAID  
US Department of Education • US Department of Transportation • US Environmental Protection Agency • US Geological Survey • US Government Council on Excellence