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15 myths in the management of change
(From Leandro Herrero's book *Viral Change* ^{TM})

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At the beginning of the book *Viral Change* ^{TM}, Leandro Herrero invites the reader to reflect upon 15 common assumptions about managing of change in organisations. In this article, we touch upon myth 6 of that list:

Myth 6: Communication and training are the vital components of change

Many change management initiatives look like communication and training programmes. Even people who would agree with you that this is 'a part', may be leading change programmes in which communication (and training) seems to be 'the' key, at least in size! It is easy, or easier, to develop hundreds of PowerPoint slides explaining the ins and outs of the change, the need for change, the alternative to change and the cost of no-change, etc. But the key question is: would people do things differently, once the communication and perhaps training programme has ended? The answer to that question is: maybe they will and maybe they won't.

Viral Change ^{TM} tells us that communication and training are components of the change, but that we really need to focus on behaviours. Behaviours can't be taught, at least not in the same way we teach people how to use a spreadsheet or how to do a business plan. You can only say you are teaching when the environmental circumstances are very concrete, rigid and 'controlled'. For example, sales persons are 'taught' how to handle a conversation with a customer, how to close the sale or how to respond to expected objections. In those circumstances, people 'learn' how to respond, what to say, when to say it, etc. It is usually crafted in an almost algorithmic way: if A is true, follow path B, if B is true, follow path C, etc. This is very different from 'teaching' accountability or collaboration or competitiveness. Although you can provide theoretical frameworks for those themes, the only way to 'teach' them is through reinforcing specific behaviours that would be consistent with them. Behaviours and the rationale of 'values', 'attitudes' and 'mindset behind them can indeed be explained, but behaviours occur through reinforcement mechanisms: by management, by peers (as in the peer-to-peer Champions interactions), etc. If you reinforce 'understanding' and 'rationality' of the message, you'll get more understood messages, but not behavioural change.

Viral Change ^{TM} tells us that only behavioural change is real change. Communication and training must be adapted so that they support behavioural change. But communication and training per se will not create change as if by magic.

Learn more about *Viral Change* ^{TM} as an alternative to the slow, painful, unsuccessful and costly traditional management of change by using the resources found on The Chalfont Project's website.

Among many other things, you can:
- Read articles about the 15 myths and *Viral Change* ^{TM} in the IdeasLab
- Listen to Leandro Herrero on *Viral Change* ^{TM} (audiovisual presentation)
- See and hear Leandro Herrero on the management of change (short video blog)
- Listen to the Inside Scoop Live interview with Leandro Herrero on *Viral Change* ^{TM}

Contact The Chalfont Project if you would like to discuss an alternative and successful change management process for your organisation.
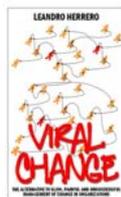
Viral Change ^{TM} can be bought at:
Amazon UK, Amazon US, Barnes and Noble, WH Smith, Borders, Books ETC.
and many other (online) retailers.