

DISRUPTIVE *i*DEAS



10+10+10=1000:
the maths of Viral Change
that transform organisations

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Disruptive Ideas

Disruptive [management] ideas are those that have the capacity to create significant impact on the organisation by challenging standard management practices. They share the following characteristics:

1. They are simple.
2. There is a total disproportion between their simplicity and their potential to impact on and transform the life of organisations.
3. They can be implemented now.
4. You can implement them at little or no cost.
5. They are most likely to be contrarian.
6. They are also most likely to be counterintuitive.
7. They pose a high risk of being trivialised or dismissed.
8. They can spread virally within the organisation very easily.

You only need a few disruptive ideas to create big transformation without the need for a Big Change Management Programme. The impact of a combination of a few is just like dynamite.

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Disruptive ideas provide management alternatives that, if spread, can completely transform the way the organisation works without the need to execute a massive 'change management programme'. Each of them, in its own right, has the potential to create significant change. The compound benefit of a few of them is a real engine of change and business transformation.

The concept of disruption in management has been applied to innovation before. A disruptive innovation is a technology, process or business model that introduces a much more affordable product or service (that is also much simpler to use) into a market.

It enables more consumers in that market to afford and/or have the skill to use the product or service. The change caused by such an innovation is so big that it eventually replaces, or disrupts, the established approach to providing that product or service. Disruptive Innovation as a concept was created by Clayton Christensen, author of *The Innovator's Dilemma* and *The Innovator's Solution*.

Leandro Herrero's disruptive ideas transcend innovation or technology and go back to the fundamental roots of day-to-day management in any kind of organisation, challenging conventional wisdom. In this book, Leandro Herrero's disruptive ideas are classified as structural, behavioural and process related.

Prologue:

The power of a
few disruptive
rules

Prologue: The power of a few disruptive rules

I have antibodies against the Big Corporate Initiative (or the Big Initiative in Big Corporations or, worse, the Big Initiative in not-so-Big Corporations that think they are Big or want to behave as Very Big). All over the world you can see the same picture: big change projects with lots of components, stacks of PowerPoint slides and massive communication programmes. In *Viral Change*, I called it the 'tsunami approach'.

As I will explain in the Introduction (which doubles as a summary of the Viral Change™ methodology and its conceptual background), a small set of behaviours has the power to create a culture or to change it.

Disruptive Ideas explains the maths of Viral Change™: the compound power of a small set of rules

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bringing true business transformation. Although this book complements *Viral Change™, the alternative to slow, painful and unsuccessful management of change in organisations*, it is self-contained and can be read independently.

In my consulting work on behavioural and cultural change, I often use a mental device that I call 'Imagine'. Imagine that this or that would happen across the board in your organisation, if it were widespread. What kind of culture would you have? Can you picture it? And I follow up with a series of scenarios, each containing one behavioural pattern. For example, imagine your boss checking up on you every single day to see how you were doing in terms of meeting milestones in your project. Imagine people using little email and a lot of face-to-face or telephone. Imagine absolutely everybody using a Blackberry and responding immediately to every single email received. Imagine people making decisions in real time, without the need for a meeting with many other people (who were perhaps redundant to the decision anyway), etc.

Most of the scenarios either elicit a smile or raise eyebrows. It takes a millisecond for people to imagine hell or heaven and it only takes one single behaviour to do it. In my presentation to clients, I do not project a complex pattern of those behaviours on screen. I am also not asking them to react to a high level concept like 'an entrepreneurial culture' or 'a culture of mistrust'. I am

simply talking behaviours, one by one. Each of them, on their own merits, may make people stay or leave the company; join it or avoid it. And I will repeat the key point: you only need one.

If one on its own is so powerful, why does the Big Corporate Programme insist we create, develop and 'roll out' dozens, if not hundreds of initiatives, divided into actions, critical success factors and personal goals?

10+10+10=1000

Even if you don't want to settle for just one of those behaviours or 'rules', the compound power of a small set of behaviours has tremendous impact. In this book, I offer you 10 ideas for 'structures', 10 for 'processes' and 10 for 'behaviours' from which you can choose. Even if you think that all of them are 'good ideas', you only need to choose a few. I am convinced that the sum of a few 'radical changes' with a small r can create Radical change with a big R. What do these 10s have in common?

- All of them are simple: you don't need a legion of consultants to implement them. Their simplicity inversely correlates with their potential to transform the organisation.
- All of them can be triggered or acted upon tomorrow. They do not need to wait for the next cycle of the Strategic Plan or for when you have a budget.

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- They can be implemented very cheaply, sometimes at zero cost. So when you consider their potential to change the system (i.e., big time and for good), focusing energy on them is highly cost-effective!
 - Many of these ideas are contrarian because they represent an alternative way that opposes 'the normal way'. I believe we often practice 'management by default' and that we continue doing things as before, as we have always done, assuming rationality and logic in what we do. But sometimes it would be healthier to say, "*Errr, mmm, excuse me sir, no offence, but this emperor has no clothes. Perhaps the Contrarian Emperor has.*"
 - Most of them are also counterintuitive. We are not used to doing things in different ways so the first impression of these ideas may be one of 'has no logic' or 'won't work'. And following that first impression is a great strategy to be 'safe'!
 - In isolation, many of them may look trivial, perhaps nothing more than a list of self-help ideas for the organisation! Or a prescriptive list: do this and you'll be OK. If you read them and think 'what's the big deal?', you either live in organisational nirvana, or you are content with what you have (nothing wrong with that), or you are still stuck in Big Corporate mode, looking down from the summit from where all things look small. You may also think that they are plain common sense, and as such, follow the rule that common sense is the least
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common of all the senses. We tend to say 'sure, of course' to many 'common sense things' and then switch off and carry on regardless.

- All of them have high viral change potential. That is, you don't have to communicate to everybody on earth that you are implementing them. All you need to do is start somewhere and have people adopt the idea(s) so that others will follow.

Many of these disruptive ideas may perhaps seem obvious (in what they can do, should do, the problem they attempt to tackle). For those of you feeling this way, may I remind you of the Latin etymology of the word obvious: in the way. It means something so common right in front of you that you don't even see it, stumble, trip and fall. Beware of the obvious things on the road, they can make life dangerous. All of them come from my personal experience as an organisational architect. So all are tested, all work ... and you may already know this, because perhaps you are already doing some of them!

There are many people in the organisational and business worlds looking for The Big Idea. I prefer to collect small ideas with big impact. The type of management of change that I facilitate and practice, Viral Change™, shows that a small set of behaviours, spread by a small number of people through the informal networks of the organisation, creates behavioural tipping points through which a new way of doing things appears and is established. The introduction on the next pages explains

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why and how. Although the 10+10+10 are three sets of 'structures', 'processes' and 'behaviours', let's make one thing clear: you must look at behaviours as your real currency to create change and transform the organisation. Structures and processes per se won't do it.

Book structure

- This book is a long conversation with you, citizen of any business organisation, manager, leader, manager-postulant, manager-novice, Head of HR, non-head of HR...basically with anybody who wants to energise the company and inject some new maths of change.
 - Other than this prologue and introduction, the 10+10+10=1000 'rules' are written as a series of thirty short, self-contained chats...as if they came up as part of a brainstorm between us. They do not intend to explore the rule or idea in depth, but to leave behind enough of a disruptive or contrarian challenge for you to carry on the thought process and imagine the application of the idea to your organisation. I would encourage you to use the blank spaces in this book as much as possible to make notes or plan. This is your live book of planning for the transformation of your organisation.
 - Each 'short chat'/chapter has a few paragraphs entitled 'Imagine'. This is for you to imagine and literally picture the culture of the organisation once
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some of those 'rules' were in place. The paragraphs written in each chapter are illustrative. You should continue the thought process and add your own notes.

- I do not believe that you need to be in a big organisation for these ideas to be implemented. Even small and medium enterprises can benefit from these ideas.
- I have compiled a map of the 3 sets of 10 (10+10+10) at the end of the book so that you can play personal monopoly and decide on which ones you want to put your money!

Disruptive ideas are like a butterfly's wings: they seem trivial, but have the potential to create a hurricane. Please read and enjoy these butterflies. The chapters are self-contained and can therefore be read independently and in any order, but I suggest you read the Introduction first.

Good luck with the transformation, but above all, watch out for 'the obvious things on your way'... those things can be treacherous.