

Changing fast | The Xpragmatic View



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Effective change requires fast and ruthless execution. These are the words of professor Behnam Tabrizi. However, is this speed of execution intentional or is it merely the result of an existing organisation that is change-able?

In a [recent interview](#) with the Mercury News, Stanford professor Behnam Tabrizi¹ argues that organisational change should be done rapidly. According to Tabrizi, *"...effective change requires fast and ruthless execution"*.

Tabrizi's statement is based upon his 10 years studying of corporations that were involved in various types of reorganisations. He now published his findings in a book called "Rapid Transformation, a 90-Day Plan for Fast and Effective Change."

In general, we agree that this is a correct statement. If things have to change, we should avoid delaying decisions and move on. Otherwise, the parties involved get into a cycle of argumentation building that will escalate in a polarisation of opinions where no further move is possible.

Whatever change exercise you are involved in, it is never possible to develop a solution path that indeed is the preferred choice of all stakeholders involved. Otherwise, why weren't you all not already walking that path?

Change is always about consensus building and finding the right equilibrium.

Anyway, while we agree that change should be rapid, we are unsure whether Tabrizi's statement reflects the real intention of the analysed change initiatives or whether it is merely the observation of the outcome of "successful" change initiatives.

Simply having the intention of moving fast is no guarantee for success. Yes, you might get at your intended change outcome, but at what cost? Many "successful" change exercises break down shortly after.

Therefore, not accidentally, many of the companies that Tabrizi lists as examples of rapid change implementations already have a reputation of being highly "change-able" organisations.

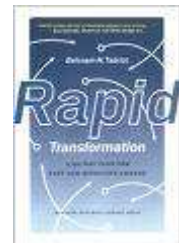
Indeed, the key for rapid and successful change is ***the existing organisation***, not the methodology used, not the change management consultants hired, and no, not the ruthless execution...

We have already mentioned this here several times, and we repeat it once again, since it is the very essence of what you, as an organisation, should strive at:



"The good-to-great companies paid scant attention to managing change, motivating people, or creating alignment.

Under the right conditions, the problems of commitment, alignment, motivation, and change



Rapid Transformation
 A 90-day Plan for Fast and
 Effective Change
 Behnam N. Tabrizi

largely melt away.'

Jim Collins, Good to Great

Dream about it. Think about it. Do something about it!


¹ Behnam Tabrizi is professor of management science and engineering at the Stanford School of Engineering

About the author



Marc Buyens is analyst, management consultant and owner of Xpragma. Marc started Xpragma in 1999 after a 20+ years career in the IT sector. Today, he provides advice, training and mentoring services focusing on the intersection of technological evolution, organisational change and business strategy: a messy world of unfulfilled promises.

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