CHANGE MANAGEMENT EXCELLENCE

Putting NLP To Work

Revised Edition
Includes a new chapter on modelling

"This is the best read on change management I have had for years."

Graham Willcocks MCMI FCIPD

Martin Roberts PhD

Change Management Excellence

Putting NLP to Work

Revised Edition

Martin Roberts PhD

Crown House Publishing Limited
www.crownhouse.co.uk

First published by

Crown House Publishing Ltd
Crown Buildings, Bancyfelin, Carmarthen, Wales, SA33 5ND, UK
www.crownhouse.co.uk

and

Crown House Publishing Company LLC
4 Berkeley Street, 1st Floor, Norwalk, CT 06850, USA
www.CHPUS.com

First edition published in hardback in 1999;
reprinted 2001 (ISBN: 1899836144).
This revised paperback edition published in 2006.

British Library of Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue entry for this book is available
from the British Library.

10-digit ISBN 1904424678
13-digit ISBN 978-190442467-3

LCCN 2004111451

Printed and bound in the UK by
Cromwell Press
Trowbridge
Wiltshire

Table Of Contents

List Of Figures iii
Acknowledgments..v
Preface to the Revised Edition vii
Foreword..ix
Introduction..xiii

Part One **Introducing NLP And Modern Developments In Change Management 1**

Chapter One Background 3

Part Two **Developing Excellence In Communication And Understanding How Other People Tick 15**
Overview 17

Chapter Two The Important Role Of Rapport In Communication 19

Chapter Three Developing Precision In The Language We Use 27

Chapter Four Bringing It All Together..49

Part Three **Developing Excellence In Change Management.....53**
Overview 55

Chapter Five Thinking And Understanding With Greater Precision..57

Chapter Six Understanding The Causes Of Failure 75

Chapter Seven Preparation In Advance of Choosing A Change Mechanism 103

Chapter Eight Choosing The Problem Solution 139

Chapter Nine Resolving Conflict And Aligning Attitudes And Beliefs 157

Part Four **Understanding The Function Of Time In Planning Change** **189**
Overview 191

Chapter Ten Using Time Functions In Strategic Applications 193

Part Five **Understanding Modelling and Modelling NLP-style** **219**

Chapter Eleven Modelling 221

Part Six **A Short Consideration Of Popular Packaged Solutions** **235**
Overview 237

Chapter Twelve Packaged Solutions 239

Appendices **253**
Appendix One The New And Updated Meta-model 255

Appendix Two Dr Mayon-White's Change Management Strategy .. 259

Appendix Three NLP Resources And Contact Points 263

Appendix Four About The Author 273

Bibliography 277
Glossary Of Terms 285
Index 295

List Of Figures

1. Causes of UK Change Management Failures 80
2. Features of Badly-formed Problems..82
3. Multiple Cause Diagram for the XYZ Company 92
4. An Example of a Rich Picture in Schematic Form 95
5. An Example of a Rich Picture from XYZ Company...........................96
6. Defining the Well-formed Problem 100
7. Critical Success Factors of XYZ Company 119
8. Main Board Members' Preferred Change Programmes of XYZ Company at the Start of the Investigation 120
9. Business Forces Diagram for a Business in Balance 134
10. Business Forces Diagram for a Business out of Balance following a failed TQM Project...135
11. Successful Problem-solving 141
12. The Well-formed Solution...147
13. Logical Levels 171
14. Logical Levels Diagram...173
15. Overlapping Subsystems 174
16. New Capability which does not fit in with the existing Organisational Identity 175
17. An Identity Conflict...176
18. Perceptual Positions..181
19. Time-line..198

Appendix One. The New And Updated Meta-model............................255

Appendix Two. Dr Mayon-White's Change Management Strategy 259

Appendix Two. The Key Features Of Dr Mayon-White's Change Management Strategy 260–261

Preface to the Revised Edition

It is now almost eight years since I embarked upon writing this book. Much to my great delight it was well received and has remained popular ever since. At the time of the first reprint in 2001, the opportunity was taken to make a few minor alterations and add a small amount of text. Most of the changes resulted from feedback that I received from my readers, and I thank them most sincerely for taking the time to contact me and to give their views.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the domain we know as NLP grew at an almost exponential rate. New ideas and concepts were added almost continuously during those two decades. In the 1990s, NLP went through what is perhaps best described as a period of consolidation with little really new being added. This was also a period when over 150 titles on the subject appeared, almost a 700% increase over everything that had been previously published. Of varying quality, collectively they served the purpose of bringing together many of the diverse ideas and concepts that NLP had introduced and made them understandable to a far wider audience. A large proportion also concentrated on the applications of NLP rather than simply the technology. So far, since the advent of the 21st century nothing much has really changed. No new NLP models and no new wonderful discoveries such as Meta-modelling, time-lines or submodalities have arisen. New books are still appearing, though less than previously, with the majority, as in the 1990s, concentrating on application.

However, we have seen a large amount of rebranding occurring in many sectors where NLP has been adopted and adapted. The first and perhaps most obvious one involves the role of the coach and mentor. Whilst nearly all schools of psychotherapy have moved away from the title of “therapist” to that of “life coach” or “mentor”, NLP has been one of the first out of the blocks. Mentoring and coaching have also become the “in” words in the business community as well as in many other domains, although both were in fact already in use in the 1980s. Whilst the names may have changed the technologies have not, although they are often dressed up to look or sound quite different. However, when you lift up the bonnet of this latest, slickest sports model, you find NLP written all over the engine. So we now see NLP, chameleon-like, changing its appearance to suit the market but the technology remains largely the same.

A similar occurrence has taken place in the world of education. NLP was at one time seen as a tool to use with special needs and gifted children. Now it has found its way into all aspects of education from early learning through to university level and onward into training in business. Again you do not always find the name NLP attached to the technology but in many cases this is exactly what it is.

This absorption of NLP techniques into other fields is a very healthy thing and it does provide proof that NLP has a sound basis. Ever since those very early days NLP has been criticised for not having had a sound scientific foundation. Well, now the proof is easy to see and is all around us: bright children becoming brighter, therapists, sorry, life coaches, achieving so much more, and business folks learning new, more efficient ways to interact with their colleagues. As they used to say, “the proof of the pudding is in the eating”.

I have often been asked why I did not include any information about NLP modelling in the first edition of this book, particularly as I had written several fairly controversial articles about the subject almost concurrent with its publication. My reason was simple: I did not feel that I could go along with many of the claims made for the efficacy of NLP modelling in a business setting. However, I did not have enough information to hand to substantiate what I thought was the true situation. After I had published a series of four articles on modelling in *Rapport* (Volumes 42–45) and analysed the results of the feedback I had received, I had most of the information that I needed. So I have put this together to provide an additional chapter in this revised edition in which I lay out my case surrounding the technology and efficacy of modelling, NLP-style.

Martin Roberts
St Clears, 2006

Chapter Two

The Important Role Of Rapport In Communication

During their early exploratory work in communication, the originators of NLP, Bandler and Grinder, discovered that in order to communicate well one first had to develop a high level of rapport with the person or persons one wished to communicate with. In instances where rapport was not established and held throughout the process of communication, the intended message would not get through. Consequently, the person attempting to communicate would have an exceedingly low chance of successfully achieving their objective.

Bandler and Grinder came to realise that even when we are not in rapport we are still communicating something, but it may not be the message we intend. It may be something of a different nature. This phenomenon has given rise to one of the early "laws" of NLP which states, "Whatever we are doing, we cannot not communicate". This may sound strange at first, but when we realise that a large proportion of what we are communicating is not contained in the words that we use but in our body language, facial expression and tone of voice, etc., perhaps this becomes a little clearer. Various researchers over the years have looked closely at this subject and have apportioned slightly different weighting to each of these functions within the process of human communication. The overall consensus is that approximately 60% of communication stems from body language including facial expression, 30% from our tone of voice and just 10% from the actual words that we choose to use.

So even when we do not wish to communicate, and have our mouths tight shut, we are still communicating a lot of information, but in a non-verbal form. A large proportion of this non-verbal information is processed by our minds at a very deep level and out of our conscious awareness. Recognising this is of prime importance, as our brains are far more likely to interpret as correct information coming from our unconscious minds, than any language input that we may be receiving via our ears.

This is a simple function of our evolution. Man has had to trust and react to his senses for many millions of years in order to survive, whereas language is a relatively recent development (McLujan and Flore, 1967). An example of this would be to welcome someone with words like, "Hello. It's great to see you again", while at the same time standing in an aggressive stance and with an angry expression on your face. In such a situation the recipient would almost certainly feel very confused and become defensive and would probably not be able to remember the words that had been spoken. Whilst such incongruence is extreme and unlikely to happen often in practice, we need to be aware that excellent communication occurs only when we are 100% congruent in all aspects of our presentation. When we have complete congruence we have started on the path of establishing rapport, but this is only the first step.

Unfortunately, we cannot just pop down the road and buy some rapport skills! Personal skills of this nature exist in us all to a greater or lesser extent but most of us have to work at them if we want to improve them. Obviously, knowing when we are in or out of rapport with other people is the most valuable skill to acquire. Fortunately, this is easy. All that is needed is, whilst involved in a conversation, to observe what happens when we change our posture in some way. If after a few moments the other person changes their posture to something approximating ours this is an indication that we are in rapport.

It is worth observing other people who are in conversation. Notice that when they are in rapport they will display similar body postures. They will tend to retain much more eye contact. They are also likely to have similar expressions on their faces. Look closely at what they are doing with their bodies, notice that when one person changes posture the other will follow, almost as though they are engaged in some form of dance, one leading and the other following. By watching other people we can quickly learn to pick out those who are in rapport and those who are not. In NLP terms this is known as increasing our "sensory acuity". In plain language this simply means we are becoming more observant of other people and taking in more detail about the way they move and use their bodies.

As with most things in life, practice makes perfect. So after observing other people for a while, and when we feel we have obtained a reasonable understanding of this dance which we call rapport, we can experiment with someone we know. This is most easily achieved by engaging the person in conversation and then observing what happens when their body language is mirrored. Then by changing our posture in some way we can see whether they imitate our new posture. In most instances they will naturally follow and move to mirror our posture in order to stay in rapport with us.

Practising this process with several people successfully will take us more than half way towards a full understanding of the subject because 60% of communication is about body language. In NLP jargon what you have been doing is referred to as "matching" or "mirroring" and then "leading" when you change your posture and they follow.

Most human beings do not have too much of a problem with building rapport because it is something we do quite naturally. However, the more we practise the better we become at it, until a point is reached when we do not have to think about it much – like any unconsciously learned skill such as driving a car or riding a bicycle.

The next level at which we can build rapport is in the language we use. By this I don't mean French, German or another foreign language; it is more about the words we choose to use and the tonality and expression that we put into delivering them.

Let us start with tonality, which research suggests is 30% of communication. We are all very aware of the major differences that exist in the forms of expression that we put into what we say, which are controlled by our emotions. When we are excited we tend to talk more quickly, and often our voice goes up in tone slightly. If we are angry the tone of our voice will often be louder than normal, and if we are sad our voice tends to be quieter and the words delivered more slowly than usual. However, all our

Chapter Six

Understanding The Causes Of Failure

Cause and Effect

Earlier I mentioned that during the last decade many Change Management projects failed to produce the results intended and a significant proportion resulted in total failure. Many of these situations could have been avoided if a proper understanding of the client's needs had been obtained at the earliest possible stage of the project. The Meta-model provides tools for obtaining precise information from the client about their needs, and, had this tool been used properly, many a failure would have been avoided. However, while poor communication stands out as a common cause of project failure, many other causes also exist.

This was constantly reinforced during my time working on the short-course programme at Ecotech at Cranfield University in the late 1980s and the early 1990s. One of our most popular programmes was for senior executives and was concerned with new approaches to the management of change. Very frequently during the course participants would mention Change Management or IT projects within their own organisations that had failed. We received so many of these examples that after a while we started to collate and categorise them, surprised at how many there were. Initially the team felt that the problem lay primarily with poor project management, but after a while we became uncertain whether this really was the primary cause. Later, using the empirical evidence provided by our course participants we began to analyse the information further in the hope that we could find common patterns that would lead us to discovering what these causes were.

The following is the unranked list that, while not exhaustive, contains the most common problems encountered:

1. Top management being persuaded by external agencies that change is necessary but failing to ensure that the case for change is a genuine one and fully proven.

   In other words, top management falling victim to what is commonly called the "Emperor's New Clothes Syndrome" (ENCS).

2. Failure to keep the objectives of the project flexible.

   Put another way, the programme is frozen at far too early a stage in its development. This is a common problem with large and expensive projects simply because management and/or accountants demand that a cap be placed on potential project expenditure. The key failure here is not to recognise and take into account that we live in a changing world. It is a heck of a job to plan or budget for this. Similarly, those involved with projects have a tendency to fix their concentration on their change programme and fail to notice that the rest of the world is changing around them. This is rarely a cause of failure in projects of short-term duration but is a common cause of failure with projects that extend over a period of several years and involve complex technology.

3. Subcontracting the change programme to outside "experts".

   Often this occurs where a level of expertise has been sought outside the company, but the experts are not experts in that particular line of business. This is a danger with employing consultants of all types, shapes and sizes. Total Quality Management and Business Process Re-engineering consultants seem to stand out for particular criticism in this respect.

4. Encountering major resistance not previously predicted.

   A characteristic that stands out in this situation is carrying out most or all of the planning of a project in total isolation from those who will be affected by the change.

5. Implementation taking longer then planned.

"So what's new?" is the most common response that I have received when presenting this information in a seminar. Nevertheless, this bucks the question. Does it always have to be like that? Clearly the answer is no, as some projects do complete on time and a few actually succeed in completing early.

6. Senior management becoming distracted.

This is a tough nut to crack and can really only be addressed very early on in the planning stage of a project. Clearly if management's attention does become diverted, it is because they believe that other things have a greater priority.

7. Major problems surfacing during the implementation phase not identified during the planning phase.

Again a cause of failure that is nearly always avoidable. Obviously lack of research is a major contributor and many reasons exist for this. These range from ignoring major issues during the planning phase and hoping that they will go away, to simply a poor understanding of the problems involved in the project. However, often items 1 and 4 above can make significant contributions to this problem.

8. Key development/implementation tasks and activities not defined in sufficient detail.

This has been separated from 7 above because they are two different problems. In this category the problem is more often concerned with taking things for granted. This leads to assumptions being made that later prove to be incorrect. The emphasis here is very much on detailed understanding of problems.

9. "A bridge too far."

This is often associated with the introduction of new technology and its failure to live up to its expectations. However,

Chapter Nine

Resolving Conflict And Aligning Attitudes And Beliefs

The previous two chapters of this book have concentrated on the methodologies for positive identification of the problem or problems and the process of evaluating possible solutions. To a large extent the issues of resolving internal conflict have not been fully addressed, nor have the methods involved in aligning attitudes in support of a common cause. Mention has been made of "politics", "human factors" and other issues which do give rise to conflict in organisations, and suggestions have been offered both for their avoidance in the first instance and for controlling them in the event of their arising during a project. However, conflict is rarely far away in any Change Management project simply because few people (including many senior executives) really like making changes other than those of the slow, evolutionary type. Therefore a discussion of these issues, plus some pertinent pointers towards controlling them successfully, would seem appropriate at this point.

There is a considerable amount of evidence available to support the hypothesis that in general the more radical the proposed changes within an organisation the more likely it is that there will be resistance to them. Most people, be they senior executive or manual worker, are wary of change in any form, as it inevitably creates some degree of uncertainty. When people become sufficiently uncertain about their status or their future prospects within an organisation there is an increasing likelihood that they will either seek alternative employment or become uncooperative or, in the worst instances, disruptive. Thus during all Change Management projects, avoiding creating unnecessary uncertainty must feature high on the list of the Change Manager's priorities. Having a mechanism available to monitor levels of uncertainty and disaffection throughout the project life-cycle can assist in identifying them and provide an opportunity to address them before they become a major disruptive influence.

It is worth recognising that uncertainty affects all employees. However, whereas more junior staff will often express their concerns collectively through a Trade Union or other representative body, more senior staff can present the greatest threat to any Change Management project. This is largely because of their status and their ability to use their personal power to create obstructions and diversions. Occasionally they can also create disaffection in their staff towards the change agents, and, if there is a high level of loyalty present in the staff towards their leader, this can generate a major road-block to progress.

Although resistance to change, sabotage and other disruptive behaviours were not mentioned as prime causes of failure in the Change Management projects analysed in the Ecotech study, there was considerable evidence to suggest that these factors were present in many of the failures examined. Conversely there was little evidence of this occurring in successful projects, although occasionally mention was made of the extra efforts that had needed to be committed to limit the development of such behaviours.

This chapter is about these vital factors and recounts the various stages where conflict was identified and dealt with in the example of the XYZ Company. Figure 8 (Main Board Members' Preferred Change Programmes) displays the preferred solution(s) championed by each of the Main Board members of the XYZ Company. These had been identified at a Board meeting held two months prior to the commencement of my team's involvement with the Company.

All the directors at that time were fully aware that the Company had a number of serious problems which needed urgent attention and most of these are identified in Figure 3 (The Multiple Cause

Diagram). However, each director held separate views as to the causes of the problems and consequently came to different conclusions as to what needed to be done to correct them. Whilst some directors had proposed using more than one change mechanism, the important factor here is that there was an almost complete lack of consensus about the most suitable solution. In fact the only things they all agreed about were that the Company urgently needed to improve profitability and regenerate growth across the whole of the group.

After my team had become involved and we had produced the results from conducting the Well-formed Problem exercise, most of the directors dropped their original suggestions and assisted in a search for an appropriate solution. However, two directors still wanted to implement their own proposed solutions and dug in their heels over the issue. This is not untypical of such situations and particularly so where there are many potential causes or more than one possible solution. One significant cause may be when individuals believe that if they do not succeed in getting their own way their credibility may somehow be damaged.

My original intention when formulating the Well-formed Solution model was to construct it in such a way that it would take the guesswork out of situations like this and also hopefully be capable of deducing the "only" right solution. However, it was never likely to work effectively because human beings frequently make their choices based upon personal preference and not upon a systematic approach, never mind a logical one. Personal preferences should never be ignored or cast aside as irrelevant, as they often represent the stored knowledge of an individual built up over many years. Sometimes the information possessed by such individuals is extremely valuable and, if lost, irreplaceable. To demonstrate this I will quote a story from Steve Andreas:

> *There is an old story of a boiler-maker who was hired to fix a huge steamship boiler system that was not working well. After listening to the engineer's description of the problems and asking a few questions, he went to the boiler room. He looked at the maze of pipes, listened to the thump of the boiler and the hiss of escaping steam for a few minutes, and felt some pipes with his hands. Then he hummed*

"Anyone concerned with change programmes would benefit from the insights in this well presented volume."
Bruce Lloyd PhD, Professor of Strategic Management, London South Bank University

This book is about achieving excellent Change Management using a variety of techniques and contains many new concepts and applications for consultants, would-be consultants and everyone involved in change in a business setting. It also provides an intriguing insight into why many fashionable 'cook-book' approaches to change run into problems – and how to avoid repeating them.

Working with top British and American companies for over thirty years, Martin Roberts has developed an enviable reputation for solving problems. He attributes this success to his ability to adapt and apply NLP, Behavioural Modification, Gestalt Therapy and Transactional Analysis techniques from the field of organisational psychology.

After publishing a series of four articles on NLP modelling in *Rapport* (Vols 42-45) and analysing the feedback received, Martin Roberts has put together an additional chapter on the technology and efficacy of modelling, NLP-style.

Martin Roberts PhD was, until his recent retirement, a management consultant with extensive experience of Change Management in practice. He worked at the highest level with many of the UK top 100 companies and also has extensive experience in working with US corporations.

"Achieve excellent Change Management using various techniques from the field of organisational psychology, including NLP, Behavioural Modification and Transactional Analysis. For everyone involved in change in a business setting."
Publishing News

"Most consultants have something to learn from this book, even if they won't admit it! If you plan a change process, make sure someone in your change team reads this!"
Patrick E. Merlevede MSc, author of *7 Steps to Emotional Intelligence* and *Mastering Mentoring and Coaching with Emotional Intelligence*

Business/Training
UK £12.99 US $18.95

Crown House Publishing Limited
www.crownhouse.co.uk

ISBN 190442467-8
ISBN 978-190442467-3
51895
9 781904 424673