



Action Impact Movement

Coaching. Facilitation. Leading Change.

Talking Change in the Boardroom

In today's world of constant change, what can the Board do to enable success?

Leaders and organizations are facing unprecedented change. Board members have a role to play in asking the right questions and engaging management in the right conversations to enable their organizations to lead change successfully.

As discussed in the best-selling book ["Talking Change: Must-Have Conversations for Successful Leaders"](#), there are many conversations needed during change, including self-reflection conversations, planning and managing conversations, and engagement conversations. Conversations create debate, understanding, agreement, and the impetus needed to move people and organizations to embrace change.

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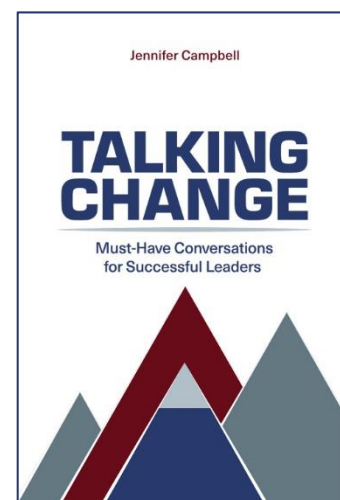
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For an organization to change, each individual needs to decide to change; they must move through a personal transition to accept a new way of doing things. Conversation is the key to support people through transition and help an organization realize the benefits of change. Conversation is also the way for boards and management to stay connected, manage risk, and make the right decisions to move their organizations forward.

Outlined below are five key conversations for board members to have with their management teams during times of change.



[Buy the book here.](#)

Conversation

Details

Key Questions



The Why Conversation – to identify the compelling reason to make change now.

This conversation is needed to uncover the real reasons change is needed now and to outline what success will look like. Your organization may need to respond to regulator requirements, customer feedback, or technology disruption. You will need a compelling reason to change to get people to buy in and commit to the new way.

- Why change?
- Why change now?
- What are the different results we want to achieve?
- What is happening inside or outside of the organization that is driving us to consider change?
- What will success look like? How will we know when we've been successful?



The What, When, and How Conversation – to decide what changes to make, then when, and how the changes will be implemented.

This is the conversation to outline the nuts and bolts of the change – what, when, and how it will happen. The board needs to understand management's implementation plans – timing, resourcing, business impacts, and contingency plans.

- What are the different business and performance results we will achieve with this change?
- What has to happen to achieve the vision for change?
- Who is leading the overall change; how are required activities resourced?
- What is the forecasted budget for the change? How is it being funded?



The Situation Conversation – to assess the magnitude of the change and the readiness of the organization to implement the change.

This conversation will shed light on the predictors of success for implementing the change and realizing the benefits of the change. The size and complexity of your organization, the number of people impacted, the degree of behaviour change required, and the organization's track record for implementing successful change will affect the success of this new change.

- What is the management team's level of buy-in and belief in the change?
- What is the organization's track record for implementing change successfully?
- How many people need to learn new skills or behaviours to achieve the change?



The Stakeholder Conversation – to identify all stakeholders impacted by the change, to understand what they need to do more, better, or differently, and to consider why they might resist the changes.

This conversation is used to identify who is impacted by the change and how, and to understand how they will perceive the change – positively or negatively. People usually focus on what they will lose due to a change before considering what they will gain. Mapping out the possible pros and cons for different audiences will enable leaders to consider where people may resist and how to address resistance to change.

- Who is impacted by the change?
- What will each audience need to know or do differently to execute the change successfully?
- What may cause the different audiences to resist?
- What is planned to gain the commitment of the different audiences?



The Celebration and Thank You Conversation – to celebrate wins during the change process and thank people for their efforts.

Change is a long game. It takes persistence and patience and a bit of celebration along the way. Thanking your management team and encouraging them to celebrate and thank others for positive progress towards the change will help build the stamina needed to realize the ultimate benefits of the change.

- What has the team (or individual) done to contribute to positive change results?
- How will the team (or individual) be recognized for their contributions?