
*Public Sector Reform:
the more things change ...*

Dr Patty Renfrow

UQ BUSINESS SCHOOL



THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

Importance of Organisational Culture

*“The Queensland Police Service is debilitated by misconduct, inefficiency, incompetence, and deficient leadership...The [organisational] **culture** which shares responsibility for this grossly unsatisfactory situation.. includes contempt for the criminal justice system, disdain for the law and rejection of its application to police, disregard for the truth, and abuse of authority.”*
(Fitzgerald Report 1989)

Public Sector Change

- Structural changes
 - changes to the organisational chart
- Process changes
 - changes to systems and procedures
- People changes – the missing link
 - changes to values, attitudes and behaviours
 - organisational culture

Universal Laws & Truths

Third Law of Motion

- *“For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction” -- Isaac Newton*

Third Law of Administrative Reform

- *“For every administrative action, there is a disproportionate and opposite reaction”*

Evidence - Dilbert

“People hate change, and with good reason.”

Why?

“Change makes people stupider, relatively speaking. Change adds new information to the universe; information we don't know. Our knowledge – as a percentage of all the things that we know – goes down a tick every time something changes.”

Incorporating the Human Dimension into Organizational Change

- Leadership
- HRM
- Professional Development
- and
- Persistence

“The lesson that we can learn ... is about culture and values. We can have the most perfect systems and processes in place but they will not be effective unless we also have a strong [culture and] set of values in place...” (Andrew Metcalfe, Secretary of DIAC, August 2007)

Overall Message

To enhance the chances for genuine organizational change, we need to tackle head on – in the design and implementation stages – the human dimension, that is the four elements of:

- Leadership
- HRM
- Professional development, and
- Persistence

So that we move from reforms where *the more things change, the more they stay the same* to reforms where *the more things change, the more things change*.