

# Leading People Through Change

## Participant workbook

# The VUCA Environment<sup>1</sup>

HOW WELL CAN YOU PREDICT THE RESULTS OF YOUR ACTIONS?	<b>complexity</b> <p><b>Characteristics:</b> The situation has many interconnected parts and variables. Some information is available or can be predicted, but the volume or nature of it can be overwhelming to process.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> You are doing business in many countries, all with unique regulatory environments, tariffs, and cultural values.</p> <p><b>Approach:</b> Restructure, bring on or develop specialists, and build up resources adequate to address the complexity.</p>	<b>volatility</b> <p><b>Characteristics:</b> The challenge is unexpected or unstable and may be of unknown duration, but it's not necessarily hard to understand; knowledge about it is often available.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Prices fluctuate after a natural disaster takes a supplier off-line.</p> <p><b>Approach:</b> Build in slack and devote resources to preparedness—for instance, stockpile inventory or overbuy talent. These steps are typically expensive; your investment should match the risk.</p>
	<b>ambiguity</b> <p><b>Characteristics:</b> Causal relationships are completely unclear. No precedents exist; you face "unknown unknowns."</p> <p><b>Example:</b> You decide to move into immature or emerging markets or to launch products outside your core competencies.</p> <p><b>Approach:</b> Experiment. Understanding cause and effect requires generating hypotheses and testing them. Design your experiments so that lessons learned can be broadly applied.</p>	<b>uncertainty</b> <p><b>Characteristics:</b> Despite a lack of other information, the event's basic cause and effect are known. Change is possible but not a given.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> A competitor's pending product launch muddies the future of the business and the market.</p> <p><b>Approach:</b> Invest in information—collect, interpret, and share it. This works best in conjunction with structural changes, such as adding information analysis networks, that can reduce ongoing uncertainty.</p>
	HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE SITUATION?	

It's become a trendy managerial acronym: VUCA, short for *volatility*, *uncertainty*, *complexity*, and *ambiguity*, and a catchall for "Hey, it's crazy out there!"

It's also misleading: VUCA conflates four distinct types of challenges that demand four distinct types of responses. That makes it difficult to know how to approach a challenging situation and easy to use VUCA as a crutch, a way to throw off the hard work of strategy and planning—after all, you can't prepare for a VUCA world, right?

Actually, you can. Above is a guide to identifying, getting ready for, and responding to events in each of the four VUCA categories.

## Don't Be a VUCA Leader<sup>2</sup>

The most certain thing about VUCA is that you do not want to be described in this way.

If you are a **volatile leader**, your changing and erratic behaviours will drive good people away.

If you are an **uncertain leader**, your changing directions will frustrate people and lead them to question your capabilities.

If you are a **complex leader**, no one will get to know you or your expectations. There is a clear danger of aloofness.

If you are an **ambiguous leader**, your lack of clarity in what is expected will stymie people from being engaged.

<sup>1</sup> From "What VUCA Really Means for You": Nathan Bennett & G. James Lemoine, Harvard Business Review, January/February 2014, found at <https://hbr.org/2014/01/what-vuca-really-means-for-you>

<sup>2</sup> From "VUCA Times Call for DURT Leaders:" John Mertz, May 2014, found at <https://www.thindifference.com/2014/05/vuca-times-call-durt-leaders/>

Being a VUCA leader is not the type of leader you want to be. Leaders need to be **Reliable, Trustworthy, Direct, Understandable**.

VUCA is a reality, requiring leaders to engage the times fully. A Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous environment translates into the need for Direct, Understandable, Reliable, and Trustworthy leaders.

## Leading Through VUCA

Speaking   Listening	<b>Be Direct</b> in complex situations  Transparency in information communicated and received will gain mutual trust and collaborative efforts.	<b>Be Understandable</b> in ambiguous situations  Clarity in purpose, direction, and responsibilities will empower others.
	<b>Be Reliable</b> in volatile situations  Follow through on what is said and agreed to will accelerate positive momentum.	<b>Be Trustworthy</b> in uncertain situations  Invest in people, keep teams engaged, involve partners, seek to understand, speak to be understood, act with respect always.

Philosophy | Values

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## Notes

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## The Change Curve<sup>3</sup>

Leaders and managers need to help and support people through transitions, which can sometimes be traumatic, and involve loss of identity. The easier you can make this journey for people, the more likely you are to be successful in leading through change.

The Change Curve is a popular and powerful model used to understand the stages of personal transition. It helps predict how people will react to change, so that you can help them make their own personal transitions.

Here are some of the features of each stage of the curve. Write down how you would communicate and support people who are in each stage.

Shock (Numbness)	
Features	How would you communicate and support?
Initial stop in the tracks	.....
Overwhelmed	.....
Uncertain how to react	.....
Rational debate not possible (amygdala/emotional brain)	.....
Much of what is said is unheard – deletions, distortions and generalisations	..... .....

Denial	
Features	How would you communicate and support?
“Won’t affect me” / “it won’t happen”	.....
Hark back to ‘the good old days’	.....
Inappropriate euphoria, fantasy	.....
Same behaviour – even if the situation has changed	.....
Trivialise and joke about the situation	..... .....

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<sup>3</sup> From “The Change Curve, Accelerating Change, and Increasing Its Likelihood of Success”, found at [https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newPPM\\_96.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newPPM_96.htm)

## Frustration (Self-doubt, Anger)

### Features

### How would you communicate and support?

Feels like things are slipping away

Can't find easy answers

Old ways don't work any more

Knee jerk reactions, withdrawal, explosions

Reactions to minor issues aren't proportionate

Feelings of powerlessness and lack of control

## Depression

### Features

### How would you communicate and support?

Low morale.

Feelings hard to express as impact of what has been lost is acknowledged.

Apathy, isolation, remoteness, low performance.

Fixation on small issues / problems – to the detriment of day-to-day tasks

## Experiment

### Features

### How would you communicate and support?

Experimenting with new behaviours

Looking for answers, experts and best practice

Lots of energy

Impatient with the pace of change

Uncertain about what creates success

## Acceptance

### Features

Acceptance of the change and what is required to adapt

Increased reality

Less emotional

Resigned to future – but looking toward it

How would you communicate and support?

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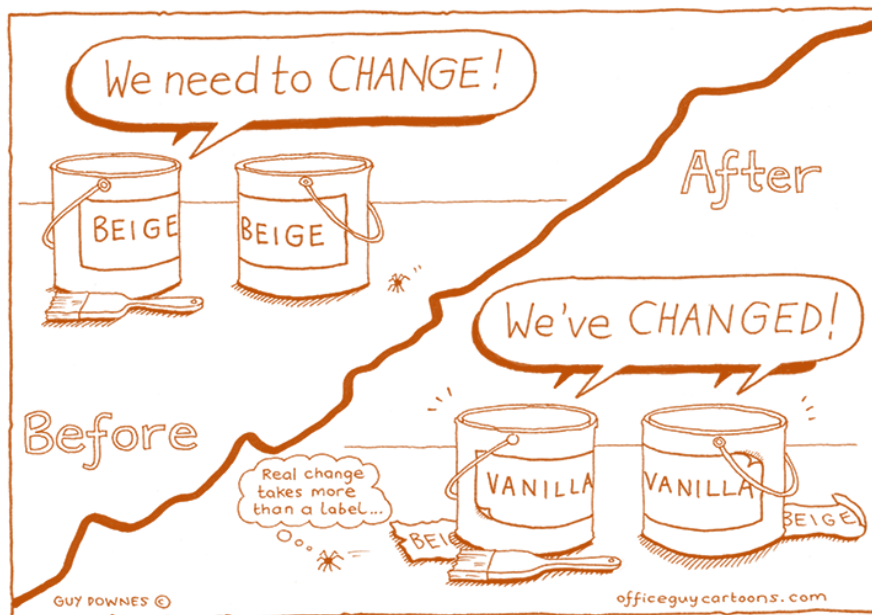
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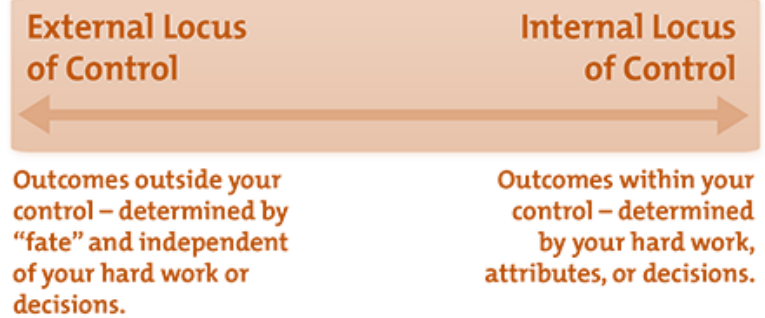
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## Locus of Control (Julian Rotter)<sup>4</sup>

Locus of control describes the degree to which individuals perceive that outcomes result from their own behaviours, or from forces that are external to themselves.

People who tend to have an internal locus of control believe that they are responsible for their own success. Those with an external locus of control believe that external forces, like luck, determine their outcomes. The following descriptions are taken from the article cited below.



### Internal Locus of Control

People who have a strong internal locus of control will likely feel that they are in full control of the events in their lives. They are usually self-motivated and focused on achieving the goals they have set. For these reasons, people with a strong internal locus of control often make good leaders.

However, there is a potential downside to having a very strong internal locus of control. Powerful self-belief may mean that these people may find it difficult to take direction, they should be careful to avoid seeming arrogant or “walking over” other people in pursuit of objectives. They should also be sure to manage risks properly – random events do occur for all sorts of reasons.

A very strong internal drive may lead people to believe that they can control everything, and if plans don’t work out they may feel responsible for their failure – even when events were genuinely beyond their control. This can lead to frustration, anxiety and, in extreme cases, stress or depression.

People who have a moderate locus of control will tend to see their future as being in their own hands. As a result, they engage in activities that will improve their situation: they work hard to develop knowledge, skills and abilities, and they take note of information that they can use to create positive outcomes.

### External Locus of Control

People with an external locus of control may likely believe that what happens to them is the result of luck or fate, or is determined by people in authority. They

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<sup>4</sup> From Locus of Control, Are You in Charge of Your Destiny? Found at [https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCDV\\_90.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCDV_90.htm)

may tend to give up when life doesn't "go their way," because they don't feel that you have the power to change it.

To overcome this, these individuals should pay attention to 'self-talk'. When they think things like "I have no choice," or "There's nothing I can do," they should step back and remind themselves that people can always make choices. It is a good idea for them to set goals and note how they are making positive changes in life by working toward and achieving these goals. In these cases, self-confidence quickly builds.

People with an external locus of control may find it useful to develop their decision making and problem solving skills. These tools can enable them to take greater ownership of situations, rather than blaming circumstances or forces "beyond their control" when things go wrong.

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Few people have a wholly internal or external locus of control: most of us fall somewhere between the two ends of the spectrum. Your locus of control may vary in different situations – at work and at home, for example – and it may change over time. People often tend toward a more internal locus of control as they grow older and their ability to influence the events in their lives increases.

Having a moderate, rather than strong, internal locus of control may make you more able to accept situations that you can't influence, and to manage them effectively when they arise.

- What are the implications of this concept on how you communicate change?
- How would you be mindful of someone with an external locus of control?
- How would you be mindful of someone with an internal locus of control?





## The Leader as the Communicator<sup>5</sup>

Leaders are critical in inspiring others and gaining trust – two essential leadership skills. This is particularly relevant when communicating change.

An example of how not to do communicate could be ex-prime minister Gordon Brown. Brown could be talking about an exciting new plan, but any enthusiasm would be lost in a somewhat dour look and flat intonation. Throw in a fake smile that makes people cringe and the leader and message are not only dull and uninspiring, they can look false.

To gain trust, leaders need to show that they can listen and that they care – former US president Barack Obama is very skilled at this. Non-verbally, he asks his audience: ‘Did you get that? Can I go on?’ Looking to establish understanding.

Think about a time when you were going through a change or challenging situation at work.

How was your manager’s communication manner with you?

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How did they make you feel?

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<sup>5</sup> From “Why leaders still need voice and body language” Harriet Heneghan, People Management, Jan 2018, found at <https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/voices/comment/why-leaders-still-need-voice-and-body-language>

How did you know you were supported?

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What did you learn from this in terms of your communication?

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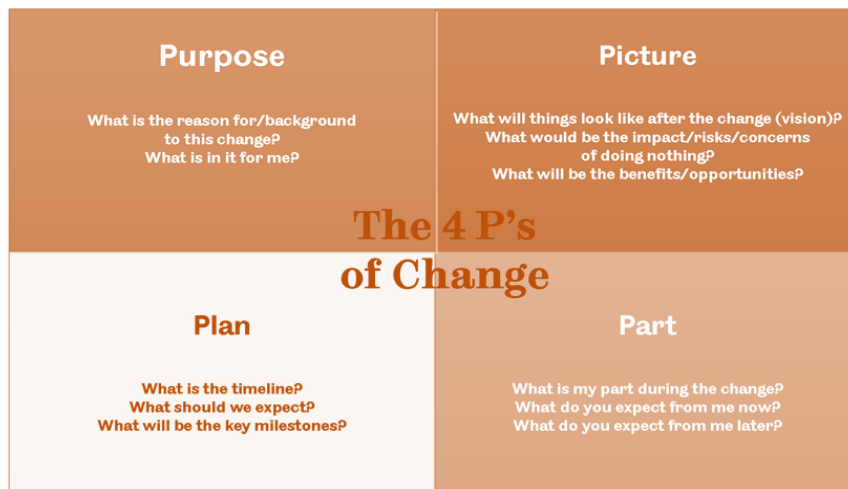
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## William Bridge's 4 P's<sup>6</sup>



According to William Bridges' influential book *Managing Transitions*, one of the best ways managers can effectively deal with the normal anxiety that's brought on by change is to thoroughly explain "The Four Ps"

### Purpose:

Why are we doing this? What problem are we solving? What are we trying to accomplish? People often need to understand the logic of a change before they can change.

### Picture:

What is the end game? How is it going to work? What is changing and what isn't? People often need to imagine what the change will look like before they can give their hearts to it.

### Plan:

What is the road map for getting to where we need to go? What is going to happen over the next X months? What happens first, second, third? People need a clear idea of how they are going to get to where they need to go.

### Part:

What is my role? How will I be involved? Do I have an opportunity for input into the plan? When will I be trained? People need a tangible way to contribute.

By providing information about the four Ps in all your communications, you'll help your team understand why the change is necessary, what it looks like, how you're all going to get there, and how they fit in.

Keep in mind that during times of transition, your communication isn't just about sharing information. It's also about how you use your communication to connect with your employees, let them know you care and build their commitment to the change.

<sup>6</sup> From The 4 Ps of change and transition Marty Jordan and Rory Cellucci, April 2014, found at <http://blog.linkageinc.com/blog/the-4-ps-of-change-and-transition/>

## Crafting your Key Messages

Using the scenario below, **apply the 4 P's** and describe how you intend to engage staff in the change. Discuss how you would address likely concerns, and the likely reactions of individuals.

As a leadership team, you have decided to restructure part of your department, given the drive to reduce costs across the organisation of which your department is a part.

A group of ten people within your department of 30 currently administer expenses. The process is complicated, paper based and inflexible. You propose to automate this process. The people working in the team have been there for some time, and are very used to their way of working. Furthermore, the new process will require the group to develop a more complex skill set.

You want to promote this as an example of your department embracing change and utilising new technology. It will also lead to greater employee self-service – and empowerment – for those submitting their expenses. The new structure, with fewer people and new technology will be more cost efficient (after the initial investment in new technology), and should provide more interesting jobs for those doing them. It will also position your department as a driver of change and one which has embraced your organisation's strategic goals.

Using the 4P model, how will you communicate this change to your team?

### Notes

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## Reviewing Change<sup>7</sup>

It is vital to not just plan and implement change, but to also take a step back and fully evaluate the process undertaken. Additionally, it is imperative to gain feedback from everyone involved and communicate / share lessons learned.

The section on Reviewing Change in the Change Management Toolkit on StaffNet has a range of tools and advice to help review change, outline what you need to do, and how it can be done. Including:

### What do you need to do?

- Seek and analyse feedback from everyone involved in the change process
- Consider and share lessons learnt (both positive and negative)
- Determine how satisfied key stakeholders are with the end results
- Fully consider whether the restructure or change has fully solved what it was seeking to address
- Carry out compliance audits on new processes, systems and job roles
- Implement any corrective measures and communicate the reasons for these, setting up visible working groups to work on problem areas

### Top tips

- ✓ Revisit original aims and assess whether these have been met
- ✓ Seek honest and open feedback on the whole process
- ✓ Collect and analyse feedback at the correct point (i.e. not too early on in the process but not too late either)
- ✓ Diagnose any gaps in knowledge/skills/understanding and develop opportunity to fill these gaps
- ✓ Set up visible working groups to work on problem areas
- ✓ Consider and share lessons learnt
- ✓ Celebrate success
- ✓ Draw a formal line under the process

### How is this done?

- Consider the correct appropriate methods to gather the required review data (e.g. questionnaires, focus groups)
- Consider using an 'external' independent reviewer to devise review mechanism
- Include as many people as possible in the review process

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<sup>7</sup> From the Change Management Toolkit on StaffNet, found at <http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/staff-learning-and-development/academicandresearch/practical-skills-and-knowledge/change-management/reviewing/>

## Your Action Plan:

Use this page to record your notes on Action Plan from this session

ACTION PLAN			
WHO	WHAT	WHEN	HOW

What are your two or three key learning points from today?

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What will you take and use immediately?

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What opportunities do you have to put your new skills into practice?

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What is important to you about using these new skills?

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What difference will using these skills make to you personally?

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What challenges might you need to think through?

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**A**ction  
**C**hanges  
**T**hings

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