

HR insights podcast

Series 8 | Episode 4

PSA: This transcript has been written with assistance from AI.

Managing the shift: navigating change in a constantly evolving world

[00:25.8]

Hi, everyone. Welcome back to HR Insights. My name is Stuart Elliott and I will be your host today on our show. Today we are going to talk everything. Change management. In a recent HR Trends report that we ran with Capfinity, we highlighted that top priority for CEOs was change management.

[00:42.2]

Today we are joined by Friska Wer. Frisker is a multiple award winning change management consultant. She's a top 50 global change management thought leader, a TEDX speaker, a triple bestselling author, of the Future Fit organization, A leader's Guide to Transformation, and has been featured in the Sydney Morning Herald, the Straits Times, the Australian Financial Review and the CEO magazine.

[01:03.9]

Prisca's second book, the Future Fit Asian Organization Balancing Tradition with Transformation, was published by Penguin Random House and became the number one bestseller in Indonesia within weeks of its release. We are really lucky to have Friska on the show today. She is a wonderful guest, a total expert when it comes to anything change management.

[01:22.3]

I hope you enjoy the show. If you have any questions, please do contact me. Thanks a lot.

[01:33.9]

Hi, Frisco. Welcome to the show. Thanks so much for having me. It's nice to see you in person. Yeah, I know it feels a bit weird actually, because obviously we've done this before, but it's been always, on teams or zoom, I think last time. Yeah, it's been a few times. Yeah, yeah. For our audience, do you want to give a little intro into you and your background? Sure.

[01:50.1]

I'm Friska and I'm the founder of Future Fit Ventures. So it's a change management consulting advisory firm. Also a training, and facilitation service. Basically I manage changes for very large organizations for a living. I'm their trusted change partner.

[02:06.9]

I'm a global top 50 change management thought leader. Published two best selling books on the topic. And my most recent creation is Future Talk, which is a card game designed for leaders to help facilitate more real, raw and honest conversations about what's changing in the workplace. Very cool.

[02:22.3]

Winter card game. How does that, how does that go? So in over a decade of experience, you know, making change happen for some of the world's most conservative organizations, I've realized that change happens one conversation at a time. And if you're not asking the right questions in the right way, then you'll never get the right answers.

[02:40.8]

And when you don't get the right answers, how are you supposed to create the best strategy to move your organization forward? Y. So it's based on my experience, 86 carefully curated questions across six categories. Like leadership is one of them. Capability is another one.

[02:56.0]

Culture is another one. Yeah. So it's like a workshop in a box. A DNM in a box. Very cool. Yeah. And did you. That's all your. Your own idea that sort of came to you one day, did it? Yeah, yeah, yeah. It came one day when I was walking along the beach in Bali. I have all the best ideas when I'm walking along the beach in Bali.

[03:16.6]

That's very cool. And you're here in London, aren't you? You've been invited to London, correct? Yes, yes, yes. I, was, thrilled to be invited to keynote at Europe's Business Transformation and Change Conference. So that wrapped up this week. Yeah, that's, that's a big deal. And we were talking just off air just a moment ago and you said, it sounds like you're coming back next year as well.

[03:35.1]

Yeah, I had some really amazing, feedback, great reviews. So I'm pretty sure I'll be back in the UK sooner rather than later. Yeah, very Very cool. And outside of work, what do you do outside of work? I have a new puppy. Oh, my God, I love dogs. What do you have?

[03:50.5]

A mini poodle. Okay. Very cool. Yeah, her name's Boba, so she takes up a lot of my time. I work very hard to keep her in the lifestyle she has become accustomed to. I have no doubt about that. Yeah. Yeah, other than that, I live in Bali, so it's a beautiful place.

[04:05.6]

I'm, I'm still in exploratory mode, so take little staycations and trips everywhere. Yeah, very, very cool. And when we, when we last recorded, I've stolen a phrase from you and I think we were posting about it on LinkedIn. Clarity is kindness. It's, it's a phrase that you mentioned to me on the last podcast and I've used it so much and I think you saw from the post how much traction that got.

[04:26.8]

So, yeah, if anyone is actually listening that wants to re. Listen to that, it was a really interesting conversation the first time around when we, when we spoke about that. Let's make some merch. Yeah, like, yeah, I like that. Couple of T shirts. I feel like I know I've got a white T shirt today. I feel like I could definitely do that. Very cool. But today we obviously want to talk about change, and I think we wanted to make it relevant to, I suppose, what we're seeing in the market as well.

[04:49.7]

I suppose over the last two years we've seen, I suppose downsizing has become pretty commonplace. So I suppose, how, how does change then? How do you make downsizing look good?

[05:05.1]

Because it doesn't sound good. Everyone's worried about their jobs, everyone's nervous. And we've seen some companies do it really badly. 100%. Yeah. So how do you make it look good in today's world? I don't think it can look good. Good. But let's not pretend that it's an amazing thing for everybody.

[05:21.5]

I don't think you need to roll it in, glitter. I think you just need to be honest and really be, patient with people. Because when we go through any mega, life changes, it could be a death of a loved one, it could be a divorce, it could be a bankruptcy, it could be a layoff.

[05:36.9]

Of course it's going to sting really, really bad. But sometimes that person will realize a year, two years from now it was the best thing that could have ever happened with them. So they're not going to get to that realization overnight. And that's totally okay. Yeah. And, you know, leaders often get shy.

[05:54.4]

Well, not get shy, really. Do not like confrontation or when people show emotions. But change is not just code as eight steps. It's not just the McKinsey 7s. It is an emotional process and people will go up and down. It's not, it's not a personal attack at you when people get angry.

[06:11.8]

And it's because really, if we stop pushing down and ignoring our emotions, and instead we're open to acknowledging and processing them, we'll stop regarding change as an exploitation and realize it's really an exploration of what's possible. Yeah. Because when I look at it at the moment, with a lot of the downsizing that's happening, I'd say a couple of years ago, I think some of the downsizing was pretty obvious.

[06:34.5]

Companies have got too big. There were too many people, especially in recruitment teams. We saw. I think it was, meta expanded and then had to downsize. Over the last year, though, a lot of the downsizing has been more sort of operational excellence or trying to make profits go along a lot further. Yeah.

[06:53.8]

How do you keep doing that, though? Because surely that must be demoralizing for employees to have to go through that on a continual basis. How do you keep cutting, cutting and, and this is one of my bugbears. Right. Just because you've got less people doesn't mean you're more profitable. Right.

[07:10.0]

I think numbers only tell one side of the story. If you're only looking at profits, but maybe it took them three times longer. You know, like, there's a lot of things that are not visible to the naked eye. And I think just looking at it purely from a lens of headcount and profits, it's.

[07:26.2]

It's not the full picture. And how to keep. And at the end of the day, if you keep cutting people and not letting them have the opportunity to upskill, reskill, get redeployed, then it's going to be like the boy that cried wolf. You're never going to be able to regain that positivity back. Yeah.

[07:43.5]

So the good thing is you can course correct. But you know, like anything, like, if you realize you're going in the wrong direction, it's going to cost you more money to get back to your original destination. So the sooner you realize it, you need to pivot and start communicating and managing change differently.

[07:59.0]

I suppose it links into the next question, actually. I suppose what are, what are the common mistakes leaders make, I suppose, when managing change? What would they be? If you could list them almost. Number one, head and shoulders above the rest, is the human element element. Like, what I think it was a year or two years ago when Musk bought Twitter. Yeah.

[08:18.3]

He fired everyone via email. Like that's a classic master case on what not to do. It's like people that break up, you know, five year relationships over text. It's just not the done thing. So I'd say the human element is one, number two is being vague about what the future is.

[08:38.0]

Three is not offering support, especially in the cases of, downsizing or. Right. Sizing as some people call it. Yeah, yeah. Touching on the human element that you mentioned there. I suppose the counter argument for a lot of big corporates would say if we want to do something, we want to do it quickly and efficiently.

[08:54.0]

So if we want to get rid of a thousand people, just pull a number out. It's easy just to do it instantly and remove that human element. Is there an argument for that or is that not the way to do it at all? Quickly and easily doesn't mean you badly. Okay. And it may look like it's quick. Yeah.

[09:11.0]

But it can bite you in the ass. You could be splashed on the front page of the Financial Times, for example. And this was one of my projects that I was one way back when I worked for an electricity, retailer. They, So fun fact, there's 20 types of inspections a person can do on a wooden power pole.

[09:30.7]

Yeah, Right. And so it was an efficiency project because there's 20 inspections and there's like seven different people to do that. Now the change was they wanted one person who would be trained up in all these types of inspections automatically. That whittles the workforce down significantly.

[09:48.5]

And they were very honest with people. They said, look, this is what we're aiming to do. We're giving you the opportunity. And a lot of these people had, been doing the same thing for like 50 years. And because they were given the opportunity, some of them actually put their hand up and opted out. They said, no, you know, I've had a good career here.

[10:05.6]

I'm not interested in learning about A, B and C. I'll take the package and go. And one of them wrote a really long heartfelt letter to the CEO and pretty much cc'd the entire company. That letter was on the front page of the Sunday Times.

[10:22.4]

And from then on they were in the employer of choice. Wow. Okay. So, you know, shortcuts, can deceptively look like it's saving you time, saving you money. But there's a lot of hidden cost to that.

[10:38.2]

Yeah, there is. I suppose the other counter is it's once you tell one person about the downsizing project, let's say it gets out. Yes. Immediately. That's better to, get on the front foot. Right. If you don't say anything, someone else is going to say it for you. So take control of the narrative. Right. Okay.

[10:54.3]

So get in front of it, communicate early and, you know, and I understand people want things, people chop, done quickly, efficiency, etc. Etc. I'm not saying you need to hold people's hands and listen to them cry for five hours. I'm just saying don't do it so rapidly with just an email or a text.

[11:13.8]

Like, give an explanation. Why give options, where to go from here. Yeah. So even even at a big firm, when you're doing this on a big, I suppose a large scale, still go through that process. Yes. Yeah. Okay. Wow. Very, very.

[11:28.9]

It's really interesting because I can, I can see it from both sides, but the more you say it, the more that makes, a lot of sense. What does? So if we go into detail about positive change management, you've explained it and sort of said that it is possible. What does it look like then?

[11:45.0]

To both, I suppose, internal employees and external. So if we're using the example of laying people off and downsizing and etc. Positive change management there is about being empathetic, being patient, holding the space, and really listening to them, not just broadcasting, this is what's going to happen, and listen to them.

[12:11.0]

So I remember I had to let go, of a team member. And I did it in a way where I just held the space for her. Like she, she got emotional, she cried a little bit. I let her ask questions and I gave her the time to process it. But I was very firm in my, decision.

[12:29.6]

One of the questions she asked was, can we try for another two weeks? And I said, no. Right. But I'll give you either this or this. And it was either paying out her contract or helping her with some other thing. Anyway, long story short, she, she said, can I sleep on it? I said, of course.

[12:44.7]

She came back the next day and said, thank you so much. You gave me my dignity. I maintained my dignity while we had that conversation. Yeah. So that's all it takes. It doesn't take a long time. It just takes you being comfortable in the discomfort as a leader. Yeah. Yes.

[13:02.5]

I think, I think it's tough. It's always a difficult conversation though, isn't it? Like, I think whenever you're doing this, there's not an easy conversation for anyone, is there? No, it's not. Yeah, I think, I think people forget that you're going to have to do these conversations. It's trying to do it in the, in the kindest way possible. And remember, sometimes people are not ready for you to pep them up.

[13:23.0]

Like I remember overhearing a conversation and this person had been let go and this other guy goes, oh, you know, in a year from now you'll, you'll be so glad this happened or so. And so was let go too. And then he ended up doing abc. More amazing things like let them have their moment.

[13:40.1]

Like if they're really, really sad, let them be sad. Don't try to, otherwise you're invalidating what they feel. Right. You know, so let them process in their own time. Because everybody works to a different timeline. And, and do you think that as we. Common message I'm hearing at the moment is operational efficiency.

[13:59.2]

So some companies got too big and then had to cut back. Now it seems like we're going to tighten our belts ever more every single year. So they're either relocating, operations to a lower cost location. So, and, and so is we always going to live in this sort of state of change at the moment?

[14:16.0]

Is that just going to continue? I think change is the next normal, yes. But the constant tightening I don't think is going to last forever. Because I was on a operational efficiency program that I would say failed completely.

[14:32.3]

So a big engineering company, wanted to save 30% of costs and they said, you know, we're going to take any non essential engineering work in Australia, the uk, us we're going to farm it out to a lower cost country. So it's not apples to apples.

[14:49.2]

Yeah, like a London educated engineer is not the same as, you know, another educated engineer from, from a different country with a different degree. And we realized then, that just because we were saving the dollars, we actually lost a lot of productivity.

[15:05.7]

There's a huge learning curve that comes associated with that because you know, people are used to work, engineers and drafters are used to working shoulder to shoulder and they just ask a question, they speak the same language and now there's the language barrier and the cultural barrier and the time zone difference as well.

[15:20.9]

So it's, it's not as simple as lift and shift cheaper. Everybody's happy and touched on culture. Actually we're going to come to that a little bit. We might as well, jump into it straight away. How, how do you see, do you see change? Globally, I suppose. Is it very different based on the culture or, the environment that you're in?

[15:39.1]

Extremely frustratingly so. Right. And any good examples of that would be great, actually. Do you have any? Yeah. So, for example, the Asian culture and the Western culture. So I remember, being on site with the gm.

[15:56.3]

He was Canadian. Yeah. And he had just been in, parachuted in, toled a site. Indonesia. It's far east Indonesia, like in the Bunis. And his entire leadership team was Indonesian too. Right. And you know, he was like, look, we're, we're, we've got a 2020 vision that we're going to create and I, want you all involved and I want your ideas and blah, blah, blah.

[16:18.1]

He's like, all right, open the floor. Let's hear it. Crickets. Like, come on, And he's like, frisco, what did I do wrong? I said, well, first of all, like, giving feedback or giving input in the Asian culture is not a comfortable process.

[16:36.6]

It's seen as criticism and we don't want to offend the boss. And I said, look, you can't just spring it on to people. You got to let them warm up, like, so they can come to the meeting pre prepared with their thoughts, you know, so it's like, okay, okay, I'll, I'll remind them that this is what I expect.

[16:52.4]

He did the exact same thing. He's like, all right, guys, this is what I'm trying to do. Let's hear it. The exact same thing happened. He was tearing his hair. He's like, I don't know what to do. And I said, look, you can't expect people that are doing things the same way for like 30 years, never lived abroad, not educated abroad, to suddenly snap to your way of thinking and doing so.

[17:14.2]

It takes time, it takes patience. And I said, but the best way to develop, relationships and friendships in the Indonesian culture is through food. So it means a lot if you have lunch with us, if you wear our traditional butt dik, etc, etc, And I'm like, look, it's not going to come overnight, but people will start to feel more comfortable with you.

[17:33.5]

And I said, gamify it. So I did gamify it. It was very simple. There was a red, red circle, a red dot. And he said, everybody, no one is leaving this room without going on the red dot and having their turn at giving some feedback, giving some, some advice on how to improve things.

[17:53.0]

So this is the thing, it doesn't happen overnight, but it does happen. It needs commitment, it needs consistency. And especially if there's a wide, widely differing culture, it takes time for them to build that trust. Yeah. They need to know that they're not going to be, you know, that their head's not going to be blown off for critiquing, the boss or they think it's critiquing, but really it's suggesting and feedback.

[18:13.6]

Yeah. On, on the flip side of more Western cultures, I find that there's almost too many voices, too many opinions. Is that, is that. I see that a lot. Do you see that as well then? Yes, in some, organizations for sure. And it's just a matter of channeling, that, like if it's taking too much noise, don't, don't have an open forum at a town hall.

[18:34.5]

Have, have like a suggestion box or have a, have an app where people can put forward suggestions and use AI that will automatically come up, like group the words into themes. So, you know, the main buckets where people's pain points or what they're happy about is. Yeah, yeah. That would save a lot of time and a lot of noise.

[18:50.7]

And there is a difference between giving people a voice and giving people a vote. Okay, so not everybody needs to have a vote, right? Yeah. Yeah. As I said, the cultures are so different. When I, when I lived in Hong Kong, I relate exactly what you were saying about Indonesia just now because that's exactly what we used to see all the time.

[19:08.2]

It's interesting. Just look at the clock.

[20:09.7]

We've been going 17 minutes now and we nearly got through 20 minutes without mentioning AI. But it's interesting. It just, it came up and look, every, everybody's talking about it. How, how then are we gonna now how is AI going to get incorporated in organizations? Because all I can see is that's coming.

[20:27.8]

But that's just going to mean more change management. Correct. And in a number of different ways. Whether that's new systems, new processes, new jobs, it could make some jobs redundant as well. So how, how are we going to future proof leaders to be, I suppose, change management experts?

[20:50.7]

I think when it comes to, I think leaders don't know what managing change is. So the first point is really educating them that it's not just about signing off on budgets or speaking at a town hall. They do have a role to play, and that is five different roles.

[21:07.6]

They are a coach, they're a liaison, they're an advocate, they're a resistance manager. And they're a communicator. So it's actually five roles that a leader has in change. And like anything there's the great thing about existing in today's world is that education is so democratized now you want to learn about change management, you don't have to enroll into a Harvard course.

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Like there's books, there's podcasts, there's so many things readily available. But what I find a lot of, organizations fall over is that there's a difference between knowing and the difference between doing so. I was in Hong Kong just last month.

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I ran a two day workshop on, on Leading Change, a group of 50 people from all around the world. Very multicultural, workforce. Now they realize that those learnings need to be applied and if you don't apply them, you're going to forget them. So like anything, it can't just be a shot in the arm approach.

[22:01.2]

It needs to be a whole program to elevate change capability. But if people are worried about losing their jobs from the AI, is there a tendency almost to then avoid it? Because actually you're worried about it taking people's jobs and positions rather than embracing it and then integrating it into an organization? There is.

[22:21.6]

And with any new tool, there's a fear it will take people's role. Like when the calculator was first invented, people thought accountants would be out of a job. They're not right? AI is just a tool for us to do our jobs. It's not replacing our jobs. So I think also this is why I think that, you know, the future, the future fit organizations are feeling organizations because they're not scared of the F word.

[22:45.9]

They understand that it's a journey that people go through. And when you understand why people push back, it's the fight or flight response because they're scared. And usually they're scared because one or more of these six P's are at threat. And the first is obviously position. Am I going to be out of a job?

[23:02.3]

Second is pay. Am I going to lose my bonus? Is it, am I not going to meet my targets? Third is performance. Is it going to be harder for me to achieve the same or better level of performance protection? So maybe this person was a whiz at, I don't know, Excel. And now who the hell needs Excel anymore when there was AI tools?

[23:20.9]

So they're like, who am I? Then prestige. So maybe they had a very prestigious role. Big team, big budgets, et cetera, don't need that anymore because of AI. So all of these human elements are what's bubbling underneath the surface when people push back.

[23:36.9]

So it's up to us as leaders to understand and acknowledge these fears and address them. Yeah. While we're talking about AI, have you seen anything revolutionary in the AI space that any companies have integrated or explored yet?

[23:55.3]

So one of my clients, I can't remember what the tool it was that they used, but they did a, quite a large feedback gathering process and whatever tool they use was able to synthesize all these data inputs and it spat it back at you in a two minute dialogue.

[24:17.6]

Literally like two people chatting. It's like, hey, did you know the results were like blah, blah, blah, blah. So that was really interesting. So rather than sifting through all these numbers, you know, because they were both qualitative and quantitative measures. Yeah. It digested it. Yeah. That's pretty amazing. Yeah.

[24:34.3]

Sentiment. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I've not seen trying to, we're trying to play around with a few things ourselves and obviously things like co pilot. Now I'm getting used to and starting to really like. And I have to. I know what you do, but I do that summary in the morning where I'm like, can you, can you summarize my emails for me? And I love it.

[24:51.0]

Like it's super useful, gets me sort of on track, gets me focused on what's really important. And then even just chat gbt. I actually was working with Hannah on something the other day and I just asked it to do a proposal and it took me five minutes. Like there's certain things that I think are really good but a lot of people are saying that we're only scratching the surface with it.

[25:10.3]

How do we, how do we encourage leaders to be more inquisitive? How do we get them to embrace AI? I suppose properly, I think you can't keep adding things onto a leader's plate without taking something away.

[25:27.0]

Right. Because our ability to absorb information is two and a half times less than pre pandemic levels. Like our surge capacity is completely deleted. Where information overload, we've got dwindling attention spans. Not to mention, to mention everyone's got this pressure, to keep doing more with less. Yeah.

[25:42.8]

So I mean it doesn't take long. Like experimenting with AI, even just 20 minutes a day is going to help. But if someone's already that busy, they almost need to be given like a playbook or a set of exercises to go through. Y. Yeah, yeah. So that's what I would, I would say if you want your leaders to Be more embracing, make it easy for them.

[26:01.4]

Like provide clear and clear instructions or directives or objectives. Yeah. Yes. Again, it's an interesting. Because I always find that the younger generation are, better with technology as a general rule. I'm generalizing quite a bit. And the older, more experienced generation, maybe not so good with that, but yet they're the ones managing the younger generation who are the ones that embrace the technology. Yeah.

[26:23.4]

There needs to be some more mentoring happening. 100%. Right? Okay. Yeah. Because in, and I talked about this in my keynote earlier this week. In any organization, there's four main archetypes I'd call them. The first is the Glory Days Guardians, where as its name suggests, they always look at, they've got two feet in the past.

[26:44.1]

They're always looking backwards. Okay. So they're usually generation X or baby boomers. Yeah. They grew up in a non digital environment, so they, don't know anything else. Yeah. You know, and given my background in mining, every single board member fell into this bucket. They were male, pale and stale. Right. They kept on wanting to try strategies and approaches that work for them in their glory days. Right.

[27:04.0]

That was like 40 to 50 years ago. And so the point is, if you're always looking backwards at the good old days, how are you even supposed to have the energy and the capacity to create the even better days that are yet to come? Yeah. And then the second, archetype we have are the professional pessimists. Okay.

[27:21.1]

So these people, they have a knee jerk reaction to anything new. Innovative. One of two words. Nup. Yeah, a lot of these negative nellies, glass half, half empty, sort of Nelly. I love that phrase. Yeah. Okay. And it's, it's a real shame because they have a lot of organizational knowledge. Yeah.

[27:39.4]

But they're just not motivated, don't have the creativity to kind of vision board a new way of operating. Okay. The third archetype which is the most common as well are the caged champions. Okay. So these are people that want to make change in the business, but can't either because they're not set up for success.

[27:57.3]

They don't have a budget, they don't have strong relationships, they don't have a sponsor. And they may lack the digital knowledge and capability. So I see this a lot, especially in young graduates. Right. You know, like on, on the outside, the recruiter's like, oh, yeah, we're disruptively innovated. But then they realize what the recruiter meant by disruptive innovation is waiting six months to Change the coffee brand in the lunchroom.

[28:18.0]

Like, not really what they had in mind. Now, last but not least, but also the rarest of all breeds are the transformation titans. So these are people that are, technically brilliant, but also have the people skills and they empower to drive success. Right. So they're well researched, they're well thought out.

[28:34.9]

They have a strategy for how, innovation or technology can be used in the business and a budget to actually execute the darn thing. So they're ready to drive change in a big way. So I'm not, not saying get rid of anyone in your people stack, but some leadership teams are very heavily dominant in the glory days Guardians.

[28:53.6]

Right. So you need a mix. The past is important, but you can't build a future solely around nostalgia. Yeah, yeah, absolutely, I think. Yes. And of those, of those four is, do you want a sort of a straightforward split of 25% across the organization or are you trying to find a different balance to that?

[29:12.5]

I think it depends on your organization. Okay. On your industry and the amount of disruption you're facing. Right, yeah. Because naturally, I'm assuming the boards that you work with are full of those glory days guys. Correct? Yeah. Yeah. So how do you get more of the others onto a board?

[29:30.3]

Is that possible? It's really hard because the, the entry requirements to even get on the board in the first place, very prohibitive. Yeah. They always ask you for already an ASX listed experience, and then you have to have this particular piece of paper accreditation.

[29:46.3]

And it's not just structurally prohibitive, it's financially prohibitive as well. Because the AICD course is about 10,000 Aussie dollars. You know, so if we want more minority people from minority backgrounds, if we want more women, then we need to change the selection criteria to begin with.

[30:01.8]

Yeah, yeah. And they also heavily skew towards, traditional, backgrounds like a lawyer, a banker, a financier. Yeah. Accountant. Yeah. Which is why often when big disruptive changes happen, they're blindsided because there's no one with an empathetic backbone.

[30:21.7]

There's no one looking at other stakeholders. There's no one looking at not just what's changing in the business, but what's changing outside and how it can impact what's going on inside. Yeah. Have you seen people and say, let's focus on these glory day guys a little bit? Have you seen those guys change to maybe transformation?

[30:38.0]

Have you, have you been able to witness that? There are some organizations that are very receptive to hearing from the millennials and Generation Z. Okay. For example, The CEO of Gucci, like he has something called a millennial council, right.

[30:53.8]

Where they have literally a direct line to him and they feed him information on trends, what they're seeing, etc, etc. So that's the only one that comes to mind. Off the top of my head there is, another one is Telstra. So Telstra hired at the time the youngest ever female board member.

[31:11.6]

She was 32. So, yeah, but they're very rare. And it sounds like what you're saying is you're not necessarily trying to change that person completely, you just want them to open their mind up to the other, other three, Right? Yeah, yeah. And I suppose that's pushing diversity on boards.

[31:28.0]

Again, that's, that's the benefit of having that, I'm assuming. Yeah, exactly. Wow. Okay. And again, I'm assuming that a lot of. Still very close minded. Correct. Okay, so how do we, how do we move that on? How do we get boards thinking a little bit more differently then they're not going to want to move from their status quo if they feel they're potentially losing something. Right.

[31:49.6]

I'll give you an example. I was, at a board meeting, mining company, and we were talking about di, and one of the board members goes, I don't understand why we're doing this. What's going to happen to my grandson? I like your bored voice, by the way. Thank you. What's going to happen to my grandson when he graduates university?

[32:07.6]

You know, you're taking things away from him. This is exactly what's wrong with the world today. It's not a zero sum game. And if the only, and if he feels the only way that his grandson was getting, a leg up in the world was because purely of his gender, then there's bigger things to worry about. Yeah.

[32:26.4]

So it starts again with why is it really understanding? Why is it that they're pushing back? So he clearly thinks someone's losing and someone's meaning, but it's not. It's really, when we invite more inclusive, diverse voices into our world, the pie gets bigger for all of us.

[32:41.4]

Not just my slice, but, for all of us. Yeah, yeah, yeah, I can see that. But you can also see, I, I can see how people get scared of that. They get afraid of change and they, they're, they're not prepared for it. Well, it's like the taxi industry when, when Uber came, right?

[32:56.8]

They were so scared, they were pushing so hard. Why? Because they rested on their laurels for far too long. They were overcharging customers I, for myself, I didn't feel safe in the back of taxi late at night. And they were allowed to coast for decades. So of course they didn't like the advent of Uber. Yeah.

[33:14.0]

They're naturally going to push back on that one. They. Exactly. And I'm not just saying that because they, they, it's, it's not a male thing, but any person who's had it easy and had a good, they're not going to want to do something different. Yeah, yeah. If we, if we flip this now to an employee rather than I suppose the employers, how do you, how are you.

[33:34.0]

If you're somebody inside an organization and someone comes to you and says, we're downsizing, we're making these changes, we're putting in a new system, how do you make sure you're open minded enough to embrace that change?

[33:49.0]

So if someone announces to you they're going, we're gonna, we're gonna roll out a new system. Yeah. And a lot I have to say when, when sometimes you see that, I can imagine that a lot of people roll their eyes like I've done this before, we've tried that before. But the negative Nelly, let's go, let's touch on these guys a little bit. How do you, how do you, how do you get those, those individuals to open their minds a little bit?

[34:08.3]

This is where, whoever's leading the effort needs to really become the spokesperson of it. Okay. Because often I've been brought into changes that have failed three, four times in the past. So of course they're going to be skeptical. Of course they're going to be on guard. So that particular person that's leading the change effort needs to have reasons why, be ready, be armed, like why this time is different, why it's going to be successful this time. Yeah.

[34:32.8]

And I think people being not open to things, it's just a self protection mechanism. It's, it's not a bad thing. But simply being aware of that, is often enough to snap you out saying, hey, I'm actually using the judgments of, you know, five, 10 years ago on what's happening now.

[34:50.5]

This is different, it's a different leader, it's a different change. Yeah, yeah. Because I was gonna say the negative Nellies, it will always turn around and be like, oh, we've done this before. I was doing the same thing again. Like you just, you do see that a lot. But it's trying to get those guys to open their minds up a little bit. Yeah, yeah. Okay.

[35:07.1]

And you know, get, get them involved in the tent. It's like why, why do you think this is going to fail this time? Like maybe they've got some, some advice. Yeah. Yeah. They've been around the traps as well. So it could, it could help you create a stronger, more robust strategy. Yeah. I was going to say is that, is there an organization.

[35:23.5]

Have you seen any organizations that are managing change really well at the moment? Any examples?

[35:31.6]

So it's not a recent change, but one that I was researching for my first book. Yeah. Would be ING Bank. Okay. In the Netherlands. So I didn't realize this but in the 70s and the 80s they went through quite a lot of banking scandals.

[35:48.6]

There was a lot of corruption and dodgy stuff going on. They wanted to overhaul their image and they put their money where their mouth is. It put. It wasn't just here's a new logo, here's a new campaign. But everything changed. Like hundreds of people were let go that were not the right cultural fit.

[36:06.4]

They went through rigorous, I think the top 1000 managers, leaders got training that then trickled down. Compensation changed, KPI's changed job, the whole thing changed. So they really went changed from the inside and the outside.

[36:22.0]

So took a few years but they regained their reputation, as one of the, you know, the most ethical banks in Europe. So they did that really well. Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's. That won a lot of awards for the culture change. Yeah, yeah. It's a tough, it's a tough one. Culture change is really interesting at the moment.

[36:38.5]

A lot of companies obviously sort of focused on that quite, quite heavily. But it's nice to see an example though somebody that's done it really well. If we look at the clock a little bit and sort of summarize. If we're looking at everything now in terms of I suppose change management and you're talking to a chief people officer out there, what advice would you give them for managing change over the next year?

[37:03.4]

I would say that don't launch big change programs because people are fatigued, they're worked. They've got so many things going at them and when they're overwhelmed they're going to push back. Nothing's going to get through.

[37:19.8]

So just focus on bite size, incremental change. Yeah, yeah. So people don't have the freeze fight or flight response. Yeah. And obviously, if you're wanting to drive these changes in the next year, don't be a tight ass like get experts.

[37:37.2]

Don't use people that haven't done it before. It's really important because first impressions are made in less than 0.3 seconds. Yeah. And you want people, the first time they see you announce something like, oh, got it. And I'm confident this is going to happen. So you don't get second chances to do that.

[37:52.8]

Yeah, yeah. And advice then wrapping up advice to employees then, who are going through this sort of perpetual change. I'd say if you're worried or concerned or not sure about what's coming down the line, be proactive. You're an adult. Ask questions. If you're curious, ask your leader for more information.

[38:12.8]

If you want to be inside the tent, why don't you put your hand up right now? Now more than ever. I find because there's less noise in the market, it's a great time to start building your brand. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Let's throw yourself into.

[38:28.3]

Because change management is a skill that is only going to become more in demand. Right. It's in the top 10, top 10 skills of this year according to the LinkedIn report. Like, the top MBA programs have special specializations in it. So if you can get real experience driving change in your organization, that's going to be something that will help you stand apart in a crowded job market completely.

[38:50.7]

We saw, we did a report this year and actually, I think in the, top three, items for Chros was change. And it's interesting then when you read the comments in the report, some people seem to be really excited about it and others were really scared of it.

[39:07.9]

And you see, I seem to see that as quite a sort of divide. Some people love it. Very polarizing. Yeah, that is exactly the right word. So it is a challenge, but it's going to be here to stay. Whether it's introducing new technology, whether it's downsizing, change management just seems to be this perpetual thing that exists now within a, line manager's job, essentially.

[39:29.2]

Awesome. Friska, it's been a real pleasure to talk to you today. Thank you so much for coming in the studio and I look forward to seeing you again, probably next year, hopefully. Yeah, sounds good. Awesome. Thanks a lot. Thanks. Cheers

[39:46.8]

Thank you for listening to today's show. I hope you enjoyed it. If you have any questions for either myself or Frisker on the topic of change management, please do contact me@sealiotscothr.com. we also have a number of different, reports coming out. So if you've missed our HR Trends report at the start of this year, please download it.

[40:04.5]

We also have a US Capfinity report, which is out now. And you can download from our website, HR Insights. if you'd like to keep up to date with all things HR Insights, please do subscribe and follow us. Thanks ever so much.