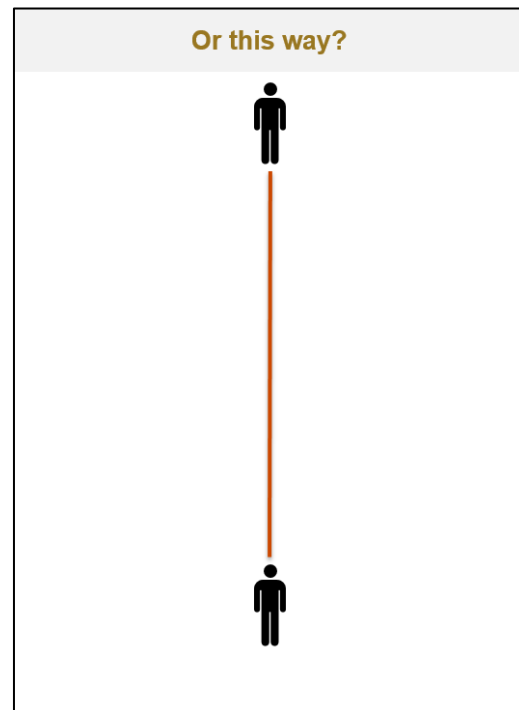
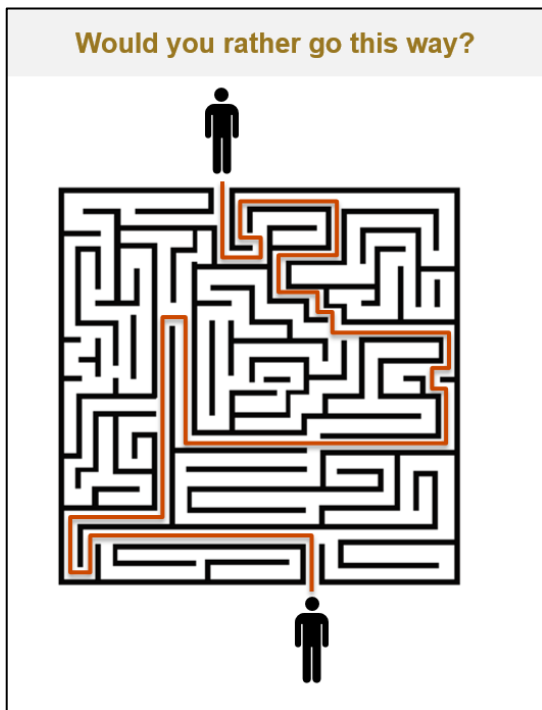


Simplicity a guiding principle for organizational change



Well, most likely everyone would go for the direct way to the desired target. Then why do we very often search for highly complex solutions in today's business world. The more when it comes to changing and transforming an organization.

Why do we need simple solutions?

This has a lot to do with the way our brain is designed and the reason for this.



- 1) Our **brain** is **trained** to **use as little energy as possible**. This makes sense because in our early days there was no grocery store around the corner, but hunting was dangerous and very often without success. This is why lions still today "chill" most of the day. Simply to save energy.
- 2) Complex solutions mostly lead to a lot of **different activities** and **hence we lose focus** and stop completing the necessary tasks. I am sure you remember plenty of such situations? If you ask: "Why are we so easily distracted" Well, it is because during our evolution it was important to be "distractive", because you realize better when a bear or a sabre-tooth tiger is just behind you. Forget the myth of multitasking we can only focus on doing one thing consciously – that's why we need **simplicity** – to **stay focused** and **get things done**.



- 3) We know from research that **people must be determined and motivated to deliver extraordinary performance** – or have you ever seen an Olympic Gold Medalist that hates what she or he is doing? One of the major motivators – according to brain research is to understand what you are doing and to feel confident concerning the execution. If things are too complex and people have difficulties to understand the rationale behind it – which is more often the case than we think – they lack the necessary motivation to go for the extra mile. And change is always an extra mile organizations need to go in the first place, but pays off afterwards if done correctly.
- 4) **Our brain avoids** - for obvious reasons - **fear**. Therefore, we need the confidence that the expected change can be managed by us. While complexity usually does not support this confidence and hence creates fear, **simple and concrete solutions reduce fear and provide the needed confidence to implement the needed changes.**

As we now know how our brain is designed, we understand how to design successful transformation projects. We make them as simple as possible when it comes to implementation. Below we would like to explain 6 success factors concerning the basic design and project execution of change projects within the organization.

How to simplify transformation?

- 1) **Reverse your mind-set** - it is

not....



Complex solution = good and intelligent

Simple solution = bad and stupid

but



Simple solution = intelligent and easy to implement

Complex solution = difficult to implement

For a comprehensive but simple and well thought through solution it is extremely important to fully understand the topic – so being simple shows that you have put more and concrete thoughts into the topic than to be complex! Or to put it like Goethe: “I did not have much time, this is why I wrote a long letter”.

- 2) Stop creating something fancy and complex – **come up with something that can be implemented** – then it gets exciting.

Organizations are mostly “triggered” by the desire to come up with something, breath taking, modern or disruptive. But especially for game changing disruptive concepts simplicity in implementation is key – the more complex the concept the clearer and simpler the implementation needs. Plus it needs clear **accountabilities** and **responsibilities** within the organization.

- 3) When designing a strategy, take into considerations the **management capabilities you need to implement** it. It is way easier to think in complex solutions than to implement them!

Often strategy department, executive or consultants target to design the ultimate sophisticated solution, considering all details and scenarios. During my 20plus years of professional life, I learned that such complex solutions mostly fail. It is important to thoroughly think through all the options and not to simplify right away - because some problems are complex - but when looking at solutions, the most important factor is the capability of the organization to implement them. In plain theory, you can recruit new capacities and capabilities, however this does rarely work. Why? Because nearly no organization can integrate a load of new employees within a very short period.

- 4) Communicate **as simple** and **specific** as possible.

Explain what is in for the people – not for you. This is not because people are stupid – but because our brain is by default minimizing the use of energy – hence employees focus exactly on their “food” (benefit) and only if this compelling they buy in and execute.

- 5) Change is **behavioral change** (not only new structures, processes or systems). Focus on the **Top 3 behaviors!** (otherwise employees are overwhelmed – remember our brain is designed to save energy!).
Try to use current company values to support the change of behavior - avoid the mistake of trying to radically change the value base of an organization, this is a long-term process and usually fails if it needs to be radical and quick. Give concrete examples of the Top 3 behaviors before and after the change.

- 6) **Work agile, dynamic and iterative** when creating new solutions.
This helps to quickly get real results and supports the confidence that change can really happen. Also, the pieces to be implemented are smaller and not so complex, so they tend to be accepted easier by the organization. The agile approach establishes a continuous improvement mind-set. As change is permanent to establish this thinking in the organization crucial for the future.

Would you like to get in touch? I would highly appreciate your feedback via LinkedIn or michael.pollak@theano-advisors.com. *Lets start a dialogue...*

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