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Podcast Transcription

Implementing Lean Marketing Systems

Project and Change Management Simplified

Guest was Bob Lewis

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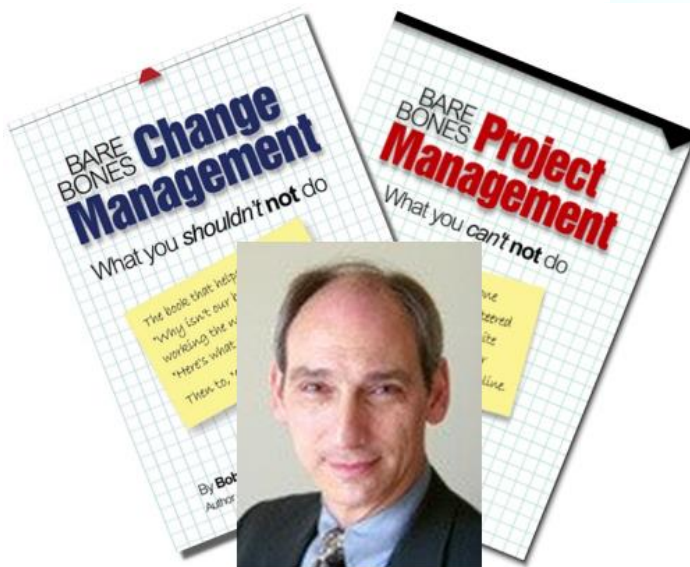
Implementing Lean Marketing Systems

Bob Lewis is the president of [IT Catalysts](#) and author of [Bare Bones Project Management: What you can't not do](#) and [Bare Bones Change Management: What you shouldn't not do](#).

Since 1996, when he started his "Survival Guide" column in *InfoWorld*, Bob has been in the forefront of a guerrilla movement in how businesses should design and plan change, and how the IT function should relate to the rest of the enterprise. This movement rejects the orthodoxy of "running IT as a business" that delivers technology to "internal customers," replacing it with an integrated view of IT, in which, as a peer with the rest of the business, it actively collaborates in the design, planning, and implementation of business improvement and transformation.

Bob presents workshops on Business Change Management. This will include topics specific to Agile and Lean transition initiatives.

They examine the source of organizational resistance to change, describe the seven components of an effective business change management plan, and show how to go beyond a "Managed Transition" to achieve both Evolutionary Change and discontinuous, "fork lift" change.



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Transcription of Podcast

Joe: Welcome, everyone. This is Joe Dager, the host of the Business901 podcast. With me today is Bob Lewis. Since 1996, when he started his survival guide column in InfoWorld, Bob has been at the forefront of a guerrilla movement in how business should design and plan change, and how the IT function should relate to the rest of the enterprise. Bob is an award-winning author of more than 1,000 articles and 10 books. He currently published two weekly columns, "Advice Line," which appears on infoworld.com, and "Keep the Joint Running," which is his personal weblog e-letter, covering a wide range of issues of concern to business and IT leaders. Bob, it's a pleasure to have you, and tell me, as a fellow writer, I have to know, how do you have time to do that much writing? What's your secret?

Bob Lewis: My secret? Joe, first, thanks for having me on. I'm looking forward to this. The answer to your question is I give up some of the basics, like research and thinking. That speeds things up a lot. I can't actually answer that question. As far as the time, the basics are, everything has to be on a schedule. I write, "Advice Line" Friday mornings, I write, "Keep the Joint Running" Saturday mornings, and if I don't, I feel guilty. The second secret, to the extent it's a secret, is I try really hard to have a list of advanced topics, so I'm not staring at the keyboard saying, "Gee, I sure wish I had an idea to write about this week." Once I have that, there's only one more "secret," and I have to say, I don't usually criticize anybody else, because I'm way too vulnerable.

The one thing I wish everybody who writes on the Internet would do would be to write to a predefined word length, because I think I probably spend more time keeping "Keep the Joint Running" to exactly 800 words, which is my target length, then I actually spend writing it in the first place.

I don't know if that answers your question, or if it's one that sounded like it, but it's the best answer I have.

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Joe: Well, you seem to write with a style that says, "Here are the tools you need. This is how they work," and you leave out a lot of fluff, and it's more about just getting things done. Have we complicated things too much in our lives? Can it be that simple?

Bob: I don't know. Maybe I'm just too simple-minded. There are a few different kinds of books. I have a friend who's the editor-in-chief at one of the major publishers. Every so often, he and I talk about doing a book together, and he looks at what I write, and he likes it, and he says, "But." What the "but" is, single topic books seem to be where publishing is going. There's one big idea, and you write 800 pages around one big idea, or 400 pages, or whatever. I think most of them, when we get into these, we read the one big idea, and then chapter two is the one big idea again, and then chapter three is the same big idea one more time, and you wonder what's new in each chapter. I don't have enough patience to write that.

The other thing is, and I learned this from my dad, actually, who writes about direct marketing; I figure if every time I write a sentence, if it doesn't either give you something you can use, or give you a reason to believe the next season that gives you something you can use, or the previous sentence, which gave you something you can use, then it's not a sentence I should be writing.

A lot of what I leave out is things like evidence. I try to make things that, once I explain the logic, the logic is inescapable. Occasionally, if I actually do know something about the subject that'll be included, but yeah, I think what you describe here...I'm a tools guy. I'm a techniques guy.

Whether I'm writing about leadership, or business change, or project management, I figure when somebody's buying a book, they're not looking to be inspired. They're not looking to get weepy. They're looking for a few things that they can start doing

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that will make them better at it than they were when they started the book.

Joe: I think you make a good point there, because a lot of books I read, and then it's like they've got to convince me that they were right for another 50 pages, and I'm already convinced I'm done.

Bob: Listen, to be fair, a lot of folks who write business books are academics. They are professors in business schools, and I'm not saying this is an indictment. What these folks do is research, and with actual research, you now have a big pile of evidence, and the whole point is that you have evidence. It's not just, "Here's how it seems to me." I write, "Here's how it seems to me." For better or for worse, I'm writing from my experience. The good news, it is actual experience out there where things happen. The bad news, experience is a biased sample, so I can't claim any universality. I actually can't really give a lot of claims that what I'm going to talk about is going to work in foreign countries with dramatically different cultures than we have here in the United States.

But within my limitations, I'm pretty sure that what I'm writing makes sense.

Joe: I like that explanation, because you're right; it's an opinion. "It's worked for me, and I'm sharing it with other people."

Bob: Yes, so that's really it. It's what worked for me, and I try to dig in at least enough to provide some logic behind it. In most of the books that I've written...Actually, I'll tell you. The nicest compliments I ever got, I'll give you two, and I usually don't do this. One was about my leadership book and somebody who read it; I think this is on Amazon somewhere, he said, "Usually, I bring a yellow highlighter to a book, but I found I was highlighting everything, so I stopped." That told me I succeeded in what I was

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trying to do, which was to write things where every sentence is meaningful.

The other one, this is the better compliment, was somebody said, "Usually, I find this kind of book tremendously annoying, but I wasn't annoyed by your book at all." You know, if you don't annoy somebody who's usually annoyed, I figure that's a pretty good compliment.

Joe: I like that. I like them both. Well, let's talk about one of your books here a little bit, and it's "Bare Bones Project Management." Can you briefly describe it? Is it a waterfall, agile type? What is it?

Bob: The reason it's a 54 page book is when I wrote it, I didn't know about project management to write a 56 page book. I think you know books have to have an even number of pages, because each sheet of paper has a front and a back. What it is, it's sort of waterfall-ish, because that's easier to explain than agile, but almost all of it is easily adapted to an agile environment also. What it is a collection of concepts in project management, each of which has to be present, or you really have a dramatic chance of failure. To give you just one example out of many, one of the things the book will tell you is if you don't have a business sponsor, and a real business sponsor, not a sponsor in name only, not a sponsor who, first the project got approved and then everybody said, "We need a sponsor. Who would be a good choice?"

That is not a sponsor. Sponsors have to want the project to succeed deep in their gut. If you don't have a sponsor, run, hide; get under the desk, duck and cover. Do something to get out of this, because, without a real sponsor who really wants the project to succeed, one of three things will happen: It'll fail early; it'll fail late, or it'll complete, but nobody will use what you produced.

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Those are really the only possible outcomes if you don't have a real sponsor. So it's stuff like this. It's what you absolutely, positively have to do, or you'll fail. I wrote it really not for professional project managers who know way too much, read this, and say, "You've got to be kidding me."

I don't have any numbers to prove this. I'm pretty sure if you go into an average company, and you count up all the projects going on; you'll find for every official project that's been sanctioned and gone through the project portfolio committee; you probably have two or three unofficial projects sailing in under the radar. They are not being managed by anybody who has any project management training.

They're being managed by somebody who's been thrown in front of the project like a speeding bus by their manager, with the immortal words, "This will be a great experience for you," which is management speak for, "Duck."

I wrote this book for all the poor schmucks out there who have been thrown in front of projects and have no idea what to do next. It's supposed to be a great experience, but actually, it's just terrifying as hell, because they have no idea what to do to manage a project. Because they don't, they and their teams wake up every day asking the question, "What can we do today to move the ball forward?" That's no way to get a project done.

Joe: I think you hit upon a couple of points that I really think about right away. Everything is somewhat of a project within the business world. You have projects going on all the time, so you do need a little experience there. Most of the projects I've ever worked on were fairly short-term duration, and if I took this elaborate project planning system, and filled out the project scope, the project charter, everything about the team, and did all those things, I'd put more work in developing the project than I would in the project, sometimes.

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Bob: You're making a great point. Let me tell you, another big problem with the standard project management methodologies isn't that they're wrong; it's a scaling problem. Most of them scale up just fine. If you want to use them to build a skyscraper, or a nuclear submarine, or a system of orbiting satellites that will beam electrical power down to earth, they're great for that. But if what you have is three people and three months that you need to build a minor satellite module to hook into your ERP system to handle billing for a new government agency, they can't scale down that far. If you look at project management, it's about 50 percent book smarts and about 50 percent street smarts. A lot of time, the street smarts aren't taught, so when something bad happens, you have no idea what to do next.

The other thing is; it's a bunch of checklist items, so, "I have to have a project charter; therefore, I will have one." The way I teach this in "Bare Bones" is, you have to understand your project, and everybody on your team has to understand the project the same way, because if they don't, your results will be incoherent.

Here are some techniques for making sure everybody understands it the same way, and they're these basic elements in a project charter.

Because it makes sense, because any project manager really does understand if they don't know what they're supposed to be doing and why it matters; they're not going to have a team; they're not going to a result that's useful, so they do the checklist stuff as quickly and as lamely as they can.

Joe: I think one of the things that I need to ask you about. Here is the "Bare Bones," I read the project management, so much this project; people think that to manage a project that they can go to the cloud, or they can use software, and if they follow the procedure, that's managing a project. Does "Bare Bones" help me out somewhat with that?

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Bob: Actually, that's a great question. Two things: Years and years ago, when I was actually employed and had to work for a living, I was invited to attend a meeting where we were presented with the company's new project management standard. I listened to the whole thing, and it wasn't that it was bad. It's that it wasn't project management; it was project administration. It was all about the tools for keeping track, and it kept track just as well as the project was on-track, or if it was off the rails. The standard worked just fine for administering.

Well, if you're managing a project day-to-day, one of the reasons you have weekly status meetings, instead of weekly status updates, is in a meeting, anybody had who didn't get their task done has to face the rest of the team and say, "I didn't get the job done this week." That creates peer pressure, because that's an awful thing to have to say in public, so people will work really hard to not have that experience twice.

The other thing you asked about doing it in the cloud, I guess I'll do a little plug for some friends of mine. I got a call not long after "Bare Bones" came out from a company called Team Dynamics. That's what Team Dynamics does, project management solutions in the cloud. They had a client that was interested in their solution, but only if they could encapsulate the "Bare Bones" technique in their software.

So they contacted me, "Would that be OK?" I'm thinking, "Would that be OK? Very nice people, by the way, but they'll be the first ones to tell you; they provide a solution for keeping track, having a great project plan, being able to update it, showing Gantt charts and all the rest of it. That's very nice, but project management is an intensely human activity.

All of the keeping track in the world won't get you beyond the team member who's not performing. It wouldn't get you beyond two team members who could perform separately, but they just can't work together. It won't get you past this point in the

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emotional development of a project team that I call "the pit of ultimate despair," when you've been working hard, and you see no progress, and everybody is completely losing motivation and momentum.

None of that is going to be helped by the software. There're baby-sittings involved here.

Joe: One of the things you point out is that project management is very little about the project; it's more relationship management.

Bob: A lot of it is. Inside the team, between team members, between the team and everybody outside, that's a big, big piece of it. Let me tell you, two of the other biggest pieces, I figure, if you're writing a project everybody understands what it's for, very important, everybody knows what they're supposed to be working on every day and when it's due, something really basic like that. If a project manager knows how to handle the situation when somebody doesn't get their task done. Which isn't saying, "Oh, that's OK, we'll extend the schedule," but sometimes it is, because sometimes the reason they didn't get their task done is quite legitimate. You can't just ask them to work harder, and more hours, and pick it up. It is knowing what to do each time based on the specifics of that situation.

If you can do those basic things, your projects will get done, probably. Well, there's one missing piece, which is knowing how to say, "We're done now."

Joe: How do you say that? How do you know when a project's done?

Bob: What they teach in the textbooks is, you've got a scope, and the scope consists of a list of deliverables. When you've created all the deliverables, then you're done. What I mentioned before, the difference between book smarts and street smarts,

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the book smarts version is, when you've created all your deliverables, the scopes complete, you're done. I read this... I wish I could tell you whom I read it from, but one of the most brilliant things I ever read about project management was, "Your project is done when your business sponsor says it's done. If your business sponsor doesn't think it's done, you can haul out anything that you want." By the way, this is internal projects.

If you're an independent systems integrator, software or services firm, you've contracted a project, you can haul out the contract and say, "Here, this proves we're done," and maybe that'll work for you. But for internal projects, no. Your sponsor says you're done, or you have more work to do, which is, as you pointed out, this is another reason this is a relationship business.

Joe: The nuclear submarine, too large of a... Is that too large for me to follow "Bare Bones Project Management?"

Bob: Oh, hell, I don't know. I've never built a nuclear submarine. If somebody asked me to, I think my head would explode. When you're talking about software kinds of stuff, which is my sweet spot, yes, most projects, or at least a lot of them, would benefit a lot by not being one big project. There's this strange thing about human psychology. The way humans think about time is anything longer than six, maybe nine months is an eternity. If you have a project that goes beyond six months or so, there's no sense of urgency until you get way too close until the end, and then you don't have enough time, which is, by the way, the fallacy of breaking a project into phases.

Breaking a big project into phases is not the same as breaking a big project into a collection of small projects. When you have phases, and I've seen this happen over, and over, and over again, the first phase goes along, and everybody says, "That's OK. We're doing a more thorough job here, so we'll make it up in the next phase."

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Then the next phase goes along, maybe that's a specification's creation, and "That's OK. The specs are so good; we'll make it up in construction." The construction goes along, and of course, "We'll make it up in testing." But you know; the rule of testing is you always test. The only question is, do you test before, or after you put it in production?

Instead, you test after it goes in production, and you've got a calamity on your hands.

Joe: I have to cut in, and people listening to this podcast have probably heard this statement a couple of times. I was just a young engineer out on a job site one time, and I had an older guy there, a seasoned veteran of this particular discipline. I was working on something that was quite a problem, and he just looked over at me and he said, "Engineering really doesn't start until you turn the key."

I looked at him, and I didn't think he knew what he was talking about, but in a few years, as I matured, I understood exactly.

Bob: That's right on the money. Anyway, in my long-winded way, the point I'm trying to make is, if you break a big project into phases, it doesn't really add any sense of urgency, because even if there are phase deadlines through soft deadlines, if you break a big project up into a collection of small projects, and the teams disband after each project... Now, you may have overlap, they may reform as another project team, but the project has a deadline, and it ends, and if you're not done by that deadline, you're just not done. There's a whole different level of urgency about it. There's also a chance to recalibrate when you learn more in the early phases.

There's also a chance to create more accurate estimates for each project than you could for each phase, because you don't have to plan every project in detail at the beginning. So yeah, for a wide variety of reasons, especially in information technology, there

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really should never be a project with more than seven people that goes longer than six months, I would say, ever.

Joe: Recently, you wrote, "Bare Bones Change Management." Was that a book for a project that went beyond six months, or is it really change management?

Bob: Not at all. Here's why I wrote, "Bare Bones Change Management." One of the things that I've been on a soapbox about for way too long is the idea that there's no such thing as an IT project. At least, there shouldn't be. One of the things that I talk to clients about is they'll have...OK, I'll make one up. You've never heard this before. Private project, implement SAP, or to give equal time, implement Oracle Financials, or whatever. The problem is; they've named the project after the software, which means that the project is done when the software is installed, configured, meets the specs, and operational. But there is no business benefit to that.

In fact, very often, these things are organized as platform replacements, which means then, on top of everything else, what you've done is you spent a whole lot of money in order to get the business to run exactly the same way tomorrow that it ran yesterday, and this is ridiculous.

So what I've been recommending for years name the project after the business change, and if there's no business change, why are you doing the project? This would be, "Optimize supply change management using SAP," "Improve accounting workflows using SAP," or whatever. I'm not trying to give SAP a plug; I'm just using it as an example.

That being the case; I'm starting to get some traction around this idea. One of the things that I think most people know project management is how you push change into an organization. If all you do is push change into the organization, the organization will usually push it right back, for a wide variety of reasons.

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Somebody once said, "Every company is perfectly organized to deliver the results it actually creates."

So you try to get something different to happen, but it's perfectly organized to deliver the results that it already creates, that make it tough. There's this complementary discipline to project management called business change management. I've run across any number of books on this subject, including the very, very popular, but it shouldn't be; I'm sure you've run across, "Who Moved My Cheese?"

Joe: Sure.

Bob: OK. Well, "Who Moved My Cheese?" promotes this idea, change is wonderful, and we should all embrace it. What I want to know is, who is moving that cheese, and why are they messing with my head? Random change, what's the point? Oh, by the way, if you know anything about history, there is this war we fought way back when called World War II. You might have heard of it. In World War II, we called the good guys the resistance. It was people trying to make change happen in Europe who were the bad guys. It seemed to me there was room in the literature for a book that started with the premise, "Employees don't resist change because they're stupid. Employees resist change because they're smart."

They understand that most business change has led to layoffs, harder work, invalidation of hard won skills, the need to go through a feeling of terrible incompetence while you learn whole new ways of doing things, often that aren't very well-defined when you start. Business change is often a very miserable experience. Of course, employees resist it.

They don't just naturally resist change; they'll be resistant to change naturally. We wouldn't have this phenomenon called the consumerization of IT, and bring your own device, where people

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want their iPhones to be supported, because they'd be resisting iPhones at home. OK, I'll get off my soapbox now.

Joe: Failure rate of a lean transformation is pretty high, but it's just not lean, it's any transformation, isn't it?

Bob: Absolutely. I had a client that was moving away from PowerBuilder to .NET, and everything about this should have been good. It was a re-platforming opportunity to rethink the application, make the business more streamlined, give the IT staff or developers the opportunity to learn a far more in-demand set of disciplines. We got pushback from the IT staff. It never occurred to us, and it certainly should have, whether or not this was beneficial. Their experience of it was...Well, first of all; IT folks tend to develop a fondness for software, for the technologies they use. So there's this, deep down, sense of betrayal as they're abandoning PowerBuilder for .NET. Secondly, they'd rather develop with PowerBuilder. They didn't in .NET. It's not just a different syntax; it's a different design philosophy.

We put all of this together, and we had taken a very highly competent crew and turned them into novices, which has to happen. Once you understand, it's no surprise you need to develop some very specific techniques to walk them through it, so they don't resist the change. They become enthusiastic about the opportunity instead, and that doesn't happen automatically.

That happens because you thought through the issues, you thought through the sources of change resistance, some of which are on the part of the employees, many of which are organizational factors, and then you do something about them,

Joe: When it comes to business change, five words that you say you never hear from IT Catalysts, or you are, "All you've got to do is." Can you explain that question a little more, or that statement?

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Bob: This used to be a simpler statement, which was, "There's one word that should never be juxtaposed with right software, and that word is 'just,'" as in, "I'll just write a program," or even better, "You just have to write a program." This just takes it to the next level. Look, something that you know something that everybody listening to this knows; small projects are hard, and they get more difficult from there. Business change is a very, very difficult thing to do. The failure rates are high, and the folks who don't know what's going on will tout the failure rates.

They say, "Only 30 percent of all CLM projects succeed. By the way, only 30 percent of all business reengineering projects succeed, and, by the way, only 30 percent of these other kinds of projects succeed." The interesting thing is, it's always 30 percent, and that's because it's like hitting a baseball. It's a really hard thing to do.

The reason that more of them fail than succeed, we're dealing with a hypothesis about how the business might run better. The only way to test that hypothesis is to try it in the real business, and even if it doesn't run better, you don't know if you're doing it wrong, because you're contrasting something that people are just figuring out with something that they have years and years of practice in.

Business change is intrinsically hard. You need to have a good concept, a better concept than the one you're using right now. You have to think it through in enough detail that it isn't just the two most obvious cases; it handles the same 85 cases that your current process handles. You need to anticipate the sources of organizational resistance, and know how to deal with them.

And you have to constantly adapt, because while you're implementing your change, the world is changing around you. You have to adapt to that change. It's not good enough to say, "Well; we need to avoid scope creep," which is defined as, "The

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creep who changed my scope." Of course, what Agile is all about is being able to constantly and flexibly adapt.

Well, that's just as important about changing how your part of the business runs as it is about what the software is supposed to do. We never say, "All you've got to do is," because "all you've got to do" makes it sound simple, and that's a great way to land an account early, and then create nothing but disappointment later.

Joe: I have this project over here, but I really have to spend as much time working on getting the project used in the business."

Bob: You're darn right. That's a very fair way to describe it. There are at least two pieces to this, maybe three. The first piece is: Have you actually done any work doing business design? Because new software, to have things happen the same old way is really bad fit, so right alongside... In fact, I advise we should all be getting rid of the word "requirements" altogether. "Requirements" don't mean anything. We should be talking about, "How do you want the business to run? What's the software need to do to support it?" Maybe that's a requirement, maybe not, but "requirements" has this connotation of this conversation that we're accustomed to having with business people, which is, "What do you want the software to do?"

They have no idea. That's not what they're supposed to be thinking about. They're supposed to be thinking about, "How do I want the business to run?" So the first piece is the business design piece. The second piece is at the executive level because there's this open secret that the path to career success among business executives is always to advocate bold change.

However, bold change is risky, so the ideal situation is when you advocate bold change, but you can't make it happen because it's somebody else's fault, like, for example, IT. So the second source of change resistance is the business executives who want it in

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theory, but really might not want it in practice, or one does, but is threatening to another. There are business-level political relationships you need to pay attention to.

By the way, one of the challenges to business change management, you can't put everything you know on paper because somebody might find the paper. What you need to take into account are some things that are unspoken.

Anyway, that's the second level, and then the third level is the employee level. The employees, in change management literature, they're usually called the targets, or the users, or the more accurate term, victims. They're the ones who have to pick up the pieces and make it work, whether it's been thought through well or not, and you need to deal with all of their potential reactions to the change, and anticipate what might cause them to resist.

Then put a plan in place, so that if there are legitimate factors, you mitigate them. If it's a matter of uncertainty, you communicate. If it does not understand why the change even matters, it's persuading. All of this is part of change management planning, and if you don't do it, then shame on you, because it doesn't have to be that hard.

You simply have to plan for all the human factors and the organizational factors right alongside the task that you need to build the new products.

Joe: Well, you have an upcoming workshop with David Anderson in Los Angeles, and it's on this business change management. What would someone learn in that workshop?

Bob: They would probably learn that David and I have different views on this that, depending on your perspective, are either in conflict or complementary. David tends to focus a lot more on the psychological dimension, and on a lot of the cognitive research

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that's been done that show that humans aren't fully rational decision makers. He's absolutely right, and that does add some additional wrinkles to the entire business of business change management. My view, as I mentioned, is that people tend to resist change because they're smart, which might sound like it's at odds with this research. It's not so much at odds. The difference is there's a difference between linear algorithmic thinking and pattern-matching, narrative storytelling kinds of thinking. Most of the time, it gets people into the same place, but one is much less conscious than the other.

David will probably be...Again; I'm characterizing his perspectives so I might not get this exactly right. David will be talking far more about the emotional reaction, and I'll be talking, probably, more structurally, and more about anticipating, and creating a multidimensional plan that includes the non-personal factors that lead to organizational change resistance.

Anyway, between the two of us, it should be a pretty thorough look at what you have to do to make change happen.

Joe: So there are specific steps involved in trying to have a successful business change.

Bob: Yeah, like so many things. By the way, I'm not, by nature, a planner. By nature, I'm an improviser. My guy was MacGyver. You give me a roll of duct tape, and I'm just happy as can be. But the planners always win. The reason the planners always win is twofold: One is they know what they're supposed to do next, so they don't have to make it up as they go along, so it's more efficient. The second one, by the way, is when an improviser's dealing with a planner, they find they can't improvise because the planner's put 22 meetings on their calendar, and there's no room left to improvise.

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I'm sure that's connected to some concept we were talking about; I just don't know which one, so I'll leave it to you to draw the thread.

Joe: I believe that everybody has to manage standard work, and everybody has some, and the better you manage standard work, the more effective and efficient you are at it. It allows for continuous improvement. It allows for creativity, and you free up more time to do it. Without managing it, you don't have the time.

Bob: Absolutely, and, by the way, you brought up continuous improvement. It's an interesting topic, because continuous improvement in business is very, very parallel to Agile as a software methodology. One of the interesting challenges, in fact, about Agile, it's a far better way to create software, but it's a whole lot harder to build business change tasks into an Agile project, because Agile has so much of a conscious focus on getting the software done properly. One of these that I've worked with clients on in the past is exactly that, how to add business change management tasks, and business design tasks, into an Agile framework, and still have everything come out OK.

Joe: Interesting topic, because I think that the way management has gone, and the way we're looking at things now is that we've seen how much, I'll use a Lean term, "waste" there's been in just accomplishing things, rather than putting them into practice, and we have to start putting things into practice.

Bob: You bet. In fact, it's interesting you put it that way. Lean is all about getting the waste out, but if you do Lean software development, and your endpoint is software that meets those specs, the whole project is probably waste because you haven't incorporated the additional work that you need to do to make it meaningful in the business. That's not so much criticism as it's time for everybody to move IT's goal posts from, "We're done

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when the software meets the specs," so it's a great opportunity for an argument.

I'm sure you and your listeners have all been in this argument at least once. It's the argument, "Well, when the software meets the specs, we're done," and the business people say, "I don't care if it meets the specs. I didn't understand them in the first place. You just made us sign that document, or you said you wouldn't move forward. We can't use the software." So you have a brainstorming session instead of figuring out, "What do you need to do so the business change happens?"

Joe: I think that's a great point and a great place to end this. Tell me about your seminars?

Bob: Well, I'm glad you asked. I wish I could engage in some self-promotion by saying, "Yes." Actually, this is an exception. Almost 100 percent, my seminars, are designed as in-house events, so that an organization would bring me in. I would take maybe 15, 20 at a time, and take them through either the business change management or the project management, or a combination, depending on what you want. One of the big advantages to doing this in-house is when I do these seminars, I don't do role plays. Well, I've got one, but it involves miming, so it's not a real role play. Well, sort of. Well, never mind.

Anyway, most of what I do has nothing to do with role plays. They are business discussions about real world situations that people in the class are facing right now. It's a whole lot easier to have those conversations when, first, everybody in the room has a similar set of business experiences that they going through, and second, they don't have to worry about non-disclosures.

If they're revealing sensitive information outside the company and all the rest of that, it makes it hard to have meaningful conversations about what people are dealing with.

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Joe: Well, someone's interested. What's the best way for someone to contact you?

Bob: I am the easiest person to contact in the known universe, either itcatalysts.com or on issurvivor.com, IT Catalyst being my consulting company, IS Survivor is where I publish. There's a contact page that has every known way in the universe of getting a hold of me.

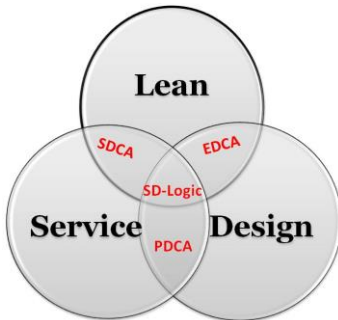
Joe: Well, I would like to thank you very much, Bob. I appreciate it. This podcast will be available on the Business901 iTunes Store and the Business901 blog site, so thanks again.

Bob: Joe, thank you for taking the time. I sure enjoyed it.

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Joe Dager is president of Business901, a firm specializing in bringing the continuous improvement process to the sales and marketing arena. He takes his process thinking of over thirty years in marketing within a wide variety of industries and applies it through Lean Marketing and Lean Service Design.

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