An Evaluation of How Change is managed in Practice and the Key Considerations for Organisations Undertaking a Change

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Abstract
Worley and Mohram (2014) state that academics are yet to provide frameworks to handle the rapidly changing market environment, and because technology is often instrumental in the change process now, the traditional change models are less relevant and out of date. Therefore, this research sets out to evaluate the process and techniques used to manage change in large organisations, in this case in the casual dining industry, using Mitchells and Butlers PLC as a case study.

The literature highlighted how important different components are to making change initiatives successful. Adopting an interpretivist philosophy and using qualitative research methods, the questions posed were shaped by the themes emerging from the literature. By interviewing managers and conducting focus groups for employees, the key findings helped meet the aim and objectives of this study.

The findings of the research support the majority of change management theories but it established that the components of change management model are often considered by managers but rarely shape what happens in practice. This research project has revealed that change management in practice involves effectively planning and coordinating the people and resources of an organisation but these needs to be adaptable. In addition, establishing desirable objectives that are sufficiently explored, planned, communicated and executed will be beneficial to the organisation. The findings did however establish that the post-change environment was exceptionally important to ensure the change was sustained in the organisation but although expert support and training is suggested to achieve this, further research in this area would benefit future change initiatives.

Keywords
Change Management, Planning for Change, Communication, Training and Support for Change

Introduction
This research paper is an evaluation of how change is managed in practice and the key consideration for organisations during this process. To effectively evaluate this, a case study of the biggest restaurant management company in the UK is used to help understand how a large company implements a significant change initiative. The research was undertaken in order to develop an informed understanding of key considerations in the process of planning and implementing change. The study takes an employer-employee perspective to establish the views of each party involved in the process, and conclusions are drawn to show how change processes are managed in a large organisation. In this section the fundamental components of change management, supported by literature in this area, are presented, followed by an overview of the methodology used to collect the data that helps meet the aim and objectives of this research project.

Research Rationale
The UK’s eating and drinking out industry is worth £75bn however, IBIS (2014) state that in the last five years, annual growth has been at -2.1%, placing more emphasis on companies retaining their customers, which is
commonly done through increasing perceived value and thus customer satisfaction (Kumar, Batista and Maull, 2011). Companies are always trying to gain competitive advantage, growing from the value a firm is able to create for its buyers that exceeds a firm’s cost of creating it (Porter, 1998). Porter (1998) postulates that there are two basic types of competitive advantage: cost leadership or how it can differentiate itself. By conducting internal and external analysis, a company can establish the direction they need to take and identify changes that need to be made to achieve the competitive advantage (Barney, 2002; Raineri, 2009; Pettinger, 2009; Grant, 2010). To create a competitive advantage, a change is therefore a necessity (Patron and McCalman, 2008).

Firstly, academic models such as Lewin’s ‘3-Stage Model’ (1951), Beckard’s ‘Formula for Change’ (1969), Thurley’s ‘5 Approaches to Managing Change’ (1979), and Beer et al., ‘Critical Path Change Method’ (1990), suggest that there are several ways in which a company can effectively go about implementing change, and with all this information on how to implement change, it can be hard to decide which model to follow in practice. These aforementioned models (Beckard, 1969; Beer et al., 1990; Lewin, 1951; Thurley, 1979) do however all share the idea that the change process has a clear beginning and ending, is initiated by senior executives of the company, ultimately focused on particular areas to sustain competitive advantage or create a desired future state that is beneficial for them. Worley and Mohram (2014) state that academics are yet to provide frameworks to handle the rapidly changing market environment, and because technology is often instrumental in current change initiatives, the traditional change models are less relevant and out of date, therefore cannot inform this type of transformational change. This research therefore establishes an understanding of the plans made and the techniques used to implement a transformational change of this nature.

Secondly, there is a dearth of academic literature encompassing the post change environment, but it is suggested by Hayes (2010) that it is an important phase in the change process, as there will inevitably be problems and the management team need to ‘monitor and adjust strategies in response’ to these problems. In addition, Lewin’s (1947) final stage in the ‘3-Stage Model’ is to refreeze the organisation with the new practices and behaviours, but the relevance of current literature to inform practice in this area is low. Due to the size of the focus organisation, and the number of separate units that they have, each one will be different and one could presume that each unit may not function in exactly the same way as another. Due to this, the research identifies whether the plans made by directors were tailored to each unit, the communications involved, and the staff experience before, during and after the implementation of change.

Thirdly, ‘a high proportion of change efforts end in failure’, and it is therefore important to get the employees or end-users of the change to buy into it, in order to make it effective and successful (Beer and Nohria, 2000; Burnes, 2003; Rogers et al, 2006; Senturia et al, 2008). Therefore, this study takes into account the employees’ perspectives in order to gain an understanding of the important considerations of a change initiative from their viewpoint. The expenditure on a transformational technological change will be high, and could have an impact on the business and its share price either positively or negatively dependant on the success or failure of the change. By gleaming information from the employees, as well as the management, this study draws informed conclusions and recommendations to help inform the planning of future change initiatives.

In order to collect the information that is required to meet my aim and objective, the research methods used generated qualitative data. Because this research project draws information from both management and the employees, two data collection methods were used to supply the information to effectively meet the aim and objectives. For the information required from the management, interviews were conducted, and to gain an understanding of the employee’s feelings, focus groups were used to gain valid and reliable data.

Aim and Objectives:
The purpose of this research project is to evaluate how change management is applied in practice, and establish the core considerations of a change effort. This leads to the following interrelated objectives:

- Establish an understanding of the planning approach used to implement change.
• Analyse how well the organisation implemented the changes in accordance to the plans that were made.
• Looking at different branches of the same company, evaluate the staff experience during the change process.
• Identify the communications between management and the employees, and analyse the effect this had on the change process.
• Identify important considerations in implementing change successfully
• Establish the challenges faced by management when implementing the new systems

Literature Review
Academic literature is critically analysed in this section to outline change management, the processes and techniques organisations use in theory and the important considerations organisations need to take into account to enable successful change. This section starts by defining what change management is, along with reasoning as to why organisations need to change, which is then followed by an explanation of the different types of change that an organisation can experience. Technological change is an important consideration in organisations of today because it is fast moving and can be a source of competitive advantage; this is therefore highlighted after the types of change are explained. Several change management models have been theorised to help organisations successfully implement change, and these are discussed before the general process of change is identified. To finish this review of literature, resistance to change is outlined and discussed as this holds the key to how people need to be managed in order to get them to accept change thus enabling work towards organisational goals to become more efficient.

Change Management
Sloan (1967) suggests that change can break an organisation if they are unprepared and that ‘change cannot just be allowed to just happen, it needs to be managed’. This suggests that whether it is sought after or not, management need to be present in order to bring about effective change. The process of managing something is an intangible thing and is defined by Brech (1975: 19) as ‘responsibility for the effective and economic planning and regulation of the operations of an enterprise’. Brech (1975) embellishes this definition by saying that management is comprised of four distinctive components: planning, control, coordination and motivation. Rees and French (2013) put it more simply, postulating that management is an intervention for controlling performance outcomes in line with a purpose or objective.

There are several definitions of change management, but three shall be identified and reviewed in order to find a working definition for the purpose of this study.
1. Fincham and Rhodes (2005: 525) define change management as ‘the leadership and direction of the process of organisational transformation – especially with regard to human aspects and overcoming resistance to change’.
2. Moran and Brightman (2001: 111) suggest change management is ‘the process of continually renewing an organization’s direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers’.
3. Finally, Hiatt and Creasey (2003) propose ‘change management is the process, tools and techniques to manage the people side of business change to acquire the required business outcome, and to realise that business change effectively within the social infrastructure of the workplace.’

From all of these definitions of change management, it is clear that it is perceived to be a process by which change is bought about. If there is a process to follow, it would suggest that each change initiative would follow a linear and logical approach. However, the process is in fact an ‘iterative, cumulative and reformulation-in-use process’ because of the differing interests of individuals within organisations and the unpredictability the future holds (Armstrong, 2009: 426; Pettigrew and Whipp, 1991).
All of these definitions make mention of the human element within the change process, in particular, the employees, and meeting their needs in order to overcome resistance to change. This derives from the management component therefore shows that there needs to be planning, control, coordination and motivation from management towards the employees as Brech (1975) suggested to help meet the organisations objectives. This component of the process does however, need to be tailored in order to meet the differing needs of internal and external stakeholders as they will not all have the same interests.

Although there have been a large number of successful implementations of changes within organisations, there is now much evidence to show that a high proportion of change efforts end in failure (Beer and Nohria, 2000; Burnes, 2003; Rogers et al., 2006; Senturia et al, 2008). The reasons for such a high level of failure include complacency, poor communication, weak leadership, inappropriate culture and political infighting (Huczynski and Buchanan, 2001; Hoag et al, 2002; Kotter, 1996; Burnes, 2009: 447). Due to this, it is widely agreed among academics that there is a need for clear objectives, managed to create planned desirable outcomes that meet the organizational needs.

For this research project, the working definition of change management will be: the effective planning and coordination of people and resources during the process to move an organisation or department from its present state to a future desired state.

**Types of Change**

Armstrong (2009: 424) says that before change can be managed, it is first necessary to understand the types of change and identifies three types of change; strategic, operational and transformational. This expands on the work of Johnson et al. (2009) who suggest that there are only two types of change; incremental and transformational. Burnes (2009) and Hayes (2010) also agree that the two types of change are transformational/revolutionary and incremental however, it is noted that it is common for the two types of changes to be run in a cycle within organisations, which is named the punctuated equilibrium cycle and associated with work by Miller and Friesen (1984), Tushman and Romanelli (1985) and Gersick (1991). The majority of organisations will experience episodes of discontinuous incremental changes but because of the nature of the macro environment, they will inevitably experience discontinuous revolutionary changes as well (Hayes, 2010).

Incremental changes are those that are associated with ‘doing things better through a process of continuous tinkering, adaptation and modification’ (Hayes, 2010: 24). This fits with Weick and Quinn’s (1999) view on change, seeing it as a pattern of endless modifications in processes and practices. Nadler and Tushman (1995) say that although common conception of incremental changes are that they are small, they can however be large in terms of the resources needed and the impact they have on people. Hayes (2010) expands on this saying that the incremental changes build on what has already been accomplished and has the flavour of continuous improvement. Burnes (2009) states that incremental change is often a long process whereby an individual part of an organisation deals with problem and one goal at any one time.

Transformational changes are more radical than other types of change and therefore take more planning (Simms, 2005). Hayes (2010) says that transformational or ‘revolutionary’ changes involve doing things differently but not necessarily better, and could potentially lead the organisation to different things altogether. Dunphy (1996) states that planned transformational changes are triggered by the failure of people to create a continuously adaptive organisation and are misaligned with their environment which requires change to happen. Nadler et al. (1995: 24) says that change efforts can be very different because of the extent to which the organisations response to change is proactive or reactive, and then a decision needs to be made as to whether it will be incremental or transformational but this is largely dependent on the time the company has available.

**Technological Change**

Technological change has been highlighted as a reason why change is more frequent in organisations in comparison to 20-30 years ago (Worley and Mohrman, 2014). Schilling (2004) postulates that technological innovations and changes in organisations are now the most important driver of competitive success. Orlikowski
and Barley (2001) state that when technological changes occur this will ‘reshape organisational activity’ which suggests that it would fit in the transformational section of Nadler et al. (1995) types of change matrix in Table 1.0. Prewitt (1996) and Orlikowski and Barley (2001), both stress that there is an importance placed on the change management process and it is therefore critical that the recipients of the change adopt and buy-in to the change (Prewitt, 1996). When technological changes are being made, Davis’ Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is frequently used to help understand employee’s motivation towards using the technology (Chutter, 2009). The TAM suggests that if there is perceived ease of use, this will directly influence the perceived usefulness of the technology, but if there is a perceived usefulness of the technology this does not necessarily affect the ease of use but will still motivate employees to use the systems (Davis, 1989; Chutter, 2009).

TAM has been expanded since the original version from Davis (1985) and now the TAM2 is strongly supported (Venkatesh and Davis, 2000). The TAM2 suggests that there are key forces contributing to the judgments made on perceived usefulness and they all have an effect on the acceptance of technology, when use is both mandatory and voluntary (Chutter, 2009). Despite the impressive advances in technology and their capabilities, many companies are finding that their systems are underutilized or have low usage which is the cause of lower productivity levels than predicted and lacklustre returns on the investment by the organisation (Venkatesh and Davis, 2000). Transformational and costly technological change is susceptible to failure, like every other type of change, therefore organisations need to understand the contributing factors contributing to acceptance, and the TAM2 outlines some of these (Venkatesh and Davis, 2000. Chutter, 2009).

**Triggers Change**

Although some academics such as Dawson (1994) believe that change in organisations has not been clearly defined, Jones (2010: 31) postulates that it’s ‘the process by which organisations move from their present state to some desired future state to increase their effectiveness’. This definition demonstrates the integrity of changing to improve the organisational performance but does not identify reasons for change. It has been recognized that there are many forces, both macro and micro that are drivers for change, helping to indicate what needs to change and where, in order to stay competitive within the industry (Raineri, 2009; Burnes, 2009: 446). With ever-greater choices made available to consumers, no organisation, company, industry or sector is immune from the pressures applied by internal and external factors, making change inevitable (Pettinger, 2009: 36).

Internally, the motives of management may determine whether change will occur and what type of change this will be, but they often have different interests to the employees, meaning that change is often a political process (Pettigrew, 1987). External pressures are growing with organisations becoming increasingly connected with consumers and one another, and the interests and motives of these stakeholders are another trigger for change (Liebhart and Garcia-Lorenzo, 2010). Any of the external PESTLE factors that effect a business, pioneered by Aguilar (1967), can be triggers for change, but essentially it is down to the management of an organisation to identify the need for change within a business and act upon it (Armstrong, 2009).

**Managing Resistance to Change**

CIPD (2014) defines resistance to change as, ‘an individual or group engaging in acts to block or disrupt an attempt to introduce change’. Hughes (2010: 162) says that most traditional change management texts avoid the topic of resistance to change and there is a tendency for it to be depicted as ‘something to overcome’. For example, Armstrong (2009: 431) says, ‘resistance to change can be difficult to overcome even when it is not detrimental to those concerned, but an attempt must be made’. However, CIPD (2014) identify that resistance to change is not necessarily negative, as it may be an indication that the change initiative needs rethinking. Literature suggests many different types of resistance but CIPD (2014) conceptualises two broad types, namely: resistance to the content of change and resistance to the process of change. With regards to the content of change, this can be a specific change in technology.
The process of change concerns the way a change is introduced and managed. ‘People resist change because it is seen as a threat to familiar patterns’ (Armstrong, 2009: 430). CIPD (2014) postulate that about 20% of an organisation will welcome the changes and champion it, 60% of the organisation will go along with it and don’t mind either way and the final 20% of the company will resist and ‘attempt to be a saboteur’ of the change. Armstrong (2009: 431) and CIPD (2014) have identified several different reasons as to why people resist change including: ‘the shock of the new, economic fears, inconvenience, uncertainty, symbolic fears, threat to interpersonal relationships, threat to status and skill, and competence fears’. Lui and Perewe (2005) identified that emotions play a key role in the acceptance of change and if positive emotions can be promoted, it is helpful when implementing transformational change (Fredrickson, 2000).

Miller and Mogne (1985) suggest that information received about the change helps to reduce anxiety and uncertainty and Armstrong (2009) depict a key role of line managers in this process. This would therefore suggest that communication would not only be between management, but simultaneous communications with employees is important to implementing successful change and encountering minimal resistance. Unfortunately, it is often the case that managers do not want to divulge changes until they are imminent due to a fear of setting off negative emotions among employees (Bridges, 1995). By doing this, management do not give themselves time to fully communicate the changes and solve any problems that arise which are some of the reasons as to why change implementations fail on a regular basis (Huczynski and Buchanan, 2001; Hoag et al, 2002; Kotter, 1996; Burnes, 2009). By talking about both the positives and negatives that will arise because of a change, this will reduce the fear from uncertainty and help the employees understand why the change is a necessity (Bridges, 1995).

It is suggested that people do not resist change inherently as is commonly thought, but when they do, it is usually because they believe the anticipated consequences associated with the change will be negative (Jansen, 2000. van Dijk & van Dick, 2009). This would therefore suggest that the organisation needs to manage the process in such a way as to change employees perceptions, or commonly, the change itself will be altered because of the thoughts and opinions communicated between employees and management (Kotter and Schlesinger, 1979. Maher and Hall, 1998. van Dijk and van Dick, 2009). It has also been suggested that any ideas about the change communicated by employees needs to be implemented where appropriate to show that the staff are valued otherwise, this could increase resistance which would be counterproductive for the organisation (van Dijk and van Dick, 2009).

As mentioned earlier, technological change is becoming one of the most common changes in organisations and this can cause resistance from employees as with any kind of change. Resistance to technological change can be functional when it signals the existence of problems with the technology or its effects but similar to any change, it can be dysfunctional when it leads to organisational disruptions (Rivard and Lapointe, 2012). If resistance is functional then the organisation needs to take the messages conveyed about the problem and use them to correct these and minimise resistance (Rivard and Lapointe, 2012). It is postulated that implementers of change need to respond to dysfunctional resistance by identifying the causes of resistance and determining how to resolve the problems (Markus, 1983). Effective organisational responses to resistance include; aiming the responses directly at the users or their work environment, adapting the system when the resistance stems from the new systems, or modifying users perception of the new systems, all to help shrink organisational disruption (Markus, 1983; Martinko et al., 1996; Lapointe and Rivard, 2006; Joshi, 1991).

Significance of Theory in Managing Change
It is suggest that through research on managerial practice, theories can be derived to help inform managerial practice, and so thus the circle continues (Saunders et al., 2012). Englehart (2001) suggests that managers failing to recognise how theories can help to make sense of situations, put themselves into a weaker position to make judgements and effectively manage. Saunders et al. (2012) identify that managers or practitioners often do not have time to do the research to develop theories that can inform their practice and so it therefore falls to management researchers to enlighten the practitioners with useable knowledge. Organisational culture and
leadership styles within an organisation, among other things, will have an effect on the way an individual perceives, feels and acts (Lok and Crawford, 1999, 2003). This therefore means that there are multiple variables to consider when trying to predict what will happen in an organisation that is subjected to change, and theory can only go part of the way to help inform this. The organisation ultimately needs to understand what the theories are saying they should do, but assess the circumstances to ensure the right change and methods to implement it are used even if the theory suggests otherwise (Burnes, 2009).

**Theoretical Foundations of Change Management**

Burnes (2009) suggests that change management is not rigid with clearly defined boundaries, but instead proposes that there are three schools of thought that form the central planks on which change management stands: individual perspective school, group dynamics school and open systems school. Although there are those that would argue one school of thought is better than the others, it is also suggested that there are different situations where each one would be applicable and some argue that they are all in fact complimentary approaches (Burnes, 2009).

**Individual Perspective**

This school of thought is split into groups: the behaviourists and the gestalt-field psychologists. Burnes (2004) states that behaviourists believe individual behaviour is a result of interactions with their environment whereas gestalt-field psychologists believe that individuals are not only influenced by their environments but by the way they reason with themselves and the situation they are subjected to. Hayes (2010) identifies that when organisations implement changes, it is primarily the individuals within the organisations are subjected to a change, however large or small, and this contributes to the organisation itself changing. Kavanagh and Ashkanasy (2006) postulate that the success of change often hinges on individuals perceptions and it is therefore important to communicate change the individual before any larger change can happen. Change management literature has shown that over time, a combination of individual incentives and discussion, involvement and debate at an individual level are needed to bring about organisational change (Burnes, 2004).

**Group Dynamic**

Lewin (1947) suggests that people within organisations work as part of a team or group and therefore change management needs to be directed at the teams. This theory is agreed with by Cummings and Huse (1989) cited in Burnes (2004), proposing that the focus of change needs to be at the group level and should concentrate on influencing and changing the groups norms, roles and values. The modern management trend for organisations is to view themselves as teams rather than a collection of individuals and this therefore suggests that when change needs to occur, then it needs to go through the teams of an organisation in order to be effective (Macredie et al., 1998).

**Open Systems**

After noting that some people view individuals and groups as the important focus for change, Burnes (2004) states that the final viewpoint is that of the entire organisation. The open systems school of thinking sees organisations as composed of a number of interconnected sub-systems, and requires analysis of these sub-systems to take place in order to determine how to improve the overall functioning of the organisation (Macredie et al., 1998). Buckley (1968) suggests that internal changes of one sub-system will affect other sub-systems in the organisation as well as having an effect on the external environment. It is therefore proposed by Mullins (1989) that the open systems perspective on change management is to achieve overall synergy across the entire organisation than optimising any one individual sub-system.

**Change Management Models**

‘Conceptually, the change process starts with an awareness of the need for change’ (Armstrong, 2009: 426). Some managers identify the need for change, believing it requires a logical and linear approach however; the process is in fact an ‘iterative, cumulative and reformulation-in-use process’ (Armstrong, 2009: 426; Pettigrew
and Whipp, 1991). There are numerous different models that outline the change process, with Armstrong (2009: 426) identifying that the best known models are by Lewin (1951) and Beckard (1969). There have been more recent developments by Thurley (1979), Bandura (1986) and Beer et al. (1990) which all offer important contributions to understanding the mechanism for change (Armstrong, 2009: 426). One of the main points to be drawn from all 5 models is that objectives need to help meet the agreed desired future state of the company that will be beneficial for them. These models also all share the idea that the change process has a clear beginning and ending, is initiated by senior executives of the company and is ultimately focused on particular areas to sustain competitive advantage. Beer et al. (1990) was the model to consider the post change environment adding a requirement that management need to ‘monitor and adjust strategies in response to problems’. Lewin (1947) argues that a successful change project involves three steps: Unfreezing, Moving and Refreezing.

1. The first step, ‘unfreezing’, is where the current equilibrium within an organisation is broken and old behaviours are unlearnt and discarded so new behaviour can be successfully adopted (Burnes, 2004). This is the stage whereby the organisation needs to make people aware of the inefficient state it is currently in and therefore the necessity for change. Schein (1996) elaborates on Lewin’s first step, postulating that there needs to be sufficient psychological safety created in this process otherwise people will become defensive and no change will happen (Burnes, 2004).

2. The second stage involves moving to the new desired state and acting upon the results of the previous stage. Burnes (2000) states that in this stage, new behaviours, values and attitudes need to be developed from the changed processes and structures.

3. The final step is to ‘refreeze’ at the new level. This stage seeks to ensure that new behaviours go well with the rest of the other behaviours, personalities and environment within the organisation to attempt to avoid disconfirmation (Burnes, 2004).

There are some people who believe that the traditional change management models are from a simpler time and are ‘generally not up to the task’ due to the radical changes organisations have faced in their internal and external environments (Worley and Mohrman, 2014: 216). Academics are yet to provide frameworks to handle these rapidly changing times and there is now little mention of the traditional change models in published case studies of transformational change (Worley and Mohram, 2014). Hayes and Hyde (1998) provided a diagram that encompassed the whole change process which can be applied universally. As with the aforementioned models, the explanation that comes with the process diagram focuses heavily on recognises the need for change, planning and the implementation sections of the change process. Although the Hayes and Hyde’s (1998) model recognises the post change environment in the ‘sustain change’ section, very little explanation is provided as to how to achieve this (Hayes, 2010: 55).

**Change Agents**

Change can be initiated from almost anywhere within an organisation, but it is commonly instigated by the top management of a company and Kavanagh and Ashkanasy (2006) suggest that these people should be the ‘head architects’ of change and Bass (1985) suggests that leaders need to promote this by creating a vision. Commonly, the top management’s objective is to maximize profits and sustain a competitive advantage so the change they propose may often conflict with how other people within the organisation feel the company should be heading in. Considerations of how the stakeholders feel need to be high on the top managements agenda in order to ensure that the proposed change is right for that company and will increase their performance instead of causing unwanted disruption (Kavanagh and Ashkanasy, 2006). Therefore it may be necessary to enlist the help of other people within the organisation who better understand the operations within the area that will be changed.

HR managers have better knowledge of the workforce than top management and best practice in managing people to become change agents. In addition, HR managers lead and advise senior and line managers in how best to influence successful change within organisations. Ulrich (2013) identifies several actions of HR professionals in the change process including: identifying and framing problems, building relationships of trust, solving problems, and creating and fulfilling action plans. Fundamentally, the HR department of an organisation
Armstrong (2009) suggests that line managers have a critical role to play when it comes to the successful implementation of change as they are the direct line to the employees who are often the recipients of change. It is proposed that during the change process, line managers should take additional responsibility in employee relations and coordinate with other managers across the organisation to help promote a clear and consistent message (Cunningham and Hyman, 1995). The line managers do not need to be the most skilled person in their area of the organisation but the need to become facilitators and be ‘the driving force behind change’ (Cunningham and Hyman, 1995).

Summary of Literature Review

The review of literature has revealed that change management can be used in a multitude of fields across industries and has attracted a lot of research to be conducted in this area. It has also allowed three areas where further research can be conducted to be identified and these lead to the objectives outlined earlier. Firstly, it has been indicated that there are several different types of change, along with different perspectives as to who to target the change process at; namely, the individual, group or entire organisation. The objectives help to inform who the case organisation targeted the change towards and the techniques used to achieve this.

Secondly, it is suggested that many change processes fail due to reasons including lack of communication, poor leadership and bad planning, but even if these things are addresses, successful change is not a certainty. The most important of these factors is the level of communication as this directly effects other factors and this is therefore incorporated into the objectives, helping show just how important communication is along with what needs to be communicated and how this is achieved.

Thirdly, there are several models of change that act as guidelines to organisation, suggesting how the process should be managed, but there is not a general rule that applies to every process. Therefore, research in this area helps identify the process and techniques that are adopted by management in practice.

Methodology

In this section, the research design and methods used are discussed and justified to help achieve the overall aim and objectives of this study. Firstly, the philosophies in business and management research will be explored to understand their influence on data collection methods and the type of results one wishes to gain. Secondly, the research design and methods used in this research will be provided and justified. Thirdly, a critical evaluation of the research limitations, reliability and validity is conducted. Finally, the ethical considerations involved with this research project are realised and discussed. In addition to this, an overview of the chosen case study is outlined.

Philosophical Underpinning of the Research

The process by which research is undertaken and how knowledge is developed is suggested by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) with their Research Onion. The outer ring of this diagram shows that before research starts, it is important to know which philosophy will shape and influence the methods used to collect and analyse data. The philosophy will help to explain assumptions made in the research and have a significant impact on how we understand what is being investigated (Johnson and Clarke, 2006; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). Although there are several different breakdowns of philosophies, the ones I will focus on are ontology and epistemology.

Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality (Collis & Hussey, 2013). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) postulate that ontology can be separated into two viewpoints: objectivism and subjectivism. Objectivism is a ‘position that implies that social phenomena confront us as external facts that are beyond our reach or influence’
(Bryman, 2001). Conversely, subjectivism suggests that social phenomena are created from the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). This research focuses on the subjective factors that are used in change management and the perceptions of the people involved with the change. Knowledge is created through subjective experiences of those involved in the change initiative; as such the research chooses not to adopt an objectivist ontology.

Epistemology is concerned with ‘the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge’ (Bryman, 2001). As with the ontological approach, epistemology can be broken down into differing viewpoints: positivist and interpretivism (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). A positivist approach to research suggests that there are regularities available to create law-like generalisations, which is in some ways like objectivism (Gill and Johnson, 2010). Interpretivism proposes that it is necessary for the researcher to understand differences between people as social actors, and gain subjective understanding from their social worlds (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). It is suggested that interpretivism is highly appropriate in the case of business and management, particularly when looking at organisational behaviour and human resource management (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). This project does just that and therefore takes an interpretivism viewpoint whereby interviewing several managers and gleaming information from their employees through focus groups helps to discover the many truths and multiple realities that are at play in just two places of work.

**Methodological Choice**

Due to the nature of this research project, the approach used is primarily from an interpretivist philosophy. This approach was chosen for a number of reasons; firstly, as suggested by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), this philosophical approach is particularly appropriate when researching areas such as organisational behaviour and human resource management as this project is. Secondly, an interpretivist approach will help to deduce the individual feelings of employees and managers involved in the change process by allowing their own experiences and opinions to help create understanding and inform the research process (May, 2002). Finally, one of the key objectives of this research project is: to identify important considerations in implementing change successfully, and although everyone has a differing view on an experience, this objective is achieved through conversation and therefore, a purely scientific approach cannot be taken.

**Research Method**

Data can be collected through qualitative research or quantitative research and the methods used differ greatly depending on which methods are used. ‘Qualitative data are mostly a record of what people have said’, using methods such as observations, interviews, questionnaires and the researcher’s impressions and reactions (Myers, 2009). Conversely, quantitative research generates numerical and statistical data, collected through questionnaires, surveys and experiments (Myers, 2013). It is suggested that when taking an interpretivist or subjectivist approach to research, then qualitative methods should be used to collect data as they are better when exploring a particular subject or area in depth, as this research project is (Myers, 2013. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012).

**Case Study Selection**

A case study is the “study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, understanding its activity within important circumstances” (Saunders et al, 2000). Yin (2009) suggests that case studies add context to the research and give the ability to explore and understand the subject being researched. In addition, case studies can be particularly relevant when conducting qualitative research and enable the researcher to gain a rich understanding and generate answers to the ‘how’, ‘what’ and ‘why’ questions, making a case study even more relevant to this research project (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007. Saunders et al., 2012).

Mitchells and Butlers PLC (M&B) have agreed to take part in this research project and be recognised throughout. M&B has recently undertaken one of the most radical changes in the restaurant industry where they introduced an entirely new system that changed the way each individual branch operated and therefore each individual working for them had to change the way they did their jobs. Because of the transformational change
in this specific organisation, this project focuses on how change was managed during this time and how the employees feel about the whole process. In order to develop a more in-depth understanding of how change is managed in this large company, branches of similar size and time of change implementation are studied, which helps support the important considerations for managing a change initiative.

**Scope of the Project**

In order to meet the aim and objectives for this project it is important to know what data to collect, who to collect it from and how to it should be collected. The scope of a project defines what is and is not to be included (Schwalbe, 2008). For this project, only employees and managers that were working for the organisation at the time of change will be used in the research. The research only spans to employees of selected branches in the south of the United Kingdom, of differing sizes, to gauge the feelings of how the change was managed, what they would have changed about the process and how effective they think the new systems are.

**Sampling**

As mentioned in the scope of this project, for logistical reasons, the branches where the research is conducted are in the south of the UK, focusing on the Bournemouth and Hampshire area as these are some of the initial locations that the brand fully implemented the new systems and the change was implemented at roughly the same time. However, if deemed necessary and more information is required, research will be conducted in locations that are further afield, also receiving the new systems at roughly the same time.

When selecting candidates to participate in the study, they must have been employed by the company at the time of the change implementation. It was also determined whether the candidates are managers or employees as they are researched in different ways. For these reasons, purposive sampling is the most appropriate sampling technique as it enables the researcher to select participants that will be most able to help answer the research questions (Saunders et al., 2009). If the sample included too many candidates who met the selection criteria, the participants were selected randomly or additional focus group were considered if the researcher felt further information can be gained from additional research. Due to the fewer managers available to select, all of them within the selected branches were asked to participate providing they met the selection criteria.

**Data Collection Methods**

By looking at theories proposed by academics that relate to the research questions, themes were established to shape the way in which some of the primary research was conducted (Saunders et al, 2009).

**Focus Groups**

Focus groups are ‘semi-structured interviews that use exploratory research’ (Hair et al, 2007: 197). Kitzinger (1995) postulates that focus groups are used to explore and clarify people’s views that would be less accessible in a one-to-one interview, through group processes which would be applicable in this particular research project. Hair et al. (2007: 197) suggest that a focus group should consist of between eight and twelve participants whereas Kitzinger (1995) considers that the group size should be between four and eight, as too many may cause some people not to contribute to the discussions.

In this project, each of the focus group sizes were between four and eight as Kitzinger (1995) recommends, moderated by the researcher in order to keep the discussion ‘on track’ (Hair et al, 2007: 197). Open discussion was encouraged but initial questions helped establish the data needed to meet the aim and objectives. One benefit of focus groups is that it ‘enables the researcher to gain a larger amount of information in a shorter period of time’ compared to one-to-one interviews (Gibbs, 1997). Another benefit of focus groups is that they can encourage participation from those who are reluctant to be interviewed by themselves or those who feel that have nothing to say (Kitzinger, 1995). However, there are some limitations of focus groups, including that the researcher has less control over the data produced and practically they can be difficult to assemble (Gibbs, 1997).
**Interviews**

Line managers did not participate in the focus groups to allow employees to express frank and honest opinions without fear of repercussions from management (Kitzinger, 1995), therefore semi-structured interviews were conducted with them. Semi-structured interviews are used when an interviewer can ask follow up questions, using their own initiative, when unanticipated questions arise, and this can lead to unexpected and insightful information (Hair et al, 2007). This method of interviewing was used to gain insight into the feelings and opinions of the managers of the same branches used in the focus groups in order to allow for a comparison of the answers given; this method has also been used to interview the organisations Director for Operations.

Because of the looser structuring of the interview, validity and reliability depend on conveying the equivalent meaning in the questioning which can sometimes be hard to achieve (Barnbell and While, 1994). To aid in the analysis of the data collected in the focus groups and interviews, they will be recorded (via video or dictaphone) so that it can be referred back to. By recording the interviews and focus groups, the researcher will better understand the feelings and opinions expressed at the time (Kitzinger, 1995. Hair et al, 2007).

**Data Analysis**

Qualitative research often delivers a large quantity of data and by analysing it; the aim is to come up with some insights that help explain the subject at hand (Myers, 2013). When analysing the data, Saunders et al., (2012) suggest that this can be inductive, deductive or abductive. This project adopts an inductive approach to analysing data, exploring the change management process in the case organisation and identifying themes and patterns that creates an understanding of how change management is applied in practice and the core aspects to consider when implementing change.

There are several methods of analysing qualitative data and breaking the data down in to manageable and meaningful fragments including; coding, thematic analysis and using narratives (Bryman, 2012). It is proposed that there are general stages to data analysis, firstly the data needs to be prepared and organised, before themes can be deduced and finally discussed and compared to existing literature (Saunders et al., 2012). This research project uses thematic analysis which predominantly follows the same stages as previously proposed but Braun and Clarke (2006) detail the phases as; firstly, becoming familiar with the data; secondly, searching for themes; thirdly, reviewing the themes; fourthly, defining and analysing the themes; and finally, discuss the findings from the data.

Recordings were made when collecting data for this project, with participant’s consent, which helped delve into understanding the emotions a person feels about a subject and pauses in their speech, can say more than written transcripts, no matter how accurate they are (Morgan, 1997. Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). These recordings were a good way to become familiar with the data which starts the first stage of Braun and Clarkes (2006) thematic analysis process.

**Research Limitations**

Change is often a very personal and this therefore means that conclusions drawn from the research cannot be used as the generalised answer to how change management works in practice in all industries as further primary research and a larger geographical scope would be needed in order to achieve this.

**Research Ethics**

When conducting research, ethical considerations are important to component to address, the primary issue being one of participant consent and privacy. With focus groups there is always a problem with privacy because when someone shares information with the researcher, they inherently share with the other group members, which automatically invades their privacy (Morgan, 1997). It is important to respect all participants’ privacy and preventing them from harm by asking them to volunteer and not coercing them into participating (ESRC, 2010).
When conducting this research project, all participants were fully briefed about the research taking place and asked to consent in taking part, and all employees and line managers were anonymised. All participants were given the right to withdraw from the research at any time and were reminded of this right both before and after the research was conducted. All research procedures in this project adhere to University of Plymouth ethical principles.

**Findings, Analysis and Discussion**

This section discusses the key findings from the research conducted to establish how change management works in practice, in addition to the important considerations for managers. The findings from the interviews and focus groups of managers and employees working for the case organisation are compared and discussed with the literature in this area of study. Each area addressed in this section focuses on a different theme from the findings and is discussed with the literature meet the aim and objectives of this project.

**Planning for Change: Managerial views**

Armstrong (2009) suggests that the starting point for a change initiative begins with an awareness of the need for change, and Raineri (2009) and Pettinger (2009) suggest that companies can be forced to change to meet the pressures from varying stakeholder groups. The interviewed managers and M&B’s Director for Operations firstly identified the organisation were ‘behind the times’ when it came to technology and systems. Secondly, it was suggested that the competition were becoming more efficient, enabling them to meet guests needs better, achieved through better systems. For these reasons, it was unanimously understood that M&B needed to make a transformational technological change, aiming to ‘catch up with competition’ and ‘become more efficient’. This confirms how and why some change efforts are initiated linking to Armstrong’s (2009), Raineri’s (2009) and Pettinger’s (2009) work in this area of change management.

One manager had this to say about the planning process:

‘every day you get up and you brush your teeth because that’s what you know to do, but then someone comes along and tells you that now you don’t brush your teeth, but you brush your toes instead. [Pauses] The change is just thrust upon you, with not much explanation as to why and there is no changing back to the way you were, you just have to get on with brushing your toes when all you want to do is brush your teeth’.

This narrative would suggest that the head office had not fully involved the branch managers before final decisions and plans were made, leaving them a little lost and confused as to what was to be implemented. Hayes (2010) suggests that ‘planning and preparing for change’ is hugely important to the success of a change initiative but also adds that this needs to be reviewed to ensure it is effective and problems are minimised. These findings oppose Lewin’s (1947) model of change which states that the first step of a change process involves ‘unfreezing’ the status quo and emphasises the importance of involving managers as well as employees.

Further work by Kavanagh and Ashkanasy (2006) suggests that the top management need to be ‘head architects’ of change, which was the case for M&B, but the plans and vision of these top managers needs to be communicated to the rest of the organisation. This again emphasises the need for a plan which seemed to either be minimal or hidden from the rest of M&B in this case. The Director for Operations somewhat confirmed this in saying that the purchase of the new systems was ‘off-the-shelf’ and that the planning prior to this purchase was not as extensive as it could have been, which he admitted may have been the cause of several of the problems post-change.

Research by Pettigrew and Whip (1991), acknowledged by Armstrong (2009) states that the process of change is an ‘iterative, cumulative and reformulation-in-use process’. Taking this view to planning change could have been adopted, meaning that plans had less rigidity and could therefore adapt quicker to arising situations. The Director of Operations conceded that more planning would have potentially helped in forecasting and avoiding...
potential problems, and ultimately smoothing out the entire process, but the lack of plans did not stop M&B achieving their main aim of implementing new systems which counters what literature suggests (Burnes, 2009; Hayes, 2010).

Planning for Change: Employees Views

There were several issues raised by employees with regards to the planning for change. Firstly, employees were not made aware of any real plans to implement the change:

‘I don’t think there was a plan other than to just get on with it [Pause] we all knew M&B wouldn’t be getting rid of the new systems so we just had to get used to it’.

Bass (1985) suggests top managers need to create a shared vision across the organisation, helping to minimise resistance to change because everyone knows what’s happening. It would appear that the management did not take time to create a shared awareness of the change initiative in M&B and this looks like the starting point for negativity towards the change.

Secondly, not all employees in the focus groups agreed that change was needed in the organisation. It was established by some that even though the previous systems were dated, they worked and were happy the way things were. As mentioned earlier, Armstrong (2009) says that an awareness for change is necessary before change can happen, and in addition to this, according to Lewin’s (1947) model of managing change it is important to unfreeze the status quo, and this could have been achieved by ensuring that the employees understood the need for change.

Thirdly, by not unfreezing the organisation, the change will be perceived to be one sided. Findings in this case study confirm Pettigrew’s (1987) proposal, saying that change can be triggered because of one groups interests, with minimal consideration given to others which can make the process political, thus more complicated. All employees agreed that this decision to change was made in head office and therefore, it was going to happen. The general feeling conveyed was that the staff knew that they and their line managers would not be listened to which goes against van Dijk and van Dick’s (2009) suggestion that the staff should be valued, and this could have been another cause of negativity towards the change.

Communications and Resistance to Change: Management Views

Miller and Mogne (1985) and Armstrong (2009) suggest that communication is key to creating transparency in an organisation so that all can see the vision and plans for the future, decreasing uncertainty and resistance to change. In all except The Director for Operations interview, communication was a key theme that tangled itself with all components of the change effort, which would suggest its importance to helping the change process go smoothly. However, the line managers stated that communication from top management was lacking or ‘intermittent’ which is understandable when the director of operations barely touched on the subject.

One technique that M&B used to help their managers understand how to manage change was to conduct a training day where they learnt about the different types of people within the organisation and how they could manage resistance to change. Armstrong (2009) suggests line managers play an important role in delivering information to employees about the change, and M&B clearly acknowledge this too. One manager in particular emphasised how beneficial this course was, saying that they felt concerned for their staff prior to this training, but this day helped them look at the process more positively which meant that they could relay positive information to their staff.

However, it was agreed that this training course did not provide enough information about the change itself, which meant there was little that the managers could communicate to their staff to help manage resistance to change. One manager used their initiative and the resources they had available, saying:
‘I sent the best communicators from my team to a branch in [the region] where they were trialling the new systems, and [the manager] knows a lot about the systems. It just meant that my team members could see for themselves what was going to change and ask any questions they had. The idea I had was that because the team members I sent were ‘core team members’, they could come back and tell the rest of the team about it and answer any of their question. [Pause] But I did say that even if they thought it was a load of rubbish, they had to come back and be positive about it to reassure the team that it would all be great [Laughs]’.

Research shows that positive emotions are an important factor in the acceptance of change (Lui and Perrewe, 2005; Fredrickson, 2000). This indicates that if all managers utilised what they had available as this one manager did, positivity would spread across the organisation, minimising resistance to change, but this one idea was not shared. In Lewin’s (1947) ‘unfreezing’ step to managing change, it entails ‘reducing resistance to change’ among other things, and if this is achieved, then following two stages of Lewin’s model will be less complicated as these findings would suggest.

Communications and Resistance to Change: Employee Views
This theme prompted several issues to be raised by the employees in both focus groups. Firstly, it was agreed that not enough information was given to them which caused worry and negativity from the outset. This confirms Armstrong (2009) and Miller and Mogne’s (1985) suggestion that negativity regarding a change stems from not knowing what is going to happen, and that if information was made available, this would help reduce anxiety, uncertainty and negativity. Although management can withhold information for fear of causing disruption within the organisation, the findings conclude that an organisation needs to extensively communicate with employees, or not communicate with them until necessary, as divulging limited information seems to be more disruptive.

Secondly, it was found that no employee, to the participant’s knowledge, was consulted as to whether a change was needed or their opinions on how to implement a change. The literature suggests that communication is a two way thing and in the instance of change, staff need to be shown that their opinions are valued and considered otherwise this can cause resistance (van Dijk and van Dick, 2009). As the research confirms, supported by Armstrong (2009), line managers are a key part of the change process, therefore top managers of M&B should have utilised them more to consult with employees on their opinions, helping inform the change process which should have been done in the planning stage.

Thirdly, training is often used to help unlearn old behaviours and reinforce the change, which is another key component of Lewin’s (1947) ‘unfreezing’ stage of the change model. This can help employees identify the benefits a change will have for them which Bridges (1995) identifies as important to reducing fear from uncertainty and resistance to change. The employees said that there was minimal training provided prior to the change being implemented which is consistent with M&B’s low level of communication in this period. The majority of training was done on the day the new systems arrived, provided by an external company that were experts in the systems and how to serve the customers using it. In doing this, M&B gave their employees minimal chance to reduce their negativity and fear of the unknown before the change was implemented.

However, these findings established that people grasped the new changes at different rates, and received differing amounts of training which seems to suggest that a way of tracking employee’s progress would have been helpful for both employer and employee.

Finally, in the days following the change, both groups said that their branches experienced problems with the systems which caused negative feelings. One participant said:

‘I know a few of us gave up with using the new ‘i-serves’ quite quickly after we had so many problems and made so many mistakes at the start of the day [pause] we just went back to the old way, which I found easier at the time, because there was no one who could help solve the problems we was having, causing us to stress out and I know I wouldn’t have wanted to be one of my guests in that first week or so, it was just awful’.

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Rivard and Lapointe (2012) postulate that problems with a change, especially of a technological nature, automatically causes resistance to change and is commonly dysfunctional to the organisation as it causes disruption which is confirmed by the findings of this research. The Technology Acceptance Model (Davis et al., 1989) suggests that people will resist change if the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are low however, this research would suggest that people will also resist technological change if problems occur that are not easily resolved, causing the perception of the change to become almost entirely negative.

The last stage in Lewin’s change model (1947) is ‘refreezing’, similarly in Hayes and Hyde’s (1998) general model for change, the last stage in the cycle is to ‘sustain the change’. Rees and French (2013) suggest that this is the stage where the company stabilises and the new change conditions are reinforced. This stage can take a long time to complete as shown by the case organisation, primarily attributed to problems arising post-change, which caused employees to revert back to their old behaviours. This would therefore suggest that resistance to change can continue after the change is implemented and that a change initiative requires adequate support from expert’s post-change, helping to build knowledge and aid in rapid problem solving.

**Differences in Employees Experiences**

One of the objectives of this study was to analyse the staff experience during the change that M&B implemented. The Director for Operations said the new systems were the same for every branch in order to try and encourage consistency across the organisation, which was predominantly for the consumers benefit. The literature states that top management need to create a shared vision and communicate this to the rest of the organisation to encourage a consistency in the change (Cunningham and Hyman, 1995; Kavanagh and Ashkanasy, 2006). Although the two focus groups receive the same systems, their respective line managers used different techniques therefore their experiences of the change process varied, yet again confirming Armstrong’s (2009) suggestion of the importance of line managers.

Firstly, there was a difference in the communication received from the line managers. One focus group received very minimal communication beforehand, whereas the other groups manager decided it would be beneficial for some of the ‘core team members’ to go to a trial branch to see for themselves what they were getting and communicate this back to their colleagues in a positive manner. Bridges (1995) suggests that some managers choose to withhold information due to a fear of setting off negative emotions among employees. However, the employees of the first branch seemed to develop negative emotions from knowing that the change was going to occur but not having anything to supplement this knowledge suggesting that information should be shared totally or not at all as mentioned earlier.

Secondly, the number of team meetings and discussions between one another seemed to differ between branches. The first branch made no mention of the change until it was imminent whereas the second branch had additional team meetings and discussions. Bridges (1995) suggests that by talking about the positive and negatives of a change initiative, fear from uncertainty will reduce and help the employees understand why the proposed change is necessary. One of these line managers clearly agreed with this idea but the findings showed that any concerns raised from these meetings were not acted upon, which didn’t help reassure some staff that the changes would be beneficial, causing some resistance, confirming that positive emotions play a key role in the acceptance of change (Fredrickson, 2000; Lui and Perrewe, 2005; van Dijk and van Dick, 2009). However, it is possible that if the manager in the first branch had told the employees absolutely nothing of the change before it was imminent, the employees couldn’t build positive or negative emotions towards the change from talking with one another, and therefore neutral emotions and no communication among colleagues would minimise disruption until the change is implemented.

Finally, all employees experienced failings in the systems themselves. Rivard and Lapointe (2012) suggest that problems with technology can be functional when it leads to technological improvements, but dysfunctional when it causes disruption. This research confirms that problems can cause significant disruption but the ways in which the problems are dealt with directly affect the employee’s experience and perception of the change. The
findings suggest that effective teamwork reduced stress and frustration when problems arose, but this was not effected by prior communications or training.

**Biggest Challenges Faced By Management**

The Director for Operations said that from his perspective, one of the biggest challenges was trying to develop consistency throughout the organisation. It was noted that M&B had developed a habit of leaving off changing anything until a ‘big intervention’ was needed, causing massive disruption throughout the organisation. Hayes (2010) suggests that this is not the way in which organisations should operate, instead suggesting that the change process is in fact a cycle of incremental changes and transformational changes. Dunphy (1996) concurs with Hayes’ (2010) suggestion, postulating that organisations operating in a continuously adaptive way find less disruption and it is ultimately beneficial for them. Moving forward from this transformational change, The Director for Operations said that he hopes this will be a good base to build upon and they won’t need to make any ‘big interventions’ but a series of ‘top-ups’ in the future which is moving towards Dunphy (1996) and Hayes’ (2010) adaptive organisation.

From both the management and employees standpoints, almost all agreed that the biggest challenge they faced, and apparently still face today, are the system weaknesses. As mentioned earlier, any problems with new systems and technological change will automatically cause resistance to the change to build up (Rivard and Lapointe, 2012). However, the managers understood that problems would occur but they did not expect such a hard battle to resolve issues because of the lack of expert support that they had to aid them. Two managers said similar things:

‘I’m not a technical whizz [laughs], nowhere near [laughs], so when a problem happened, I was pretty useless [laughs] ... I just needed help to sort it out because it stressed my employees out and it irritated the guests. The support people on the end of the phone weren’t great, and you could tell they were busy because you always had to wait ages to speak to someone . . . when you did speak to someone, it felt like they didn’t really know how to help and I swear I just heard them tapping on keys to look it up on Google [laughs]’.

‘Honestly, I just got told to switch the systems off and back on again most off the time’.

This would suggest that Rivard and Lapointe’s (2012) proposal may need amending slightly as the findings from this research suggest that although the problems with the systems were irritating, the lack of support was what caused real issues. The findings also suggest that although the organisation was striving for consistency across the brand, branches weren’t considered individually and therefore one radical change would not create the desired outcome across the organisation. If the organisation had taken an incremental approach as suggested by Weick and Quinn (1999), the processes and practices in each branch could be continuously modified across the organisation to create consistency over time. Having said this, Simms (2005) suggests that desired outcomes can be achieved from a transformational change but this requires substantially more planning, which these findings established were lacking in this case.

‘Refreezing’ and ‘sustaining the change’ are the last stages in Lewin’s (1947) and Hayes and Hyde’s (1998) change models, and this requires the new behaviours and practices to become the norm within the organisation. Line managers do not need to be experts in these new practices or behaviours, but they need to be able to drive it forward (Cunningham and Hyman, 1995). In order to cause minimal disruption to the organisation, the new behaviours and practices should be cemented as quickly as possible. The findings show that system problems cause organisational disruption and staff resorting back to old behaviours, therefore confirming Venkatesh and Davis’ (2000) suggestion that technological change often causes lower productivity and is underutilised because of the problems that arise.

**Summary and Important Considerations for Change**

The key themes of this research have been discussed throughout this section, but the final question posed to all participants of this study aimed to find the important consideration for a change process to be successful.
Management Views

To implement a successful change strategy, from a head office perspective, training is a necessity. The Director for Operations made special mention to post-change training initiatives whereby the recipients of the change continuously had their knowledge topped-up to solidify new practices and behaviours. This fits with Weick and Quinn’s (1999) suggestion of continuous modifications and adaptations that would ultimately lead to M&B not needing to make another disruptive transformational change. The Director for Operations suggests that training should be continuously delivered by line managers and e-learning platforms, looking to develop organisational consistency. By doing this, communications be enhanced with the employees which Burnes (2009) sees as an important component of any organisation.

Line managers also agreed that training was a key component that would lead to successful change, stating that a combination of ‘e-learning’ and ‘live training’ should be utilised. They believed that a more personal approach to delivering information to employees would be more beneficial than solely utilising technology to do this. They themselves believe that they are the important link between the top managers and the employees; however they currently think that they are underutilised. This concurs with Armstrong’s (2009) view on the importance of line managers in a change initiative, and therefore how the line managers are used is an important consideration when planning a change.

Although Armstrong (2009) and Pettigrew and Whip (1991) suggest that a change initiative needs to be an ‘iterative, cumulative and reformulation-in-use process’, the findings from this study would suggest that extensive plans are still necessary and should be fully transparent. However, these plans need to be adaptable because as the managers established, problems will arise and need to be addressed quickly in order to cause as little disruption as possible. This would suggest that communication needs to continuously go back and forth between line managers and the top management to help inform and adapt the change (Hayes, 2010; Kavanagh and Ashkanasy, 2006).

Employee Views

Several different views on what is considered to be integral to a change initiative arose from both focus groups. Firstly, communication and training pre-change were considered important. This again emphasises the importance of communication throughout the change process (Burnes, 2009). Training could be viewed as a way of communicating to the staff about the change and if conducted well, can reduce fear and uncertainty before the change, thus reducing resistance (Bridges, 1995).

Secondly, having a good, knowledgeable manager/leader was identified to be significant by some employees. Fincham and Rhodes (2005) stated that change management required ‘leadership and direction’, and Burnes (2009) supports these findings by suggesting that weak leadership can be a reason why some change initiatives fail. The findings suggest that having a good manager that’s committed to communicating and training the employees helped to settle nerves and promote a positive attitude towards the change which again confirms Armstrong’s (2009) suggestion as to the importance of line managers and also Lui and Perrewe’s (2005) assertion that positive emotion are important when implementing a change.

Finally, both groups agreed that post-change, they were left very much to themselves and would have liked further support and training. These opinions are in line with The Director for Operations and show that the post-change environment needs to be considered when initially planning a change initiative. The literature puts significant emphasis on the planning and preparation prior to a change but there is little mention of the plans for the post-change activities (Brech, 1975; Hayes and Hyde, 1998; Hayes, 2010). Lewin’s (1947) change model suggests the organisation needs to refreeze and cement the new behaviours and practices as the norm within the organisation. There is however no mention of how to achieve this but this research would suggest that expert support and training ‘top-ups’ could be techniques used.
Conclusion
This section draws together the findings from the research, identifying how change is managed in practice and the key considerations needed for a change effort. Firstly, this section will revisit the objectives outlined earlier and briefly explain how this study has met these objectives. Secondly, this section explains the recommendations for organisations undertaking change initiatives. Finally, this section outlines the areas where further research can be conducted to help inform change management.

Revisiting the Research Objectives
The aim of this research project was to explore how change management is applied in practice, and evaluate the core considerations in the process. This lead to the following interrelated objectives:

- Establish an understanding of the planning approach used to implement change.
- Analyse how well the organisation implemented the changes in accordance to the plans that were made.
- Identify the communications between management and the employees, and analyse the effect this had on the change process.
- Looking at different branches of the same company, evaluate the staff experience during the change process.
- Establish the challenges faced by management when implementing the new systems.
- Identify important considerations in implementing change successfully

The first two objectives were interrelated and the theoretical approach to planning a change initiative was met in the review of literature, and a practical understanding of planning for change was established and analysed where the findings were discussed. The literature established that planning for change involved the coordination of the organisations people and resources (Brech, 1975; Burnes, 2009). The findings uncovered that there was no evident plan for the case organisation, but instead, they seemed to deal with situations when they arose. Whilst this contradicts what the literature suggests, the primary objective of implementing new systems was met, but it was conceded that having a more detailed plan would have been beneficial.

The third objective looked at how important communication is when implementing change. Not much of the change management literature explicitly states how important it is, but it does however suggest that poor communication can lead to a failed change effort (Burnes, 2009). The findings show that communications were between lacking somewhat and this effected the experience of the recipients of the change. However, the findings prove that even with poor communications, a change initiative can be success in meeting a company’s aim. The fourth objective was achieved in the section analysing the findings and the differences in opinions and experiences of both the management and employees in varying branches were established. Although consistency was strived for, the different experiences were had and can primarily be attributed to the line manager’s styles of managing and how well the employees worked with each other.

The fifth objective was also met when the findings were analysed and discussed, and by establishing some of the challenges faced throughout the process, this was able to help inform the final objective, revealing the importance of some components of the change process. The findings from the interviews and focus groups climaxed by establishing what the important considerations of a change effort are, focusing primarily on planning, communication, training and support.. By meeting these six objectives, the overall aim to explore how change management is applied in practice, and establish the core considerations of a change effort has also been achieved.

Recommendations for Organisations
To determine whether a change effort has been successful or not, it needs to be established as to whether it has achieved the objectives that were set when the change was triggered (Armstrong, 2009; Rees and French, 2013). Mitchell and Butlers primary objective was to update their systems and this has been achieved, but whether it has benefitted the organisation is up for debate. Therefore, the first recommendation for organisations
considering making any type of change would be to explore the desired outcome and tailor objectives that will meet these desires benefitting the organisation.

Secondly, organisations need to make clear plans and communicate these to everyone involved in the change, which will lead to effectively meeting the objectives. Having said this, these findings show that problems are to be expected; therefore it is imperative that plans are adaptable to accommodate any potential problems. Thirdly, post-change training and support, needs to be planned for and prepared. As mentioned, problems are to be expected, and by ensuring the support’s there for the recipients of change, it will help ‘refreeze’ and ‘sustain the change’ in the organisation. Finally, the line manager’s leadership and knowledge will directly affect the experience of the employees. This final recommendation, as with previous ones, emphasises the importance of communication in the change process. By utilising the people in the organisation that have good knowledge and communication skills, it can make the process more positive and less stressful for others, which has been proved to work against resistance to change.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

This research has identified the important considerations for organisations planning change initiatives, but it has also been established that problems are almost always inevitable and unavoidable. There is little research on what can be done to cement a change in organisations and although the findings suggest that training and support post-change will help to do this, it has not been proved thus far and could serve as an area for further research.

**References**


ESRC (2012) ESRC Framework for Research Ethics (FRE) 2010 – Updated 2012. Available at:


