

Business Agility by Serious Fun Infusion

Ignite Human Excellence
in the Age of AI



REVELANCE

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Foreword and acknowledgements – 2026 Edition

New editions on change management saturate the market. Clearly, change management is of great interest to organisations and affects all of us. My contribution to this field is to help you understand how you can cope with change and uncover the human drivers behind it.

This booklet takes one intentional and often overlooked perspective: **the human lens on transformation**, the mindsets, emotions, skills and drivers that determine whether change actually succeeds. It does not aim to provide another organisational transformation framework; methodologies such as Lean, Agile and SAFe already offer that structure. Instead, it focuses deliberately on the human capabilities that make any framework work in practice: the mindsets, emotional drivers and behavioural conditions that enable people to embrace change, grow and collaborate. These human foundations bring to life values such as transparency, alignment, respect for people and relentless improvement, values no method can achieve without human excellence.

In an age of digital transformation, artificial intelligence, robotisation and automation, most publications concentrate on structures, processes and technology. These perspectives are important, but they do not make transformation work. **People do.** That is why this booklet concentrates on *Igniting Human Excellence in the Age of AI*. It highlights the psychological, emotional and interpersonal capabilities that help individuals and organisations adapt, innovate and grow faster than technology.

Let this booklet guide you through the complex terrain of change management and help you become a critically informed and curious participant in the ever-changing landscape of personal and organisational transformation.

I believe that people who embrace change are the foundation of any sustainable transformation. And I believe that overcoming our natural resistance to change can lead to a happier, more meaningful life, although it requires insight, self-knowledge, curiosity and patience.

This booklet is designed to spark your own change approach and deepen your curiosity about your role in times of transformation. I invite you to explore your personal contribution in a world where change is the only constant, especially now, as digital acceleration reshapes how we work, lead and collaborate. My hope is to offer ways to navigate uncertainty, solve issues and make better personal and professional decisions.

I want to inspire, provoke reflection, and bring together the insights and scientific research that shape successful change and help ignite human excellence in the Age of AI by addressing:

- The impacts of technological developments for organisations and people in the future
- The REVELANCE approach to change: the three essential drivers of change
- The importance of fun infusion.

Fun is not entertainment. it is the psychological state where curiosity, energy, engagement and hope activate the human drivers of change.

With great gratitude, I thank dear Prof. Dr. Cees J. Hamelink for listening, brainstorming, being who he is and for his wise advice!

1. REVELANCE – reveal what's relevant to you to embrace change!

Real organisational change starts with vision. What do you want to achieve? And why? Once the essence of change and its why are clear, it's time to focus on people. Because people put vision into practice, and organisations only change when people change themselves.

Organisations change when people change themselves.

This is where transformation becomes challenging. Change is uncomfortable, uncertain and often resisted. And yet, in the *Age of AI*, human adaptability, curiosity and emotional agility are the most decisive capabilities for future-ready organisations.

My work therefore focuses intentionally on the human side of transformation, the part of change that is both underestimated and underdeveloped. I help people open up to the pleasure of change: to see it not as a threat, but as something energising, meaningful and even fun. When people experience change as exciting and rewarding, they naturally step out of their comfort zone, grow faster than technology, and unlock new possibilities for themselves and their organisations.

To change mindsets, you must understand who people really are not just the tip of the iceberg, but what lies beneath: their drivers, fears, motivations and strengths. From managing directors to frontline supervisors, I work to uncover what makes people tick. And once we reveal that, transformation accelerates.

Fun is a strategic force and it is terribly underrated.

That is why I infuse fun into every assignment, measure it, and start the dialogue about how to increase it. Fun boosts energy, opens minds, and sparks the curiosity needed to embrace change. It enables people to make their own transition in a way that fits who they are, so the organisation can achieve its goals without waste, resistance or detours.

When individuals grow, the organisation transforms. When people open up, vision becomes reality. So the question is: **Are you ready to reveal what's truly relevant to you and open up to the pleasure of change?**

1.1 Business agility and human excellence

A race for business agility! We are now at a stage where the speed of technological innovations and emerging trends is evolving faster than businesses and people can naturally react to. Machines and intelligent systems are increasingly taking over human tasks and perform them with more precision, faster, more reliably and less expensively. Generative AI, AI copilots and autonomous agents are now part of everyday work.

There are two major reasons why technological progress is pushing the economy and society forward so rapidly:

- **IT is a generally applicable technology:** IT can change production processes, boost productivity, and destroy existing business models. Moreover, when computers understand complex actions, they can be copied and spread easily in any sector. Thus, IT has an enormous range.
- **Digital and AI development is exponential and combinatorial:** every new step forwards, is comparable to all earlier steps made before. Computer processing power is doubling every two years. At that rate, infotech power increases by a factor of a million in 40 years. Now we are rapidly developing autonomous, self-driving vehicles, drones, machines that perform surgeries, identify faces, translate and lots more.

The speed at which (parts of) human work can be augmented or replaced by machines and AI is much higher than the speed at which new human work is naturally evolving.

We tend to underestimate what intelligent systems will be able to do and what the effects are for business models and for new, valuable skills. Many organisations struggle to adapt and to create strategic value, to foresee and keep pace with the continuously changing environment.

Businesses will need to focus on and actively manage their **business agility**: facilitating and prioritising doing the right work at the right time. If today 5% of your projects are not the right projects, how do you know and how do you ensure that from tomorrow onwards you move closer to 100%? How can you facilitate and manage business agility? How do you get the right mindset to get employees on board? How do you get the right talent on board in a world where AI and human capabilities need to complement each other?

1.2 A marathon of human and machine intelligence

How to “survival-of-the-fittest” in a digital age? Automation, robotisation and now artificial intelligence are examples of technological developments that are disrupting existing business models more rapidly than ever. They demand a new generation of business models and people skills that focus on business agility **and** human capabilities. This goes along with a new era of leadership and communication.

The ongoing developments will challenge employees and self-employed professionals in ways we have not seen before. Business as usual will not solve this problem. Fundamental changes will be necessary: transformations in organisations and in individuals. As Darwin said: it is not the strongest of the species that survive, but the ones that adapt and fit best to new environments.

Various technologies such as information technology, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, biotechnology, robotics, telecommunications, IoT and data & communication technologies are converging and thereby disrupting and challenging our thinking. Change is so rapid that organisations and skills have difficulty keeping pace. We are already living and working together with AI systems and robots, and our communication with machines or with their assistance increases exponentially.

We are engaged in a marathon of human and machine intelligence.

The marathon is changing progressively and, to participate successfully, individuals will need to deal with speed, innovation and uncertainty. They will need to demonstrate foresight in navigating a rapidly shifting landscape of organisational forms and skill requirements. Organisations and individuals will increasingly be called upon to continually reassess the skills they need, and quickly put together the right plans and resources to develop and align these with future requirements.

What if machines and AI systems can eventually acquire almost any technical or analytical skill? The greatest anxiety troubling humans is how we will continue to add value and at the same time, this is our greatest opportunity to redefine what truly human work means.

As technology accelerates faster than organisations can respond, the labour market transforms just as rapidly. To understand what business agility requires, we must first look at how jobs and skills are shifting.

2. Revaluation of jobs and job skills

Technological developments affect the economy and especially the labour market, and lead to growing uncertainty. Many jobs will change or disappear, many new jobs will emerge. What are the jobs that will remain, and what are the new ones evolving? As technology becomes more dominant in the workforce, what are the effects on future job skills?

What is our comparative advantage to human machines?

The fear of technological unemployment is as old as technology itself, and machines have already been replacing people for years. However, this process is accelerating. Many people are lagging behind. Routine work, both physical and cognitive, is being automated or supported by AI tools. At the same time, new roles arise around data, AI, sustainability, customer experience, ethics, leadership and transformation.

Specific predictions about particular sectors and dates have been overtaken by reality. What we do see across industries is:

- Work is being re-designed rather than simply eliminated.
- Tasks within jobs are automated, while the human part of the job shifts and often becomes more complex.
- Skills-based hiring and continuous reskilling are becoming the norm.
- Careers are becoming more fluid: portfolio careers, multiple roles and lifelong learning.

As machines outsmart and replace humans in some tasks, and augment them in others, their largest impact may be less obvious: their presence forces us to confront important questions. What are humans uniquely good at? How do we redesign work so that humans spend more time in those areas? We will have to rethink the content of our work and our work processes in response.

2.1 Machines and humans: Take-offs and take-overs

For decades, most of the physical work in factories and offices was repetitive and routine. Work was designed to be that way and focused on efficient productivity. Any work in the field of repetition, routine and administration will increasingly disappear or be taken over by machines and AI systems, piece by piece. We see these take-overs especially in the service sector, in which a large proportion of people in advanced economies work.

Machines and AI excel at routine actions. They can store and retrieve information, perform accuracy work and handle big data. They are better at certain forms of fraud detection and pattern recognition. Based on financial data and sports results, they can write news articles that can be published directly online. Machines can communicate with machines, such as nanobots in our biological systems, potentially destroying pathogens and correcting DNA errors. Generative AI can already create text, images, code, video and sound on demand.

Technology advances, and machines learn to perform human tasks with greater efficiency than humans themselves in specific domains. Machines exceed human capacities of memory and processing in many areas and, as they get better at “thinking, communicating and social interacting”, this again leads to further automation.

Smart machines evolve, grow and improve in taking over repetitive, routine, manufacturing and service tasks, including many cognitive ones.

It primarily concerns jobs where skills can be codified and replicated by technology, such as logical, linear, sequential and analytical thinking. It means that the job skills that machines can codify are still necessary, but no longer sufficient.

There is a shift from being good at being like a machine to being good at being a person. With the jobs remaining and the new ones developing, there is a shift in the kind of skills that are needed, skills that have a **comparative advantage over machines**. The shift depends on the balance between what machines can do and what humans are still better at than machines and AI. The developments demand that we continuously monitor and anticipate human comparative advantages.

People with a high interest in human interactions will become increasingly important to create competitive advantage. Their positive effects will show in, for example, effective customer bonding, building strong cultures, breaking through with innovative ideas and working in more effective teams.

Re-evaluating human skills – uniquely human capabilities in the age of AI

- Creativity / artistry / design
- Imagination / playing
- Innovation / inventiveness
- Empathy / communication
- Social sensitivity / building relationships
- Passion / compassion
- Humor
- Leading / proactive / driving innovation
- Problem solving / meaning / judgment
- Ethical judgment / responsibility
- Critical thinking / big picture thinking
- Intuition / amazement
- Storytelling / narratives
- Curiosity / sense-making
- Learning agility / adaptability

Many complex questions arise about business models, social interaction and communication:

- Do we value, develop and teach essential human skills sufficiently?
- When machines and AI can replace humans in many tasks, how can we live and work together peacefully and how can we complement each other? How does this coexistence affect sustainable business strategy?
- Are these developments helping human morality, security, freedom and peace? Who are the people who create sustainable and positive value for the future? Who decides what is “positive”?

Who guards the humane perspective of change?

2.2 Balancing humanoid and human intelligence

Being a human is far easier than building a human. But we are working hard on it. We are on the way to designing humanoid, sociable robots and highly conversational AI systems. Robots and AI are outstanding at interacting with things, data and now also language, but are still limited when it comes to deep, authentic human connection.

Machines are not yet able to truly replicate human behaviour, human thinking or the genuine desire for social interaction.

This gives us humans plenty of space and chances to do the things we are uniquely good at, enjoy and value. There are obvious examples of professions showing the uniqueness of human talent:

- **Creative arts:** Art is an expression of human creativity, imagination and improvisation.
- **Professional sports:** Sports are compelling because of the human narrative that goes along with them: the history, the rivalries, the athleticism, the stakes. Humans love to watch and feel the excitement.
- **Healthcare and medicine:** Morals, norms and values, making tough decisions, dealing with human psychology, the legal and ethical issues of putting a patient's life in the hands of a machine.
- **Education:** Future technological advancements may change the landscape of education. AI can support learning, but the need for human teachers, mentors and role models remains. Can a computer truly understand the nuances of music, art and literature, let alone teach them in a subjective, inspiring manner?
- **Quality assurance and ethics:** Some mistakes can be fixed by computers, but which decisions and judgments must remain human?
- **Politics and Law:** Governors, generals, lawmakers, judges and juries will need human discernment. It is a social necessity that individuals are accountable for important decisions.

There is a good chance that these professions will endure and further develop. So, what are the activities that we humans, driven by our deepest nature, will simply insist be performed by other humans, even if computers could do them?

They involve the human desire for social interaction, communication, sensation, excitement, amazement, emotional bonding and other emotions that touch us. We desire to work with other people to solve problems, tell them stories and hear stories from them, and create new ideas together.

To look into someone's eyes is (still) the key to high-value work in the coming economy.

How far will computers and AI develop to match or outperform these human desires, our humanity? Will humans in some contexts prefer to interact and communicate with humanoids and AI systems rather than humans? What balance brings the most value to economy and society? Developments in humanoids and AI are fast. They are capable of reading emotions through words, tone of voice, facial expressions and body language. There are many observations of emotional bonding between humans and machines (robots, virtual assistants, digital companions).

When machines and AI can replace humans in many tasks, how can we live together and how can we complement each other?

Human desire for social interaction and communication 2026

- Sensation and excitement of human touch
- Machines can personalize, but only people can make it truly personal and meaningful
 - Innovate like people can, think out of the box
- Computers can predict, but people can surprise, empathize and interpret context
- Robots confirm, AI responds, but people smile; that says: *I understand you*
 - Storytelling and human narratives
- Human connection creates trust, belonging and emotional safety

2.3 Comparative and sustainable human assets

Socially intelligent employees can quickly assess the emotions of those around them and adapt their words, tone and gestures accordingly. This is a key skill for people who collaborate and build relationships of trust and it is now even more important when collaborating with larger groups of people in different settings, often hybrid and virtual.

In a globally connected world, cross-cultural skills become increasingly important. Diversity is a great driver of innovation and can make a group truly intelligent. Complementary input from different angles, identities and perspectives can open up a broader view of solutions, provided there is proper understanding, communication and direction.

Our emotionality and social IQ will remain one of the vital assets that give human workers a comparative advantage over machines and AI.

Diversity comes with many attributes: different ages, gender, skills, disciplines, cultures, working, personality and thinking styles. Successful employees within diverse teams need to be able to identify and communicate points of connection (shared goals, priorities, values) that go beyond their differences and enable them to build relationships and work together effectively.

This is an enormous challenge, since it means that people with increasingly different drivers (e.g. culture, intelligence, gender, age, personality, emotion, ratio) need to understand each other, collaborate and improve results. It comes down to trust and effective communication.

Drivers in humans are unique and are formed by many factors such as cultural background (values, norms, religion) and intelligence (linguistic, logical, visual, kinesthetic, musical, intrapersonal, interpersonal and naturalist intelligences). Thus, people have their own unique personality and their own personal drivers. What you see is the iceberg tip. What motivates and drives people depends on their identity, what lies below the surface.

The complexity of communication lies within drivers of each individual.

Drivers are manifold: the wish to belong to a group, moral beliefs, power, love, trust, curiosity, learning, status, and many more. Drivers influence motivation, engagement, attitude, flexibility, resilience, preferences and respect, and therefore determine social interaction, communication and collaboration.

It is about different styles of thinking, feeling and behaving. This is crucial when it comes to transformations. It can contribute to the change objective, since it can enhance the value of people's thinking, the questions they ask and the initiatives they take.

The more individuals identify with change (the why, how and what), and the more their drivers are positively engaged (rational and emotional drivers), the greater their agility, adaptability, hope and motivation.

Tech-check your own sustainability

- Can someone overseas, or remotely, do my job or parts of my job more efficiently or cost-effectively? Can it be outsourced or performed digitally?
- *(Proof: you cannot let a person in another country clean your local streets, but many knowledge tasks can now be done from anywhere.)*
- Can a computer, AI system or autonomous agent do my job or part of my job faster? Can your work be automated or augmented?
- *(Proof: a robot cannot replace the plea of a top NL lawyer, but AI can support research, argumentation and preparation.)*
- What is the overlap between humans and machines/AI in my job? What is my comparative advantage to technology? What makes me uniquely valuable?
- Does my product or service satisfy the growing non-material, emotional, ethical and experiential demands of this abundant age and experience economy? Does my service go beyond purely functional needs?
- What is the timing? When will parts of my job be automated or augmented, and where do we continue to rely on people?
- Which career paths should I choose to stay adaptive, resilient and relevant in a world where automation and AI increasingly take over routine and repetitive tasks?
- What would be a suitable job that requires human behavior that machines cannot yet replicate, such as judgment, empathy, creativity

2.4 Practical skill-shifts per business units

What are the critical skills for employees' future success when the environment is rapidly changing, when change is a constant? Generally speaking, employees who excel in relationship building, teaming, co-creativity, brainstorming, critical thinking, cultural sensitivity, communication, flexibility and the ability to manage diverse employees are grounded in the most relevant skills.

Over the last years, interaction jobs have become the fastest-growing category of employment in advanced economies. Yet, no matter what business unit is concerned, the ability of an employee to **create value** will be the most enduring talent. Consequently, it matters how they think, what questions they ask and what initiatives they take to create value.

As economies have evolved over the centuries, we have always looked outward to get the new skills we required. We could fall back on schools, trainers, coaches and employers that knew and could teach what we needed to know. Now, we must also look inward.

There is a fundamental value shift from what we know to what we are like. To become more essentially human.

How can you discover and develop talent to adapt and to drive change? How can you see if the engine is working, if you need an upgrade, or if you need new parts? There are general examples of how you can discover behavioural bright spots behaviour that anticipates future changes. Below are examples that help you to discover talent generally, and specifically for chosen work environments such as IT, finance, management, marketing and sales.

You can discover exemplary actions and behavior of talents, who...

Connection & Collaboration

- build strong relationships
- brainstorm and co-create
- collaborate effectively across teams and disciplines
- are transparent and authentic

Leadership & Initiative

- lead and take initiative
- dare to experiment and get up again
- are flexible, hopeful and resilient

Learning & Growth

- are curious and committed to lifelong learning
- work and learn in smarter, more experiential and digital ways
- are both the apprentice and the teacher at the same time
- know their talents and how to use them
- stay ahead of developments within their discipline and adjacent fields

Human Advantage & Diversity

- continuously develop uniquely human skills that have a comparative advantage to machines
- can combine and integrate multiple disciplines
- surround themselves with diverse talent
- maintain a healthy work-life balance

2.4.1 ICT trends and bright spot behaviour

Current ICT and digital trends include:

- Automation of automation (AI that builds, tests and optimises software)
- From “If this, then that...” to “What if... and what next?” – AI-assisted problem solving
- Basic digital and data literacy are necessary, but no longer distinguishing
- Strong dependence on digital platforms and ecosystems (cloud, SaaS, platforms)
- ICT embedded in almost every job and company (from logistics to healthcare to retail)
- Widespread use of AI, machine learning and data analytics in daily operations
- Increasing importance of cybersecurity and privacy
- Convergence of technologies (cloud, AI, IoT, 5G, edge computing)

ICT bright spots are people who...

- Combine ICT knowledge and business understanding; take on bridging roles between both disciplines
 - Besides technically linking systems, combine content from diverse disciplines
- Choose a specialisation within ICT and combine it with another discipline or profession
 - Understand that no choice is permanent and keep learning continuously
 - Are curious and eager to learn and develop
 - Can cope with uncertainty and unpredictability, and embrace experimentation

2.4.2 Finance trends and desired future skills

Finance trends include:

- Strong automation and digitalisation of financial processes and reporting
- Growing impact of data analytics, AI and real-time dashboards
- Increasing focus on risk management, cybersecurity and compliance (regtech)
- Sustainability and ESG criteria integrated into financial decision-making
- Online and platform-based financial services
- A growing advisory and partnering role towards the business

Desired future finance professionals are people who...

- Think in targets, value and scenarios, not only in rules and regulations
- Communicate clearly and can translate complex financial insights into business language
- Connect professional finance skills with other disciplines such as stakeholder management, data analytics and sustainability
- Listen respectfully and can build trust with internal and external stakeholders
 - Embrace entrepreneurship and innovation in financial processes and services
- Strive to be the best in their profession while staying adaptable and learning-oriented

2.4.3 Trends in management

- Traditional management layers are shrinking
- There is a trend towards self-management and empowered teams
- The perception of managers is often that they cost time, money and energy if they do not add clear value
- There is misunderstanding and rejection between generations if dialogue is missing
- The shift is from management to **leadership** and from control to **trust and clarity**
- Hybrid and remote work require new leadership skills

'De-management people' are exemplary when they....

- Realise that leadership is a social process and a result of co-creation
- Have a learning mindset; co-create and learn together to cope with uncertainty, complexity and continuous change
- Start and host meaningful dialogues
- Stimulate and strengthen open minds, creativity, psychological safety and hope
- Listen respectfully and are transparent in their intentions and decisions
- Think in solutions, not in problems
- Look for new business models to create value
- Embrace constructive, disruptive thinkers
- Let go of control and leave responsibility to teams within clear boundaries
- Empower employees to make and take decisions that create value
- Give advice "only" when asked or needed; coach rather than command
- Keep their ego in check; support and empower employees
- Focus on comparative human skills when recruiting, to get the fittest people on board
- Think fundamentally about how technology and human capabilities can reinforce each other
- Have reached a level of personal maturity and self-confidence
- Stimulate bottom-up innovation by giving space to experiment
- Learn from experimenting and normalise learning

2.4.4 Future-ready marketing performers

- Content is growing in complexity and volume
- Data and insights are central to understanding customer behaviour
- The learning capability of machines and behavioural science are quickly evolving
- Hyper-personalisation and dynamic customer journeys are becoming standard
- AI increasingly supports segmentation, targeting, content creation and testing

Future-ready marketers...

- Know about conceptual and technological possibilities in digital marketing
- Understand and advise on the technology behind online marketing and automation
- Learn continuously about technical developments and their impact on customer behaviour
- Influence human behaviour in ethical ways and know which tools and algorithms are needed
 - Curiously deepen their knowledge of behavioural sciences
- Deepen their knowledge of data, analytics and Big Data possibilities
- Collaborate closely with sales, product and customer success to create a consistent experience

2.4.5 Sales development changers

- Automation of the sales process shifts skills from commodity selling to tailored, value-based solutions
- Personal sales increase in complexity: stakeholder management, co-creation, understanding the customer's ecosystem
- Consultative selling alone is not sufficient; business development and insight selling are key
- The salesperson is a challenger of the customer's thinking, a knowledge broker and a trusted advisor
 - Teamwork is essential to solve complex customer questions

Future sales talents...

- Connect with customers through personality, professionalism and integrity (analytical and social skills)
- Develop key accounts and build a reputation so that customers actively seek their advice
- Focus on how to create value for the effectiveness and results of the customer
 - Come up with creative and innovative solutions that create tangible client value
 - Communicate clearly and are committed to developing and maintaining relationships
- Continuously learn and improve as knowledge brokers, using digital and AI tools intelligently
 - Claim and demonstrate thought leadership in their domain

3. REVELANCE approach to change

REVELANCE was born from one conviction: transformation succeeds only when you reveal what truly matters to people, their drivers, fears, motivations and hopes. When technology reshapes work, people must reshape how they respond to change. Mindset, motivation and human drivers therefore become decisive, and that is where the REVELANCE approach begins.

No one is untouched by digitalisation and technological acceleration. Organisations and individuals alike are challenged to adapt continuously. And although organisations change only when people change themselves, this is precisely what makes transformation difficult. Real change demands creativity, flexibility and inventiveness — deeply human capabilities that cannot be automated.

What worked in the past, authority, loyal employees, rationality, linear change processes, no longer works in a world shaped by rapid technological development, human AI collaboration and continuous shifts in work.

Lasting transformation requires true individual motivation. And in essence, the way we motivate ourselves and others has not changed. Approaches to transformation and behavioural change have become complex, but the psychological fundamentals remain simple. The REVELANCE approach focuses on three essential drivers of successful change:

Three essential topics to make change successful:

- *your rational drive,*
- *your emotional drive, and*
- *your driveway - the path that makes change feel achievable*

The interaction between these three drivers is crucial to one's mindset and determines whether someone feels the desire to take steps to transform. Whatever the condition of your drivers and driveway, my premise is always to infuse serious fun, measure fun and start the dialogue about how to increase it. Like identity, fun is experienced and triggered differently by each individual. Fun can stand for engagement, vitality, satisfaction, health, inventiveness, anything that makes you feel energised and happier at work and in life.

3.1 Infuse serious fun at all times

Fundamental changes will continue to be necessary for people and organisations to stay successful and employable and they come with uncertainty. Change, however, is certain. We are facing a new principle: **we are never quite done.**

When change is a constant, we better embrace it and make it exciting, fun and sustainable.

Fun shifts our mindsets and brings fresh solutions to change management. When change feels fun, we open up to new ideas and new behaviours. This is beautifully demonstrated by examples like the “Piano Staircase” or the “Deepest Bin”, when we are interested, we get involved, we learn and we explore. Our natural reaction to change is resistance. It is the fear of the unknown and the discomfort of leaving our comfort zone. The question is: how do we make the recipe feel “fun”? What is needed to make rational drive, emotional drive and the driveway feel exciting, rewarding and meaningful? How can we create desire?

Fun is such a powerful force, and yet, it is terribly underrated. Fun is not entertainment, it is the psychological state where curiosity, energy, engagement and hope activate the human drivers of change.

I believe that fun should be a serious standard in organisations. Teams should be tasked to infuse fun, measure it and keep the dialogue going about how to increase it. Fun is one of the greatest motivators and accelerators for change, and each of us should know how to improve our own individual fun factor, not only at home, but especially at work. Fun is the iceberg tip. Positive psychology research shows that fun at work has extensive positive effects: better health, more wellbeing, increased laughter, stronger collaboration and more creativity. One of the greatest challenges in change is mindset: the willingness, the urge, the fun and the desire to change. We love to change when fun is involved. When we succeed in turning a change project into a challenge or adventure that feels fun, people do things their own way, become excited and curious, and open up to the pleasure of change. Inevitably, results follow. Just imagine the impact on engagement, commitment, health, cooperation, business agility and employability.

Organisations change when people change themselves. Organisational change starts with people and that is the real challenge. We are all so different, with our own rational and emotional drivers. Understanding these is where transformation truly begins.

3.2 Rational drivers

Do I want to achieve change targets? Change starts with a strategic vision: why, where, and what to achieve within a specific timeframe. There must be no doubt about that. One of the crucial success factors of change is clarity of direction. Strategy must be translated into explicit targets, actions and priorities. Strategic coherence between projects is essential, it enables focus and helps people understand what matters most.

The more options we have, the more distressed we become (the paradox of choice).

Resistance often comes from a lack of direction, or from the exhaustion of not knowing what to do. Identify positive examples, spread them and develop them further. Focus on solutions, distinctiveness, and the final destination.

For an individual to *want* to change, one question has to activate the rational drivers: Do I want to achieve these targets? Rational insight alone is not enough. Being “smart” is not enough. People need more than logic, they need to feel that change makes sense. They must identify with the vision, with the values and norms behind it, and with the meaning it brings. Only then do the “I-want-to-change hormones” get released. The challenge is to communicate targets in a way that provides reward, perspective, hope and meaning.

3.3 Emotional drivers

Why is it worth achieving change targets? Individual emotional drivers are unique and diverse. Identities differ and this is one of the greatest challenges in change. Key questions are:

Why is it worth going on this journey?
How do I feel about the final destination that is pictured?
Do I feel excitement, hope, reward or fun?

Our emotional drivers are deeply influenced by neurochemistry. Dopamine, serotonin, endorphins and oxytocin influence reward, social bonding, safety, motivation and trust. They shape our willingness to learn, adapt and connect. Oxytocin, for example, reinforces feelings of being accepted, valued, rewarded and included all essential conditions for behavioural change. By designing experiences that activate these emotional systems, we make work and life more rewarding, and create momentum for change.

Activate your “I love to change” hormones!

To spark one’s “**I love to change hormones**”, emotional relevance must be activated. When people experience meaning, connection, appreciation and fun, they become more proactive and adaptable. Because feeling rewarded and experiencing fun is personal, leaders need to help people find their own emotional connection to change.

3.4 Driveways to change

Can I achieve change targets? When your rational and emotional drivers say “yes”, you are motivated from within. Yet the **driveway**, the pathway that makes change feel achievable, can still demotivate you. Discouragement can be situational or environmental.

The driveway needs to be **clear, consistent, inviting and achievable**. The key question becomes:

Can I achieve the targets?

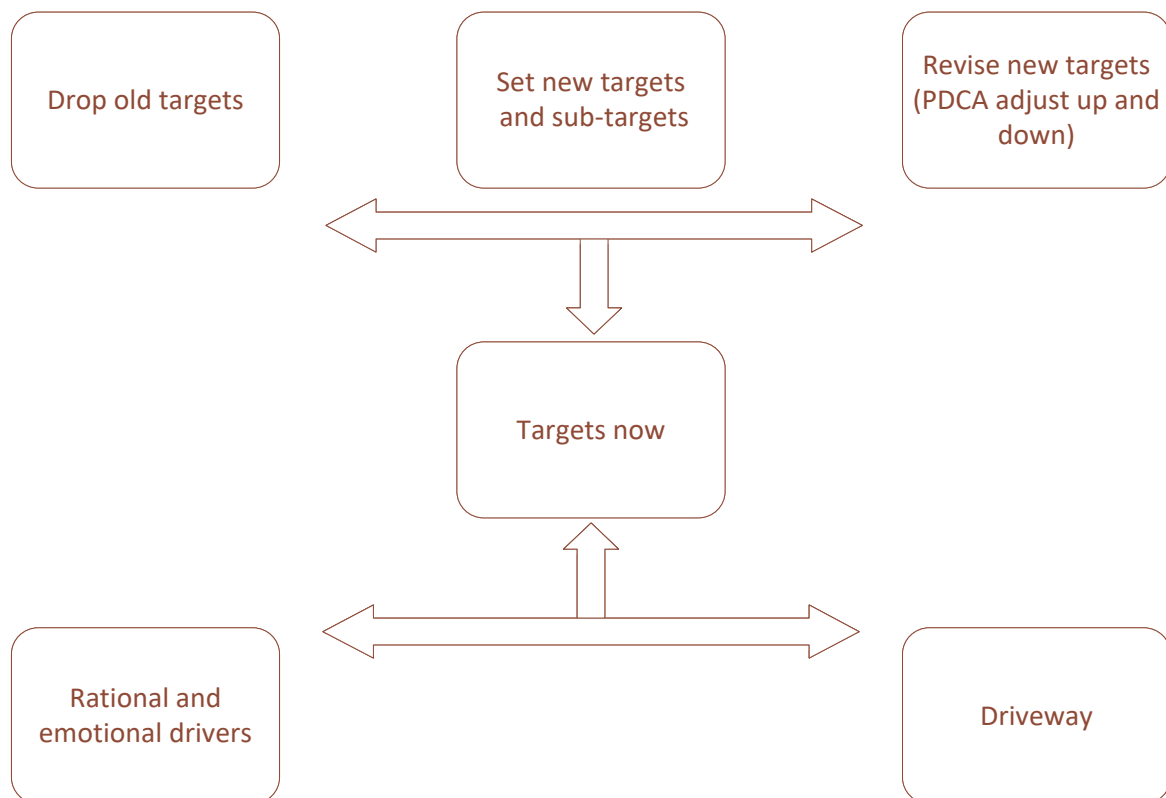
Help people imagine the final destination and how to get there together as a team. Hope is one of the strongest drivers of human action, it is the engine of success, empowerment and happiness. When people believe and hope they can achieve a target, they become determined to do so. Define targets and sub-targets that have meaning, align with the strategy, and are realistically achievable. A powerful way to pave the driveway is to let go of outdated targets, introduce new and relevant ones, break them down into simple sub-targets, and continuously refine them (PDCA cycle). Breaking the long-term destination into short-term milestones reduces psychological thresholds and creates flow. Feeling “already halfway there” builds enthusiasm and confidence.

Adaptable – resilient – happy? Test your level of hope

- I hope that I will accomplish meaningful goals in my life
 - I feel loved and supported by someone
 - I feel emotionally grounded and connected to myself
 - I draw strength from my personal values and beliefs
- I can turn to a good friend or family member to relax or find support
 - I can count on others when I need help to reach my goals
- I feel that I belong and that I am part of a group or community

When we can imagine and feel that we can achieve targets, we more and more believe that we can do it and beyond, we start to grow.

Let people know that everyone is capable of growing and learning. Develop this mentality to foster hope, resilience and self-esteem. Encourage openness, creativity and curiosity, because hopeful people adapt more easily to change. Revising targets also strengthens business agility. It ensures that teams focus on doing the right things, not just doing things right. Ask yourself: If today 95% of projects are right and 5% are not, how quickly and how agile is your organisation in adjusting to reach 100%? Imagine the impact on value creation, engagement and company pride.



Facilitating business agility should be a major priority for organisations, as it reflects how quickly and effectively they can adapt and implement change.

3.5 Driveway for heroes...Pay it forward

Encourage and celebrate people who contribute to change. Highlight the individuals who take risks, succeed and move the organisation forward. Give them space to brainstorm and co-create with others. Their behaviour is contagious, people copy habits they admire and want to belong to.

Grow the role models. Amplify the habits that people want to join. Role models are crucial in uncertain situations. They show the way and demonstrate that progress is possible. Transparency about progress inspires momentum. Simple tools that show progress or checklists that track behaviour can reinforce positive habits. Communicate positive actions, results and hero stories and affirm them.

Driveway for learning together... Learn through experimentation

Last but not least: embrace experimentation and manage expectations that not every outcome will go as intended. Change can trigger frustration, yet this is a natural part of the learning curve. Highlight examples where unexpected outcomes created insight or led to better solutions. Normalise and value learning experiences, they accelerate growth, strengthen resilience and build confidence in navigating the unknown.

Reveal what is relevant for you.

What are your desires to achieve in life and in business? How do you picture and imagine your final destination? Have you opened up to go on your change journey and infuse more fun to your life? No one can arrange it for you, it starts with you.

4. Breaking the Quiet Truth: The human foundation of change

Even with the right structures, frameworks, incentives and skills, transformation succeeds only when the deeper human layers are understood. These layers often operate quietly, yet they determine everything.

4.1 Why human layers matter

There are aspects of change we need to place on the daily agenda. Not because they are new but because they are deeply human, often subtle and still insufficiently recognised. Yet they influence everything explored in this booklet: our energy, creativity, resilience, emotional drivers and our willingness to adapt in an age increasingly shaped by AI and coexisting with robots.

Throughout this book, one message has been constant: **organizations change when people change themselves**. But people can only do that when their inner world - their needs, identity, hopes and pressure points - is acknowledged. These human layers often hold the quiet truth behind how we respond to change. Many of us move through change with a silent tension: wanting to keep up, belong and contribute, while managing personal stressors that rarely enter professional conversations. These dynamics are not dramatic or exceptional, they are simply human, yet they strongly shape whether our rational and emotional drivers align, and whether the driveway toward change feels achievable.

I realised long ago how essential this dimension is. In 2005, when I introduced soft skills in highly technical environments, the timing wasn't right. Today, with rising stress, burnout and accelerating technological change, we collectively recognise how fundamental these human foundations are. They form the **comparative human advantage** highlighted throughout this booklet: creativity, empathy, connection, psychological safety and fun, the very capacities that technology cannot replicate. Our basic psychological needs - to feel competent, autonomous and connected - are often under pressure. When these needs are unsupported, energy drops. When they are nurtured, people flourish: they become hopeful, adaptable, curious and far more open to change. Over the years, I have seen how powerful it is when these deeper layers become visible. When individuals understand what strengthens them, and what quietly drains them, change becomes lighter, more meaningful and even fun.

To support this awareness, I work with the Profilizer® measurement, a scientific, data-driven personality and motivation assessment developed by L&D Support. It integrates validated psychological models with behavioural analytics to reveal personal drivers, stress patterns, resilience levels, growth potential and the conditions under which people can bring out their authentic talents. It offers clarity without judgment and creates space for conversations that need to happen daily.

My ambition is that we begin to talk more openly about these human layers of change, to acknowledge that transformation does not happen in systems and frameworks alone. It happens in people, and people carry stories, emotions, needs and hopes that deserve space, especially when everything around them is shifting. When we understand ourselves better, change becomes fun. More aligned. More human. And perhaps that is where human excellence truly begins: in recognising what makes us human, thus, allowing that humanity to guide how we work, learn, collaborate and grow forward together with robots, humanoids and advancing technologies.

4.2 For leaders and executives

These human layers may seem soft, but they are a hard determinant of whether digital and AI-driven transformation takes root. Even the strongest strategy falters when people feel unseen, unsafe or disconnected. When basic psychological needs are strained, it shows up in familiar patterns: lower energy, slower decisions, fragile collaboration and hesitation toward new ways of working. These are not cultural issues, they are human signals.

When these needs are understood and supported, something shifts: teams learn faster, adapt faster, innovate faster and take ownership of change. This is how we achieve true business agility. Methods like Lean, Agile and SAFe recognise these human foundations. When they are applied as intended, with their underlying values and principles truly lived, teams become both *agile in mindset* and *agile in practice*. But this balance is only possible when the human foundation is strong. This is where human excellence becomes a strategic asset, and where business agility truly accelerates. It is also why organizations should take and **infuse fun seriously** if they want to strengthen **business agility**.

Fun is not entertainment. it is the psychological state where curiosity, energy, engagement and hope activate the human drivers of change.

Organisations that thrive in the Age of AI will be those that look beyond systems and metrics and deepen their understanding of what enables people to do their best work. This is not another program. It is a different lens. A human lens revealing the drivers of performance, creativity and adaptability that technology alone can never unlock.

Transformation is not a technical journey, it is a human one. And humans lead the way.

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Notes for change

Your notes for change:

Your notes for fun:

About Kirsten Baas

My motto: "Change is seriously fun."

Fun is one of the most underestimated drivers of human behaviour, learning and adaptability. In a world shaped by AI, complexity and continuous transformation, business agility cannot depend on processes alone it depends on **people** - their energy, mindset, curiosity, rational and emotional drivers. That is where **serious fun infusion** becomes a strategic asset.

I help organisations strengthen business agility by connecting human potential with proven transformation frameworks such as SAFe, Lean, Agile and continuous improvement practices. These methods provide structure, but it is the *human experience* that determines whether transformation truly works. When fun enters the process, resistance drops, learning accelerates and teams begin to innovate and adapt with confidence.

Fun is an intelligent catalyst for transformation.

It opens people up. It creates energy. It sparks ownership and creativity. And it turns change into something people *want* to be part of.

This is where technology and humanity meet. Where AI accelerates work and fun accelerates people. Where business agility becomes more than a method: **a human capability**.

My work is simple and deeply human: I help people open up to the pleasure of change, so organisations can move with the speed, clarity and resilience the future demands.

Serious fun as a strategic driver of human behaviour and business agility

This booklet explores where technology and humanity meet and why human excellence is the decisive factor in real transformation. SAFe, Lean, Agile and CI recognise the value of mindset, behaviour, transparency and alignment - but these only come alive when the human foundation is strong. An invitation to see change with more fun, energy and possibility. Fun is not entertainment, it is the psychological state where curiosity, energy, engagement and hope activate the human drivers of change.

My motto: "Change is fun."

Kim Baas Strategic Transformation Lead



- baas@revelance.nl
- www.revelance.nl
- +31 – 6 16 03 79 17
- Dutch, German and English