Change management —or change leadership?

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This paper argues that, while change must be well managed, it also requires effective leadership to be successfully introduced and sustained. An integrative model of leadership for change is proposed, reflecting its cognitive, spiritual, emotional and behavioural dimensions and requirements. The model comprises vision, values, strategy, empowerment, and motivation and inspiration. The paper concludes with a brief account of the application of the model in varied strategic change situations.

"... there is no more delicate matter to take in hand, nor more dangerous to conduct, nor more doubtful in its success, than to set up as a leader in the introduction of changes. For he who innovates will have for his enemies all those who are well off under the existing order of things, and only lukewarm supporters in those who might be better off under the new.' (Machiavelli, 1469-1527)

In the early sixteenth century, Niccolò Machiavelli clearly understood the problem of change. In The Prince, he points out the difficulty and risk involved in implementing change, in particular resistance to change and, at best, lack of commitment to it. Some 500 years later, this is still a familiar problem. As Andrew Mayo says, 'Our organisations are littered with the debris ... of yesterday's [change] initiatives' (Mayo,

2002). The reason for this, this paper contends, is not necessarily poor management of change but more likely a lack of effective leadership. While change must be well managed it must be planned, organised, directed and controlled — it also requires effective leadership to introduce change successfully: it is leadership that makes the difference. This paper proposes a new model of leadership which is the result of a three-year study of the burgeoning literature on the subject and which has been successfully applied in several organisations in a variety of sectors planning and implementing strategic change. The model proposes that the leadership of successful change requires vision, strategy, the development of a culture of sustainable shared values that support the vision and strategy for

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change, and empowering, motivating and inspiring those who are involved or affected. This behaviour reflects the underlying dimensions and requirements of leadership: the cognitive, the spiritual, the emotional and the behavioural.

WHY 'MANAGEMENT' IS NECESSARY BUT NOT SUFFICIENT

Change programmes often fail because of poor management: poor planning, monitoring and control, lack of resources and know-how, and incompatible corporate policies and practices. Good management of change is a *sine qua non*.

How change may be mismanaged is well known. Change efforts may fail because of poor planning, monitoring and control, focusing more on the objective than on the steps and process involved, a lack of milestones along the way, and failing to monitor progress and take corrective action. Change efforts often lack the necessary resources, eg budget, systems, time and information, and the necessary expertise knowledge and skills. Corporate policies and practices sometimes remain the same and become inconsistent with the aims and strategies for change. For example, the performance criteria used in appraisal and reward policies may not support and reinforce a desired performance-driven, teamwork-oriented culture, resulting in a disincentive or lack of incentive to change behaviour. A large European study found that the most successful organisations make mutually supportive changes in terms of changes in roles, governance structures and strategies (Whittington et al., 1999).

Change is all too often regarded as a 'quick fix'. This fails to address the implications of the change for the organisation as a whole and therefore causes unforeseen and unacceptable disruption. Change initiatives are often

the result of the naïve adoption of management fads. Such fads frequently deal with only one aspect of an organisation's functioning without regard to their implications for other aspects. Lack of communication or inconsistent messages and the resulting misunderstanding of the aims and process of change lead to rumours that demoralise people and to a lack of commitment to change.

A lack of commitment to change may be due to a lack of compelling evidence for the benefits of change. It shows itself in objections, unwillingness to consider options or look at process issues, and the use of 'hidden agendas' or delaying tactics. Top management itself may display a lack of commitment to change. Their commitment is evident in several ways: their unequivocal acceptance of ownership and responsibility for success of the change initiative, eagerness to be involved, willingness to invest resources, willingness to take tough decisions when required, awareness of the impact of their own behaviour, a consistent message, and the holding of regular reviews of progress.

Change efforts that are purely 'managerial' in nature, especially those that are mismanaged, result in a lack of dedicated effort, conflict between functional areas and resistance to change. Resistance to change is a common phenomenon. Kubr (1996) provides a good account of why people resist change. A cognitive and behavioural reason is lack of know-how. A lack of conviction that change is needed questioning the meaning and value of the change for individuals — inevitably leads to a lack of motivation to change. Perhaps the most powerful forces of resistance to change, however, are emotional:

- dislike of imposed change
- dislike of surprises

- lack of self-confidence and confidence in others: fear of the unknown and of inadequacy and failure and the adverse consequences, such as share price decline and blame
- reluctance of management to deal with difficult issues (especially in the case of managers approaching retirement)
- disturbed practices, habits and relationships: 'We've always done it this way'. Moving people from their 'comfort zone' means moving from the familiar, secure and controllable to the unfamiliar, insecure and uncertainly controllable
- self-interest and shifts in power and influence such as loss or change of role in the organisation
- lack of respect and trust in the person or people promoting change and scepticism as a result of the failure of previous change initiatives.

The human and political aspects of change are often not well thought through in change management initiatives. Mulligan and Barber (1998) speak of the yin and yang of change: respectively the social and emotional considerations (leadership) and the technical aspects (management). McLagan (2002) points out that taking a purely rational and technical approach to change, 'making sure it's technically sound and offers economic advantage to the organisation', tends to lead to the false assumption that the organisation will naturally absorb it. Kotter (1995a) says:

'In failed transformations, you often find plenty of plans and directives and programs ... [with] procedures, goals, methods, and deadlines. But nowhere was there a clear and compelling statement [a vision] of where all this was leading. Not surprisingly, most of the employees with whom I talked were either confused or alienated. [The 'managerial' approach] did not rally them

together or inspire change. In fact, [it] probably had just the opposite effect.'

In his classic statements on management and leadership, Kotter (1990a, 1990b) says that management produces orderly results which keep something working efficiently, whereas leadership creates useful change; neither is necessarily better or a replacement for the other. Both are needed if organisations and nations are to prosper. He also says, however:

'Management's mandate is to minimise risk and to keep the current system operating. Change, by definition, requires creating a new system, which in turn always demands leadership.' (Kotter, 1995a)

Sadler (1997) concurs:

'we have observed dramatic transformations in British industry in recent times which appear to be due more to inspirational leadership than to good management as traditionally conceived. British Airways under Colin Marshall, and ICI under John Harvey-Jones are oft-quoted examples.'

Change, therefore, is primarily about leadership.

THE LEADERSHIP OF CHANGE

The keys to successful change, according to an American Management Association survey (American Management Association, 1994), are first and foremost leadership, followed closely by corporate values and communication (Table 1).

If change is a process of taking an organisation (or a nation) on a journey from its current state to a desired future state and dealing with all the problems that arise along the journey, then change is about leadership as well as management. Leadership, in The Leadership Trust's view, is about showing the way: using personal power to win

Table 1 Keys to successful change: Survey of 259 senior executives in Fortune 500 companies in the USA

	% mentioning this as important
Leadership	92
Corporate values	84
Communication	75
Teambuilding	69
Education and training	64

the hearts and minds of people to work together towards a common goal (Gill, 2001). The leadership of change, for the chief executive, Hooper and Potter (2000) say, means 'developing a vision of the future, crafting strategies to bring that vision into reality [and ensuring] that everybody in the organisation is mobilising their energies towards the same goals ... the process we call "emotional alignment". It can be argued that the most difficult challenges facing leaders today are making sure that people in the organisation can adapt to change and that leaders can envisage where the organisation is currently placed in the market and where it should be in the future (Heifetz and Laurie, 1997).

The case for alignment is made in a report by World Economic Forum (2000) in partnership with management consultants Booz Allen & Hamilton and the Center for Effective Organisations at the University of Southern California:

'Alignment ... galvanizes people around the aspirations and objectives of the company. People know what is to be done, and understand how they as individuals contribute to the whole. Adaptability enables the organisation to change rapidly and effectively in response to external threats or opportunities.'

Alignment is displayed by a shared understanding, common orientation, common values and shared priorities. Adaptability is displayed by environmental sensitivity, tolerance for contrary views, a willingness to experiment, tolerate failure and learn from it, and the ability to respond quickly to change — organisational agility. Both alignment and adaptability are needed (World Economic Forum, 2000):

'Alignment without adaptability results in bureaucratic, sclerotic organisations that "can't get out of their own way" ... Adaptability without alignment results in chaos and resources wasted on duplicate and conflicting efforts.'

The former chairman of ICI, Sir John Harvey-Jones (1988), takes a radical view of alignment:

'In the future the organisation will have to adapt to the needs of the individual, rather than expecting the individual to adapt to the needs of the organisation.'

Nixon (2002) identifies 'big issues' concerning global business leaders: creating successful and sustainable workplaces, the need to be good corporate citizens and at the same time profitable, the gap between strategy makers and those not involved, products that damage the quality of life, and a yearning for meaning and balance in life, 'uniting body, mind, heart and spirit'. Dubrin (2001) says that 'The transformational leader ... [helps] group members understand the need for change both emotionally and intellectually.' How to meet the challenge of change can be understood more broadly using a new model of transformational leadership. This model attempts to integrate the multiple dimensions and requirements of

leadership — the cognitive, spiritual, emotional and behavioural.²

THE DIMENSIONS AND REQUIREMENTS OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership theory has developed along separate tracks that have never fully or usefully converged. Nevertheless, each track provides a distinct dimension and set of requirements for effective leadership. These tracks are the study of cognitive or rational processes (cognitive intelligence), the need for meaning and worth in people's work and lives (spiritual intelligence), emotions or feelings (emotional intelligence) and volitional action or behaviour (behavioural skills) in leadership (Gill, 2002).

The intellectual/cognitive dimension and requirements of leadership — 'thinking'

Strategic failure, especially in times of rapid change, is often the result of the inability to see a novel reality emerging: the corporate mind is wedded to obsolete assumptions that blind it to the perception of change. Effective leadership requires the intellectual or cognitive abilities to perceive and understand information, reason with it, imagine possibilities, use intuition, make judgments, solve problems and make decisions. These abilities produce vision, mission (purpose), shared values and strategies for pursuing the vision and mission that 'win' people's minds.

The spiritual dimension and requirements of leadership — 'meaning'

'Spirit', according to Webster's Dictionary and the Oxford English Dictionary, is a person's animating principle. The spiritual

dimension of leadership concerns the yearning for meaning and a sense of worth that animate people in what they seek and do. Meaning and this sense of worth depend on the vision and shared values to which one is party. William W. George, chairman and CEO of Medtronic, Inc. — one of the world's leading medical technology companies, based in Minneapolis — and the Academy of Management's 2001 'Executive of the Year', argues that people at work today seek meaning and purpose in their work. When they find it, '[they] will buy into the company's mission and make the commitment to fulfilling it' (George, 2001). Dess and Picken (2000) quote Xerox PARC guru John Seely Brown as saying: 'The job of leadership today is not just to make money: it's to make meaning.' Effective leadership 'wins people's souls'.

The emotional dimension and requirements of leadership — feeling'

Effective leadership also requires well-developed emotional intelligence — the ability to understand oneself and other people, display self-control and self-confidence, and to respond to others in appropriate ways. Emotionally intelligent leaders use personal power rather than positional power or authority. Emotional intelligence, in addition to cognitive and spiritual intelligence, is key to identifying and promoting the shared values that support the pursuit of vision, mission and strategies and to empowering and inspiring people. Emotionally intelligent leaders 'win people's hearts'.

The behavioural dimension and requirements of leadership - doing'

While the necessary behavioural skills of leadership include both using and responding to emotion, for example

through 'body language', they also comprise communicating in other ways through writing, speaking and listening — using personal power — and through physical behaviour, for example MBWA ('managing by walking around'). Communication is the 'life blood' of the organisation and the 'oxygen' of change within it.

A NEW MODEL OF LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE

Effective leadership of change reflects all of these dimensions of leadership. An integrative model of leadership for successful change needs to explain the following elements of effective leadership practice: vision, values, strategy, empowerment and motivation and inspiration. Effective emotional and behavioural leadership without valid vision and strategic thinking can be misguided, even dangerous. The converse is impotent.

Vision

'Without vision, a people perish', one is told in the Bible,³ and so does an organisation. The foundation of effective leadership is defining and communicating an appealing vision of the future. One of the best definitions of a vision comes from the *Oxford English Dictionary*: 'something seen vividly in the imagination, involving insight, foresight and wisdom'. A vision is a desired future state: this is the basis for directing the change effort.

Kotter (1995a) suggests that the starting point in a successful change process is attaching a sense of urgency and importance to change. Kotter says it is necessary to create dissatisfaction with the status quo and an understanding of the need to change. He quotes a former CEO of a large European company as

saying that successful change begins by '[making] the status quo seem more dangerous than launching into the unknown'. This is the basis for developing a vision for change.

Sylvie Jackson of Cranfield University's Royal Military College of Science starkly illustrates how little vision figures in communication in organisations:

'Total amount of communication going on to an employee in three months = 2,300,000 words or numbers. Typical communication of a change vision over a period of three months = 13,400 words or numbers. 13,400/2,300,000 = 0.0058. The change vision captures only 0.58% of the communication "market share".' (Jackson, 2001)

The British government has identified leadership as key to meeting the challenges of change in public services (Performance Improvement Unit, 2001). Change starts with a vision: 'The Government has to present a clear picture ... of the kind of society it [wants] from its reforms and stop being seen as a "value-free zone", says health secretary Alan Milburn. Prime minister Tony Blair responds: '[New Labour] needs to rediscover its political vision ... building a Britain of opportunity for all' (Waugh and Morris, 2002).

Vision needs to be meaningful, ethical and inspiring. Effective visions are imaginable, desirable, feasible, focused, flexible and communicable (Kotter, 1995b). They are memorable and quotable. Senge (1990) sees vision as a driving force, while Covey (1992) describes vision as 'true north', providing a 'compass'. Vision helps to create commitment, inspiration and motivation by connecting and aligning people intellectually and emotionally to the organisation; and it is associated with organisational growth and success (Baum et al., 1998).

A shared vision is key to successful change. Kakabadse (2002) reports the finding from a survey at Cranfield School of Management of over 12,000 organisations that more than one-third of directors have a vision of the future of their organisation that is different from those of their colleagues. Without a shared vision, there is no alignment. Senge (1990) puts it this way:

'In a corporation, a shared vision changes people's relationship with the company. It is no longer "their company"; it becomes "our company". A shared vision is the first step in allowing people who mistrusted each other to begin to work together. It creates a common identity.

Kotter (1997) makes the point that, for organisational change, only an approach based on vision works in the long term. He says a shared vision:

- clarifies the direction of change and ensures that everything that is done (new product development, acquisitions, recruitment campaigns) is in line with it
- motivates people to take action in the right direction, even though the initial steps in the change process may be painful to some individuals
- helps to align individuals and coordinate their actions efficiently.

Values and culture

A Nepalese Buddhist mantra says: 'Open your arms to change, but don't let go of your values'. Values are principles held dear in people's hearts by which they live (and sometimes die). Covey (1992) makes the distinction between personal values, which are intrinsic, and corporate values, which he regards as extrinsic guiding principles for behaviour throughout the organisation.

The challenge of change has stimulated an emphasis on values-based leadership. O'Toole (1995) says that there is a widespread belief among corporate executives in the need to create strong, shared values to unite people in a fragmented world. The fear, though, is the danger of 'groupthink'. Yet, if there is one organisational characteristic that provides the 'glue' in uniting people, it is trust. As O'Toole suggests, trust 'emanates from leadership based on shared purpose, shared vision, and, especially, shared values' (O'Toole, 1995).

Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) point out that 'Leaders walk their talk; in true leaders, there is no gap between the theories they espouse and their practice'. Effective leaders are role models for corporate values: they set an example. Collins and Porras (1998) contend that corporate values are 'not to be compromised for financial gain or short-term expediency'.

Effective leadership entails identifying and promoting shared values. Shared values are a key feature of a strong organisational culture (that includes beliefs, attitudes and patterns of habitual behaviour) that supports a common purpose and engenders commitment to it. Values that are not shared can be dysfunctional (Drucker, 1999). Shared values create a sense of belonging and may contribute positively to competitive advantage (Deetz et al., 2000). Indeed, a change orientation is one of the common values among the most admired companies in the USA (Kets de Vries, 2000), and firms have become more customer and stakeholder focused, more time-competitive and more value-added and quality focused (Cannon, 2000).

Networks of power and influence and 'horizontal' relationships will replace the formal hierarchies found in bureaucratic organisations (Gill *et al.*, 1998). New organisational cultures will supplant

bureaucratic cultures that are characterised by hierarchy, boundaries, internal orientation, control and the need to avoid mistakes (Hastings, 1993). Bureaucracy is a well-documented hindrance to developing a learning culture.

One of the problems of change during mergers and acquisitions is that change is exciting for those who do it and threatening for those to whom it is done. The solution that worked for one company was to get people to participate in it. When ScottishPower acquired Manweb and Southern Water in the 1990s, it created 'transition teams' with managers from the acquired company to create shared values and human resource policies and practices.

Culture change programmes are about 'changing hearts, minds and souls' of employees (Rajan, 2000). This takes a long time, and it requires some luck: Amin Rajan says, 'The 'big bang' approach has the potential to inflict ... collateral damage', although sometimes it may be necessary. Bill Cockburn, managing director of British Telecoms' UK operations, believes that in his business, incrementalism does not work: 'radical reinvention' is required (Monks, 2000). But, to be more effective, culture change requires leaders to plan and implement sequential, but incremental, changes.

An example of a culture change programme aimed at changing feelings of involvement, consultation and values is that experienced at Marks and Spencer. Marks and Spencer fell from grace at the end of 1998, with a drastic fall in shareholder value. Under a new chairman, Luc Vandervelde, in early 2000, a major initiative was introduced to revolutionise the corporate culture as part of the recovery strategy. This entailed improving consultation — on key business issues rather than 'tea and

toilets' — among managers and employees through Business Involvement Groups (BIGs) and training in consultation processes. The outcome, by May 2002, according to Marks and Spencer's Helen Eaton, was 'a greater mutuality of interest at meetings, with managers and staff beginning to work together on key business issues ... [and] ... more openness, honesty, trust and professionalism' as well as a clearer sense of direction (Law, 2002).

Wendy Sullivan and her colleagues describe how aligning the values of the people in the organisation — and those of the organisation itself — can help to bring about rapid change, citing the case of Sellotape (Sullivan *et al.*, 2002). The company significantly improved business performance, with profitability increasing from 3 per cent to 10 per cent over two and a half years, and significant improvements in individual job satisfaction and fulfilment and in morale and teamwork.

Strategy

Without strategies for change, vision is a dream. Strategies are ways of pursuing the vision and mission; they are informed by vision, mission and values. Strategic plans are 'road maps' of a changing terrain in which a compass (vision) is needed (Covey, 1992). Effective leadership entails developing, getting commitment to and implementing rational business strategies based on possible future scenarios for the organisation. A key issue with the effectiveness of strategies is where their ownership lies and commitment to them: effective strategy development taps the wisdom of people in the organisation (Eden, 1993).

William W. George of Medtronic says, 'Employees can adapt to major strategic shifts as long as the company's mission and values remain constant' (George,

2001). This is an important factor in maintaining trust in top management. Medtronic is 'completely reinvented' every five years in terms of its business strategies. For example, between 1989 and 1994, the company was transformed from a pacemaker company into a broader cardiovascular business, with revolutionary new therapies during the following five years, and with further innovations likely over the next five to ten years reflecting its 'Vision 2010'.

Meanwhile, mission and values have remained, and will remain, constant. Innovation and change require structural flexibility, but with the stability to deliver products and services on time. Peters (1993) calls this 'permanent flexibility'. It is well established in the management literature that structure must serve strategy, not the converse. An example of how structures have changed is the introduction of short-term, high-performance teams, superseding permanent functional or departmental teams and cross-functional teams. They come together for a specific purpose and, on achieving it, disband. The consequences are roles that frequently change and temporary and varied leadership roles.

An effective strategy for change entails creating a guiding coalition — putting together a group of people with enough power to lead the change — and getting it to work together as an effective team (Kotter, 1995a). Kotter also emphasises the need to use every method possible to communicate constantly and explain the new vision and strategy and ensure the guiding coalition models the behaviour expected of all employees.

Empowerment

Like so many aspects of leadership, empowerment is not a new idea. In the fifth century BC, Lao Tzu wrote: 'As for the best leaders, people do not notice their existence.

The next best, the people honour and praise.

The next, the people fear.

And the next, the people hate.

But when the best leader's work is done, the people say, "We did it ourselves"."

Empowerment literally is giving people power. It is about making them able to do what needs to be done in the change process. In practice, empowerment is giving people the knowledge, skills, opportunity, freedom, self-confidence and resources to manage themselves and be accountable. Important aspects of empowerment are stimulating people's intellects and imagination, in particular their creativity in the change process, risk taking and trust. Empowering people for action in part entails getting rid of obstacles to change, removing or changing systems or structures that undermine the vision, and encouraging risk taking, new ideas and innovative activities (Kotter, 1995b).

Bennis (1999) suggests that a 'shrinking' world with increasing technological and political complexity offers fewer and fewer arenas for effective top-down leadership. The key to real change, he says, is empowered teams. The need for rapid response and innovation has created a culture of 'intrapreneurship' in many companies. Innovation has become the province of all employees, not just those in the product development department. Encouraging intrapreneurship is an example of empowerment.

General Electric successfully underwent extensive restructuring in the 1980s under chairman and CEO Jack Welch, to build a network of interrelated businesses with the aim of capturing top market-share positions in their respective industries. The change process included 'Work-Out', a way in which employees

could participate in teams in the process, and 'Town Hall Meetings' with all employees to strengthen dialogue and understanding in respect of the change process and the new roles and work habits that were needed. Managers had previously been appraised solely on their ability to manage in a 'command-and-control' culture. Now, however, they were required to meet ownership, stewardship and entrepreneurial goals. Performance expectations and rewards were therefore realigned. As a result, GE strengthened its position in several global markets and greatly increased its market value.

Empowerment is also about involving people in the change process. People are much more inclined to support what they help to create (and they resist what is forced on them). Myers (1993) writes:

'Study after study finds that when workers have more control — when they can help define their own goals ... and when they participate in decision making — their job satisfaction rises.'

Tom Cannon describes how organisations have responded to the challenge of change (Cannon, 2000). They have created flatter structures with more empowered employees who are trusted more, expected to conform to shared values and encouraged to be more entrepreneurial and innovative. They have introduced flexible learning programmes to enhance competencies in initiating and achieving successful change.

Motivation and inspiration

Effective leaders motivate and inspire people to want to do what needs to be done. In any change process, the change champions — leaders — must be credible. Credibility comes from

perceptions of honesty and competence in leaders and from their ability to inspire, say Kouzes and Posner (2002). Motivation and inspiration arise from alignment of organisational goals with individuals' needs, wants, values, interests and aspirations and from the use of positive and appealing language.

Motivation also arises from short-term wins. Gaining short-term wins entails planning and creating visible improvements during the change process. It also entails visibly recognising and rewarding people who made the wins possible (Kotter, 1995a).

Positive and appealing language is characterised by framing the message and crafting one's rhetoric. Framing the message, Conger (1999) says, is 'connecting your message with the needs, interests and feelings of those whose commitment you need' and, thereby, Goodwin (1998) says, 'making people feel they have a stake in common problems'. Examples of framing language are:

- linking the message with the benefits for everybody involved
- reflecting their values and beliefs
- talking in their language
- matching body language with words
- moving from 'I' statements to 'we' statements
- making positive comparisons of their situation with that of others
- expressing confidence in people's ability to achieve.

Rhetorical crafting of language consists of giving examples, citing quotations, reciting slogans, varying one's speaking rhythm, using familiar images, metaphors and analogies to make the message vivid (Martin Luther King's allusion to 'the jangling discords of our nation' comes to mind), waxing lyrical and using repetition.

APPLYING THE LEADERSHIP MODEL

This integrative model of leadership has been successfully applied in leadership development programmes in several organisations concerned with change: a manufacturing company, a private mental healthcare company, a public sector defence agency, the top management teams of two universities, a youth charity, and an insurance and emergency assistance company.

Former US president Harry S. Truman is on record as saying: 'Men make history and not the other way round. In periods where there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous, skilful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better.' Change requires good management, but above all it requires effective leadership.

Notes

- 1. Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) *The Prince*, translated from the Italian by Hill
 Thompson, Collector's Edition, 1980, The
 Easton Press, Norwalk, CT, 55.
- 2. Roger Gill, *Defining Leadership*, Sage Publications, London, in preparation.
- 3. The Bible, Proverbs, 29: 18.
- 4. Lao Tzu (c. 500BC) The Way of Lao Tzu, Number 17.
- 5. Quoted by Dana Hield Whitson and Douglas K. Clark (2002) 'Management Audits: Passé, or a Useful Quality Improvement Tool?', *Public Management*, 84(4), 6.

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