

CQ Case Study: **A Change Leader's Experience with the CQ System**

In a 30+ year career, Clarence Trowbridge has experienced change in multiple industries and from several perspectives. Currently the Manager of Learning and Development at Wells Enterprises, makers of Blue Bunny ice cream, he notes that over the past two decades change itself has become more normal at all organizational levels. "People are much quicker these days to say, 'We're doing this differently from a year ago. Six months from now, we'll do it differently again.'"

As a result, he has become a great advocate of Change Catalyst's Change Intelligence (CQ) process. With a graduate degree in organizational development, Trowbridge is familiar with the field's wide range of assessment tools, including the Myers-Briggs and DISC. The CQ process is different, Trowbridge states, because it has "a singular focus; it does a deep dive into change. There is no other tool that focuses on change management and change leader behaviors."

"We're Not Doing That."

After his honorable discharge from the U.S. Army in the 1980s, Trowbridge joined the Inland Steel Company, working as a product supervisor. "We had to make our quota of steel every day," he explains, "so my job was to protect my people from change. I was the buffer between them and the engineers with their experiments. The engineers would want to make changes and not tell us why. I would tell them, 'We're not doing that. My mission is to produce steel.'"

The engineers, serving as change leaders, were unwilling to explain their motives or to consider the opinions of the people affected by their changes. Trowbridge and those he supervised were worried about missing deadlines while the change was in progress and finding themselves responsible for tasks they weren't trained to handle. They believed ideas that were intended to improve production would have the opposite effect. Trowbridge says, "You can change things like schedules or processes. It's easy to reprogram a computer. But those changes impact a person. Few people go to work hoping that their boss is going to change the game today."


Dr. Barbara Trautlein, principal at Change Catalyst, calls this situation the difference between intent and impact. "Change leaders may intend a positive change but the impact on others may be far from positive. Change leaders need to act in a way that ensures their positive intentions will have a positive impact."

The CQ process identifies the change leadership style of change leaders (including Visionary, Coach and Executor), what their strengths are and where they and the company might benefit from a different strategy or tactic. The process begins with a 15-minute online CQ Assessment of each change leader, followed by an on-site workshop that examines the results of the CQ Assessment and what it means for the change leadership team and their change efforts. Thereafter, the team can refine its change plan and receive additional coaching to bring the plan to life. The goal is to create an environment where individual strengths are valued, everyone contributes and change can succeed.

As Trautlein points out, "Failure carries a huge cost in lost time, money and morale. Companies know that every failure makes the next change even harder."

"We're More Effective and Efficient As a Team Now."

Like many companies, Wells must continually absorb new equipment, personnel, regulations and technologies to stay competitive. The CQ process revealed two ways in which the company's change strategy could be better adjusted to ensure that changes stick.



After Trowbridge's change leadership team completed the CQ Assessment, they attended Trautlein's follow-up workshop where they faced their first unexpected and surprising result. Trowbridge explains, "Barbara discovered that out of 15 people on our team, only two were Executors. The majority of the rest of us were Visionaries. Barbara pointed out that we can envision all we want, but can we get anything done?"

The follow-up team workshops and individual coaching are essential parts of the CQ process because they help change leaders find ways to modify their change strategy to ensure success.

"Barbara's analysis takes the CQ Assessment to an entirely new level," says Trowbridge. "She draws insights out of the tool and individuals. She stressed that we need to listen to those Executors on our team because those are the people who are most apt to focus us on 'getting 'er done.' Barbara is fabulous at challenging people to try something new. She will ask a person to 'try just this one thing.' People walk away, attempt the one new thing, and a week or two later say, 'That worked!' All fifteen leaders on my team were willing to 'try one new thing'. We're more effective and efficient as a team now, playing to each other's strengths."

"Let's Do This."

It was the evaluation of his own change leadership style that gave Trowbridge his second surprise. "I'm good at creating a plan and putting together resources," he states. "My 'aha moment' was that I realized that what I'm not good at is understanding people's emotions, that this change effects someone's life. They cross their arms and say firmly, 'I don't want to do that.'"

The CQ Assessment and follow-up coaching gave him some new strategies for dealing with this situation. He says, "I've put it on my radar, now, to see how people are feeling, whether they're compliant or committed or resistant. I'm trying to ask the questions that can give me more information about people's attitudes and perceptions about change."

A major benefit of the CQ process is that leaders gain a common language for discussing change with other people, filling the gaps in their approach and identifying the roadblocks: that crossed-arms response. Maybe in the past no one clearly explained the benefits of a change (vision). Maybe the fears and concerns of other people were ignored (coach). Maybe the company failed to train people properly to deal with the effects of the change (execution). Once a company or a team knows where the gaps and roadblocks are, they can start to address them.

Citing an example from his own recent experience, Trowbridge states, "I had someone who appeared resistant to a key change element. However, when I sought for a deeper understanding, I found that they were merely concerned about meeting a due date. When I understood, I negotiated with them. I said, 'Let's do this much now and wait on the rest.' Their concerns and 'feelings' were both valid and valuable." The result was mutual cooperation to ensure successful change, a far cry from his experience as a production supervisor in the steel industry.

Trowbridge concludes, "Barbara has a knack of understanding the culture and needs of a client organization and communicating them clearly and flawlessly. Though she acclimates quickly, that doesn't dissuade her from saying the hard things that need to be said. Barbara is one of the finest consultants I've ever worked with."