



Capital University of
Economics and Business
首都经济贸易大学

STRATEGIC CHANGE MANAGEMENT

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Contents

Welcome	3
About me.....	4
What is this Course about?	5
1. Abstract.....	5
2. Course Objectives	5
3. Learning outcomes.....	5
4. Teaching methods	6
5. Required textbook(s).....	6
6. Suggested Journals and Websites.....	6
7. Course schedule: Overview	7
8. Assessment and Grading.....	7
9. Reflective Journal – Assessment Rubric (Total: 100%).....	10
10. Detailed Course Schedule.....	11

Welcome

Dear Students,

Welcome to the Change Strategic Management course. I am delighted to have you join us as we explore how organisations—and the people within them—navigate change in a complex, dynamic, and uncertain environment.

Change is inherently complex. It introduces uncertainty, questions established beliefs and disrupts long-standing routines. Yet, it can also foster renewal, innovation, and growth—if we understand it fully and manage it effectively. This module will assist you in critically analysing the forces impacting change, the frameworks that direct it, and the human experiences that influence its success or failure.

Our sessions will combine theory and real-world application, featuring case studies from both Chinese and global contexts. You will be encouraged to share your insights, reflect on your experiences, and engage actively with your peers. Throughout the module, we will explore questions such as:

- What makes an organisation ready for change — and how can we assess that readiness?
- How do leaders earn trust, demonstrate credibility, and foster commitment during uncertain times?
- Why do people resist change, and what can we learn from their responses?
- How do communication, culture, and informal power structures shape the outcome of a change initiative?

The module is structured over four days, each with a distinct focus. At the end of each day, you will begin writing a reflective journal entry that forms your final individual assessment. This is your opportunity to connect what you've learned with your values, experiences, and future leadership practice.

Please come prepared for each session by completing the assigned readings and reflection questions beforehand. Your input in discussions and group activities is vital—not only for your personal understanding but also for fostering a collaborative and engaging atmosphere for everyone.

If you have any questions or concerns during the module, please don't hesitate to speak with me directly before or after class. Your feedback is always welcome, and I am here to support your learning experience.

I look forward to collaborating and learning from your insights as we explore Strategic Change Management.

Best regards,

Dr Johan Coetsee
Course Leader

About me

Dr Johan Coetsee is an accomplished academic at Liverpool John Moores University with 25 years of international experience spanning industry, academia, and consultancy. He holds a BCom, BCom Honours, MPhil, MBA, and DPhil in Human Resource Development. His work bridges academic theory and practical application, advising global organisations on leadership and change management. Dr Coetsee has extensive experience in executive education and undergraduate and postgraduate teaching. His research focuses on leadership, organisational change, and management education. He has presented at numerous academic and professional conferences and has published widely, including books, book chapters, and peer-reviewed journal articles. He serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance* and is Associate Editor of the *Journal of Management Development*.

What is this Course about?

1. Abstract

This intensive, practice-oriented module examines how organisational change unfolds across cultural, structural, and psychological dimensions. Over four themed days—covering the foundations of change, strategic implementation, resistance and leadership, and complexity and ethics—students explore why change is necessary, what makes it succeed or fail, and how it is led in dynamic environments. Blending Chinese and Western perspectives, the course engages students in models such as change readiness, stakeholder analysis, behavioural resistance, and systems thinking. Interactive case studies, collaborative exercises, and personal reflection help students connect theory to practice in realistic contexts. Students will develop a structured reflective journal as their final individual assessment, complemented by optional group presentations analysing real-world or conceptual change challenges. The course develops critical awareness, cultural sensitivity, and practical strategies for leading and navigating change.

2. Course Objectives

The course objectives are: -

1. To explore organisational change's triggers, types, and contextual drivers, focusing on readiness and early-stage diagnostic thinking.
2. To introduce and compare multiple change models and frameworks, supporting students in evaluating their strategic application across sectors and contexts.
3. To examine change's psychological and communicative dynamics, including how resistance, voice, and message design shape employee engagement.
4. To investigate how leadership behaviours, power dynamics, and cultural expectations influence the success or failure of change initiatives.
5. To develop students' capacity to think systemically, act ethically, and lead adaptively in conditions of uncertainty and complexity

3. Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, the learner will be able to:

1. Develop a critical understanding of the core theories, models, and concepts that underpin organisational change across different contexts.
2. Analyse the influence of organisational readiness, stakeholder dynamics, and change capacity on implementing change initiatives.
3. Evaluate the role of leadership, communication, and employee voice in shaping engagement, resistance, and participation during change.
4. Understand how power, culture, and informal influence affect the leadership of change in Chinese and international organisations.
5. Reflect on the ethical, adaptive, and systems-based challenges of leading change in complex environments and apply insights to personal and professional development.

4. Teaching methods

This intensive, face-to-face module is designed to be highly interactive, exploratory, and practice-oriented. Teaching methods include short lectures, facilitated discussions, collaborative group exercises, structured case analyses, and guided self-reflection. Active participation is essential: learning depends on engagement with the material and your willingness to share perspectives, challenge assumptions, and contribute to peer learning respectfully and reflectively.

The module's learning philosophy focuses on critical dialogue, applying theory to real-world organisational contexts (especially within China), and developing your leadership insights. You are expected to prepare in advance for each session by reading the assigned materials and reflecting on the preparatory questions. In-class activities such as diagnostic mapping, communication design, and leadership dilemmas will demonstrate your preparation and lived experience.

The final 30 minutes of each day are dedicated to starting your structured journal entry for that session to support reflective learning. These entries will contribute to your final individual assessment and help you integrate theory, case material, and personal insights. By capturing your thoughts after each session, you will minimise learning loss and establish a meaningful foundation for applied leadership and change development.

Throughout the module, you are encouraged to raise questions, share reflections, and discuss any challenges with the instructor. Open and ongoing communication fosters an inclusive, responsive, and professionally meaningful learning environment.

5. Required textbook(s)

Various change management textbooks are available in your university library, and you are welcome to consult any of them to deepen your understanding of the subject. However, for this Course, we will focus on exploring key change concepts through selected academic journal articles, which will be provided for you to download.

The following books may be interesting:

- Coetsee, J., & Flood, P. C., (2013). *Change lessons from the CEO: Real people, real change*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Hughes, M. (2019). *Managing and leading organizational change* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

6. Suggested Journals and Websites

Key Academic Journals

- These journals regularly publish high-quality, peer-reviewed articles on change management, leadership, and organisational behaviour:
- Journal of Change Management
- Journal of Organizational Change Management
- Academy of Management Perspectives / Academy of Management Journal / Review
- Journal of Organizational Behavior
- Leadership Quarterly

- Asia Pacific Journal of Management

Recommended Websites and Online Resources

- Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) – <https://www.ccl.org>
- Harvard Business Review (HBR) – <https://hbr.org>
- McKinsey & Company Insights – <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights>
- Prosci Change Management Resources – <https://www.prosci.com>

7. Course schedule: Overview

The following provides an overview of the four teaching days, while the subsequent pages outline a detailed course schedule.

Date	Morning/ Afternoon Session	Topic
Theme 1: Why change happens — foundations, drivers, and organisational readiness		
12/07/2025	Morning	Session 1: Foundations of change
	Afternoon	Session 2: Diagnosing readiness and change capacity
Theme 2: How change happens — models, adaptive structures, and strategic communication		
13/07/2025	Morning	Session 3: Change models and strategic approaches
	Afternoon	Session 4: Strategic communication for leading organisational change
Theme 3: Navigating resistance and mobilising leadership in change		
14/07/25	Morning	Session 5: Rethinking Psychological Resistance
	Afternoon	Session 6: Change Leadership and Power Dynamics
Theme 4: Reimagining change for a complex world		
15/07/2025	Morning	Session 7: Leading in complexity: Ethics, paradox, and systemic thinking
	Afternoon	Presentations

8. Assessment and Grading

The reflective journal is your final assignment for the Change Management Course and contributes 100% to your overall grade. Its goal is to encourage you to critically engage with key ideas, models,

and discussions from each session, linking them to your experiences, values, and career aspirations. After each session, you will complete a structured entry using a clear format to reflect on your learning, its connection to your personal or cultural context, and its practical application. The last 30 minutes of each day will be set aside for you to start working on your reflective journal entry, providing time to articulate your thoughts while the session remains fresh in your mind.

8.1 Purpose of the Reflective Diary

The Reflective Diary is your final individual assignment. It helps you:

- Think deeply about what you learn in each session
- Connect theories with your own experiences
- Reflect on your future as a leader or change agent in Chinese or international organisations
- Develop self-awareness and critical thinking

8.2 Assessment Details

Element	Requirement
Assessment Type	Individual Reflective Diary
Word Count	400- 500 words per session (x6 sessions)
Submission Format	One document (Word or PDF)
Due Date	TBC
Grading Weight	100% of the module grade

8.3 Diary Structure: Use the Following Headings for Each Session:

Each diary entry (for Sessions 1 to 6) must incorporate all five components listed below and display the specified headings.

Heading 1: Session Overview

Purpose: Briefly summarise the key content of the session.

What to include:

- The main topic or theme
- Key models, theories, or case studies introduced
- Activities or discussions that stood out

Example sentence starters:

- “This session focused on...”
- “We explored the theory of...”
- “One key concept introduced was...”

Heading 2: Key Learning Point

Purpose: Highlight the most interesting, surprising, or challenging idea.

What to include:

- One specific theory, model, or concept

- Why did it stand out to you
- How it changed or challenged your thinking

Example sentence starters:

- “The idea I found most meaningful was...”
- “I had never considered that...”
- “This challenged my earlier view that...”

Heading 3: Personal Connection

Purpose: Relate the key learning to your experience or cultural context.

What to include:

- An experience from your studies, work, or personal life
- A situation in a Chinese organisation that connects to the idea
- Reflections on how your culture or background shaped your understanding

Example sentence starters:

- “This reminded me of when I...”
- “In my internship, I observed...”
- “This theory fits with how Chinese organisations often...”

Heading 4: Application to Practice

Purpose: Think about how you will apply what you learned in the future.

What to include:

- A real-world situation where you could apply the concept
- Steps you might take as a manager or team member
- How will this knowledge influence your professional behaviour

Example sentence starters:

- “As a future leader, I would use this by...”
- “In a Chinese organisation, this model could help with...”
- “If I face a similar situation, I will...”

Heading 5: Reflective Statement

Purpose: Summarise your takeaway from the session.

What to include:

- How your thinking has changed
- One sentence on how the session influenced you

Example sentence starters:

- “After this session, I now see that...”
- “This session helped me realise...”
- “My understanding of change has improved because...”

9. Reflective Journal – Assessment Rubric (Total: 100%)

Assessment Criteria	Distinction (75–84%)	Merit (65–74%)	Pass (52–64%)	Fail (0–51%)
1. Depth of Reflection (30%)	Consistently demonstrates meaningful insight and personal learning. Shows shifts in thinking or perspective.	Sometimes demonstrates personal engagement. Begins to move beyond surface-level observations.	Reflection is mostly descriptive or limited to basic observations.	Lacks genuine reflection. Content is overly descriptive, vague, or unrelated.
2. Connection to Theory (25%)	Accurately explains and integrates relevant theories or models—clear links to session content and personal context.	Some attempt to use theory, though explanations or applications may be limited or formulaic.	Limited or inconsistent use of theory. Often vague or only partly understood.	Theory is incorrect, missing, or applied without understanding.
3. Application to Practice (20%)	Demonstrates how ideas apply to real-world Chinese or global organisations. Includes relevant and realistic actions.	Makes some practical suggestions but may be general or lacking in depth.	The application is basic or lacks relevance to practice. A few specific examples are provided.	No precise application; may include irrelevant, invented, or unclear scenarios.
4. Structure & Organisation (15%)	Fully follows the journal format. Each section is labelled, clear, and logically organised. Writing is fluent.	The structure is adequate but inconsistent. Headings or transitions may be missing or unclear.	Some structural issues: weak organisation or imprecise expression.	Lacks structure. Writing is confusing, disorganised, or challenging to follow.
5. Consistency & Completion (10%)	All six entries were completed to a high standard. Effort is balanced across all sessions.	Most entries completed; some variation in depth or clarity.	One or more entries are missing, overly brief, or lack engagement.	Several entries are missing or rushed. Work lacks sustained effort.

Detailed Course Schedule

Theme 1: Why change happens — foundations, drivers, and organisational readiness (12/07/2025)

Session 1: Foundations of change (Morning)

Topics:

1. What is change and change management?
2. Types, levels, and scope of change
3. Internal/external triggers of change
4. Why change efforts fail
5. Change challenges in Chinese and Western organisations
6. Takeaways

In-class exercises:

Think about a time when you experienced or observed organisational change in a workplace, university, or public organisation.

1. How did the change make you feel, and why?
2. What assumptions did you or others have about the change before it began?
3. In hindsight, what do you think the organisation did well, and what could have been done differently?
4. How has that experience shaped your thoughts on leadership and change today?

Prepare to discuss your experiences of change in pairs or small groups (30 minutes).

Readings:

- Phillips, J., & Klein, J. D. (2023). Change management: From theory to practice. *TechTrends*, 67(1), 189-197.
- Zhu, H. D., & Jones, M. (2014). Huawei: An Exemplar for Organizational Change in a Modern Environment. *J. Inf. Technol. Educ. Discuss. Cases*, 3, 1.

Case:

Huawei: An Exemplar for Organizational Change in a Modern Environment - Debrief in class and mini lecture

Session 2: Diagnosing readiness and change capacity (Afternoon)

Topics:

1. What does “readiness for change” mean?
2. Change readiness models and frameworks
3. Diagnostic tools for assessing readiness
4. Takeaways

In-class exercises:

Please write brief responses (3–5 sentences per question). Be prepared to discuss your answers in small groups.

1. When you think of an organisation going through change (e.g. a workplace, university, or public service), what made people ready — or not ready — for that change?
(Think about mindset, communication, leadership, or environment.)
2. What does it mean to be “ready” for change? Who decides if an organisation is ready?

What do you think leaders need to do before they launch a change initiative to ensure the organisation is ready?

Readings:

- Weiner, B. J. (2020). A theory of organizational readiness for change. In *Handbook on implementation science* (pp. 215-232). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Coetsee, J., & Flood, P. C. (2013). Getting employees ready for change. In *Change lessons from the CEO: Real people, real change* (pp. 101–130). John Wiley & Sons.

Case:

In your group, apply the diagnostic tool assigned to you (either Force Field Analysis, McKinsey 7-S, or Stakeholder Mapping) to assess the organisation's readiness for change in the scenario. Based on your analysis, identify two key actions the organisation should take to improve its readiness.

Theme 2: How change happens — models, adaptive structures, and strategic communication (13/07/2025)

Session 3: Change models and strategic approaches (Morning)

Topics:

1. Critical review of key models and approaches
 - a. Prescriptive models of change
 - b. Strategic Change Approaches
 - c. Behavioural and Psychological Models
2. Strategic use of change models: choosing the right approach for the context
3. Applying Key Principles to the Oticon Case Study
4. Key takeaways

In-class exercises:

Revolution at Oticon – The Spaghetti Organisation

Readings:

- Harrison, R., Fischer, S., Walpola, R. L., Chauhan, A., Babalola, T., Mears, S., & Le-Dao, H. (2021). Where do models for change management, improvement and implementation meet? A systematic review of the applications of change management models in healthcare. *Journal of healthcare leadership*, 85-108
- Stouten, J., Rousseau, D. M., & De Cremer, D. (2018). Successful organizational change: Integrating management practice and scholarly literature. *Academy of Management Annals*, 12(2), 752-788

Case:

Revolution at Oticon – The Spaghetti Organisation

1. What were the case's vision, strategy and key issues?
2. Which change-model principles are most evident in Oticon's shift to a project-based "spaghetti" structure, and where do traditional models (e.g. Lewin, Kotter) fall short in explaining this transformation?
3. What type(s) of change did Oticon undergo — planned, emergent, or adaptive?
4. How would you assess Oticon's readiness for this change?
5. What stakeholder concerns would likely arise in this kind of transition?

Session 4: Strategic communication for leading organisational change (Afternoon)

Topics:

1. The role of communication in organisational change
2. Strategic communication planning
3. Message design and framing
4. Communication channels and timing
5. Takeaways

In-class exercise:

Developing a strategic change communication message

Readings:

- Armenakis, A. A., & Harris, S. G. (2002). Crafting a change message to create transformational readiness. *Journal of organizational change management*, 15(2), 169-183.
- Li, J. Y., Sun, R., Tao, W., & Lee, Y. (2021). Employee coping with organizational change in the face of a pandemic: The role of transparent internal communication. *Public relations review*, 47(1), 101984.
- Campbell, S., Walsh, K., Prior, S., Doherty, D., Bramble, M., Marlow, A., & Maxwell, H. (2022). Examining the engagement of health services staff in change management: modifying the SCARF assessment model

Case: Preparing Employees for Change at SenseTime

Develop a persuasive change communication message that builds readiness using Armenakis et al.'s five beliefs: Discrepancy, Appropriateness, Efficacy, Principal Support, and Valence applying the principles of SCARF.

Theme 3: Navigating resistance and mobilising leadership in change (14/07/2025)

Session 5: Rethinking Psychological Resistance (Morning)

Topics:

1. Reframing resistance to change
2. Individual reactions to organisational changes
3. Psychological safety and employee voice
4. Change Engagement Framework
5. Takeaways

In-class exercises

World Café: Understanding Human Dynamics in Organisational Change

1. Why do people resist change — even when the change is necessary or beneficial
2. What makes people feel safe — or unsafe — to express their true thoughts during change?
3. How can leaders respectfully move people from resistance or silence towards engagement and contribution?

Readings

- Oreg, S., Vakola, M., & Armenakis, A. (2011). Change recipients' reactions to organizational change: A 60-year review of quantitative studies. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 47(4), 461–524

- Morrison, E. W. (2023). Employee voice and silence: Taking stock a decade later. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 10, 79–107
- Ferrari, F. (2024). Readiness to change and change recipients' reactions: An investigation of the beneficial effects of change cynicism. *Journal of Change Management*, 24(1), 25–49

Case:

Discussing results from World Café

Session 6: Change Leadership and Power Dynamics (Afternoon)

Topics:

1. Leadership Approaches in Change
 - Transformational and Adaptive Leadership
 - Confucian leadership
 - When directive vs participative leadership is appropriate
2. Credibility and the change Agent
3. Power, politics, and informal Influence
4. Takeaways

In-class exercises:

Before the next session on **Leading Change**, write a short reflective response (approx. 200 words). This will not be submitted but will form the basis for discussion and applied exercises during class. Reflect on a change process you experienced (in a workplace, university, or public context) where you were not the leader, but leadership actions significantly shaped your experience.

Your reflection should address:

- What kind of change took place, and who led it?
- How would you evaluate the leader's approach — clarity, credibility, and adaptability?
- How did the leader's style affect people's engagement or resistance?
- Were there missed opportunities to lead differently? What would you have done?
- How has this shaped your understanding of good change leadership?

Readings:

- Musaigwa, M. (2023). The role of leadership in managing change. *International review of management and marketing*, 13(6), 1-9.
- Wang, Q., Hou, H., & Li, Z. (2022). Participative leadership: A literature review and prospects for future research. *Frontiers in psychology*, 13, 924357.
- How to be a successful change leader – Center for Creative Leadership

Class discussion:

Create a group collage that symbolically depicts what change leadership signifies for you, encompassing the challenges, behaviours, emotions, and dynamics involved in guiding organisational change

Theme 4: Reimagining change for a complex world (15/07/2025)

Session 7: Leading in complexity: Ethics, paradox, and systemic thinking (Morning)

Topics:

1. Leading in complexity: From control to emergence
2. Paradox management and tensions in change

3. Ethical judgement in uncertain contexts
4. Systems thinking and interdependence
5. Redefining leadership and success in change

In-class exercises:

Navigating change in a complex system: A live leadership dilemma (See handout)

Readings:

- *Center for Creative Leadership*. (2021). *How to manage paradox for better performance*. Greensboro, NC: CCL.
- Voulvoulis, N., Giakoumis, T., Hunt, C., Kioupi, V., Petrou, N., Souliotis, I., & Vaghela, C. J. G. E. C. (2022). Systems thinking as a paradigm shift for sustainability transformation. *Global Environmental Change*, 75, 102544.
- Payne, D., Trumbach, C., & Soharu, R. (2023). The values change management cycle: Ethical change management. *Journal of business ethics*, 188(3), 429-440.

Case:

Navigating change in a complex system: A live leadership dilemma

Session 8: Presentations

Title: Independent Topic – Design Your Focus

You can suggest a presentation topic as long as it relates to organisational change and effectively engages with at least two concepts, models, or frameworks from the course (Sessions 1–7). Your topic must be specific, analytical, and theoretically grounded.

You may focus on a:

- Real-world case (past or present)
- Sector-based challenge
- Theoretical problem
- Conceptual or reflective question related to change

Your Presentation Must Include:

1. **A clearly defined focus or question**
e.g. “How can inclusive leadership be strengthened in cross-cultural digital transformations?”
2. **At least two relevant course concepts or frameworks**, such as:
 - Change readiness (Weiner, Coetsee)
 - Communication framing (Armenakis, SCARF)
 - Resistance and employee voice
 - Stakeholder analysis
 - Change models (e.g. Kotter, Lewin, emergent strategies)
 - Systems thinking, paradox, complexity
 - Ethical leadership and legitimacy
3. **Structured analysis or critique**
 - Apply theory to practice or vice versa
 - Identify patterns, tensions, outcomes, and alternatives
 - Avoid purely descriptive or narrative formats
4. **Reflection or insight**
 - What does your analysis reveal about how change happens (or fails)?
 - What are the implications for leaders, organisations, or systems?
6. **A short reference list** (APA style)
7. **Group size:** 2–3 students per group.
8. **Presentation length:** 12 minutes per group, followed by 3 minutes of Q&A.
9. **Slides:** Maximum of 10 content slides plus 1 reference slide.

10. **Requirement:** Each group must apply at least two concepts or frameworks from Sessions 1–7