

SEPTEMBER 25TH, 2020



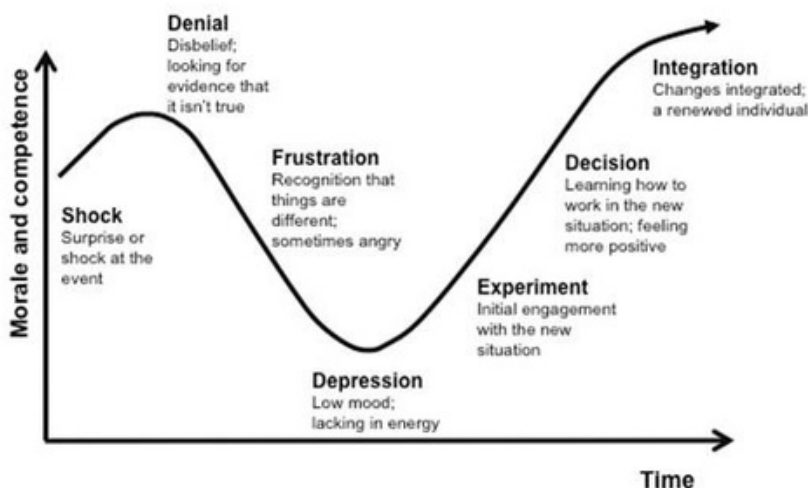
# LESSONS FROM THE HYPER-DISRUPTIVE PANDEMIC

by Prashant Raje and Mangesh Kirtane

## "Change is the only constant in life"

While everyone knows phrases such as, "Change is the only constant in life", we are today dealing with an unprecedented disruptive change in our lives – not only in our own lives, but perhaps in the lives of three or four generations of us. Every individual and every organization has been trying to figure out how to work with this change that was forced upon us out of the blue. Alchemy is no exception to that. As we near the completion of six months of the beginning of the first lockdown in India, we at Alchemy have been reflecting on our own journey over the last six months – and we realized that the following model by Kubler-Ross best describes the process that we have been going through, individually, and as an organization.

### The Kübler-Ross change curve



## Highlights

How did it affect Alchemy?

Insights to take away

Scale, Complexity and Role  
Of Operational Managers

How can we help you?

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What is even more interesting is that as we started sharing our stories, we realized that individually, each one of us experienced this curve differently! Some started on the journey earlier and some later; some moved through the stages faster and some slower; some even skipped over one of the stages – one of us said that he never experienced depression, but found himself eager and agog in the Experiment stage after some Frustration about ‘nothing happening’ in the world; and individually, we are in different states at the end of these six months!



## What about us as an organisation?

Well, despite the difference in our individual journeys, we agreed that we have experienced quite a coherent journey as an organization! We are well past frustration, depression and inaction, and are well into the last three stages: not only that, we all agree that our interactions in dealing with this change as an organization has had a distinctly wholesome and salutary effect on our individual journeys.

## What insight can we take away from this?

It is this: imagine what the people in your organization are going through individually as they not only cope with the implications of this pandemic to themselves and their respective families, but also of the sweeping organizational changes that their managements are making, or will be making, in their professional lives! Besides, extrapolating from the example of the tiny universe of Alchemy consultants, imagine how widely different will be the reactions of individuals in your large organization, each coming from her own universe of aspirations, fears, constraints, compulsions, values, experiences and ways of thinking. You, as the leaders of your organization may be doing, or may already have done a brilliant job of thinking through what your organization needs to do in order to succeed through this unprecedented change. But will it be easy to drive the change through the entire organization, with this wide variation in how people are dealing with themselves and the organization?

The complexity involved is massive. Fortunately, there is a body of knowledge that has already been built up by thinkers in Behavioural Psychology, Organizational Behaviour, and Organizational Development to effectively manage and drive change through an organization.

We at Alchemy not only use the following framework as a broad guideline in parallel with the Kubler-Ross model of change, but have developed useful methodologies, tools and techniques to navigate and drive the organization along the curve.

**Share you Thoughts, Feelings,  
Anxieties, Fears and Hopes**



**Choose the Positive**



**Develop New Skills**



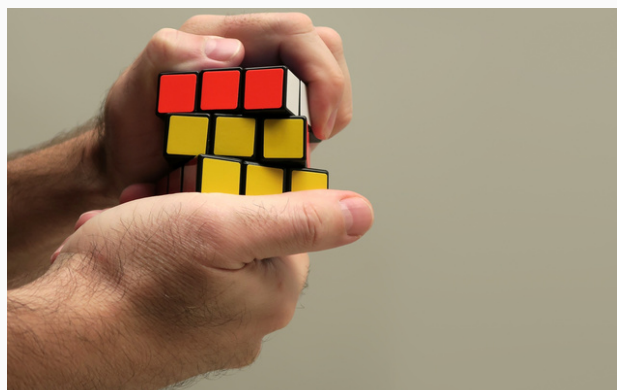
**Communicate, Act and Communicate**



**Align, Integrate and Celebrate**

## Scale, Complexity and Role of Operational Managers:

The larger the scope of the change, the greater is the difficulty in driving alignment across various units and teams. How do we go beyond merely getting people to understand the need to change? How do we get our frontline employees to actually support and drive the change? In our opinion, the role of operational managers is crucial here. The main source of their resistance is a lack of a deep understanding of the need for the change, and insufficient knowledge and tools for explaining various aspects of the change program, combined with their appreciation of operational challenges. Hence in our methodology, we ensure that two-way communication plays a pivotal role in the change process - both prior to designing the change as well as while implementing the change. In addition, we have regular round-tables to address their concerns, and provide a tool-kit for enabling ongoing two way conversations at all levels







There could be many successful frameworks for appreciating and bringing about change in a planned and integrated manner. However what we believe is critical for success, is to develop a common language for change, in addition to leveraging the obvious drivers such as growth in sales numbers, break-through in a particular geography or channel, increase in manufacturing productivity, reduction in customer complaints, etc.

In summary, our role is to understand the change that you seek in your organization and help you

- Align core management on the exact change necessary,
- Design the right structures for effectiveness,
- Design business process changes needed for success,
- Design and implement communication strategy across the organization,
- Align reward and incentive systems,
- Identify key challenges and devise mitigation and contingency strategies,
- Identify and address areas of potential impact on employee morale and motivation,
- Devise and implement success metrics,
- Conduct workshops before and during the change process for successful outcomes, and
- Train, coach, mentor employees across the organization as necessary

While we have always enjoyed and derived immense satisfaction from helping our customers successfully drive change through their organization, we believe that we are emerging from this life changing experience with a far deeper appreciation of what we do and a whole new perspective on how to be effective. We look forward to using these new insights to help our clients even better now.

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