

**Navigating Change within Organisations: The Human Element
(Summary)**

Inaugural Lecture

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For organisations, change has become a constant and is triggered by many external forces which include technological innovation, economic shocks, global conflict, humanitarian crises and environmental concerns. The current environment is typically described as volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. Traditional knowledge bases are considered inadequate to resolve what is called the wicked problems of the world, and research, design thinking and innovative solutions are required. In practice this means that meaningful change cannot take place without the involvement of a wide range stakeholders. Many change initiatives fail due to insufficient attention to people issues, not considering stakeholders needs and not following an inclusive process.

An evolving field of interest related to change is that of humanistic management, humanising workplaces and a humanising work experience. It is centred on the premise that every person within an organisation counts, that every person needs to be deeply respected as a person and for their work, and that every person has the right to flourish at work.

Perpetual change requires of organisations to be in a state of change readiness. Change readiness is not about an event of change but a mindset or predisposition for being comfortable with change and engaging with change. On an individual level, readiness to change is defined by the extent to which a person is cognitively and emotionally ready to accept, embrace and adopt a change plan that will change the status quo for them. At an organisational level, the readiness of existing systems, structures and processes, leadership commitment to change and organisational culture are factors that can either foster or disrupt change.

The focus of the inaugural lecture is thus on the imperative of people-centred organisations and change, and pillars of change readiness within organisations, including organisational capability, employee readiness, communication, organisational culture, learning and leadership.