

# YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 13

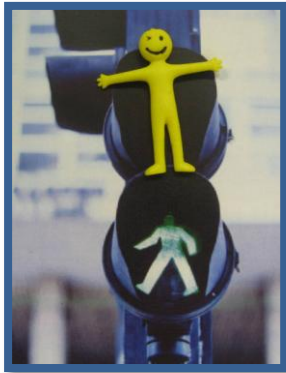
*If you treat staff as consumers rather than as human resources, might you effect change better...?*

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## Encourage Transformation...

"We cannot change anything unless we accept it. Condemnation does not liberate, it oppresses. "

[Carl Jung](#) Psychologist



Happy to Change

*When you are faced with a change programme at work, would you rather be treated as a consumer or a human resource?*

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I read somewhere that 80% of change programmes don't achieve objectives, (if you know the source please let me know). Why might this happen?

Could it be because so many change programmes treat those involved as resources to be controlled by using e.g. "bogus consultations", "traffic light" project tracking, name and shame progress reports and "copy all" e-mails to managers who are slipping deadlines. It is little surprise that people revert to previous behaviours once the controls are released.

Some years ago I took responsibility for a company change programme, to implement and document all processes. There were a few challenges because the company was not process oriented outside of computer

operations, people were change fatigued after three company change programmes and the day job was keeping them busy! Had I accepted a poison chalice or a G & T on the patio?

It depends how you frame the problem and reframing a problem in a different way is a powerful creative technique.

"What if," I mused, "we treat the staff as consumers rather than human resources? Would that make them more responsive?"

So we did, and they were. We ran the change programme as a consumer campaign.

We held optional consultation sessions (over a third of the company attended) to discuss ideas and used their output. We publicised the project with humorous direct marketing mail shots. We provided individual help clinics to aid people and when things slowed down we ran a humorous advertising campaign to encourage managers.

There was not a traffic light report or snotty memo in sight. The result? Helpful people, delivery objectives exceeded and a fun time for the project team. Yes, our post project review highlighted things we could have improved on, but when I spoke to the Head of Audit recently, he revealed that much of what we had implemented was still in place five years later.

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## SO

My belief is that we can make change much more effective in the long term if we treat those involved in a change programme like consumers, to be encouraged and motivated to “buy” and implement the change, not human resources to be controlled.

I don't pretend the consumer model for change is unique but I have studied various change models and have not found a similar model. So I am developing one.

I bounced the basic outline off a friend who is Marketing Director of a retail drinks company. I explained my approach to him and by chance he had just run a project using very similar principles, to develop a new style of store which would be the pilot for a company change programme. So, the model appears to be transferable.

## ACTION

1. If you would like a copy of an article that summarises various change models and their pros and cons, go to the [web site](#).
2. Use the guiding principle "the people involved are all consumers", as the basis for your next project. Develop your plans based on this, a great opportunity to use creative thinking techniques and to make your project one of the 20% that succeed.

## TO CLOSE

A book I read about [Bomber Crews](#) by John Nichol and Tony Renell brought this topic to mind. One chapter outlines the differing approaches of the RAF and the US Air Force to those who lost their nerve for combat operations and requested to stop flying.

The RAF used the tactics of fear and peer pressure to prevent this happening. People (all volunteers) who refused to fly (even after 40 missions) were publically branded as cowards and ceremoniously stripped of rank and flying brevets (often in front of the whole station).

The US Air Force accepted that all flyers were volunteers and transferred the airmen to ground duties with no comment. *Significantly there was no difference in performance and the rate of people refusing was similar in both Air Forces.*

So there you have it, two different frames for a problem, one that led to a solution that left people with respect and one without. Both had the same results. What's better?

May your next project bring you success.

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