

Viral Change[™] revisited...

Since the first edition of *Viral Change*, Dr Leandro Herrero and The Chalfont Project continued to expand their experience in the field of viral change management, which they pioneered. This has now resulted in a second and revised edition of Dr Herrero's book: *Viral Change: the alternative to slow, painful and unsuccessful management of change in organisations*.

This is the prologue that Dr Herrero wrote for this second edition:

"The terms 'viral change' or 'behavioural change management' have increasingly been linked to our work as any Google search for these terms will show you. And I am delighted that there is a growing interest - from many sectors of the business and organisational life - in understanding the viral model of change management that we pioneered and its applications.

Since the first edition, we have continued building on our *Viral Change*[™] experience, both in large scale interventions and in its applications in medium-sized organisations. Additional work on viral leadership has also taken place and some extra notes on this topic have been added in this second edition. Viral leadership goes beyond communication ('viral communication') to engage others to champion the new idea, the new process or the new behaviours. We are so used to equating change to good communication that sometimes people think these two things are not just connected, but interchangeable. However, they are not the same.

I have also added some notes on influence mechanisms. In recent months, it became fashionable to question the true role of 'influencers', for example, in marketing. In this second edition, I have stressed how any virally induced cultural change recognises a combination of mechanisms: influencers ('the opinion leader model'), the first followers ('the early adopters model') and the fact that a critical mass of 'new culture practitioners' ('the critical mass model') is powerful enough in itself to induce another critical mass, no matter what the initial trigger was.

Social copying leads the way. This is incredibly important for me as a practitioner of Viral Change™ (as opposed to a simply theoretical advocate), because I am more interested in the infection of new ideas and behaviours being spread and leading to new routines within the organisation ('new cultures') than in the socio-arithmetical ability to measure whether 20% of those were due to mass social imitation or direct Change Champion, peer-to-peer work. The best (cultural, organisational) Viral Change™ in action is the one that has used multiple mechanisms of influence.

Every day I encounter more and more people in organisational life who are tired of yet another corporate initiative with a change management angle. The mechanistic top-down model (push from the top of the organisation, get results at the bottom) is still what people think of: a burden you have to endure at some point, one way or another. This model is past its sell-by date. Making no apologies for stealing the slogan of a European mobile communications company, I'd like to proclaim that 'the future is bright, the future is viral'. I really believe that the viral model of change is the only hope for a tired, overwhelmed, over-managed, predictable, commanded-and-controlled, straight-jacketed and initiative-inundated corporate life.

Leandro Herrero
May 2008"

The second revised edition of ***Viral Change: the alternative to slow, painful and unsuccessful management of change in organisations*** will be available from **15th July 2008**.

It can already be pre-ordered from [Amazon UK](#), [Barnes and Noble](#) and [meetingminds](#).