



## Five Minutes with... Sherry Herman



### **Sherry Herman, Director, Harbinger Corporate Resources (self employed).**

My background extends to 20 years of experience managing projects across a broad range of industries, including ERP system implementations, business start-ups, introduction of new business services, restructures, improving sales force effectiveness, business process improvement and service delivery improvement. After gaining 10 years of experience within businesses, I started my own business in 1999 and have been self employed ever since.

### **How did you come to perform in a change management related role? What attracted you?**

I started my career as a Tax Accountant with Arthur Andersen and Co back in 1989, when Change Management had really only begun to evolve as a profession. About a year and half after joining, I was invited to transfer over to Andersen Consulting's Change Management practice by one of their senior managers. That launched my career in a new (and far more exciting) direction. I was attracted to the role because it required me to examine business problems from multiple angles (not just financial) and enabled me to participate in the development of holistic solutions. Although I did not stay with Andersen Consulting for very long (I went out into business to gain hands-on experience), it whet my appetite for change management.

### **Why is good change management so critical to the way businesses perform today?**

Good change management is essential for almost every business, especially in today's environment where businesses must evolve at a very rapid pace and talent is in short supply and highly mobile. Investing in good change



management is like buying an insurance policy – it helps to greatly increase the probability of a successful outcome on almost all business initiatives.

**What makes a great change management practitioner?**

Listen a lot more than you speak. Seek out and engage the people within the business who are affected by the change – most of the time they already know the answers but are not given the opportunity to get involved in the solution. Help all leaders in the chain of command to successfully lead within their sphere of control, do not disempower them or encourage senior executives to stand in for and deliver messages that should be delivered by middle and front line managers. Great leadership is required at all levels within an organization.

**What would you say to anyone thinking of starting/developing a career in change management?**

Change management requires practitioners to have a very good, well-rounded and practical understanding of all facets of business (finance, operations, sales and marketing, human resources, etc.). Develop a broad base of experience working within a business (or businesses) and, in particular, develop an understanding of how businesses bring value to their customers via the convergence of people, processes, and systems.

**What is your idea of a great change management challenge?**

The greatest change management challenge is to engage the people within an organisation to harness their own skills and abilities to solve complex business problems. The greatest barrier to overcome is almost always the fear of failure and blame.