



## Five minutes with... Dawn Marie Turner



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### Introduction to Dawn-Marie...

I've been working in organisational change management for about 15 years. My experience spans the gamut from working with individuals and communities to move people to healthier lifestyles and to create healthier communities, to working with organisations to make them "healthier" and help them realise their business goals through their change initiatives. In Canada, I've worked with the private sector, government, and crown corporations, to design and implement transition plans that help organisations get the results they want from their change initiatives.

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

That's a really interesting question. I originally had a background in healthcare and thus started out helping individuals and communities design healthy lifestyles and communities. Then I began working for a large IT company who needed a change management person and at the time I was it! I quickly realised that what was happening in the IT industry could be helped by bridging individual change with organisational change management through the use of proven change management strategies tools and techniques.

This experience really cemented my attraction to change management. I realised, as a change management practitioner I had an opportunity to affect business results, engage with a variety of individuals, and really make a difference in helping an organisation be successful. I became focused on how to make organisational change easier, less uncomfortable and more productive. I also really liked the challenge of



taking something that at first looks uncomfortable or difficult and helping people work through the process so they ultimately get as excited about the change as the leaders who initially launched the change. So for me the attraction of change management is when the people being affected by the change have an “aha moment”, and the excitement that builds from that as the individuals began to move forward with the change initiative.

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

I think good change management is so critical today, because change is something every organisation has to have, it's really necessary and it's going to happen whether it's managed or not. But whether they get results, whether the organisation grows and prospers, only happens if the transition is managed. Change management really focuses on that transition. Getting the individual to adopt and adapt to a new environment and to do it with ease and enthusiasm. It's so important to the bottom line, it saves time, it saves money and it allows for a better use of resources. It's about building capacity in an organisation, and organisations with high change capacity are far more successful and able to respond to their ever-changing environments.

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

I think first and foremost a great change management practitioner really has to understand the change process and how individuals move through that process. Change management is really about individual change so they really need to know it well, be able to assess it and move people through the process. Other necessary skills are the ability to analyse and problem solve and to be very adaptable. When you're helping an organisation through a change process, you need a solid methodology but you also need to be able to quickly mold and adapt it to fit the organisation as individuals move through the process. Change management practitioners are often the front person for the initiative and as individuals become uncomfortable, the change management practitioner often becomes the person to weather that storm. They have to be strong in themselves and what they're doing and truly believe in what the organisation is trying to accomplish. A thick skin also helps!

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

I would say great, go for it! I would tell them you needed to be prepared to work in very diverse settings, with multiple organisations in multiple settings, and with a variety of different types of people. I would also tell them it's a great time to enter the field. Change management, especially in Canada, is just coming into its own right now as organisations are recognising they aren't getting results and they are looking for a better way. This is a good time to get involved in change management.



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

In my experience, a common change management challenge is often purely project-related. For example, what is happening more and more, especially in large countries like Canada, is that organisations are looking to implement a common change initiative with a workforce that is geographically dispersed and operationally different across the various components of the organisation. The value of change management in this situation is that by creating commitment to the common outcome, it allows the organisation to move in the right direction collectively, as opposed to everyone doing their own thing. The challenge is the opportunity to engage these different workforces into creating and making real the common vision for the organisational change.

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