



## Five Minutes with... Helen Haley



My name is Helen Haley and I am the Managing Director of Allegra Consulting. I have been running Allegra Consulting for just under five years and I love it. It is a great role and I enjoy what I do everyday, so I consider myself very lucky indeed !

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

My first foray into change management was when I worked at Barclays Bank in the UK in the 1990s. I was managing a debt management business and the unit was part of a transformation program which meant that the whole unit was being relocated from Liverpool to Manchester. To Australians a change in location of 30 odd miles might not seem a big deal but in the UK this is considered a huge change and especially challenging for those people who had had the same role for 20+ years in their home town. I worked on a number of streams of work including technology-related change, process re-engineering but most enjoyable for me – coaching and support of those employees who were forced to consider their futures.

I discovered I had a passion for helping people deal with change and I really got a buzz out of supporting them to overcome their fear of change and fear of the unknown. I worked closely with the impacted groups to determine individual action plans and help prepare them for the changes.

My previous roles have also incorporated my other passions which are communication and engagement which for me are non-negotiable skills for top change managers. Having the ability to communicate and engage on both a personal and more macro level are key indicators of a successful career not only in change management but in all professional roles.



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

It's been said many times before but change is the only constant and organisations spend so much time and money on constantly transforming their business to ensure they remain competitive and successful. For me change management is all about delivering business benefits – when you invest time and money in something you need to ensure it is set up to succeed and the practice of change management plays a critical role in this.

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

So many things make a great change professional but for me these are the key skills:

- Understanding and appreciating people and their points of view and actively listening to all opinions,
- The ability to coach others through change whether they are leading the change or directly affected by it and, most importantly,
- The ability to apply common sense to problems and challenges.

Change managers who go out and experience a range of challenges give themselves the best opportunity to hone their own personal style and approach and test theories and methodologies in real time.

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

It is a great career with huge potential for personal growth. Every day the change manager faces a challenge because quite simply as human beings we like the status quo. So if you get a buzz out of turning the tide little by little then this career is one you should consider.

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

There are so many both for the change manager on a personal level and for the organisation as a whole. For me, organisations which embark upon major transformation programs face considerable challenges which are both daunting and exciting as a change manager – so many considerations, so many stakeholders, changing internal and external conditions and moving targets. This is where the professional change manager can really come into their own – bringing cohesion to these projects and a consistent approach which will serve to promote consistency of message, engagement of key stakeholder groups and ultimately delivery of benefits and objectives.