

Five Minutes with... Ingrid Heaton



My name is Ingrid Heaton and I am a Change Communications professional at the National Australia Bank. Having previously worked in Business Banking and Technology, I am about to embark on a new role in Lending Services.

Previous roles I have had include Change Manager at Sensis, as well as numerous project and executive support roles across Coles Myer, ANZ, and BP's head office in London.

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

My exposure to projects over the last 10 years has taught me a lot about the importance of simple, open and honest communication, and that when you work with people to effect change, rather than just 'doing it', they respond a whole lot better!

I have also been fortunate enough to work with some inspiring change professionals, as well as many successful Senior Leaders. Those that I enjoyed working with the most all seemed to share a common understanding of how to influence and motivate people. Most importantly, they understood that change impacted everybody differently and that a one size fits all approach was not sustainable.

My transition into a Change Management role seemed like a natural progression for me when I realised that much of the work I was already doing involved effective communication and influencing individuals to reach a desired outcome. Attending a course in facilitating and leading successful change further inspired me and there has been no looking back!

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

Without effective change management, change is simply not sustainable – more often than not individuals will, where possible, simply revert to the old ways of doing things, or even worse, leave the organisation entirely. With such strong competition globally, it is essential for businesses to remain agile and responsive to market and technological advances. Implementing change is costly and may compromise the success of the business if benefits are not realised.



What makes a great change management practitioner?

The ability to build strong relationships across varying stakeholder groups and to clearly and effectively translate complex issues into simple terms. Most of all, I believe that effective change management is about engaging and influencing individuals to understand the drivers for change while instilling a sense of contribution and ownership - try putting yourself in their shoes and imagine how you would respond under the same circumstances.

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

If you like surprises and have an open mind, it can be the most rewarding career you ever embark on, and I can honestly say that I have never, ever been bored. Change Management is completely and totally people focused and without this key discipline you will never understand what could make your change a success.

What is your idea of a great change management challenge?

I believe that the biggest challenge we face is keeping up with the volume of change experienced in society today. We are constantly being bombarding with new things at home, at work and in our communities and it can be difficult to feel like you are still in the driving seat of your own life. All of these influences can impact the way that change in the workplace is responded to, and it is important to understand that while change may be easy for you, not everyone navigates and adapts to it in the same way.