



This private newsletter is for my clients who lead change. All content is based on my real-world experience working with world-class leaders. I stand ready to make a contribution to your efforts. Email Seth@SethKahan.com or call my office, 301/229-2221.

CREATING BUY-IN AND ENGAGEMENT

It is 2007 and I am sitting in a tiny conference room in a large, multi-national organization in Europe, packed tight with eight people. A revolutionary idea for business improvement is being presented, and everyone is eager, having dropped their day's work to join this impromptu session. If the company can implement fast enough, this way of working will become their competitive edge.

The first slide shows the value of the change in dollars. The second shows a region-by-region time-line for global execution. The third slide reads, **Buy-In**. Here the presenter says, "We need to get managers and front line staff engaged," then he moves on. Someone interrupts, "Wait a minute. How are you going to do that? This is a real issue for us. We don't have a history of success in our region." Long pause. "I don't know. We'll use some change management stuff. Last time we brought in juggling monkeys. They seemed to work pretty well." *Juggling monkeys!? You can't make this stuff up!!*

Two hours later I am in the senior sponsor's office. He is talking me to me because I am the change management guy and he wants an alternative to juggling monkeys. He says, "People didn't take us seriously. What can you do for us?"

I introduce him to my approach. It is called, **Face-to-Face: Bringing Your Most Valuable Players Together to Generate Transformation**. It is the single most powerful technique for breaking logjams, overcoming obstacles, and accelerating complex change. The key is *buy-in and engagement*.

Buy-in is about winning the commitment of your Most Valuable Players

(MVPs). These are the people who will literally bring your vision to life. They are your "sink or swim" critical stakeholders.

The secret to creating rock-solid buy-in, the kind that holds steady in storms of all kinds, is to engage your MVPs so they personally identify with the future state. When their identities are fully integrated with success, they will do *whatever it takes* to see execution through.

This is critical, because in today's complex world it is impossible to predict every situation that will arise. You want your MVPs to react and respond appropriately, in concert with your objectives, in a wide variety of unforeseen events.

This happens when you have *engaged* your MVPs, getting them involved in the creative process of change. Here they actually flesh out the details of the future state. You know you are a winning when your MVPs are formulating the substance of the initiative.

Most Valuable Players

1. Those that authorize the work.
2. Those that design and plan the work.
3. Those that carry out the work.
4. Those partners whose activities are interdependent with the future state.

Engagement requires a professional approach to knowledge sharing and collaboration. This includes connecting people to each other in a collaborative environment that generates *esprit de corps*.

The Face-to-Face method works across cultures, disciplines, and even geographic separation. It depends on systematic face-to-face gatherings that support collaborative implementation.

Engagement doesn't happen with juggling monkeys. But, when you involve your MVPs in the critical, creative aspects of change through face-to-face collaboration, you will realize the buy-in that generates powerful transformation.

Change Leadership clients include:

Alberta Provincial Government, Canada • American Public Transportation Association • Association of Independent Corrugated Converters • Braintrust International • Ernst & Young Federal Executive Institute • Institute of Management Accountants • International Coaching Federation • KM Pro • NASA IV&V • NASA Leadership Alchemy Program • NASA Masters Forum • National Institute on Aging • National Institutes of Health • National Park Service • National School Board Association • Oklahoma Nurses Association • Ontario Public Housing Association, Canada • Peace Corps • Project Management Institute • Royal Dutch Shell • Trillium Health Centre, Canada • USAID • US Department of Education • US Department of Transportation • US Environmental Protection Agency • US Geological Survey • US Government Council on Excellence