



## **Jo North, Managing Director of The Big Bang Partnership Ltd**

My name is Jo North, I'm the Managing Director of an innovation and change consultancy called 'The Big Bang Partnership Ltd' and I've got a former career in being a corporate director of organisations, such as East Coast Trains, Northern Rail and First Group, in the transport sector. So I have a lot of experience of dealing with the practice of change and the realities of driving change through, particularly from an entrepreneurial perspective, where organisations are looking at becoming more innovative and forward thinking.

I think the key thing about change is really making sure that the people involved have a clear vision; they start with the end in mind, in terms of understanding what the benefits of the change will look like, what the end result will look like. So they have a very, very clear picture image and understanding that they can work towards.

I think what often happens in reality is that the senior team in an organisation, the leaders, can see that picture really, really clearly and absolutely get it and in their excitement and enthusiasm think that other people will, will get that too. But what's really important is to realise that not everybody is in the same starting place, everybody hasn't had the same opportunity to think about the change and to really catch up from where ... with where the leadership team is. So that's very important to bear in mind.

Quite often, particularly in changing the way that people work and the organisation structure and the job content of an organisation people can say "Well I've been working this way for some time now, you've been telling me that's the right way to do it and that I've been doing that well and you're now telling me that that way of working isn't good enough, or is no longer needed" and that can take people some time to get through as well and to really understand that actually it's the external world that is changing and that people need to change in line with the external world and the new requirements of the organisation.

I think in most changed circumstances what is really evident in practice is actually seeing the change curve work in reality, so you can see the change curve is where news of a change hits people within the organisation, then they take time to reflect and there's almost like a dip in terms of a period of almost bereavement and missing what was there before and not understanding why the change needs to take place. That usually hits a bottom of the curve and then starts to climb again as people really understand that the change is here to stay, they need to adjust, they need to adapt and adjust themselves to the change and then they start to perform and the organisation really comes out of that change curve, because people have got used to it and understand that the change is here to stay and what really helps is to compress that change curve to make the dip element of the curve as short as possible, so that people can get through the negatives, the negativity, the concerns, the frustrations and worries they have about the fact that things are changing and move into a performance state as quickly as possible and I think leaders of teams and of organisations can help that by being very clear about what the end in mind is as I've said. But also really having some empathy and

understanding and appreciating the perspective of others in the organisation and not expecting everybody to be on the same page as they are from day one.

I'm often asked how do you make change stick and I think it's actually ... the question should really be about the stickiness of change and how sticky you really want it to be, because in a world that is fast moving, ever changing, change process needs to be embedded if it's a significant step change, but then the organisation needs to get used to making changes on a frequent basis, always looking at what's going on in the organisation, outside the organisation in the world around it and making sure that strategic drift doesn't happen and what strategic drift is, it's where the internal organisation doesn't keep a pace with the changes in the market and the world outside and that means that it can lose market share, it can lose competitive edge and it can move further and further away from delivering what customers actually want.

So to stay competitive and to stay fully functional, organisations always need to be changing and always ensuring that they are aligning themselves with the needs of the market place.