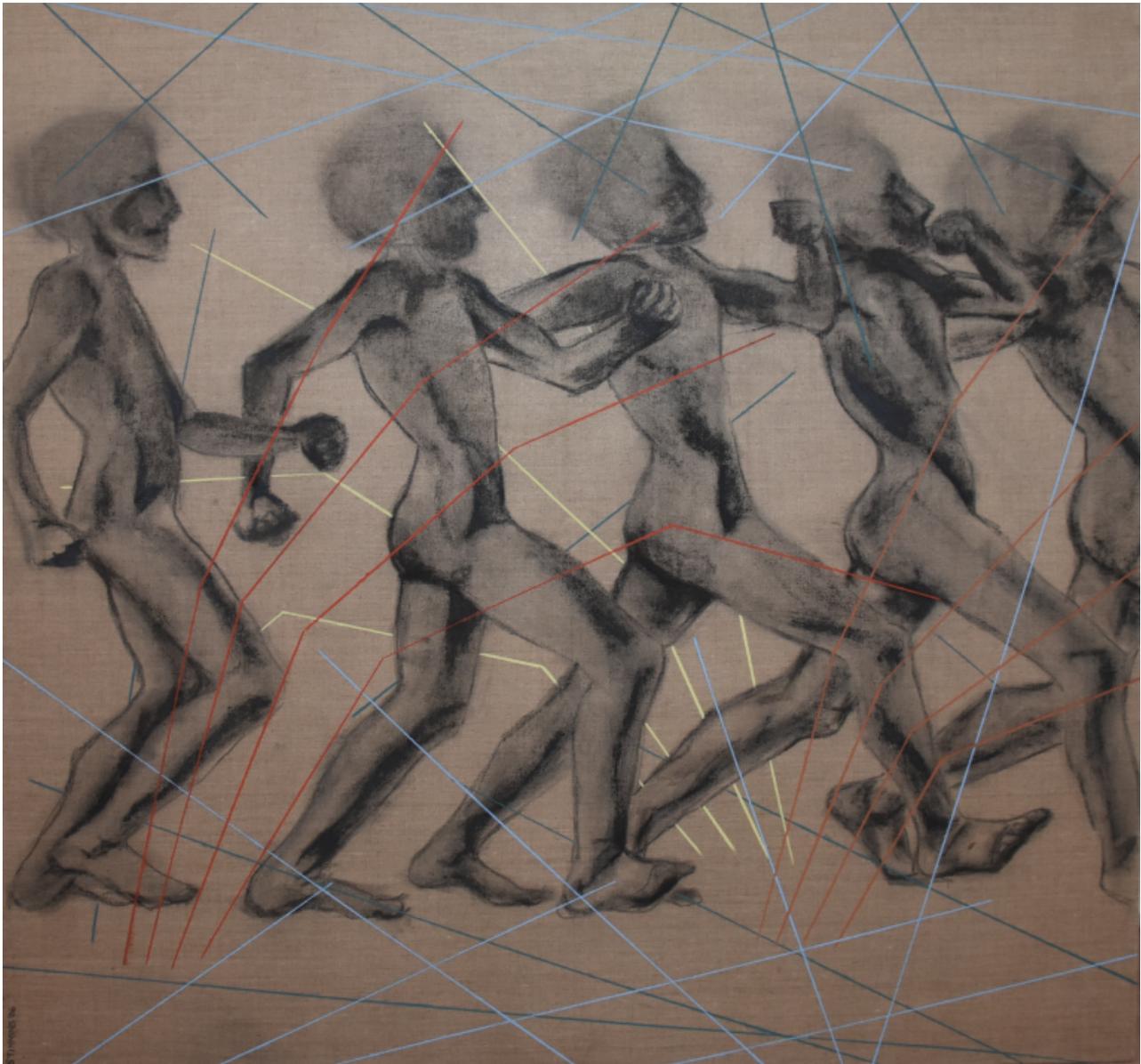


# Time Marches On!

[linkedin.com/pulse/time-marches-clive-porter-brown](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/time-marches-clive-porter-brown)



The old military adage tells us that no plan survives first contact with the enemy. Whilst we must not think of our stakeholders as the enemy, it should make us think about the mindset applied when working with our stakeholders. The result is that we become our customers agent for change and help them achieve their goals.

But first, who is our “customer” and how do they differ from the “user”? The customer is our key stakeholder, the person that makes the decisions, has the budget and will become your prime sponsor. The customer will be an enabler to the success of your service being delivered because they want it and are positioned to make it happen where it is needed.

The “user(s)” on the other hand are also stakeholders and they will live with the result of the decisions on the day to day. The user is not likely to be the final decision maker, but they can be a big influence on the success or failure of any service. Through their support

of the design and testing, transitioning successfully from the previous service is more assured.

All stakeholders have requirements and demands, which must be kept in balance; think of the time, cost and quality triangle. Key to this balance is remembering that requirements are defined by people. Unlike technology, which can generally be relied upon to do as it is told, people are different. People will not behave and respond in predictable ways, so working purely through a technical or legislative change process will not achieve the desired success, especially if it ignores the stakeholders and their habits, needs, wants and desires.

The same applies to your suppliers and your teams. Just because someone work for you does not mean they understand, agree or are willing participants in the journey ahead. Make it easier to adopt the new behaviour rather than create workarounds to hang onto the old.

Experience tells us that you cannot just click your fingers and make it happen. To achieve the desired change takes time and effort, talking, explaining, understanding, engaging. But time is also a thief and the urgency of why this needs to happen and the consequences of not acting now needs to be conveyed, understood and even accepted. When stakeholders understand the vision and the reason, they see that what lies ahead is not an empty vessel. Instead, they see the why and what the new is intended to be. They may still not like what is coming, but they will be better positioned to have been a part of the future and help it succeed.

There is no golden rule that will work with everyone as acceptance from an individual has its own timeline. Remember to understand and engage with your stakeholders, understand the organisation and its constraints and ways, work with what you have. What lies ahead? Ideally a future that engages us all and we are excited to go there because it is where we want to go.

I think Kotter and Demming were onto something!

#organisationalchange, #people, #timemarcheson, #changemanagement, #kotter, #demming