



LEARNING LESSONS: HOW TO ACHIEVE CHANGE IN UNIVERSITIES

Paul Woodgates
Head of Services to the Education Sector, PA Consulting Group

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01

**WHY ARE
UNIVERSITIES TRYING
TO CHANGE?**

WHY ARE WE TRYING TO CHANGE?

The world is changing

- Expectations of students
- Opportunities offered by technology
- Competition between universities and with other providers of teaching and research
- New forms of collaboration



Universities must respond and lead

- New definitions of success for teaching and research
- New ambitions
- New relevance to society
- New drive for efficiency



The way universities are constructed suits the old world not the new world

- Old operating models
- Old processes
- Old technology
- Old ways of working



So, universities need to transform

- Operating models
- Organisation designs
- Processes
- Estate and facilities
- Technology solutions
- People management
- Partnerships

while keeping their focus on academic excellence and on what makes universities special



“Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.”

JOHN F. KENNEDY



02

**WHAT MAKES
CHANGE HARD?**

“If you want to make enemies, try to change something.”

WOODROW WILSON

WHY IS IT HARD?

Change is hard in any organisation

- Change has to be specified, designed, implemented and made to stick
- Change can create uncertainty and opposition
- It's often done badly – with poor results

And universities have some special characteristics:

- Academic freedom is at the heart of what makes a university special
- Often limited history of change – mostly slow!

The very purpose of a University is create and disseminate new knowledge – creating change in what we know
And yet achieving change to the way a university *works* is often very challenging to achieve

“There is nothing more difficult to
take in hand, more perilous to
conduct, or more uncertain in its
success, than to take the lead in
the introduction of a new order
of things.”

NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI



03

**SOME KEY LESSONS
TO LEARN ABOUT
MAKING CHANGE IN
UNIVERSITIES**

KEY LEARNINGS

DEFINE

CREATE

RESPOND

EMPOWER

EMBED

TELL EVERYONE WHY



- Make the case for change
- Then, make the case for change
- Then, make the case for change...
- Senior academic leaders must tell a story grounded in the university's strategy
- Bring the change TO LIFE!
- Embrace the doubters

“Change before you have to.”

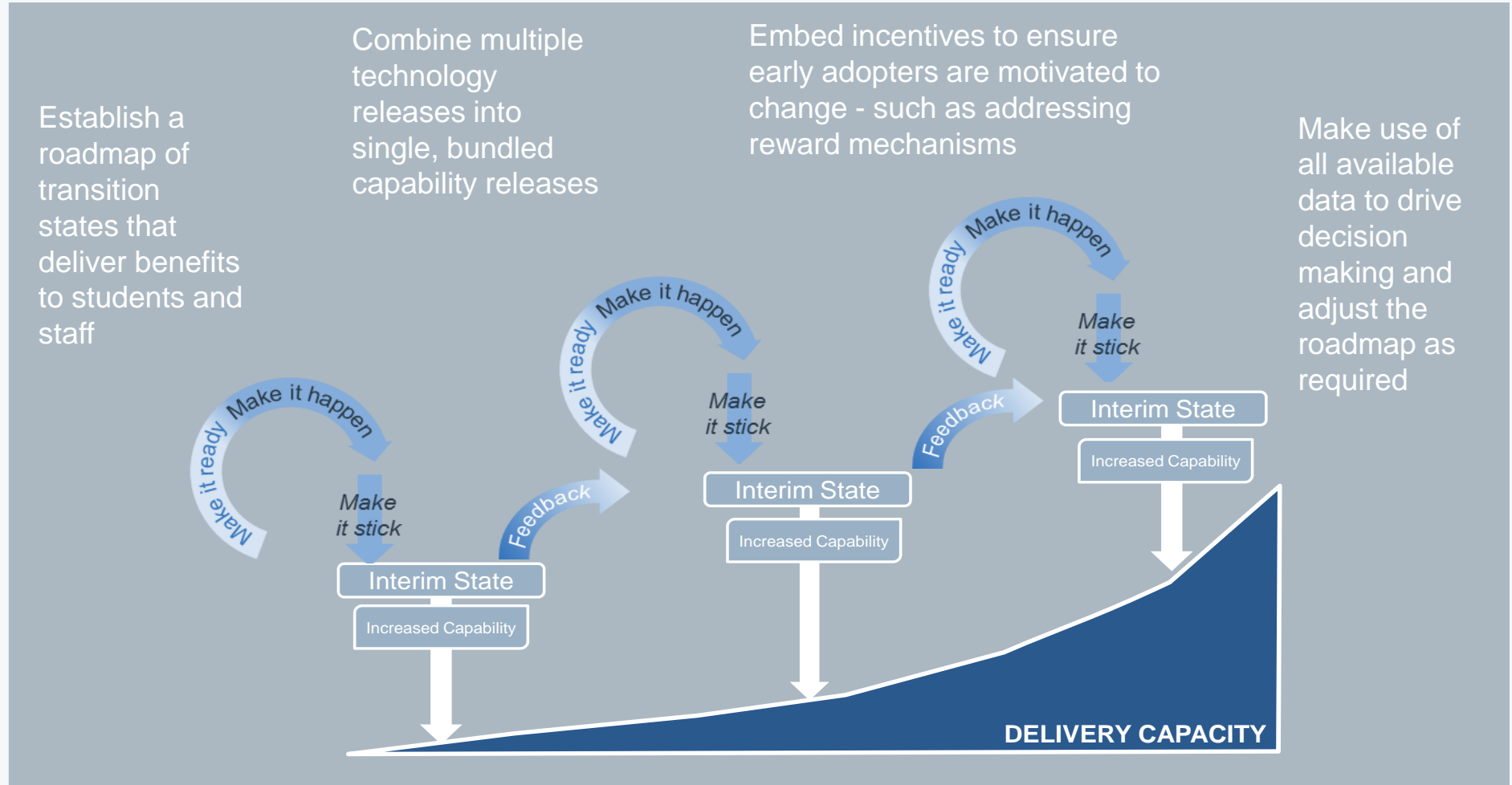
JACK WELSH

CHANGE IS A JOURNEY



- You can't get there in one leap
- Break up the journey into “Transition States” to define interim positions – with benefits (academic, service, financial) attached to each
- Sort out the enablers and pain points – sequencing
- Make a start – pace and momentum are all!


TRANSITION STATES: DEFINING THE STEPS ON THE PATH TO A NEW REALITY



BE COURAGEOUS



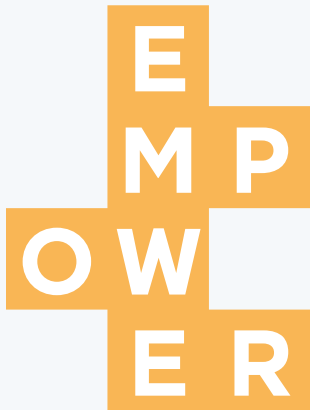
- Consider the implications of change carefully, but make decisions quickly
- Have a genuine dialogue – listen as well as talk
- Don't claim to have all the answers – clarity will develop over time. The Transition States should provide interim points of clarity

A person in a black wetsuit is captured mid-backflip, entering the ocean. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The water is dark, and the person's splash is visible.

“The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails.”

WILLIAM ARTHUR WARD

RELEASE PEOPLE'S DESIRE TO BE MORE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE



- Establish change leaders across the centre, faculties and departments
- Enable leaders to lead – give them the capability and the tools
- Be authentic – this is a University not a business so treat it as such!



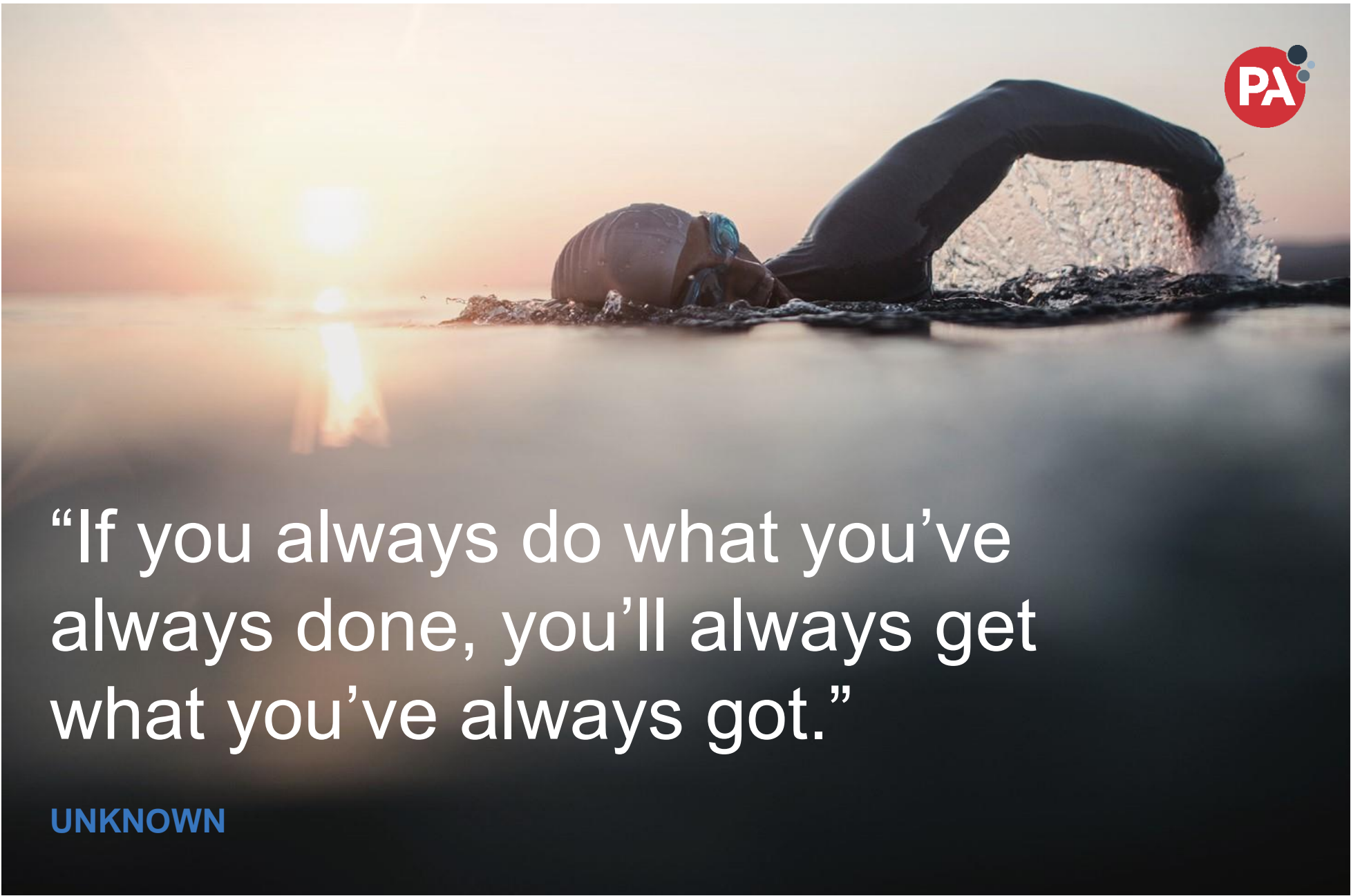
“People don’t resist change.
They resist being changed!”

PETER SENGE

ONLY IF CHANGE STICKS IS IT WORTHWHILE



- Be true to the vision, but be willing to learn lessons as you go
- Don't declare victory too soon – until you've made it stick, you haven't finished
- Stay ahead of the game – become a nimble and continuously improving institution

The background of the slide is a photograph of a swimmer in a dark wetsuit performing a freestyle stroke in the ocean. The swimmer is in the middle of a stroke, with one arm extended forward and the other pulling back, creating a large splash of white water. The sun is low on the horizon to the left, casting a warm, golden glow across the sky and reflecting on the water's surface. The overall mood is serene yet dynamic.

“If you always do what you’ve
always done, you’ll always get
what you’ve always got.”

UNKNOWN



Paul Woodgates
Partner
Head of Services to the Education Sector

PA Consulting Group
paul.woodgates@paconsulting.com
+44 207 881 3597

paconsulting.com/education

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Corporate Headquarters
10 Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DN

+44 20 7730 9000

paconsulting.com

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