



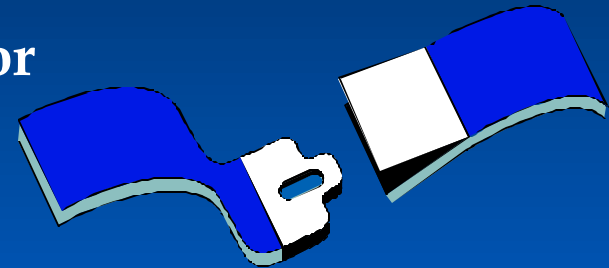
Seat Belt Buckles or Elections?

Achieving Successful Technology Deployment

Lewis Gray, Ph.D.

My Two Metaphors

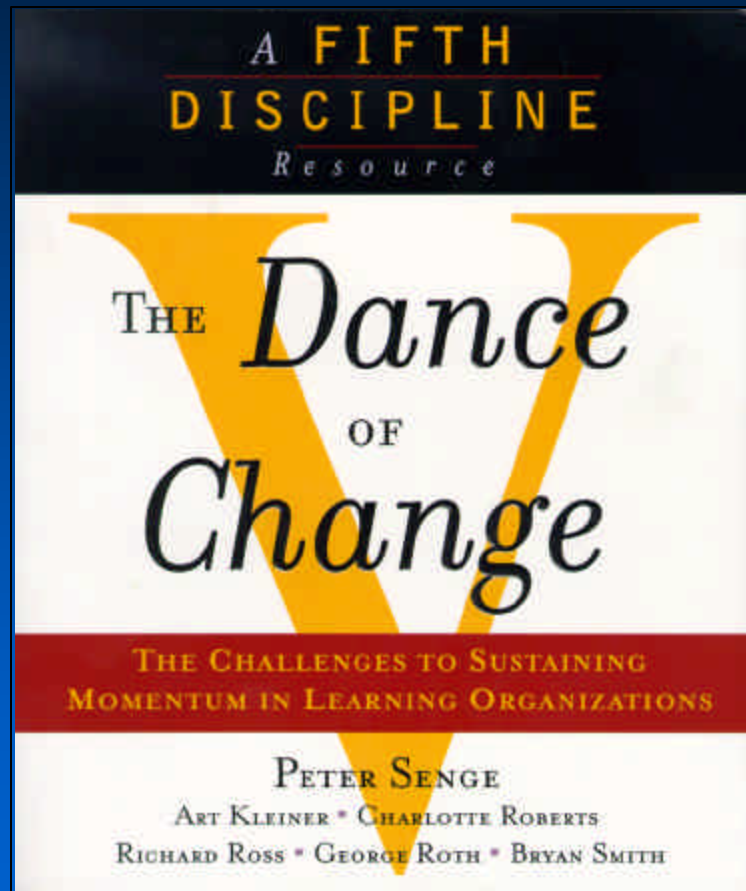
- ◆ What does technology deployment have to do with seat belt buckles in automobiles or with political elections?
- ◆ A seat belt buckle is a metaphor for one important case of technology change, where technologists are in control.
- ◆ An election is a metaphor for the other case, where technologists aren't in control of the change - this is the case where the stakeholders decide whether the change is a success.



Objectives

- ◆ To give some examples of seat belt buckle change,
- ◆ To give other examples of election change,
- ◆ To suggest constructive techniques for achieving success in each situation, and
- ◆ To point out evidence of the danger of mistaking one kind of change for the other.

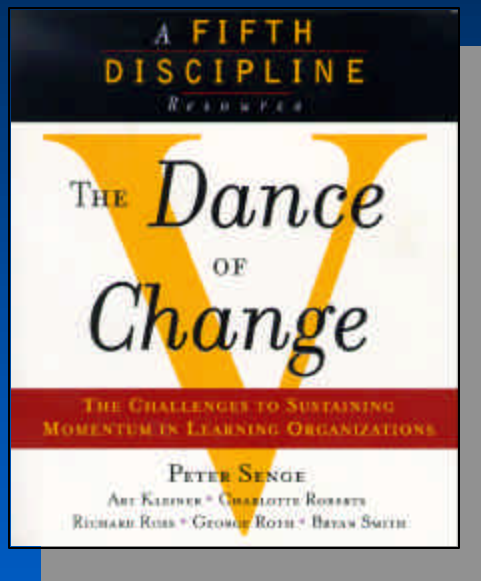
Attempts at Change Fail



- ◆ Business process reengineering fails as often as 70% of the time.
- ◆ Paul Strelbel in *Harvard Business Review* '96: 20%-50% success rate
- ◆ John Kotter in *Harvard Business Review* '95: more than half of corporate transformations do not survive initial phases.

Peter Senge et al., *The Dance of Change: The Challenges to Sustaining Momentum in Learning Organizations*, A Fifth Discipline Resource (Currency/Doubleday: NY, 1999)

Why Does Change Fail?



- ◆ “The fundamental flaw in most innovators’ strategies is that they focus on their innovation, on what they are trying to do -- rather than on understanding how the larger culture, structures, and norms will react to their efforts.”
- ◆ **Technologists pretend that they are in control -- they respond inadequately to resistance to their proposed changes.**

When An Organization Changes (Part 1)

- ◆ For an organizational change to succeed, the change must be adopted by those within the organization.
- ◆ When there is an opportunity for the stakeholders in the organization to defeat a proposed change, then succeeding at the change is like winning an election. The stakeholders have to “vote with their feet” to adopt it.

When Change is An Election, Who Are the Candidates?



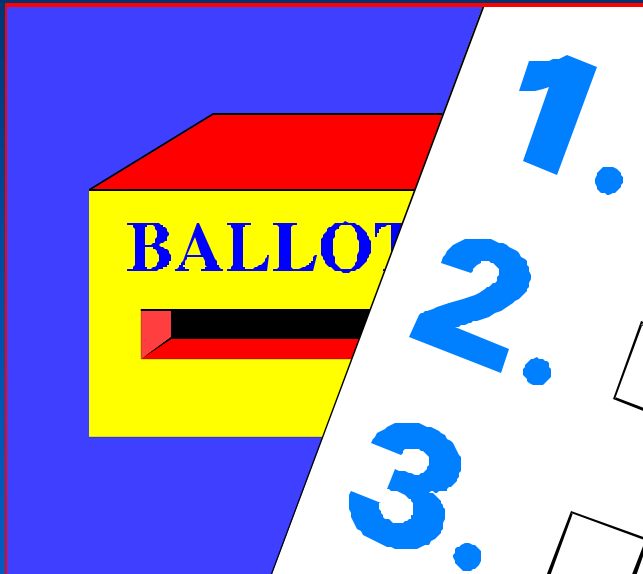
When Change is An Election, How Will the Candidates Campaign?



- ◆ E-mail
- ◆ Meetings
- ◆ Quizzing co-workers
- ◆ Rumors (“going negative”)
- ◆ Face-to-face arguments

- ◆ In general, in the same way politicians campaign in an election

E-mail (the Office Media)



- ◆ National political campaigns use media ads, junk mail, bumper stickers, and cardboard signs to advertise candidates.
- ◆ Office campaigners use e-mail.

Meetings

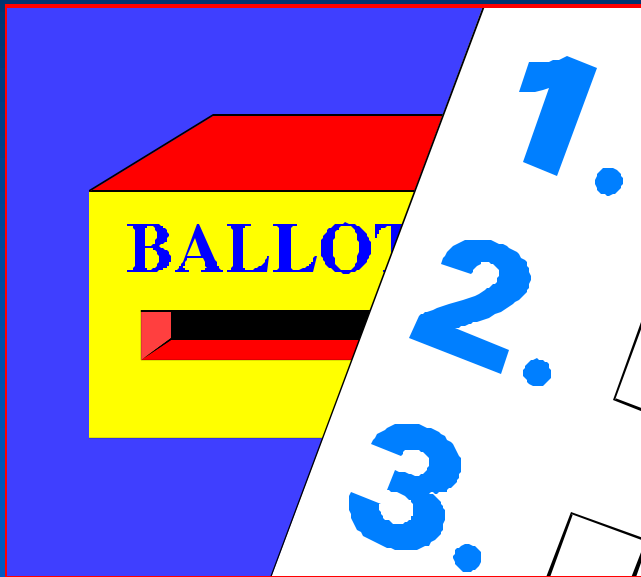


- ◆ National political campaigns use visits to neighborhoods, speeches to friendly groups, caucuses, and town hall meetings to bring candidates together with the voters.

“I’m like you, vote for me!”

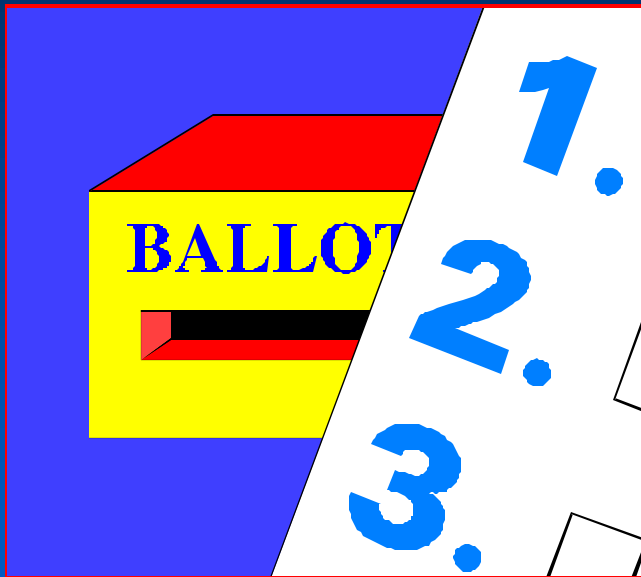
- ◆ Office campaigners use meetings.

Quizzing co-workers



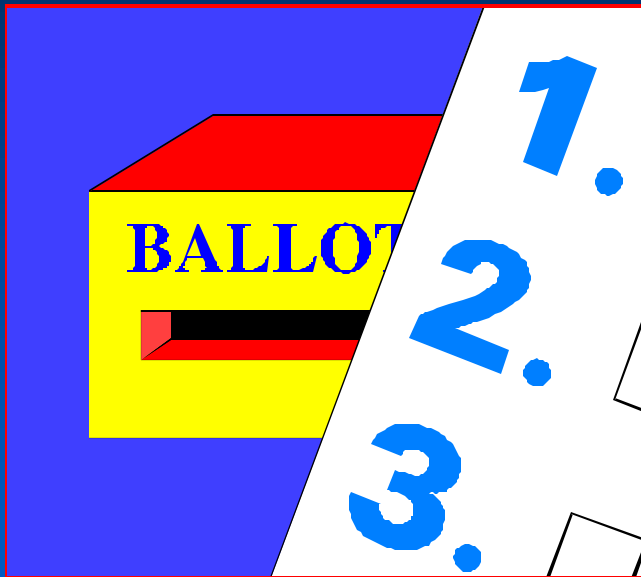
- ◆ National political campaigns poll, poll, poll to see what voters are thinking, what they want, and what they fear.
- ◆ Office campaigners quiz their co-workers.

Rumors (Office Attack Ads)



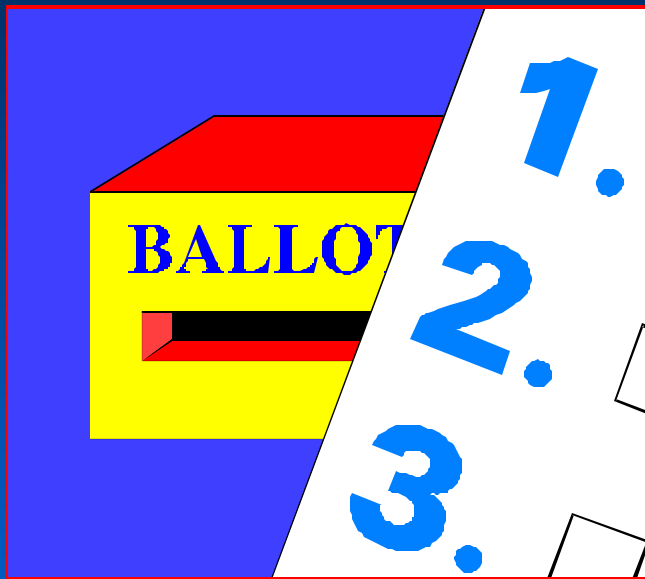
- ◆ National political campaigns beat up opposing candidates with any charge they think will stick, regardless of whether it's actually true.
- ◆ Office campaigners start false rumors.

Arguments



- ◆ National political campaigns stage debates to persuade voters that their candidate is better than the opponents.
- ◆ Office campaigners just argue with each other.

The Case Where Successful Change is Like Winning an Election...



- ◆ Most people try to avoid it.
- ◆ Politics is not an admired profession, so...
- ◆ Most people do not want other people to think of them as a politician.

Can An Organization Avoid “Elections” and Still Change?

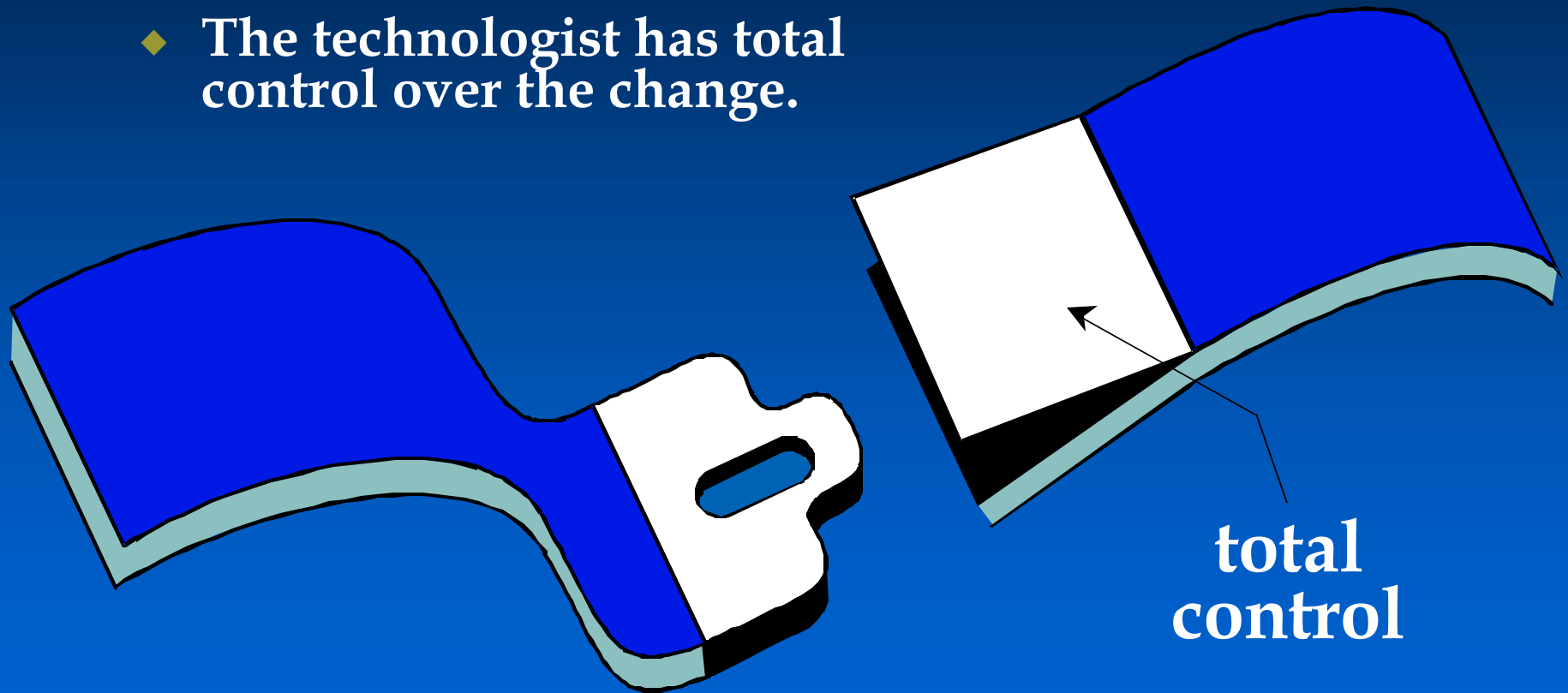
- ◆ Sometimes not! Sometimes, messy election-like maneuvers are inevitable. Even so, there are reasonable ways to campaign and unreasonable ways.
- ◆ However, (1) a change that depends on an “election” will be risky (voters are unpredictable), and (2) some changes do not require elections.

When An Organization Changes (Part 2)

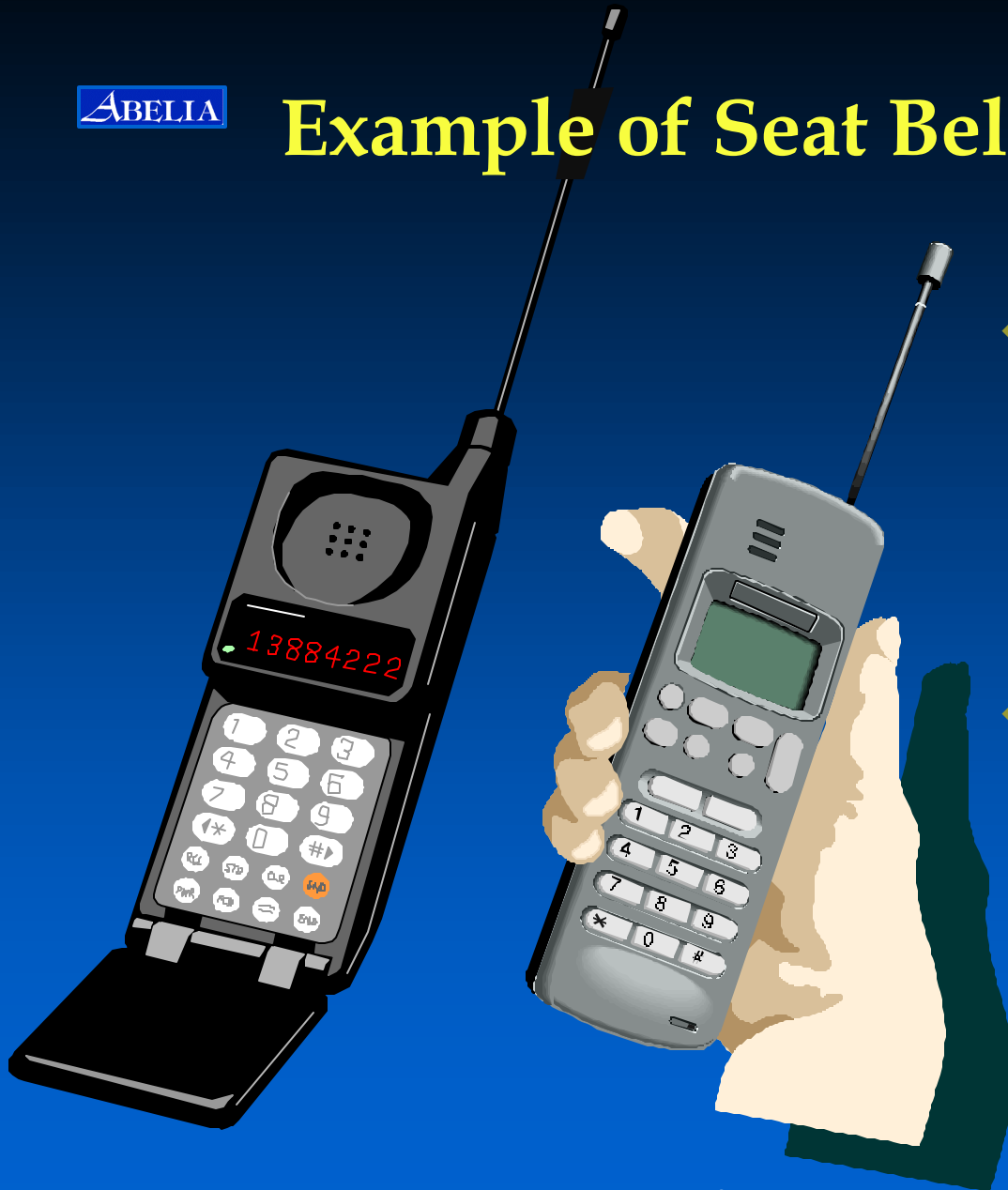
- ◆ When there is **no opportunity** for the people in an organization to defeat a proposed change, then succeeding at the change is **not like winning an election**, because **the stakeholders have no "vote."**
- ◆ This is when deploying a technology change is like using a seat belt buckle in your car.

When Change is a Seat Belt Buckle, Who is the Driver?

- ◆ The technologist is the driver.
- ◆ The technologist has total control over the change.



Example of Seat Belt Buckle Change

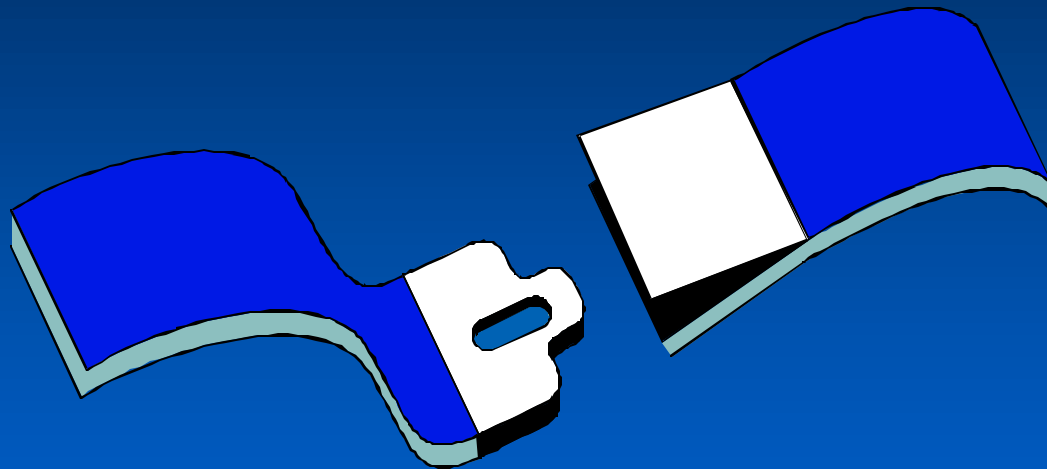


- ◆ A change from an analog cell phone system to a digital system is a major technology change for the phone company.
- ◆ However, for the basic phone user it might be as easy as an exchange of one handset for another one.

Technologists Are in Control of Upgrading from Analog to Digital Cell Phone Service

- ◆ The phone company technologists define the requirements. They estimate the effort.

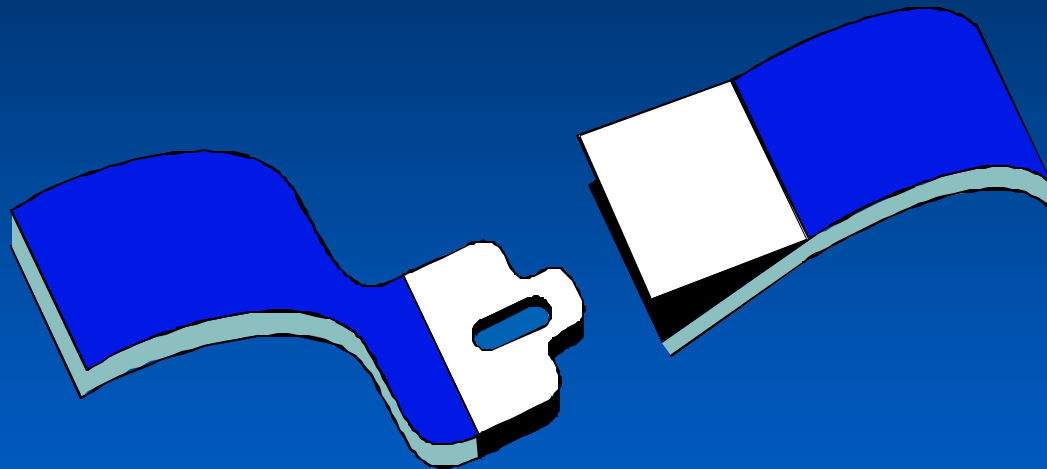
They plan the project. They interact only with their technology peers. The change is successful when they say it is.



- ◆ The new technology functions just as well whether there are lots of customers for it or none.

Other Examples of Seat Belt Buckle Change

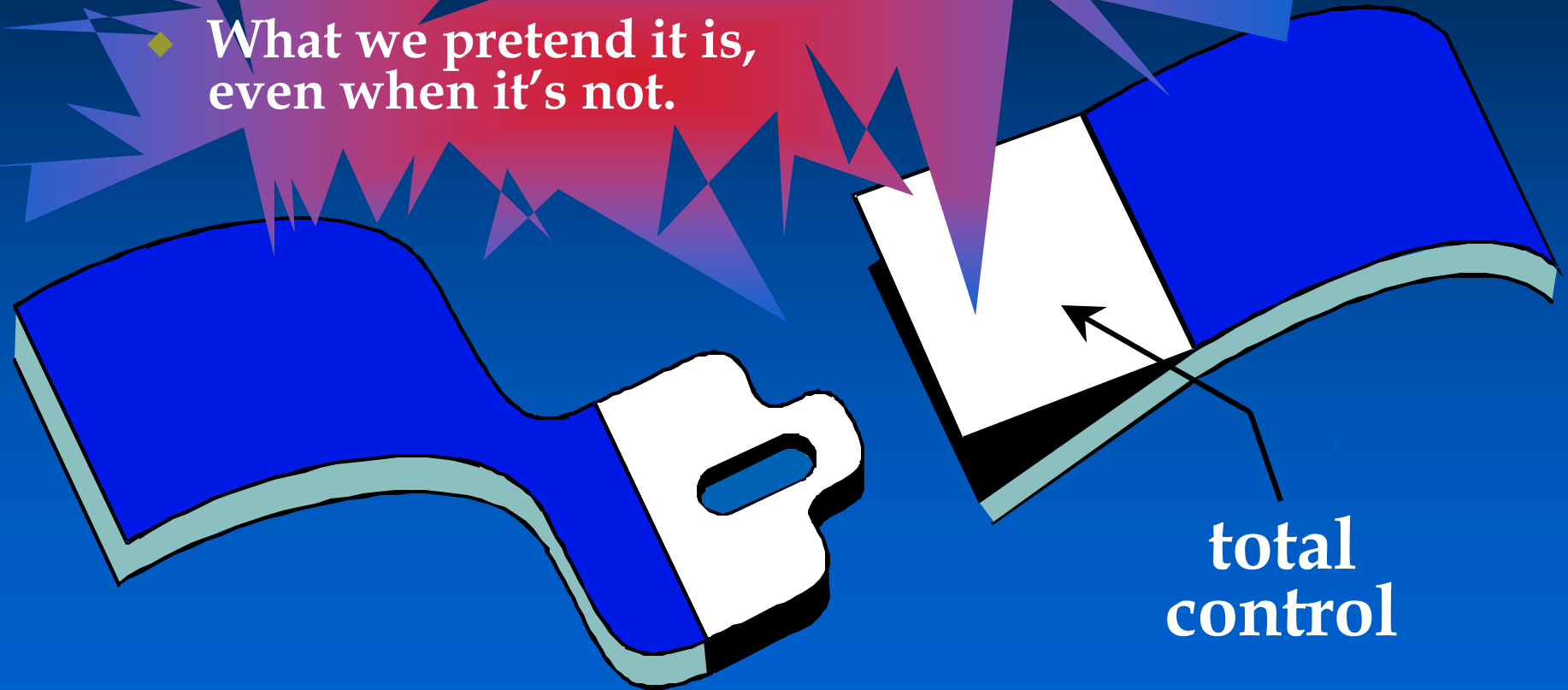
- ◆ A network administrator installs a patch to an application on a network server.



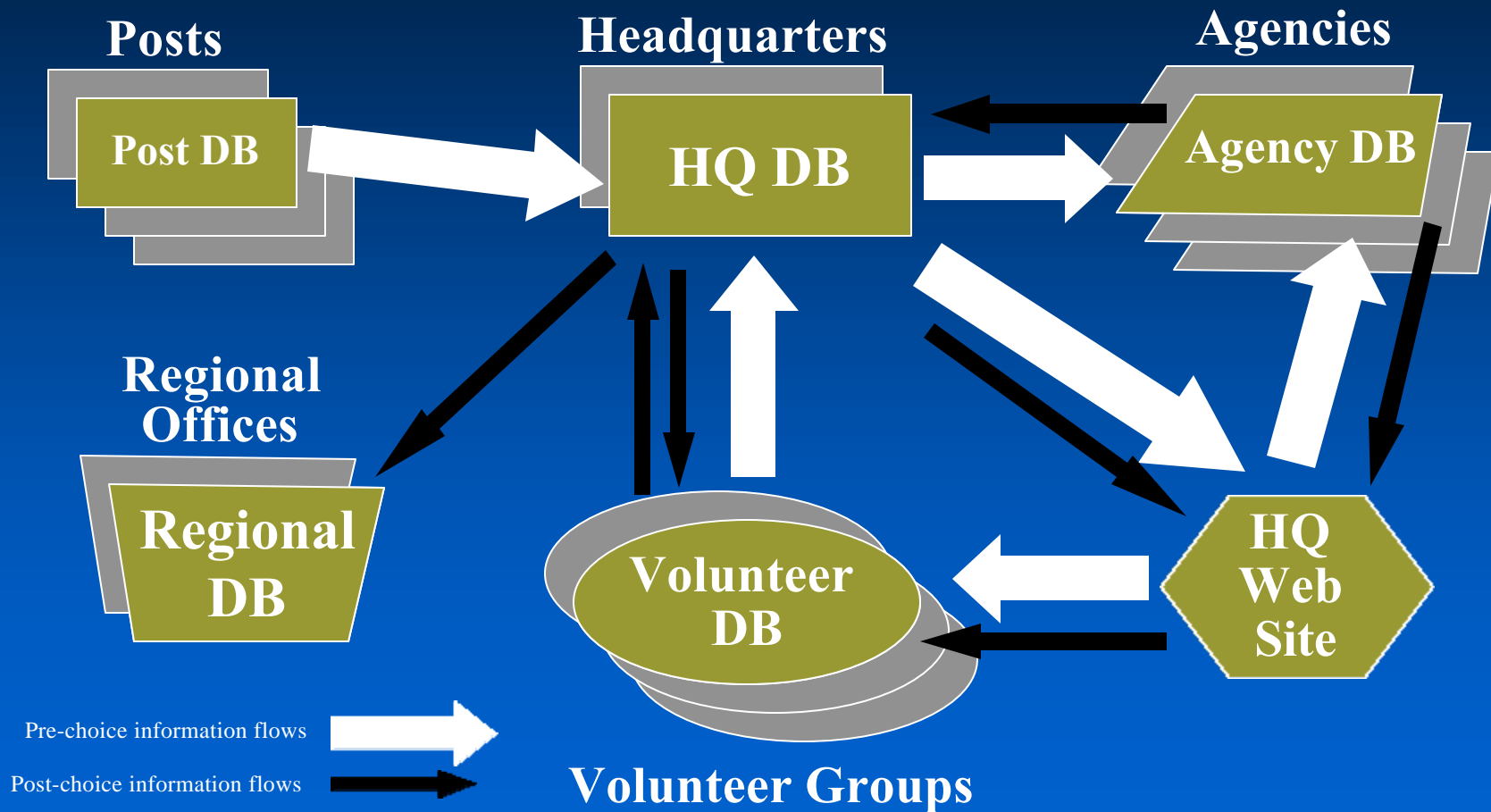
- ◆ A phone company technician upgrades a software switch.
- ◆ A radio station replaces its transmitter.
- ◆ The new technology functions just as well whether any customers know about it or not, or approve it or not.

Seat Belt Buckle Change

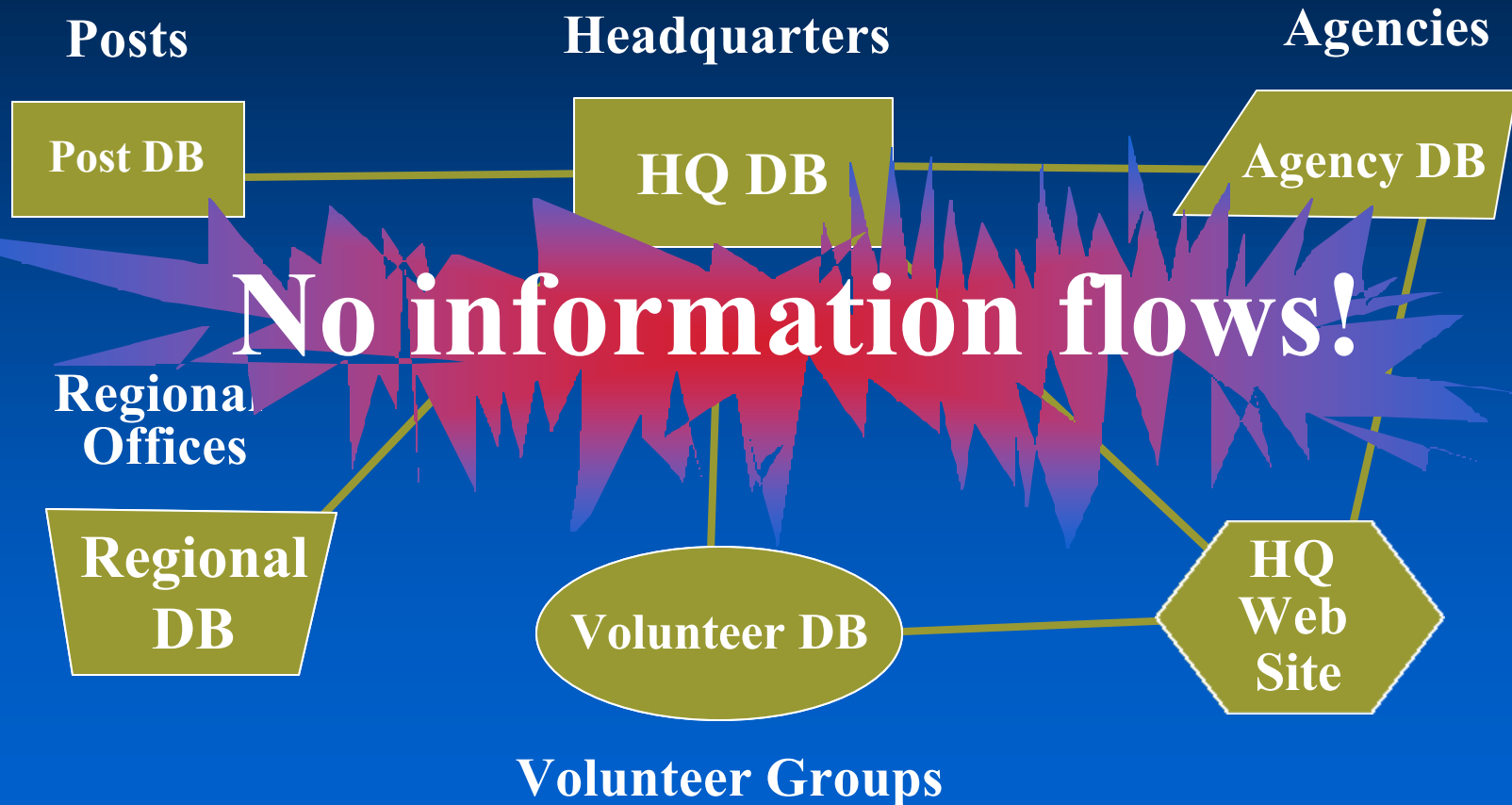
- ◆ How we want technology change to be.
- ◆ What we pretend it is, even when it's not.



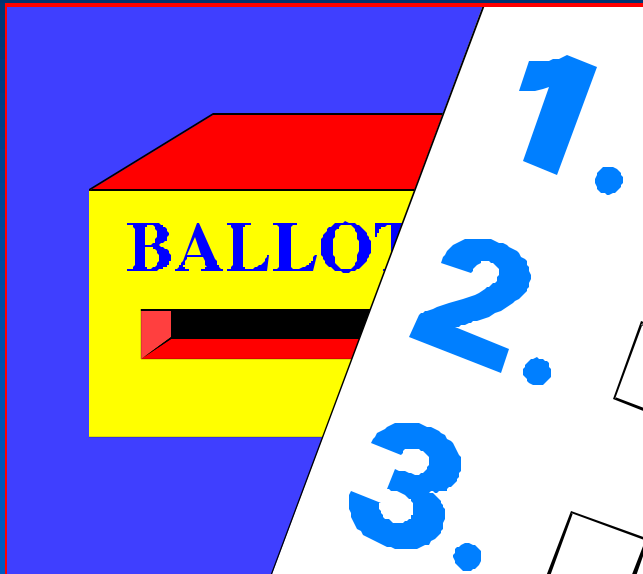
An Election Change: A New Information Management System (with New Manual Operations)



The Same Information Management System Without People: Not a Seat Belt Buckle Change!

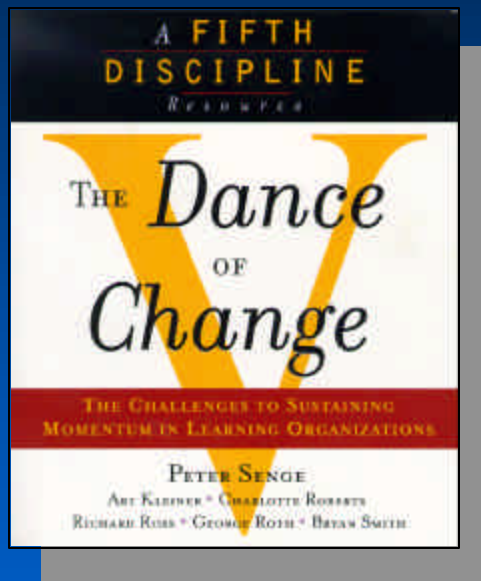


Other Examples of Election Change



- ◆ Most new information technology (IT) systems.
- ◆ Enterprise engineering.
- ◆ Business process reengineering.
- ◆ Software process improvement.

Why Change Fails



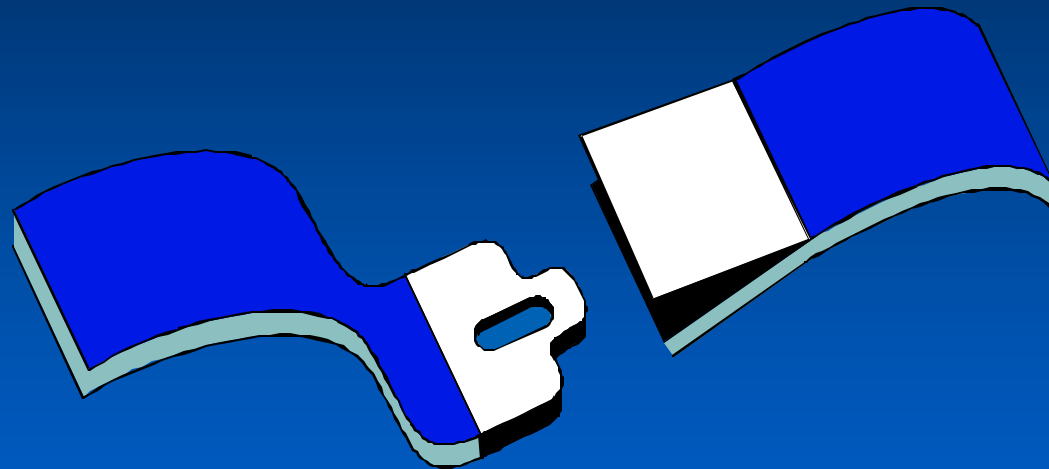
- ◆ “The fundamental flaw in most innovators’ strategies is that they focus on their innovation, on what they are trying to do -- rather than on understanding how the larger culture, structures, and norms will react to their efforts.”
- ◆ **Change fails because technologists pretend that election change is seat belt buckle change even when it isn’t -- and they lose the election.**

How to Succeed at Change

- ◆ **First, identify the change -- is it seat belt buckle change or election change?**
- ◆ **Second, satisfy the requirements for success at that kind of change.**

Seat Belt Buckle Change: Requirements for Success

- ◆ Expert understanding of the technology.



- ◆ Ability to plan the successful solution of all technical problems.
- ◆ Ability to recruit and manage the resources for the change.

- ◆ Knowledge and skills to perform the technical changes.

Election Change: Requirement for Success



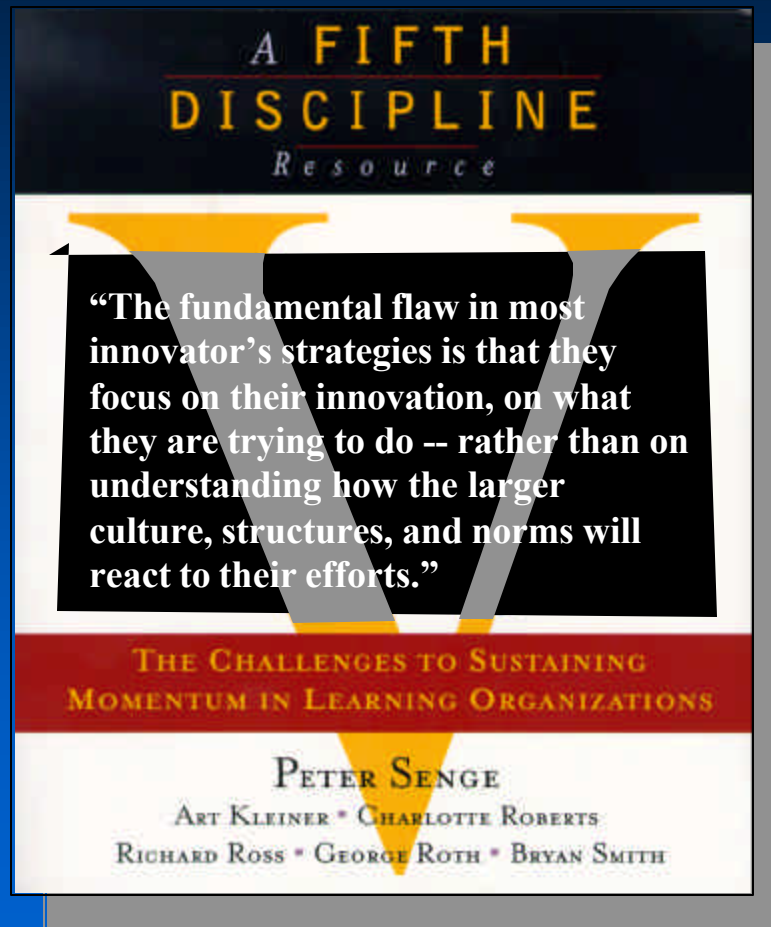
- ◆ Get the stakeholder votes -- they must adopt the change.

Election Change: How to Get the Stakeholder Votes



- ◆ Satisfy all the requirements for seat belt buckle change.
- ◆ Add
 - Learning what stakeholders expect and fear (polling)
 - Communication -- telling stakeholders what they can expect (advertising, meetings)
 - Deal effectively with rumors
 - Present convincing arguments.
- ◆ What would you like a political candidate this year to do to get your vote?

Bottom Line



- ◆ When you’re in seat belt buckle change, you can act like you’re in charge of the results, you can expect everyone else to fall in line with the technical program, you can insist that everyone do what the technical experts say -- and you can succeed.
- ◆ When you’re in an election and you try this, you will lose.

Questions & Comments

