

Simon Edgett

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- Elk Valley Resources (EVR) is the world's second largest exporter of seaborne steelmaking coal, headquartered in Vancouver and operating in the Elk Valley of British Columbia, Canada. EVR's low-carbon intensity, high-quality, hard coking coal, improves blast furnace efficiency, reduces emissions and is sought after by the world's largest steelmakers.
- Digital Systems covers the Information Technology (IT), Operational Technology (OT) and Business systems to safely and efficiently operate our 4 mines and support our 5000+ employees.

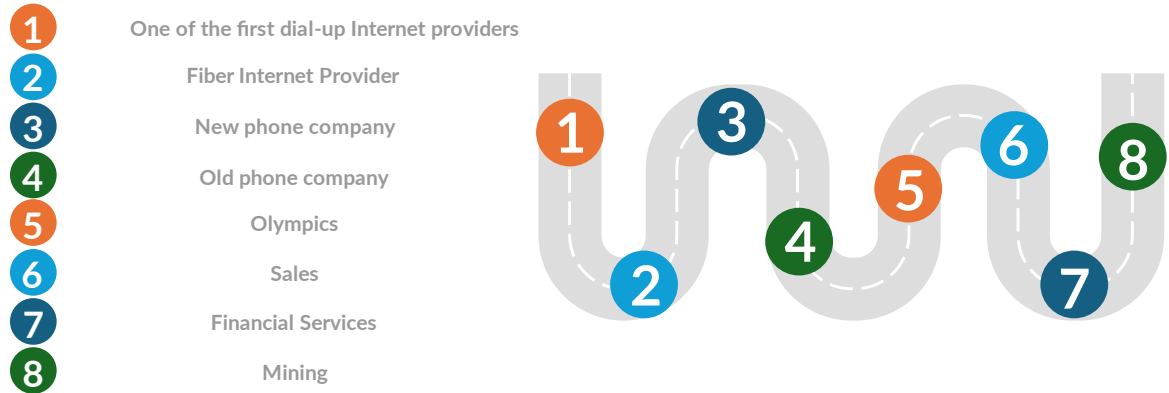
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Good afternoon, and thank you for having me.

Has anyone had to deal with change?

My name is Simon Edgett, I am the Head of Digital Systems at Elk Valley Resources. While I'm not a geomatics expert, I expect many of you are navigating change—in curriculum, technology, and student expectations. Today I will share some of my experiences and I hope they resonate with you.

Journey



- For my career journey I've worked in startups, national and global companies, worked on delivering the Olympics, Sales, financial services, and most recently mining. I've seen two IPOs, three acquisitions, and led teams through major transformations. And every pivot has taught me something new about how people respond to change.
- Over the last 5 years I have been focusing on business transformation and building high performing teams. Through my change journey I have found a few tools that help in both managing change, but also in my role as a leader, in helping others navigate through change.
- Today, I'll share a few models, VUCA, VUCA Prime, ADKAR and discuss some communication best practices to help you influence the change around you.

Why Change Feels Hard: The VUCA World

Volatility

Uncertain

Complex

Ambiguous



Why does change feel hard? Change is hard because it's often Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous—VUCA.

Let's unpack these:

- Volatility: for example, sudden shifts in GIS software standards or government data policies.
- Uncertainty: It's unclear whether a new platform will integrate well with legacy systems and processes
- Complexity: Coordinating across unique stakeholder interests - different departments, vendors, compliance requirements – or perhaps employers and students
- Ambiguity: For example an unclear definition of success or unclear government policy on open geospatial data.

In my current role at EVR, we've been through a lot recently: In the past 10 months we have been acquired by a global company, separated 5,000 people into a new entity, replaced our HR and payroll systems, started a project for a new finance system, wiped 3,000 computers, —and we're in the process of wiping them all a second time. All while commodity prices dropped 50%.

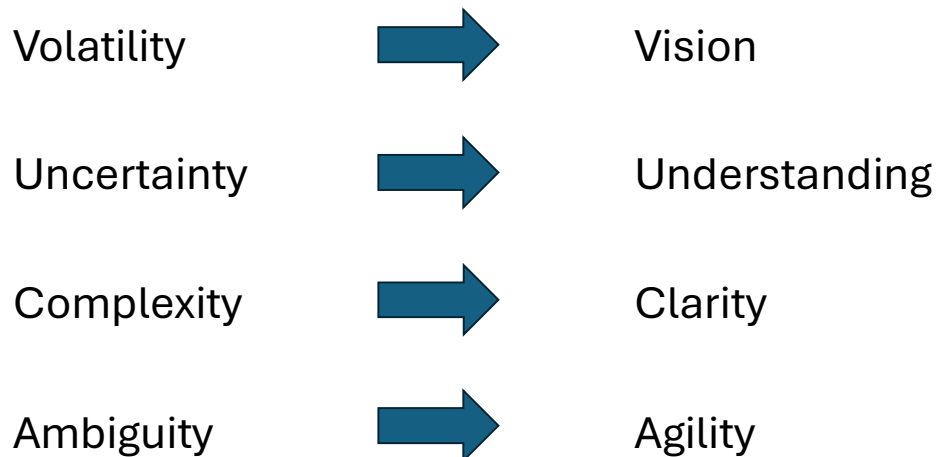
This is VUCA in action.

70%
of change initiatives
fail due to
unaddressed challenges

Burnes, B. (2011).
"Success and Failure In Organizational Change: An Exploration of the Role of Values."
Journal of Change Management, 11(2), 133-162. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14697017.2010.524655>

- Why does this matter?
- Well, 70% of change initiatives fail due to unaddressed challenges, like those contemplated in VUCA
- Now that we touched on the chaos of change, let's talk about how to bring order to it...

From Chaos to Control: VUCA Prime



- VUCA Prime flips the script:
- Vision counters Volatility; Understanding reduces Uncertainty; Clarity simplifies Complexity; Agility overcomes Ambiguity
- For Example, For Vision - Consider how communicating a clear goal anchors people in the volatility of change.
- Understanding - Workshops and demos help teams understand how a project or change impacts them. This builds confidence and removes uncertainty.
- Clarity: Simplify complexity with clear plans. For example, a roadmap with milestones or Ask ChatGPT to make your messages simpler. Breaking the problem down into smaller parts can reduce complexity.
- Agility: Adapt to ambiguity by iterating. Start with a pilot project and adjust based on feedback.
- In my day to day work, VUCA Prime is a constant tool to remind myself to ensure I am sharing a vision and consistently trying to bring clarity to the problem or change at hand.

Clarity in complex environments boosts strategic success by 60%

Center for Creative Leadership. (2019).
Navigating Complexity: Leading in a VUCA World.
<https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/navigating-complexity-vuca-world/>

- “That clarity in complex environments boosts strategic success by 60%”
- By a show of hands, how many of you have had lack of clarity make your job harder?
- Hopefully, you can see how VUCA Prime can help provide that clarity.
- “Now that we’ve looked at how to bring clarity to chaos, let’s explore how to help people actually move through change.”

Turning Resistance into Progress: The ADKAR Model

ADKAR

- **A**wareness
- **D**esire
- **K**nowledge
- **A**bility
- **R**einforcement



- Moving through change is where the ADKAR model comes in.
- ADKAR is a simple but powerful framework that explains the five key building blocks every person needs to go through during a change. It stands for:
- Awareness – Why are we doing this? People need to know why the change is happening. For example, Why we’re moving to cloud-based GIS tools.
- Desire – What’s in it for me? . i.e How this helps students be job-ready.”
- Knowledge – How do I do it? They need to understand how to change.
- Ability – Can I do it?
- Reinforcement – Will I keep doing it? You can celebrate early adopters and share success stories
- If even one is missing, resistance grows. For example, if someone isn’t trained, they’ll struggle—even if they want to change.
- In my experience, ADKAR helps us pinpoint exactly where people are stuck—and what kind of support they need and it really complements VUCA Prime especially in clarity and understanding.
- So when you’re leading change—whether it’s a new tool, a new process, or a new mindset—think about ADKAR. It’s not just about managing change. It’s about helping people succeed through it.”

Communicating Change: Building Trust and Momentum



Transparent



Frequent



Two-Way



Tailored

- Finally, Communication builds trust and cuts resistance. It's your key tool in leveraging VUCA Prime.
- Best practices on communicating for change
 - Transparent: Share the 'why' – for example We're adopting new GPS tools to align with industry.
 - Frequent: Send regular updates to avoid rumors.
 - Two-way: Listen via meetings or surveys. Get feedback from students and employers.
 - Tailored: Different people need different things from your communications. For example, explaining curriculum changes differently to industry partners vs. students."

“Companies with highly effective internal communication strategies are 3.5 times more likely to significantly outperform their peers.”

— Towers Watson, *Change and Communication ROI Study* (2013–2014)



Monthly Town Halls I meet with 300+ team members to share updates and reinforce priorities. We use anonymous Q&A with upvoting to ensure open dialogue.



“Fist of Five” Weekly Check-ins: My direct reports rate their week (1–5). High scores share wins; low scores prompt support and problem-solving.



Project SteerCos: Project leads present progress, challenges, and roadblocks to leadership for real-time support.



Cross-Team Project Updates: Broader teams hear directly from other workstreams—this builds understanding and alignment.



Dedicate Change Stream Resources dedicated to facilitating change for large projects.

- To give you some examples on my communications:
- I conduct monthly town halls with my entire team about 300 people to give an update and reinforce priorities. I take anonymous questions that the audience can upvote to give a two-way forum.
- I run a meeting every week with my direct reports called “fist of five”. You start by holding up how many fingers for “how are you”. If someone is a 4 or a 5 we might ask them to share a success story.
- If they are under a 3 we would be asking them how we can remove roadblocks.
- We run project steerco's where the project leads present to leadership what's going well, what needs attention, and if there are any roadblocks we can assist with.
- We also run project updates where the larger project team can hear first hand how other workstreams are progressing, why decisions are being made, etc.
- Finally, for our most critical projects, we dedicated resources and manage a workstream just for managing change.
- All of this is structured to have the best possible outcome around change.

Your Change Toolkit: Models to Lead With

VUCA to understand challenges



VUCA Prime to act

ADKAR to structure

Communication to connect

What's one change you're navigating right now—and which model might help?

- So what's one change you're navigating right now?
- Use VUCA to understand the challenge
- Use VUCA Prime to respond
- Use ADKAR to support people
- Communication to connect
- Remember Change is tough—but you can shape it and take control of the chaos.
- Thank you.