

## **Harnessing the natural Energy of Organizational Discontent.**

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A principle of Change Management states that the first step in creating organizational change is to create discontent with the current situation. Fortunately, this is a self-generating process in all organizations. As we sit on our barstools sipping JB and coke, I complain about the situation at work. You listen contentedly, nodding. Then you add your own barrage of criticism.

“If only they would listen to us...”

This type of dialogue is commonplace in the break room, in the office, and after work in the local pub. I complain to you and you complain to me in a never-ending cycle of ideas and opinions, solving all the problems of the Corporate World. We unwittingly create a “reinforcing process,” one where your actions feed off my actions and vice versa. As complaints increase, morale decreases, leading to further complaining.

“If only things would change.”

The break room and after hours bar meetings actually generate enormous amounts of energy aimed at change. Why, then, do so few organizations take it to the next step? Why are so few companies able to harness the energy generated by that process?

Good question, since the same process that causes morale to take a nosedive can be turned into a generator of ideas for improvement and energy for change by a few simple modifications to the systemic structure. This paper will discuss that process and discuss the results of two case studies.