

# A guide to change management

This is the first in a series of articles about why and how independent pharmacists can adapt to the rapidly changing landscape around them, whether that be consumers' behaviours and expectations, payers' requirements, or advances in technology, to ensure that we have a sustainable professional sector and viable businesses in the future. Deborah Evans and Michael Holden from Pharmacy Complete provide the context, a vision for change and a process to get there.

## Objectives

This series of CPD modules will explore change management and organisational development models that you can use to plan for a successful business future.

As a result of reading this module you will have a better understanding of:

- Why adaptation to a rapidly changing environment is important for your future
- What this series of modules will offer you as a business leader.

# Context for change (the why)

**M**any markets have changed radically in recent years, and there are numerous examples around us:

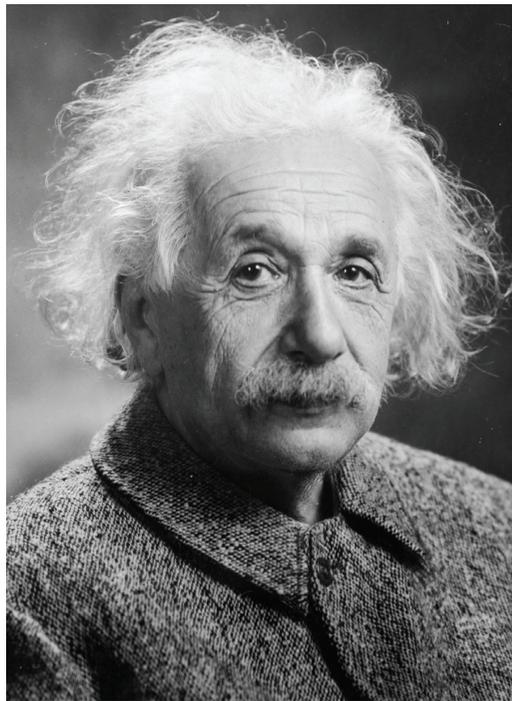
- Newspaper readership is steadily declining and some titles are closing or moving online
- The developing and printing market has largely moved to digital, with smartphones used to take thousands of images and videos that are stored in the cloud or on sharing platforms
- The local high street moved first out of town and then into cyberspace, with £1 in every £5 spent now online, although there has been a recent renaissance in local specialist outlets emerging.

Consumers' expectations and behaviours, particularly in the use of technology, social networks and online shopping, are changing fast, and businesses need to change with them. In health, we are seeing ever-rising demand for resources as the population grows and ages. People are living longer with one, two or more long-term conditions related to unhealthy lifestyles.



*“Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results”*

Albert Einstein



Much is changing that impacts on pharmacy – the NHS, funding, regulatory requirements such as new GPhC standards, information governance, political and policy agendas, increased competition, technology, the list goes on ... And in England, proposed funding cuts and other reforms further challenge the ability to respond to change. The only constant is change.

Yet it has never been more important to step back and examine what business you are in and why. There are many questions to ask. Successful businesses make plans, understand their strengths and weaknesses, and are flexible and responsive while sticking to a core proposition.

### A compelling offer

As the needs of payers and consumers change, so must pharmacy. Business leaders must step back and create a compelling and relevant offer for the consumers and funders of services.

Some important initial questions to ponder include:

- How dependent do you want your business to be on medicines supply as a profitable income stream?
- How do you make yourself more attractive to those in the health system who fund services?
- How do you differentiate yourself from other providers?
- Why would consumers come to

you, and why would they stay with you?

- Who are most important customers to your business?
- How do you increase the value to and from each consumer?
- What place does technology have in your business now and in the future?
- How are you networking locally to leverage opportunities and understand threats?
- What needs are unmet in your community?

### Choosing to change

We’ve started to touch on the why change, and choosing to change is the most important step. So step back, look at your business and critically appraise your reasons to change.

Choosing to change is an active decision you make as a leader in your business and has to precede organisational change. Turning a vision into reality requires discipline, passion and tenacity.

## A business fable

*Who Moved my Cheese,* by Spencer Johnson, is a recommended read.

It’s a business fable that illustrates how attitude to change influences outcomes. It is a story about mice and humans, Scurry, Sniff, Hem and Haw, who are faced with dwindling supplies of cheese and have different approaches to the situation they find themselves in. There are many parallels for where we are now in pharmacy – a true tipping point, where our future will depend on how we all respond to the need to change.

The ‘cheese’ (prescription supply) for community pharmacy is dwindling, and there are strong indicators that this will accelerate. NHS England has outlined the need for community pharmacy reforms, funding will become increasingly difficult (against a context of £30 billion savings required across the NHS by 2020), competition for other providers will increase, and consumers will continue to want more, better, faster.

With this rapidly changing environment, we can be like Hem in the story and feel victimised and angry. He blames others for his situation and does not look around for more cheese. However, Haw starts to wonder what he could do if he were not afraid, and what could be achieved if he did something new.

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