

Prime Movers for Change

by

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When things really start to change, these *prime movers* are often involved:

- incentivization programs emerge
- corporations start transforming conservation (green) from an expensive nuisance to a profitable strategic advantage
- scientists are invited to assume advisory/policy positions in high government spots
- star/brand power gets involved, e.g.,
 - Al Gore and “An Inconvenient Truth”
 - best-selling book(s)
 - high-impact visuals in the form of documentaries by credible producers such as National Geographic, 60 Minutes
- something bad happens to our **critical infrastructure**:
 - 2001 9/11 > Homeland Security & surveillance state
 - 2003 blackout > Smart Grid
 - 2005 Hurricane Katrina > flood preparedness
 - 2011 tsunami & Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant > earthquake preparedness

All of these scenarios motivate the public to put pressure on the politicians, administrators, CEOs, and policy makers to take action. The question is, what comes in between the science (labs) and real action (above)?

I think it’s messaging, i.e., how you get the word out so that the public and decision makers wake up and take notice and move an issue to the top of the priority/awareness list. Scientists are generally not so good at that and can’t understand why decision makers don’t beat a path to their published papers. There are professionals that are good at messaging and I think you have to engage them, which costs money.

Another important tool in the process is the idea of a Decision Support System (DSS) as an output of the research. Many critical infrastructures are being driven by DSS software that helps leaders make complex and big-dollar investments, in effect giving them a rational (non-political) roadmap for the next steps each budget year.

In the corporate world, Organizational Change Management (OCM) enterprise systems are being deployed to help CEOs and boards navigate enterprise-wide change while trying to avoid failure which has often been the case. These are big-data systems that have advanced algorithmic engines operating on all the transactional and social data within the corporation to try and optimize change management decisions which is far too complex for a board to mull over in their heads.