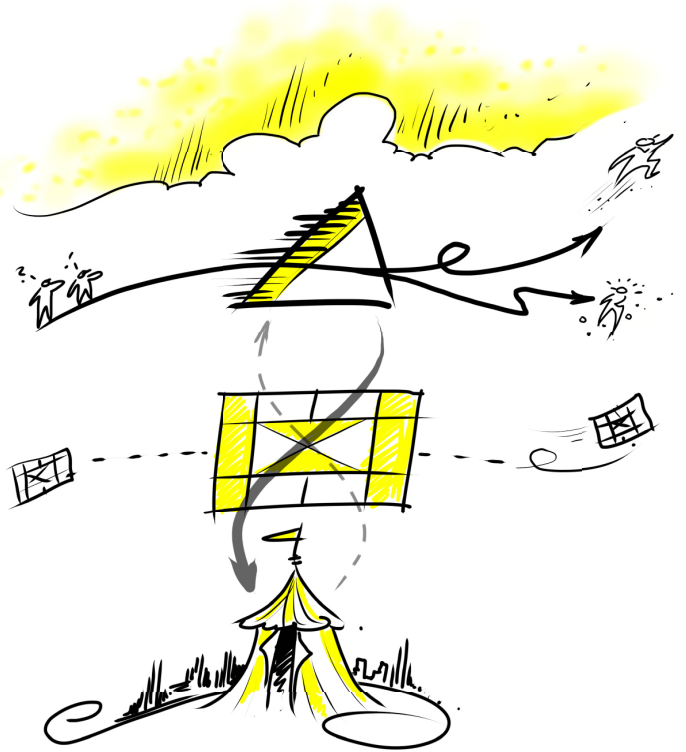# DESIGN
to Change

Drive change by mastering
event design conversations

Roel Frissen | Ruud Janssen | Dennis Luijer

"A good conversation can shift
the direction of change forever"

—— **Would you leave it to chance?**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

"There is a method to the madness"

There are two big mistakes that are often made in event design. The first mistake occurs when the purpose of the event is to impress others. As a result the event is focused on meticulous stage craft, overwhelming sensory stimulus, and a general feeling of massive wow. All of this is nice, but it could also be achieved by hiring a magician. Often with a much lower price tag as well.

The second mistake occurs when the sole purpose of the event is to entertain the audience. This creates a momentary rush of energy, happiness, and well being. It also fades away soon after the event.

What I have learned instead as a corporate executive, and later in my career as a professional speaker, is that any event should improve the condition of the person or entity which pays for the event. This could be a corporate event resulting in Behavioural change, or a client event resulting in additional sales.

After every chapter, Paul Rulkens will provide his Executive Perspective.
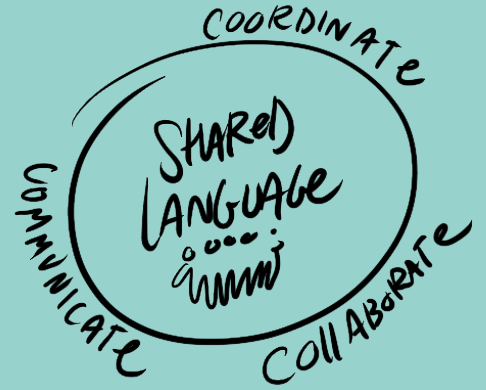
LOOK AND ACT BEYOND THE NOW

EVENT

Any gathering of two or more people or groups of people that changes behaviour.
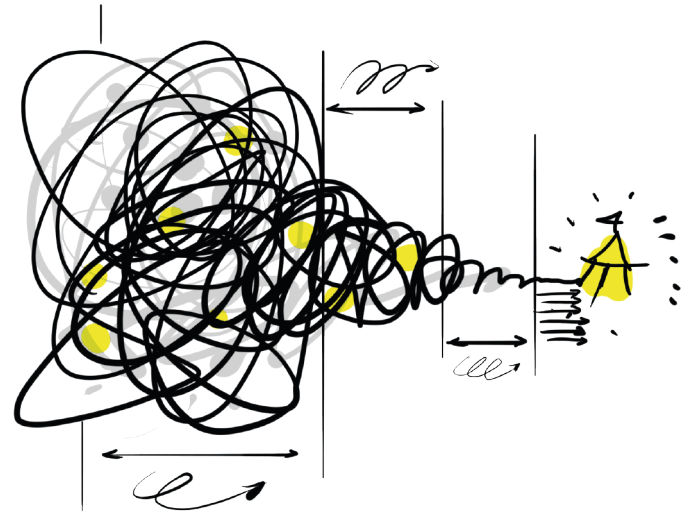
EVENT DESIGN

The process of articulating change, setting boundaries, and prototyping your events using design thinking and doing.

MAPPING THE STAKES.

PARK ALL IDEAS
HERE UNTIL PHASE II
(PROCESS FIRST!)

CHOOSING WHOM
TO DELIGHT.

EMPATHISE +
IN-OUT + FRAME.
(CHANGE)

EVENT DELTA
[ARTICULATING THE
DESIGN GOAL].

IDEA
QUARANTINE

STAKES

STAKEHOLDER
ALIGNMENT

CHOICE

EMPATHY EVENTCANVAS™.

PHASE I
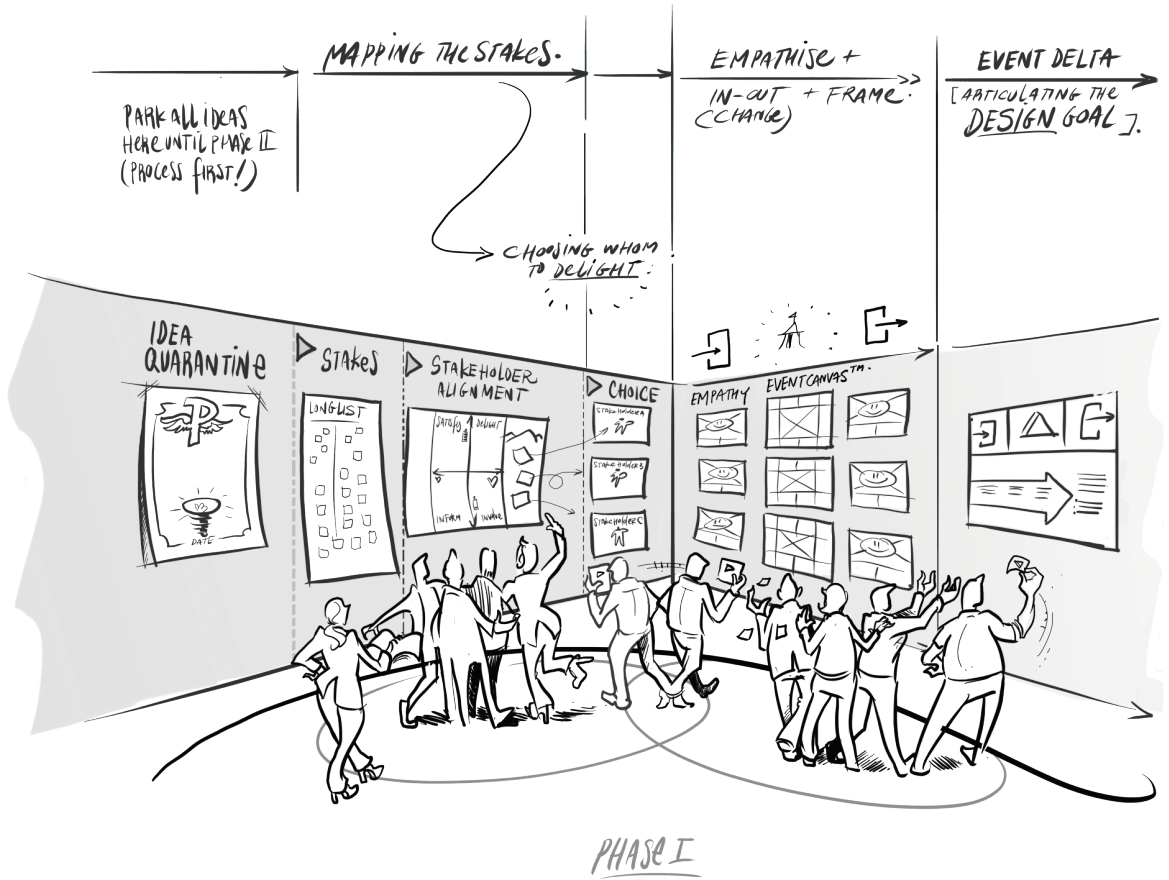
01. HOR

HORIZONS OF CHANGE
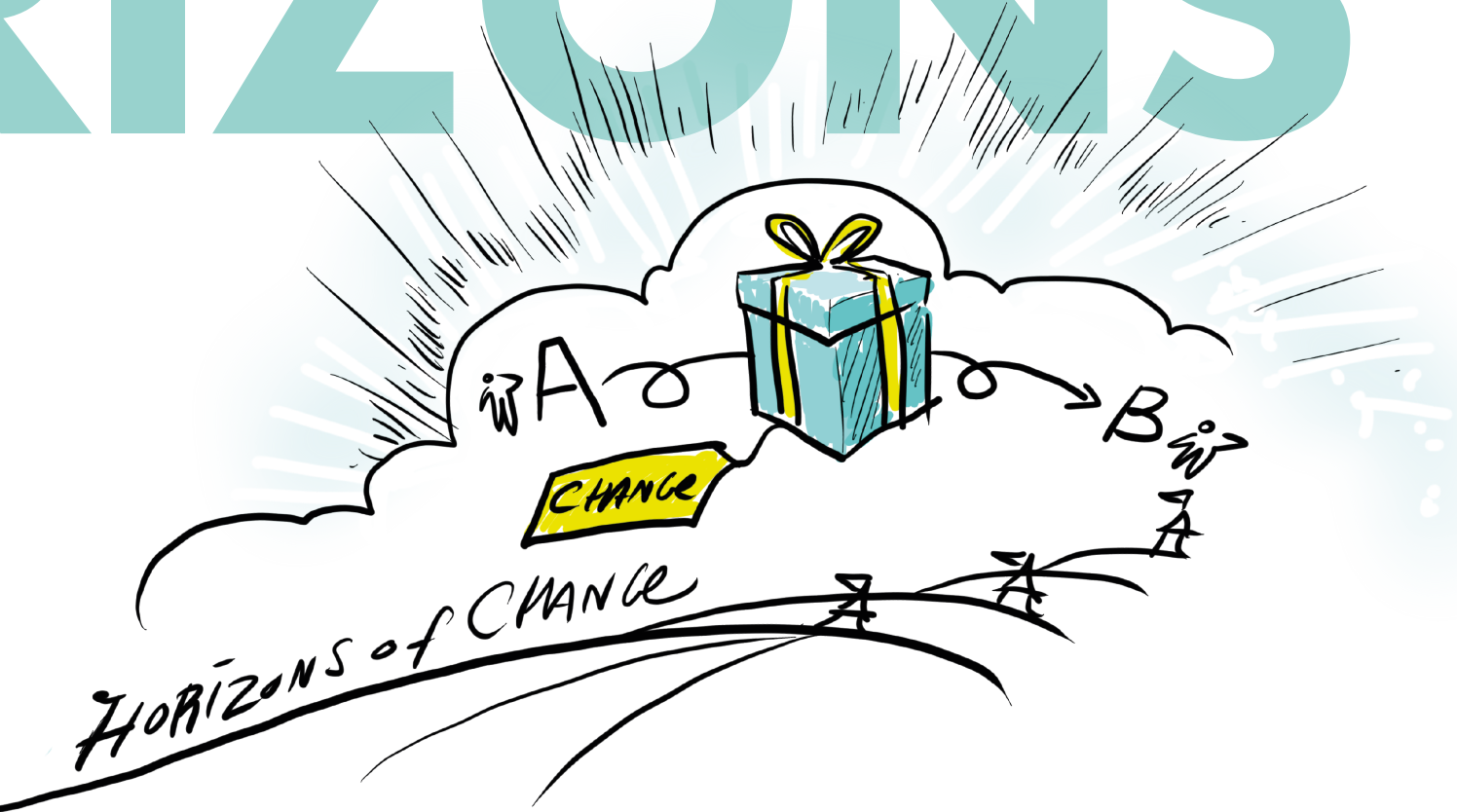
03.

PROCESS OR OUTCOME, OR BOTH?

OUTCOME

The results of using outcome thinking in tandem with process thinking is that your team will be able to draw on a process to consciou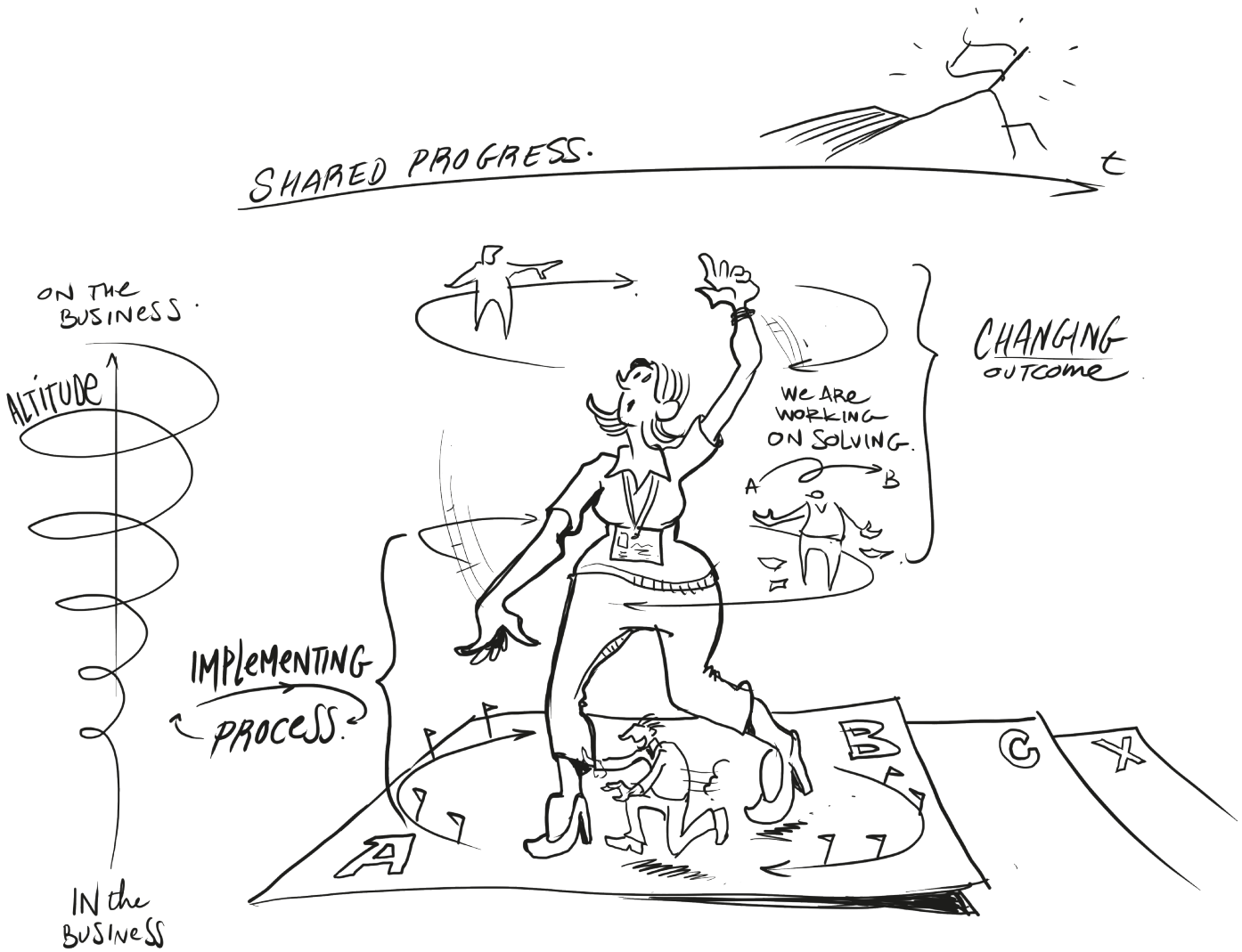sly design for outcomes. Teams will be on the same page, working on one common event narrative. They will be clear about the timing and usefulness of two different perspectives. The process will be ordered, sequential, and demonstrate causality in the delivered designs.

Understanding the difference between and the symbiosis of process and outcome will make teams more successful in understanding each other: effective in addressing change, fine tuned to the listener, able to adapt the message to process and outcome thinkers.

Additionally, the team will be able to ask and answer several critical questions. How big is the change we are willing to attempt? If we are to create ripples in the pond, are we throwing a pebble or are we throwing in a large rock? Are we ready as an organization for the results of that change? Are we prepared to create that change? Who acts when? How many incremental steps does it take?

By initiating the design of an event with such a conversation about the current state, the desired future state, and the arc of change, the collaborators reach an alignment with each other about the overarching aim and can develop an understanding of the language for outcomes and obtain appreciation for the language of process.

Being specific about the resources needed and the sequence of the process is essential. For example, you could spend eight total hours over two days; six hours to spend on analyzing the stakeholders, their wants and needs, and their deltas; one and a half hours for generating prototypes; and a half hour to debrief the executive. This forces the designers to take responsibility and assures the executive that there is in fact a methodology and that someone is facilitating it.

Being clear on this requires people to listen for the sake of understanding rather than listening to respond. In this way, rapport is formed and relationships will be built on trust. Design can be the bedrock of that very trust.

That trust carries through the process. Executives maintain a proud sense of sponsorship and ownership during the process. And by having this permission followed through, designers can maintain a continuity of meaning and purpose.

With such trust and partnership, events will turn into time well invested, be more interesting and chosen as a preferred mechanism to deliver change over time.

Process thinking or outcome thinking standing alone are incomplete, but when they join forces they will move the organisation forward to create shared progress in the desired direction of change.

ANTHONY VADE, CED+

DIRECTOR
EVENT DESIGN COLLECTIVE NORTH AMERICA

You need to be brave to lead change. Not only because the act of leading change is hard, but also because others may see you as a rebel fighting against the status quo. A leader of change must be brave, but also constantly adapt to understand the emotional impact of their most immediate conversations. Then tailor future engagement and conversations to make the change progressively more accessible to all involved.

LUCA VERNENGO, CED MEM CME-IT

DIRECTOR
EVENT DESIGN COLLECTIVE ITALY

Let's face it, change, though inevitable is sometimes scary. Learning to understand the value of change and that good change can be designed for, will enable you to put design on the agenda. The first step to start a constructive conversation.

Take a moment to reflect. Grab a pen.
Jot down the answers to the following questions:

What did you do previously, whereby you were not being taken seriously when event owners were having the conversation about change?

What buttons are you pushing to get what you need?

When asking yourself "Why are people not taking the design process seriously?" what critical behaviours did you demonstrate, that others could have observed? (that got in the way, of what you want

How can you and your team zoom out and empathize with the event owner to address their required outcomes?

Is your event owner not ready or are you as the event designer not ready?

MEET
THE AUTHORS

RUUD JANSSEN
@ruudwjanssen

Ruud is an international speaker, facilitator and designer of high stakes conferences & events. He helps organisations innovate by thinking differently based on functional, social and technological advancements using business and event model innovation. He created the Event Canvas™ with Roel Frissen to enable teams to systematically design events that matter.
Ruud is the co-founder of Event Design Collective GmbH, the event design consulting & training firm.

DENNIS LUIJER
@visiblethinking

As a Design Engineer Dennis believes in the powerful practice of visualization and its ability to MAKE CHANGE VISIBLE. His role in visualising how events create value, brings the strategic narrative to life and ties the event story to each individual contribution that realizes the design goal of behaviour change. As co-founder of the Event Design Collective GmbH he works constantly to improve & design new visual tools that help event professionals to engage and design extraordinary Events.

ROEL FRISSEN
@roelfrissen

Roel is an entrepreneur, speaker, facilitator, non-executive, and trusted advisor for organisations. He helps professionals to engage their colleagues and clients in strategic conversations and design projects. On a quest to create a common and visual language to ease the conversation between Event Planner and Event Owner, he created together with Ruud Janssen the Event Canvas™. Roel is the co-founder of Event Design Collective GmbH, the event design consulting & training firm.

You will learn the implications of the change in the event landscape and how to design the conversations between Event Owners and Event Designers. The story includes discussions about wants and needs, processes and outcomes, and the potential for change. Discover effective communication strategies for discussing the importance of Time, Team, and Space in designing for change. Additionally you will learn to better understand your own behaviour and the motivations of event owners who seek change. This book also offers guidance on how to navigate ambiguous situations, address risks, and identify opportunities for rewards in conversations with event owners.

DR. THOMAS BACH PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE
"You want to be the leader of change and not the object of change."

BERTRAND PICCARD EXPLORER & ENVIRONMENTALIST, SOLAR IMPULSE FOUNDATION
"It's not the answer that's important, but the attitude to the question."

JOËL LETANG SENIOR EVENT STRATEGIST, WIKIMEDIA FOUNDATION
"Events are markers of change. Event Design enables us to track the past, organise the present and to design for the future."

with insights from: PAUL RULKENS & EDC MASTERMINDS

Audio book, e-book and podcast series available on
www.designtochange.online

EVENT
DESIGN
collective

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