

A VIEW FROM SUE UNERMAN

Advice for anyone adverse to change

[CONSUMER](#) [INNOVATION](#) [OPINION](#)

SUE UNERMAN, CHIEF TRANSFORMATION OFFICER 23 MAR 2017

You can't really buy into any change until you fully understand what it means for you personally. Some ads are remembered in the hearts and minds of the public long after the campaign has been dropped.

The [BT "Ology" ad featured Maureen Lipman](#) as a grandmother, who is told by her grandson over the phone, (played by Josh Krichefski's brother by the way) that he flunked his exams, passing only pottery and sociology. The ad also featured in [Lindsey Clay's survey of the portrayal of women in advertising](#) over the past 50 years in the UK.

The BT ad was to encourage people to use the phone more, not to drive market share as this wasn't an issue in the 1980s.

Haven't times changed? Driving more phone use is hardly a requirement of any telecoms provider today. Most of us use our phones more frequently than the admen at JWT could have ever thought in 1987. It's a change that most of us have taken to happily. Other

changes around will take more getting used to, such as the rise of the robots in customer service or AI's impact on retail.

Maureen Lipman has had a long career as a comedian. In one of her stand-up routines she described how after borrowing her dad's car for a week she got back into her own vehicle and discovered it just wouldn't work properly.

She called the car rescue services and waited two hours for them to turn up. When the chap from the AA arrived, he started the car and drove it round the block. It was perfectly ok. It was simply that her dad's car was an automatic and after only a week of driving it, she'd forgotten how to drive a geared car. She just couldn't work it out. Even though she'd been driving one for a decade.

There's a lesson in this for everyone who is change averse – and many people hate the idea of any change they aren't in control of, and haven't chosen.

Firstly, you can get used to a change ridiculously quickly. There's a world of difference between an innovation we take to like a duck to water (such as checking phones dozens or hundreds of times a day), and those that feel alien.

When a change in work practices is mandated, or becomes inevitable in your business, it's good to remember some change may feel so instinctive that in a week in, you won't remember what work was like before.

Secondly, you can't really buy into any change until you fully understand what it means specifically for you. So if you're in a company meeting where the new vision is being presented and you're just not feeling inspired, don't worry.

Don't expect to love the change till you can feel and see what it means for you. And give it a go, it might just be the new way forward you've been missing, just as much as you'd miss your mobile phone.

CONSUMER INNOVATION OPINION