

Believe in your goals

Achieving a goal that you have set yourself feels great. All the hard work and effort is finally worthwhile; you can celebrate success and congratulate yourself on a job well done. But it wasn't always like that. The path to that success will often have been strewn with obstacles – some of your own making, unexpected challenges and maybe a few difficult individuals who are determined to ambush you along the way.

Earlier this year I completed a 330km cycle event taking in three countries in the heart of the Alps. This was the Tour du Mont Blanc. By anyone's standards this is a long way to ride in one day but then add in 8000m of ascent and some extremes of weather from scorching heat to torrential thunderstorms. It was clearly a significant goal that I had set myself but had approached it with 6 months of hard training and strict discipline – "*nobody said it would be easy!*" The difficulty of the challenge made the successful outcome all the more satisfying but there were dark moments during the day when it felt like it would never end. That was when the belief in the goal, the recognition of the past hard work and a determination to succeed were really needed. Pete, my partner in this crazy endeavour, admitted later that he had seriously considered giving up, especially when another competitor he was riding with at the time had expressed his own doubts on their ability to finish before the cut-off time. Luckily for Pete it wasn't long before he reached the next checkpoint/feed station where he was met by my wife who was providing support for us on the day. She pointed out how far he had already come, dispelled his doubts and (in the nicest way possible) told him to "*get on with it!*"

We can find the same situation at work. When an organisation sets out on a culture change journey most people recognise that the going will not always be plain sailing; there will be pitfalls and setbacks along the way. However some way down the line when things do not appear to have got much better it is easy to get disheartened. There may be *well-poisoners* sniping from the sidelines, revelling in the lack of obvious success. This is the time to dig-in, remember your ultimate goal and remind yourself that the end really does justify means.

Culture change, like any change, tends not to be a linear process. Improvements come slowly at first, but momentum gathers, success breeds further success until a *Tipping Point* is reached and the rate of change shifts up to another gear. At this point, with the finish line in sight you will find renewed energy and enthusiasm and the negative voices will fade away.