

## The influence of individual readiness to change on the rise of blackberry LTD

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### ABSTRACT

This article extensively explores BlackBerry Ltd. 's fall and rise, charting its path from a dominant hardware production company in the mobile phone devices industry to its current focus on the software and cybersecurity industry. It delves deeply into the strategy of individual readiness to change undertaken by John Chen, the new CEO, to navigate the swiftly changing market and technological landscapes. Under the leadership of CEO John Chen, who took the helm in 2013, BlackBerry pivoted successfully toward enterprise software, particularly in the areas of cybersecurity, automotive systems, and Internet of Things (IoT) technologies. Moreover, it assesses the implications of the transformations for BlackBerry Ltd. 's positioning in its newfound operational domains, highlighting both the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for the company within the cybersecurity and software services sectors. This is an in-depth exploration of BlackBerry Ltd. 's strategic evolution and John Chen's quest to transform the company's future. This analysis demonstrates BlackBerry Ltd. 's ongoing commitment to motivating its readiness to change and embrace new opportunities in an ever-changing market.

**Keyword:** blackberry, John Chen, cybersecurity, software

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The landscape of the global technology sector is a veritable graveyard of titans—companies that once defined their industries only to falter in the face of disruptive innovation. This phenomenon, often described by Joseph Schumpeter's term "creative destruction," underscores a fundamental truth: in a world of relentless technological advancement, incumbency is not a guarantee of future success (Schumpeter, 1942). The ability to adapt, pivot, and fundamentally change is paramount in this regard. Within this unforgiving arena, few stories are as dramatic and instructive as that of the BlackBerry Limited. Once a titan of the mobile communications industry and a symbol of corporate and political power, BlackBerry experienced a precipitous decline that pushed it to the brink of irrelevance. However, its subsequent journey from the abyss toward a new identity as a formidable software and cybersecurity firm presents a compelling case study of corporate transformation. This paper argues that at the heart of this turnaround lies a critical, yet often underestimated, factor: the cultivation of an individual's readiness to change, championed and instilled by a transformative leader.

In its golden age, from the early 2000s to the end of the decade, BlackBerry was not merely a product; it was a cultural phenomenon and an indispensable tool for professionals worldwide. The company, then known as Research In Motion (RIM), pioneered the concept of push email, delivering seamless real-time mobile messaging through its BlackBerry Enterprise Server (BES). This capability turned its devices, with their signature physical QWERTY keyboards, into essential productivity instruments. The term "CrackBerry" entered the popular lexicon, humorously describing the addictive nature of being constantly connected (Triggs, 2021). Its secure network made it the device of choice for governments and corporations, famously being the preferred device for figures such as the U.S. President Barack Obama, who insisted on keeping his BlackBerry upon entering the White House (Sieglar, 2009). The BlackBerry Messenger (BBM) platform created a closed, secure, and instantaneous messaging ecosystem that fostered immense customer loyalty. In emerging markets such as Indonesia, BlackBerry's dominance was even more pronounced. It became a status symbol and the primary mode of digital communication, with BBM PINs being exchanged as readily as phone numbers are. At its zenith in 2008, BlackBerry's market capitalization soared to over \$80 billion, and by 2011, it boasted a global subscriber base of nearly 80 million users (Cheng, 2013; Himsel, 2020). From an external vantage point, its position seems unassailable, fortified by enterprise contracts, carrier relationships, and a legion of loyal users.

However, the seeds of BlackBerry's decline were sown at the peak of its success. The launch of Apple's iPhone in 2007, followed by Google's Android operating system in 2008, represented not only new competition but also a fundamental paradigm shift. The industry's focus is rapidly shifting from hardware-centric, communication-focused devices to software-centric, application-driven ecosystems. The iPhone's intuitive touchscreen interface and the revolutionary concept of the App Store created a new user experience centered on versatility, entertainment, and a vast, ever-expanding universe of third-party applications that can be downloaded. With its open-source model, Android rapidly democratized the smartphone market, offering consumers endless customization and choice (Vogelstein, 2013). BlackBerry's leadership, ensconced in their success in the enterprise market, largely misread the tectonic shifts occurring around them. They viewed the iPhone as a "toy" and failed to appreciate the "bring-your-own-device" (BYOD) trend that would soon see consumer preferences dictate corporate IT standards (McCracken, 2012). Their attempts to respond, such as the touchscreen BlackBerry Storm, were plagued by poor user experience and a nascent, under-supported app marketplace (BlackBerry App World) that could not compete with the robust ecosystems of Apple and Google. The company's core competencies in security and hardware efficiency, once its greatest strengths, fostered a sense of complacency that blinded it to the changing desires of the mass market.

The consequences were swift and brutal. Between its peak and 2013, BlackBerry's market share evaporated, its stock price plummeted by over 90%, and the company began reporting staggering financial losses, including a nearly \$1 billion write-down on unsold BlackBerry 10 devices (The Guardian, 2013). The company that had once defined an era was now in a death spiral. In a desperate move to stave off collapse, the board ousted co-CEOs Mike Lazaridis and Jim Balsillie, the architects of BlackBerry's rise,

and in November 2013, appointed John S. Chen as the new CEO. Chen was no stranger to corporate turnarounds, having previously rescued the enterprise software company Sybase from a similar crisis and leading it to a successful acquisition by SAP (Gold, 2010). He was tasked with a monumental challenge: to save a bleeding, demoralized company whose primary business model had been rendered obsolete.

At this critical juncture, the concept of "readiness to change" becomes the central analytical lens for understanding BlackBerry's subsequent evolution. Organizational change literature extensively documents that successful transformation is contingent not only on sound strategy but also on the willingness and ability of the organization's members to embrace new processes, mindsets, and roles (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993). As defined by Holt et al. (2007), readiness to change is a "comprehensive attitude that is influenced simultaneously by the content (what is being changed), the process (how the change is being implemented), the context (circumstances under which the change is occurring), and the individuals (characteristics of those being asked to change)." John Chen's immediate task was not just to devise a new strategy but to fundamentally alter the psychological state of the entire organization—from a state of denial and despair to one of acceptance and proactive engagement. He had to convince employees, investors, and customers that BlackBerry's future lay not in recapturing the glory of its past as a handset maker, but in forging a new path built on its less visible, but still formidable, core competency: secure software.

Chen initiated a painful but necessary period of triage. He made the bold and, for many, unthinkable decision to systematically dismantle the company's reliance on hardware manufacturing. This involved massive layoffs, the sale of significant real estate assets, and the eventual outsourcing of handset production to partners, such as TCL Communication (Gu, 2016). This strategic retreat was not an admission of defeat but a calculated maneuver to stop financial hemorrhaging and free up resources to invest in a new vision. Chen redirected the company's focus toward its software assets, particularly the QNX operating system—a highly reliable and secure platform already embedded in automotive systems and critical infrastructure—and its enterprise mobility management (EMM) solutions. Subsequently, the company embarked on a series of strategic acquisitions, such as AtHoc for crisis communication and Cylance for AI-driven endpoint security, to build a comprehensive and modern cybersecurity portfolio (BlackBerry, 2015; BlackBerry, 2019). This pivot transformed BlackBerry's business scope entirely, shifting it from a B2C device manufacturer to a B2B enterprise software and security provider.

Therefore, this study explores the BlackBerry turnaround through the framework of individual and organizational readiness to change, as orchestrated by John Chen's leadership. It delves into the specific actions, communication strategies, and cultural initiatives he employed to motivate a workforce accustomed to one business model to embrace a radically different one. The discussion analyzes how acquisitions were integrated, not just technologically but also culturally, forcing an exchange of knowledge and fostering new competencies. It will examine how Chen's leadership style—characterized by transparency, decisive action, and a clear, consistent vision—was instrumental in building the psychological safety and confidence necessary for employees to navigate profound uncertainty. By dissecting this remarkable corporate transformation, this analysis aims to demonstrate that while strategy provides the map, it is the readiness of individuals to undertake the journey that ultimately determines whether an organization can successfully navigate the turbulent seas of technological disruption and emerge not just as a survivor but as a renewed and relevant entity.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 The Foundational Pillar of Change: Lewin's Three-Stage Model**

Any substantive discussion of organizational change must begin with the foundational work of social psychologist, Kurt Lewin. His deceptively simple yet profound three-stage model – Unfreezing, Changing (or moving), and refreezing – remains the bedrock upon which much of modern change management theory is built (Lewin, 1947). Lewin's primary insight was that human behavior within an organization is not static but exists in a state of "quasi-stationary equilibrium," held in place by a complex

field of driving forces (pressures for change) and restraining forces (resistance to change). For meaningful change to occur, this equilibrium must be deliberately and carefully disrupted.

The first stage, unfreezing, is arguably the most critical and often the most difficult. It involves disconfirming existing beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. This stage is about creating the motivation to change by making the organization and its members aware of the urgent need for a new approach. This can be achieved by increasing the driving forces, such as highlighting poor financial results, declining market share, or the emergence of disruptive competitors, or by diminishing the restraining forces, such as challenging ingrained cultural norms, questioning the efficacy of old processes, or reducing fear of the unknown (Schein, 1996). In the context of BlackBerry, the catastrophic financial losses, public loss of confidence, and the clear technological superiority of competitors served as powerful unfreezing agents, creating a state of "survival anxiety" that made the status quo untenable. Without this deliberate disruption of the existing equilibrium, any attempt at change is likely to be met with formidable resistance from an organizational culture comfortable with its established routines.

The second stage, Changing or Moving, involves the actual implementation of change. This is the transition phase in which the organization learns and adopts new ways of working, thinking, and behaving. This period is marked by uncertainty and confusion as old norms are dismantled and new ones are yet to be fully established. Lewin emphasized the importance of clear communication and strong guidance during the phase. Leaders must provide a clear vision of the desired future state and offer the necessary support, training, and resources for employees to navigate the transition (Cummings & Worley, 2014). This stage is not merely about introducing a new strategy but also about fostering new skills and perspectives. For BlackBerry under John Chen, this was a period of radical triage: exiting the hardware business, acquiring new software companies like Cylance and AtHoc, and reorienting the entire workforce's identity from a device maker to a security software provider.

The final stage, refreezing, involves stabilizing the organization at a new state of equilibrium. The goal is to institutionalize new behaviors and attitudes, making them the new norms. This is achieved by anchoring changes in the organization's culture, reward systems, performance metrics, and structures (Kotter, 2012). If this stage is neglected, there is a significant risk that the organization will revert to its old ways. Refreezing ensures the long-term sustainability of change by creating a new, stable "force field" where new behaviors are supported and reinforced. Chen's continuous communication about the company's new mission and the celebration of successes in the software domain were crucial refreezing activities designed to solidify BlackBerry's new identity. Lewin's model, while sometimes criticized for its linearity, provides an essential macro-level framework for understanding that organizational change is a structured, psychological process, not just a series of managerial edicts.

## **2.2 From Process to People: The Concept of Individual Readiness to Change**

While Lewin's model provides the "how" of change, subsequent research has delved deeper into the "who"—the individuals being asked to change. The success of any organizational transformation ultimately hinges on employees' collective readiness. Armenakis, Harris, and Mossholder (1993) were seminal in framing "readiness" as a critical precursor to successful change implementation. They argued that creating readiness is an active process of social cognition, in which leaders must shape employees' beliefs about change. They identified five key messages that must be communicated to foster this readiness: (1) discrepancy (the need for change), (2) appropriateness (the suitability of the proposed change), (3) efficacy (the organization's and individual's capability to implement the change successfully), (4) principal support (conviction from senior leaders), and (5) personal valence (the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits for the individual).

Building on this, Holt et al. (2007) developed a more nuanced, multidimensional model, defining readiness as a "comprehensive attitude" influenced by four distinct factors. The first is change content, which relates to an employee's evaluation of the specific change being proposed. The second is the change process, which refers to perceptions of how the change is being managed and implemented (e.g., fairness and communication). Third, the organizational context includes factors such as the level of trust in

leadership and the prevailing organizational culture. Finally, and most critically for this study's thesis, is the individual, encompassing an individual's unique traits, values, and past experiences. This framework underscores that an employee's readiness is not a monolithic construct but a complex judgment based on multiple simultaneous assessments. A brilliant strategy (content) can be derailed by poorly managed implementation (process) or a history of mistrust (context).

The Transtheoretical Model of Change (TTM), developed by Prochaska and DiClemente (1983), further deepens the understanding of individual change. While originating in clinical psychology to explain behavioral changes such as addiction cessation, its stages are profoundly applicable to organizational settings. The TTM posits that individuals move through a series of stages when modifying their behavior: a) Precontemplation: The individual is unaware of the need for change or is in denial. They do not intend to take action.; b) Contemplation: The individual becomes aware that a problem exists and begins to consider the pros and cons of changing, but has not yet made a commitment; c) Preparation: The individual intends to take Action: The soon and may begin taking small steps toward the new behavior; d) Action: The individual actively modifies their behavior, experiences, or environment. This stage requires significant commitment. (e) Maintenance: The individual works to prevent relapse and consolidate the gains attained during the action stage. A leader's role, viewed through the TTM lens, is to act as a facilitator, guiding employees through these stages. John Chen's initial, starkly honest communications about BlackBerry's dire situation were aimed at moving the organization from Precontemplation (denial) to Contemplation. His strategic acquisitions and clear pivot to software represented the Preparation and Action stages, while the ongoing cultural initiatives served as maintenance activities. This model highlights that readiness is not a simple "yes/no" state but a developmental journey requiring tailored interventions at each stage.

### **2.3 The Engine of Change: Transformational Leadership**

If readiness is the fuel, leadership is the engine that drives the vehicle of change. The profound, discontinuous nature of the transformation required at BlackBerry demanded more than transactional management; it required a transformational leadership. As defined by Bernard M. Bass (1985), transformational leadership is a style that inspires and motivates followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity. It is composed of four key components, often referred to as the "Four I's": a) Idealized Influence: The leader acts as a role model, earning the trust, respect, and admiration of followers. They embody the values and visions they espouse. John Chen's reputation as a turnaround specialist and his decisive, transparent actions helped build this credibility; b) Inspirational Motivation: The leader articulates a compelling and optimistic vision of the future. They inspire team spirit and provide meaning to the task at hand. Chen's vision of a new, leaner, software-focused BlackBerry provided a clear and motivating alternative to the company's past identity; c) Intellectual Stimulation: The leader challenges assumptions, takes risks, and solicits followers' ideas. They encourage creativity and stimulate critical thinking, pushing employees to question old ways of doing things. The pivot to cybersecurity inherently required BlackBerry's engineers and staff to think in entirely new ways; d) Individualized Consideration: The leader acts as a coach or mentor, paying attention to each individual's needs for achievement and growth. They create a supportive climate in which individual differences are respected.

This leadership style is particularly effective in times of crisis and uncertainty because it creates a psychological bond between the leader and followers, fostering the trust and intrinsic motivation necessary to embrace radical change (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Complementing the *style* of transformational leadership is the *process* of leading change, most famously articulated by John P. Kotter (1996, 2012). Kotter's 8-Step Process provides a practical roadmap for implementing the type of transformation that leaders like Chen undertake. These steps, which align closely with Lewin's model but offer greater granularity, are as follows: (1) create a sense of urgency, (2) build a guiding coalition, (3) form a strategic vision and initiatives, (4) enlist a volunteer army, (5) enable action by removing barriers, (6) generate short-term wins, (7) sustain acceleration, and (8) institute change.

Kotter's framework emphasizes that leading change is a sequential and cumulative process. Skipping steps or under-communicating the vision can easily derail an entire effort. Generating short-term wins (Step 6) is crucial for building momentum and convincing skeptics, thereby reinforcing readiness and commitment. Announcing new, high-profile software contracts or the successful integration of an acquisition served this purpose for BlackBerry, demonstrating tangible progress along its new path.

In synthesis, the academic literature provides a multi-layered framework for analyzing BlackBerry's turnaround. Lewin's model offers an overarching structure for the change process. The theories of Armenakis and Holt, along with the Transtheoretical Model, provide a critical lens to understand the human dimension—the necessity of cultivating individual readiness. Finally, Bass and Kotter explain the indispensable role of transformational leadership in both inspiring and executing change. A successful transformation is not merely the product of a brilliant strategy; it is the result of a masterfully orchestrated interplay between processes, people, and leadership.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This chapter outlines the methodological framework employed to investigate the influence of individual readiness to change on the corporate transformation of BlackBerry Limited under John Chen's leadership. A systematic approach was adopted to ensure the rigor, validity, and reliability of the study. This section details the research design, data collection methods, data analysis procedures, and measures taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings.

#### **3.1 Research Design and Approach**

Given the research objective of gaining a deep, holistic, and contextualized understanding of a complex social phenomenon, a qualitative research paradigm was deemed most appropriate (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Specifically, this study employed a single instrumental case study design. The case study method is ideal for answering "how" and "why" questions concerning a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control (Yin, 2018). BlackBerry Limited represents a unique and revelatory case of a company that navigated a near-fatal decline to successfully pivot its business model. By focusing intensively on this single case, this research can achieve a rich, in-depth exploration that would be lost in a large-scale quantitative survey. As described by Stake (1995), this is an *instrumental* case study because the intent is not merely to understand the particulars of the BlackBerry case itself, but to use it as an instrument to gain insight into the broader theoretical issue: the role of individual readiness to change in corporate turnarounds. The boundaries of the case are clearly defined, focusing on the period from the appointment of John Chen as CEO in November 2013 to the present day, encompassing the strategic shift from hardware manufacturing to software and cybersecurity.

#### **3.2 Data Collection**

This study used documentary analysis as its primary data collection method. Given that this research focuses on a recent, well-documented corporate history, a wealth of high-quality secondary data is publicly available. The use of documents is a non-reactive and stable data source, allowing for a systematic and rigorous examination of events, communication, and strategies as they develop (Bowen, 2009). The data collection process involved a systematic search and compilation of documents from various sources to facilitate triangulation and enhance the credibility of the findings. The collection was comprehensive and drew from several key document types to ensure a robust dataset. The core of this was corporate and financial documents, including BlackBerry's official annual reports and shareholder letters, which provided an audited narrative of the company's strategy and health. This was supplemented by official communications, such as press releases and executive interviews, which offered direct insight into the intended messaging. To provide a critical external perspective, this study incorporated reputable media coverage from established financial and technology news outlets, alongside insightful industry and analyst reports that offered expert evaluations of BlackBerry's market position and strategic moves. This

data collection process was guided by the research questions, focusing on documents that could illuminate strategic decisions, communication initiatives, cultural changes, and leadership actions related to the corporate pivot.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, which is a flexible and powerful method for identifying and reporting patterns within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analytical journey was systematic and progressed through several interconnected phases. The process began with a deep familiarization with the data through repeated readings to immerse in the case details, during which initial ideas were logged. Following this, an initial coding process was undertaken, where the features of the data were systematically tagged, driven both by emergent patterns and by the theoretical concepts from the literature review. These granular codes were then collated and organized to search for broader, overarching themes using tools such as mind maps to identify patterns of meaning. These emergent themes were rigorously reviewed and checked against both the coded extracts and the entire dataset to ensure that they were coherent and representative. Once a satisfactory thematic map was developed, each theme was carefully defined and named, identifying the "story" it tells in relation to the research questions. Finally, this led to the production of a report in which the analysis was woven into a cohesive narrative, supported by illustrative data extracts to tell a compelling and well-grounded story about the BlackBerry transformation.

### **3.4 Trustworthiness and Rigor**

To ensure the quality and integrity of this qualitative study, the criteria of trustworthiness established by Lincoln and Guba (1985) were diligently adhered to. The credibility of the findings was enhanced through the triangulation of diverse data sources by comparing corporate reports against media analysis and executive statements to construct a more robust and validated understanding. While the findings of a single case are not statistically generalizable, transferability was sought by providing a "thick description" of the case and its context, allowing readers to assess the applicability of the findings to other situations (Geertz, 1973). Dependability was addressed by maintaining a clear and transparent audit trail of the research process, with procedures described in sufficient detail to allow the logic of the study to be followed. Finally, confirmability was achieved by grounding the findings firmly in the data, using direct extracts extensively, and allowing the established theoretical frameworks to guide interpretation, thereby reducing potential researcher bias and ensuring objectivity.

## **4. DISCUSSION**

This section interprets the case study findings concerning BlackBerry's transformation under John Chen, contextualizing them within the theoretical frameworks established in the literature review. The analysis reveals that BlackBerry's successful pivot from a failing hardware manufacturer to a resilient software and cybersecurity entity was not merely a consequence of sound financial and strategic decision-making. Instead, it was fundamentally underpinned by the deliberate and masterful cultivation of individual readiness to change among its employees, orchestrated through the potent application of transformational leadership. The findings demonstrate a powerful synergy between the macro-level process of organizational change and the micro-level psychological shifts required of individuals within it.

The narrative of BlackBerry's turnaround aligns remarkably well with the foundational stages of Kurt Lewin's (1947) change model. The initial phase under John Chen's leadership served as a textbook example of Unfreezing the organization from its "quasi-stationary equilibrium." By communicating the brutal facts of the company's financial unsustainability and its technological irrelevance in the consumer market, Chen effectively dismantled the complacency and denial that crippled his predecessors. This created the critical "survival anxiety" that Schein (1996) argues is necessary to overcome resistance and generate motivation for change. The subsequent strategic actions—divesting from the handset business,

selling real estate, and acquiring software companies such as Cylance and AtHoc—represented the Changing or Moving phase. This was not a simple change in the product line but a fundamental shift in the company's core identity. Finally, the Refreezing stage is evident in Chen's consistent reinforcement of the new vision through internal communications, celebration of software-related wins, and restructuring of the organization around its new mission. This process anchored the new identity into the corporate culture, ensuring that the changes were institutionalized and sustainable, as advised by Kotter (2012).

However, viewing this transformation solely through a process model, such as Lewin's, is insufficient. The findings illuminate that the true engine of this change was the focus on the human element, specifically fostering IRC. Chen's leadership implicitly followed the blueprint for creating readiness described by Armenakis, Harris, and Mossholder (1993). He masterfully communicated the discrepancy (the urgent need for change), the appropriateness of the pivot to security software (leveraging BlackBerry's historical strength in security), and the efficacy of the plan by securing strategic partnerships and making targeted acquisitions that brought in new expertise. Furthermore, his unwavering public and internal commitment provided powerful principal support, while the vision of leading a high-growth, high-value industry offered a compelling sense of personal valence for employees who could reinvent their careers. This approach effectively guided the organization through the stages of the Transtheoretical Model (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983), moving employees from a collective state of precontemplation or denial about the failure of the old model to one of action and, ultimately, the maintenance of their new identity as software professionals.

This cultivation of readiness was driven by a clear exhibition of Transformational Leadership, aligning with the "Four I's" described by Bass (1985). Chen's reputation as a turnaround expert provided Idealized Influence, earning him the trust and credibility necessary to ask for profound sacrifices. His articulation of a clear, compelling vision for a new BlackBerry offered Inspirational Motivation, replacing despair with a sense of purpose. The radical nature of the pivot demanded immense Intellectual Stimulation, forcing the remaining workforce to abandon old competencies and embrace new, complex challenges in cybersecurity and IoT. Finally, his consistent communication and town hall meetings, explaining the 'why' behind his difficult decisions, demonstrated a form of Individualized Consideration on an organizational scale, acknowledging the uncertainty employees faced. This leadership style was the catalyst that made the difficult process of change possible and meaningful for those who remained with the company.

#### **4.1 Implications of the Study**

Theoretically, this study reinforces the argument that successful organizational change is a multilevel phenomenon. This highlights the crucial mediating role of individual readiness, suggesting that leadership actions do not directly cause change outcomes but rather influence them by shaping employees' psychological readiness to embrace the new reality. It demonstrates that grand theories like Lewin's and Kotter's provide the "what," while theories of readiness and transformational leadership provide the "how." The implications of this study for managers and executives are profound. The BlackBerry case serves as a powerful lesson that in times of crisis, leadership is less about being a strategist and more about being a "Chief Psychology Officer." Leaders must go beyond the balance sheet to understand and manage their employees' cognitive and emotional journeys. The key takeaway is that a turnaround strategy is, at its core, a communications strategy designed to build belief, efficacy and trust.

#### **4.2 Limitations and Future Research**

The primary limitations of this study are inherent in its single, instrumental case study design. While providing depth, the findings are not statistically generalizable, although they offer analytical generalizability (Yin, 2018). The reliance on publicly available documents means that the analysis infers individual readiness from corporate actions and media reports, rather than measuring it directly through methods such as surveys or interviews with employees. This presents an outsider's view of the internal dynamics.

Future studies should address these limitations. A comparative case study, perhaps contrasting BlackBerry's pivot with Nokia's, could yield further insights into successful and unsuccessful transformations. Quantitative studies within organizations undergoing significant change could develop and validate scales to measure the key components of readiness and their correlations with leadership styles. Finally, a longitudinal study of BlackBerry could explore the long-term sustainability of this change and the ongoing challenges in maintaining a transformed corporate identity.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The revival of BlackBerry Limited offers a compelling modern parable of corporate leadership and organizational change. This study argues and demonstrates that the company's successful pivot was not merely a product of shrewd strategic realignment but was fundamentally enabled by a deliberate focus on the human dimension of its transformation. The findings confirm that John Chen's transformational leadership style was the critical catalyst that fostered the necessary individual readiness to change among the workforce. By masterfully communicating a clear vision, building a case for the urgent necessity of the pivot, and inspiring belief in the new direction, he effectively navigated the organization through tumultuous phases of change, aligning with established theoretical models. The BlackBerry saga underscores a vital lesson for contemporary business leaders: in an era of perpetual disruption, a leader's most critical role is that of a "Chief Psychology Officer." The ability to understand, manage, and shape employees' beliefs and attitudes is paramount. Ultimately, this research posits that while financial acumen and strategic foresight can chart a new course, the cultivation of a ready and willing crew ensures that the ship can successfully navigate the storm. Therefore, the story of BlackBerry's rise from the ashes is a testament to the enduring power of leadership that places the human element at the very heart of its strategy for change.

### **Ethical Approval**

Ethical approval was not required for this study.

### **Informed Consent Statement**

Not Applicable.

### **Author Contributions**

BF contributed to the conceptualization of the research, development of the theoretical framework, and analysis of BlackBerry Ltd.'s strategic transformation. He also prepared the initial draft of the manuscript. DL contributed to the literature review, data validation, and refinement of the discussion section. He also coordinated correspondence with the journal and provided critical revisions during the review process.

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The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest.

### **Data Availability Statement**

The data presented in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author for privacy reasons.

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### **Notes on Contributions**

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