

CHANGE MANAGEMENT – RESISTANCE TO THE CHANGE

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Changing the way employers operate is hard, but all signs indicate that innovation and transformation are here to stay. Success in the workplace of the future will heavily depend on the ability to anticipate change, understand its impact and apply practical methods to turn chaotic situations into opportunities for growth. Efforts naturally center on the problem, measurement and analysis, and potential solutions, but they often fail to consider factors affecting how improvements will be permanently integrated into daily work. Making the quality system operable was chaotic. The key to coping with resistance is to understand the needs of people who are affected by change. There are practical steps to follow for successful navigation through the uncertainty: 1. Seek accurate information to avoid needless worry. 2. Express concerns to a trusted few. 3. Remember your value. Focused, organizational change management is the prescription that leads to successful programs.

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Adoption of change management

Changing the way employers operate is hard, but all signs indicate that innovation and transformation are here to stay. Success in the workplace of the future will heavily depend on the ability to anticipate change, understand its impact and apply practical methods to turn chaotic situations into opportunities for growth. Ready or not, a major change is in future. When it happens, there are practical steps to follow for successful navigation through the uncertainty: 1. Seeking accurate information to avoid needless worry. 2. Expressing concerns to a trusted few. 3. Remembering one's value. The organization will reflect the leader's attitude, so it is crucial to rapidly come to grips with the change and identify the opportunity it offers.

Improvement projects, although well intentioned and defined, often slow down in their latter stages because team members and sponsors can lose focus once a solution is found. Efforts naturally center on the problem, measurement and analysis, and potential solutions, but they often fail to consider factors affecting how improvements will be permanently integrated into daily work. Making the quality system operable was chaotic. The key to coping with resistance is to understand the needs of people who are affected by change and actively take steps to address their issues. Here are some phases to sustain change: 1. Define the need and necessity for making improvements. 2. Create and communicate a unifying purpose. 3. Identify formal and informal work alliances and ensure their participation. 4. Create a plan for action. 5. Empower people to take action. 6. Create opportunities for small, meaningful accomplishments. 7. Expand the accomplishments and complete the unfinished change activities. 8. Reinforce the new approach.

The government has been studying and publishing best practices in the public and private sector for more than 15 years. These practices have generated many appropriate recommendations. Despite a desire to improve, however, change efforts often achieve insufficient results. Simply inserting a few best practices will not achieve enduring results. What's missing in most cases is an understanding of how to apply life-cycle principles to each unique program or environment.

Managing change, whether to fix a problem or to improve the environment, is the domain of the change-management process. Request for changes can be created by a customer or user by means of a change-management-supplied interface. Furthermore, other service-support processes can compose a request for change and submit it directly. Once submitted, a request for change is routed to the appropriate personnel to be accepted and categorized. If accepted, the categorized request for change is handled by a process that is customized based on request for change key attributes, such as its category, group, type, and priority. The handle - request for change process manages the life cycle of a change. The five steps that can compose a sample best-practice process for handling a change are: (1) Assess change, (2) approve and schedule change, (3) coordinate change implementation, (4) prepare, distribute, and implement change, and (5) review and close change.

Change initiatives often fail because they focus on only one or two dimensions. Successful programs cross functional boundaries-people, processes, technology and physical infrastructure. Technology is an important consideration, but so are the people who operate the new system, the business processes it supports, and the work locations.

Resistance to the change

While some business strategies analyze the effects of change, management of change focuses on people and how they resist, cope with, and ultimately accept this in the workplace. People resist change for many reasons. They may not understand the objectives driving the change or they may not agree with the organization's new direction. Or, they may simply be anxious about how the changes will affect their jobs. Executive teams that acknowledge the human tendency to fight change-even when change is necessary for business success-take an important first step toward a positive outcome. They use change-management strategies to create a culture that embraces change, and often find that these strategies make the difference between the success and failure of new management processes and system implementations. There are three critical steps that executives must follow to implement change in the workplace: focus on people, communicate strategic messages and combine communication and training. Action learning creates a laboratory where staff and managers work together as they learn new processes and solve problems.

Another key to complex change is a life-cycle approach. Initiatives in each dimension progress in stages. Integration is vital because each dimension affects another, but each has its own requirements and timing. Work should address people, processes, technology and infrastructure.

Concerning people, employees need to be part of the process and they need to be heard. Change-management experts recommend that managers start at the top and speak to every level of the organization about the factors driving change, and how jobs will be different before, during, and after the change occurs. Staff will be much more likely to accept and support the new process if they know what to expect at each phase. An added benefit of this process is that staff members are able to contribute ideas drawn from their varied experience that improve planned processes, save money, and avoid potential obstacles. Corporate communications play a major role in any change-management strategy. Once employees understand the reason for the change, managers must reinforce cooperation with timely, practical, and even inspirational messages.

Resistance to the change was divided along generational lines. Newer, more tech-savvy employees welcomed the change while the older employees did not cope. The company brought specialists who prescribed instructor-led training as a way to introduce changes into the work process. The training started with an overview of how many more orders an individual could place in a given period with the new system and highlighted the reduced time spent on redundant paperwork.

The process depicted is appropriate for a major nonurgent change. A minor urgent change could be handled effectively with a small subset of the tasks shown. The attributes of a request for change may impact which activities are required to handle the request for change. For example, urgent request for changes are handled differently from regular request for changes. Other attributes of the change (customer) may also factor into deciding which activities are included. In a multicustomer environment, the customer may have unique business requirements, such as regulatory requirements, that need to be accommodated in the handle- request for change process. For complex changes that would benefit from release management, the coordinate-change-implementation and prepare-distribute-and-implement-change activities can invoke the release management processes. Overall control of a change, even if release management is employed, remains with change management.

Each customer has a unique organization and unique control procedures. These factors significantly influence the process reference models used by a customer. A readymade process can provide a good start, but it rarely meets all customer requirements. If a company had a complete process reference model for change and release management the readymade process models had to be significantly customized in the field before the company could meet this customer's requirements. Some customers do not have a documented and approved change-management process. For these customers, creating new process reference models and gaining the approval of the IT staff can take a significant amount of time.

As regards technology, a group should not design its business processes without taking into account available technology, organizational structure and work locations-and vice versa. It is not enough to proceed along each dimension at the same time and at the same pace. They have to be combined to produce

a business and technical solution that can be implemented with effective program management and ownership, so employees will accept and adopt the changes.

No single set of instructions can produce enduring transformation in all instances, but with a lifecycle approach, any organization can develop a roadmap for its unique situation. Whether the transformation is large scale or applies to one particular organization or work group, the same universal precepts apply. New company management, systems, and processes affect how people perform on the job so it makes sense to incorporate training with the change management strategy. With the contract adoption program mentioned earlier, a key element was specific training in a variety of media directed toward teams in different business units and geographic locations. The training included online self-help, e-learning, and local experts to provide group or individual assistance as needed. This training ensured that the sales force knew how to implement the new process so that the transition from understanding the "why" to implementing the "how" was seamless.

The cost of change-management programs depends on the size of the organization, its corporate culture, geography, and other business factors.

At the beginning, this may seem overwhelming, but taking into consideration the cost of a failed implementation and the cost of refusing changes, it is much better to assimilate change as a need for each organization, so that it can maintain its position on the market.

Focused, organizational change management is the prescription that leads to successful programs. Executive teams must understand the organization's needs and budget resources, and must address these as part of their plan for change.

To track metrics throughout the program, executive teams need a value and a goal that measure what the process costs, how long it takes, what results are achieved currently, and the expectations after adoption.

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