

# FOUR SUCCESS TIPS FOR KEEPING CHANGE INITIATIVES ON TRACK

IT SEEMS THAT regardless of our best efforts, organizational change rarely goes according to the original plan. In fact, it is probably best to expect adjustments to occur in certain areas as your change strategy moves forward. However, there are ways to keep on track when you incorporate a little planning.

Here are four success tips that will help you keep change initiatives in line. While there are certainly other areas that may arise, these four are some of the most common that experience modifications.

## Use Straightforward Communication

Many times communication between the change management team and others in the organization can seem vague or confusing. The use of inadvertent jargon, memos with conflicting messages, or communication that neglects the mission and vision statements can leave employees wondering what is really going on.

Be sure communication is as

straightforward as possible. Avoid jargon when possible. If technical or other industry-related terms must be used, make a point to include a clear definition as well. Always present communication in "plain English" for best results.

Also, implement quality control measures for your communications. Inspect each written or verbal piece to ensure it lines up with both the vision and mission statements before releasing it to the organization.

## Rumor Management

Rumors can quickly lead to ill feelings and mistrust when they spread unchecked through a corporation. It is always wise to instill rumor management controls during organizational change. At the first alert of rumors, issue communication stating what the rumor is and why it is incorrect. Also, repeatedly encourage employees to speak directly to their supervisors or members of the change management team when confronted with a rumor to receive the most accurate information.

## Mindset and Behavior Adjustments

Negativism spreads quickly and can be more deadly than cancer. That's why it is vital, from the onset of your change initiative, to encourage the proper mindset and behavior.

These work best when implemented from the top down. As managers are brought onboard, impress on them the importance of a

team-oriented mindset and a positive attitude. They can then pass these behaviors down to their employees.

## Welcome Feedback

Everyone has an opinion about how changes affect his/her work environment and/or responsibilities. Allowing team members to voice their views helps reinforce communication and supports feelings of good will. Create opportunities for people to provide feedback and comments on **► continued on page 2**



## LETTER FROM KATHI GRAHAM- LEVISS

Surprisingly, many organizations don't use organizational change strategies. They simply make a decision and "full steam ahead" their way through the implementation process. Why is a change strategy so important? When dealing with the vast network of people, processes, and projects that make up a corporation, planning is the global positioning system (GPS) that guides the way over the stiff peaks, through the jagged cliffs, and around the sharp curves. Without official change strategies and teams in place, your change is likely to take twice as long and cost three times as much. With change strategies, however, the line from A to B becomes much straighter. This issue is focused on the power of managing the change and its benefits to your organization.

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the implementation process. Welcoming suggestions and ideas may also help you fine-tune your direction.

If you remain agile and observant, you can use these four tips to help keep your change initiative on track. While you may still need to cope with adjustments in other areas as you move forward, they will be much less complicated when the foundation of your effort is firm.

During the challenge of staffing your change management leadership positions and teams, it is often tempting to place speed before quality. However, long-term success is dependant on assigning roles based on competency as opposed to availability. If you have a choice of selecting someone who is more qualified, but unavailable for two months and someone who is less qualified, but immediately available, choose the former. The wait will be well worth it!

# DETERMINING CHANGE LEADERSHIP AND TEAM ROLES

**DETERMINING ROLES AND STAFFING** a change effort is the critical step to creating your change strategy plan. Clear roles and responsibilities are needed to minimize redundancy and ensure all responsibilities are covered. Caution is a must when assigning these roles and responsibilities. Often roles are assigned based on availability rather than who is the most competent and best positioned. This may result in a poor fit for the role and a less-than-successful outcome.

Below are a few leadership and team roles you'll want to include during your planning stage.

## **Change Process Leader**

Normally an executive, this leader will have authority directly from those who have sponsored the change effort. A few responsibilities traditionally held by the Change Process Leader include:

- Facilitating the process of defining, planning, and correcting the strategy and process.
- Clarifying the scope, outcomes, pace, conditions for success, and constraints.
- Setting parameters and allocating resources.
- Advocating and integrating change initiatives and securing resources.
- Overseeing communication, information generation, and course correction.
- Modeling mindset and behavioral changes along with other leaders.
- Providing feedback and coaching to all change leaders and stakeholders.
- Directing the change leadership team and the change project team.
- Updating the executive team.

## **Executive Team**

This team is the executive leadership team in the organization that is involved in the change management process. In many cases, this will include all members of senior management.

The executive team is generally responsible for:

- Supporting the desired outcomes of the change at a vision, strategy, and behavioral level.
- Running the business and buffering the change effort from organizational constraints.
- Making strategic decisions as negotiated with the sponsor (or delegate this responsibility accordingly to change leadership team).
- Participating in designing change strategy and desired state.

## **Change Leadership Team**

The change leadership team is a group of leaders and key stakeholders with delegated authority to shape the outcomes and the change process. (Depending on the scope of the effort, this team may be the same as the executive team.) The change leadership team will:

- Focus on vision, strategy, and planning of change activities.
- Assure adequate resources.
- Direct and guide communications and course correction during the change effort.

While other teams or directors may be necessary for your change management project, these three are critical to your success. This stage of planning may take more time than others. However, ensuring you have capable, competent, willing team players assigned to each role will have a tremendous impact on the victory of your change effort.



# Tool of the Month

## CHANGE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

There are eight steps to the successful accomplishment of any change management effort. Understanding and effectively implementing these steps is key to ensuring you meet or exceed your goals for change.

XB Coaching's newest workshop, **Change Management: Building Your Change Strategy**, outlines the details of these steps and provides insightful examples and exercises that will help you implement effective change in your organization.

In this workshop you'll learn how to:

- Create Your Vision
- Define Your Leadership and Team Roles
- Identify Resources
- Create Your Change Strategy
- Determine Measurements of Effectiveness
- Develop Your Communication Plan
- Celebrate and Reward Success
- Establish Best Practices

Contact XB Coaching today at 401-682-2859 or [support@xbcoaching.com](mailto:support@xbcoaching.com) for details and registration information.

Every change management program should include timelines and goals. When one is met, spread the word! Rewards and encouragement go a long way to boosting morale and excitement toward the change effort. Hold a special luncheon, give out T-shirts stating the accomplishment, or treat everyone with a movie gift certificate. There are a million inexpensive ways to show you appreciate the team effort.

## INSPIRING, ENLIGHTENING, ENTERTAINING KEYNOTE SPEECHES FROM XB COACHING

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