

CHANGE MANAGEMENT – PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCE

The Components of Change Management

Understanding Resistance is a necessary component of successful Change Management.

Change Management Overview

Many organizations fail to plan or include several critical components when implementing changes to their operations. As a result, even the simplest of changes often encounter resistance, significant delays, and fail when being executed. Management's ability to strategize and create buy-in from key stakeholders often determines the likelihood of successful change management.

Change creates opportunities for employees at all levels of an organization. Unfortunately, many interpret change as a negative and forceful act by Management and fail to recognize and seize the potential upside for both the company and their role. In today's rapidly changing economy, innovation and continuous improvements are necessary for any organization to remain competitive and effective. Leadership in implementing changes is critical for success.

Critical Components for Effectively Managing Change

Although there are many different components required for effectively implementing change based on such factors as industry, economy, competitive environment, and culture, they should all encompass an effective strategy, buy in from key stakeholders and Leaders, pre-defined methods to reduce and eliminate initial employee resistance, and an incentive or healthy competition program to help create excitement to help guide the changes through the initial stages. Most operational changes involve a shift in employee behaviors which are often the most difficult to implement and rely heavily on the change Leaders ability to influence and motivate for the desired results.

Strategy

An effective change management strategy should fully address the following six details:

- 1) **Who** – Clearly identified change Leaders and Team.
- 2) **What** – Strategic objective and goals.
- 3) **Where** – The internal and external environment.
- 4) **When** – Change milestones and timelines.
- 5) **Why** – the purpose of the change and the problem to be solved
- 6) **How** – Detailed implementation process.

Ensuring that each of these areas are addressed and clearly defined creates transparency amongst employees of what to expect as well as the opportunities, impact, and timelines surrounding the change implementation.

Buy In from Key stakeholders

Prior to implementing changes in an organization, it is crucial that all key stakeholders understand and buy-in on the proposed modifications. A positive and unified front by key stakeholders and change Leaders instills confidence throughout the organization and with employees. Top Management buy-in and acceptance ensures alignment between corporate objectives and strategy with any proposed operational changes.

Resistance to Change - Methods to Reduce & Eliminate

When changes in an organization are realized and communicated, fear and resistance among employees are the most commonly felt emotions. Employees typically resist for several reasons such as a fear of the unknown, a lack of understanding of the changes and its implications, fear of failure, or disagreement with the need for change. However, there are several tactics that can be utilized by the change Leaders and Team to help minimize or eliminate the negativity commonly associated with change and focus on the positive opportunities that can arise including:

- 1) Education and clear communication of the changes and implementation plan
- 2) Negotiation
- 3) Facilitation and employee support
- 4) Employee participation and involvement throughout the process.

It is imperative that the change Leader and Team communicate and focus on the opportunities that will arise with the proposed changes and the benefits that will be realized throughout the organization and potential gains for employees.

Incentive & Healthy Competition Program

A successful incentive or healthy competition program can not only help with changes being adopted in the initial implementation phases, but also increase productivity, profits, and employee morale. An incentive or healthy competition program can range from monetary rewards to employee recognition to increased employee empowerment in their day to day responsibilities. While monetary rewards are often the 'preferred' choice amongst employees, it often is not sustainable or a key motivator for continued employee success. Employee recognition and praise of an accomplishment is the most powerful incentive as it creates visibility within an organization and showcases successes.

Conclusion

Many organizations propose and implement changes without actively planning and ensuring all bases are covered which often results in high levels of employee resistance, delays, and failure during execution. Ensuring that a well structured and clearly communicated strategy and plan is developed and key stakeholder's sign off and agree to the proposed changes will help any organization as they attempt to execute and implement the necessary modifications and realize potential gains. ✨