

Change Management: Bracing for Impact

Job as Part of Personal Identity:

How will I do my job? Who will I report to? Will I lose my job? Why do we have to change? What's in it for me? How does this impact me personally?

We work so hard to fit into this world and find the niche we believe was created just for us, when something comes along to threaten that position, how we relate to the familiar environment and even who we interact with, it threatens our place in that niche.

What is Change Management?

The area of Change Management addresses the specific issue of how major changes will impact the rank and file of corporations and obtain a degree of "buy-in" from them. Change Management uses specific communication tools to reach broad audiences and address the issues and feelings of uncertainty that could sabotage any project when all else is progressing smoothly. It is important to have a number of strategies and protocol in place to address the needs and styles of the target audience.

Change Strategies

Four basic strategies include normative, coercive, adaptive and rational. These strategies are geared to meet the various behavioural styles of employees. Where normative seeks to re-educate, coercive utilizes the balance of power, adaptive proposes that people will gradually adapt to new circumstances and rational appeals to self-interest.

However, before you can begin to implement these strategies and protocol you will need to identify key individuals who can give you an idea of what to expect within a given department or section. These individuals will be able to provide insight into which tools will be most useful in their area and you will be able to formulate an action plan to follow. They may also be able to identify specific individuals requiring personal attention and the specific strategy that will help ease them into the idea and process of change.

Based on the strategies and protocol in place, communication tools may include an informational intranet site, Joint Application Development (JAD) sessions, random individual or specific contacts with various departments or sections, and follow-up protocol such as random contacts, online troubleshooting guide and post-change meetings.

Employee Concerns:

- ✓ **Changes in reporting structure**
- ✓ **Changes to proficiency**
- ✓ **Changes to job satisfaction**

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What it Looks Like

It is imperative to address the needs and styles of the individuals within the organization as well as the overall business need in the plan because final implementation and integration is an employee responsibility. While the change itself is initially rolled out by a team of managers and subject matter experts (SMEs), it is the front line employees who will become responsible for maintenance of the new system. By addressing their needs for security, consistency and confidence in their ongoing role within the corporation, the overall transition will be a smoother process with low amounts of resistance.

The practical applications of this are creating a collaborative environment by communicating with all employees. Specifically, you want to let them know the objectives of the organization, how this project meets those objectives, changes they can expect to see in the environment as a result, how they can help with the make it happen, ask for volunteers, give them contact points and a schedule.

Energy Creates Energy

Corporations, like individuals have momentum. Change, managed properly can enhance that momentum and increase the efficiency of both parties. After all, no organization is greater than the sum of the people whose daily dedication and performance maintains the health and vitality of that corporation.

Case in Point

E2 Consulting applied CRRSP on an engagement with a large insurance client. The project started as a 1 year, \$1.2 mil program and was mid-way through year 2 and nearing \$5 mil in spending when E2 got involved. The project team was highly fractured and deep in conflict.

The phase 1A break & fix crippled the project with over 396 critical issues discovered after deployment. This added more pressure and increased the divide by creating oppositional attitudes as team members deflected blame.

E2 resources, pushed for a halt to work on subsequent phases until 1A had been brought under control. We then incorporated specific elements of our IEMO Change Management Methodology and employed them with selected components of the CRRSP methodology to fixing the post-production issues and completing the requirements for phases 1B & 1C.

We held workshops with the business users, developers and testers using the

Tips & Tricks:

- ❖ *Develop internal and external communication plans*
- ❖ *Establish a project website*
- ❖ *Host workshops*
- ❖ *Utilize surveys*
- ❖ *Provide a sense of control*
- ❖ *Use meeting*

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agendas

rough draft of the requirements document and an ambiguity log as our discussion points. The business analysts walked them through the draft and explained the function that each section of the requirements defined (including business rules, workflow, inputs and outputs) and how that mapped back to scope.

The users, developers and testers then addressed how closely the requirements matched the stated goals and exploring possible scenarios through decision tabling, on order to ensure that the whole team was on the same page and that we had accurately mapped the full functioning of the new system.

Results

The team became a cohesive unit working collaboratively on the project and were able to socialize. They each felt heard, important and respected.

From a project perspective, Phase 1B was deployed with only 2 known issues which were immediately rectified, because the team had known about them prior to going live and prepared to address them. It had been determined they could be addressed after implementation since they were data incompatibility issues that only impacted 1 customer record each (residuals from system mergers without adequate data clean-up).

The collaboration and open-door policy of the project team with the business users increased team focus, motivation and user confidence in the product.

Benefits to Client

The clients benefitted from cost savings realizations of \$250,000 for Phase 1B due to the decreased break and fix cycles, elimination of the post production issues, and decreased staffing needs to complete the requirements. Individual team members benefitted from increased self-confidence and job satisfaction. The business benefitted from getting more of the features they needed in the new product designed to support the program.

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