

Change Management: In the Aftermath

Organizational Evolution

Organizations evolve throughout their life cycle the same way that people do. According to Gartner, business evolves from an ad-hoc company in chaos towards managed and optimised organizations. By and large, the most common platform for the implementation of large scale corporate change is a project.

The intrinsic nature of a project is to accomplish this change in as little time and with the least amount of money possible. This alone can leave team members and employees feeling as though they are being swept up in a whirlwind. In like fashion, projects have their own momentum that is more often than not, a world apart from the corporation itself.

With this in mind, it would be easy to understand why change management teams have their work cut out for them. Strong overall strategies and effective consistent communication throughout the process of implementation can result in minimal impact on the corporate culture and employees. Nonetheless, there will be some degree of fallout.

Champions of Change

For instance, when the coercive strategy is utilized and compliance is the only available option, detachment, politeness and courtesy are of the utmost importance so that in time, as the employee becomes more comfortable and versed with the new policies, they will feel that they have regained control and yet not lost any dignity during the whole experience. Surprisingly, they may even become the champions of future changes. However, in order for any future changes to be considered, we have to review those most recent and learn how we can improve on the process in order to ensure that new changes are implemented as seamlessly as possible.

Forensic Assessment

During the process of change, we have the opportunity to learn more about the employee base from their perspective, and the technical side of the project (the tools and approaches that worked best).

From the employee perspective, the change management team needs to assess the level of empowerment and buy-in, overall comprehension of the change itself, how were their roles and duties affected and moreover, what was their level of individual participation in the process? Technically speaking, the team

Organizational Concerns:

- ✓ **Ready adoption of new products & processes**
- ✓ **Maintaining momentum**
- ✓ **Improving or maintaining productivity**

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needs to assess the tools they used both to communicate with the employees and implement the change. Part of the assessment of the implementation tools used, is documentation throughout the process and the other part is to review that documentation afterwards to find what worked best. For example, how often and what kinds of information was accessed from the project website?

In order to fully review the project from the employee perspective, the change management team can use tools such as follow-up meetings, online surveys and mining data from the project website, statistics and information tracked during the process. The most comprehensive project review will utilize a combination of these tools in order to reach as many employees and obtain the most amount of feedback as possible.

Communication as Change Facilitator

Change, in one form or another, is an inescapable part of corporate life as it represents the organization's ability to advance with social and economic change and its ability to respond to the needs of its employees and customers. In order to better understand the implications for future changes to the organization, we need to understand the changes we have made to date, how they affected things like employee and customer loyalty, and what the long term ROI (return on investment) will be. This understanding is simply not possible without two way communication.

Case in Point

E2 Consulting applied IEMO on an engagement with a large gas & energy client. The project started as a 1 year, \$2 mil project to migrate operating systems and convert from WordPerfect and Lotus 123 to MS Word & Excel. E2 got involved at the outset of this project and supported development of the implementation plan. The employee and system base was spread over a geographically diverse region with large differences in levels of computer literacy. We established a communications focal point with intranet, help desk and email presences so that communication could be filtered to the project team for consistent messaging.

E2 resources applied a 360° approach to the implementation by migrating the executives and then communicating the schedule to all employees. One month prior to specific implementation, an email followed advising them of the migration process, training schedules and how they could help.

Tips & Tricks:

- ❖ ***Develop project team communication plans***
- ❖ ***Develop user communication plans***
- ❖ ***Follow through on promises***

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We held workshops with users to understand the volumes and types of documents that would require conversion. For this purpose, we established clear criteria for migrating documents for active or archival purposes. The implementation team was then able to migrate their systems as planned.

Results

For the most part we found that 80% of the employees accepted the changes and simply went about their daily routine. Of the remaining 20%, about 80% of those people just needed more information and then quickly accepted the changes as a part of their routines. Only 20% of the 20% actually needed firm hand-holding and to be guided through the changes. In the end, only one person needed to be coerced by management to migrate.

From a project perspective, the team was free to work on the implementation and this resulted in surpassing client expectations by 10%, conversion of 45,000 documents, migration of 6300 systems, gap analysis and rectifying break-downs in the asset management process and adoption of a document management methodology.

The collaboration and open-door policy of the project team with the business users focused and directed user interactions effectively so that the project team was free to implement and the user community supported the project and adopted the changes more readily.

Benefits to Client

The client benefitted from cost savings realizations of over \$500,000 due to the efficient and systematic implementation and the ability of the team to gain buy-in from resistant employees. Individual team members benefitted from increased confidence and feelings of job security. The business benefitted from rapid adoption, complete asset inventory, and document management policies.

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