

What Exactly is Change Management?

At its heart Change Management is the process of moving an organization and its people, processes and technology from a current state to a desired future state in a sustainable fashion. Authors from Senge (The Dance of Change 1999) to Kotter (Leading Change 1988) to Andersen & Ackerman Anderson (Beyond Change Management: How to Achieve Breakthrough Results Through Conscious Change Leadership 2010) have addressed the subject of change in seminal works, but the question remains, “What is Change Management?”

1

Executive Alignment.

Executive Alignment, or lack of it, is consistently cited as a major cause of failure of large transformational programs. We have defined the seven elements of Executive Alignment to be Vision, Strategy, Objectives, Leader/Follower, Accountability, Investment and Communications – all of which are required for a fully engaged executive team.

2

Stakeholder Assessment

Knowing who the real stakeholders are, their level of commitment and influence is critical to the success of any large transformational program. Stakeholder Assessment, however, is just one of several components that needs to be actively managed in a successful transformation.

3

Business Readiness

Large transformational programs can seek to change many aspects of a company – corporate culture, functional organization alignment, and business operations and processes, to name a few – and at the same time ensure significant ROI for the organization. Successful transformations invest large amounts of time to make the business ready to capitalize on the changes. The change management program itself is simply a vehicle to achieve that.

4

IT Readiness

Similar to Business Readiness, IT Readiness can be an important component of overall transformational change. While Business Readiness is paramount, IT Readiness is often where “the rubber meets the road” in terms of operationalizing new systems and business processes.

5

Communication

Inexperienced change management practitioners tend to focus, sometimes exclusively, on Stakeholder Assessments, Communication and Training. Communication should not be the exclusive focus of a Change Management program. Timely, clear and concise communication can be an accelerator of successful change, but should not be the main focus of a program.

6

Training

In a successful transformational program, Training is a “pull” not a “push” activity. Too often Training is pushed to end-users in a failing program. If the other elements of the transformation have been executed successfully, end-users will want to use the new systems and processes – seeing the benefits of the change and working within the new state of the business.

7

Pre and Post Implementation Support

Only through sustained change is the anticipated ROI of large transformational programs achieved. The key to sustained change is Pre & Post Implementation Support. Small support investments can yield significant returns.

About the Author

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