

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Change management can be defined as *“the process of managing changes that occur because of an event”*. These changes can be attributed to technological changes including new processes or organizational changes including restructuring and mergers. Change management is a systematic approach to dealing with change, both from the perspective of an organization and on the individual level. A somewhat ambiguous term, change management has at least three different aspects, including: adapting to change, controlling change, and effecting change. A proactive approach to dealing with change is at the core of all three aspects. For an organization, change management means defining and implementing procedures and/or technologies to deal with changes in the business environment and to profit from changing opportunities. Change management is not a stand-alone process for designing a business solution. It is the processes, tools and techniques for managing the people-side of change. It is not a process improvement method. Change management is a method for reducing and managing resistance to change when implementing process, technology or organizational change. Change management is not a stand-alone technique for improving organizational performance.

Change management is a necessary component for any organizational performance improvement process to succeed, including programs like: Six Sigma, Business Process Reengineering, Total Quality Management, Organizational Development, Restructuring and continuous process improvement. Change management is about managing change to realize business results.

The rate of organizational change has not slowed in recent years, and may even be increasing. The rapid and continual innovation in technology is driving changes to organizational systems and processes. Witness the startling growth of the Internet, which is enabling much faster and easier access to knowledge. Add to this the increased expectations of employees as they move more freely between organizations. And, of course, globalization has seen the tearing down of previous international market barriers. It is no wonder that relentless change has become a fact of organizational life.

WHY IS CHANGE MANAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

While management design and implement strategies that deliver improvement in performance, they often neglect one key area for success. “Managing the change” Change management is important because understanding this change and its effect on the organization and its people minimizes disruptive aspects and enhances positive opportunities in the change process. These opportunities can include containing costs, realigning resources and respond more quickly to customer demands.

In spite of the importance and permanence of change, most change initiatives fail to deliver the expected organizational benefits. This failure occurs for a number of reasons.

One might recognize one or more of these in organization.

- Absence of a change champion or one who is too junior in the organization
- Poor executive sponsorship or senior management support
- Poor project management skills
- Hope rested on a one-dimensional solution
- Political infighting and turf wars
- Poorly defined organizational objectives
- Change team diverted to other projects

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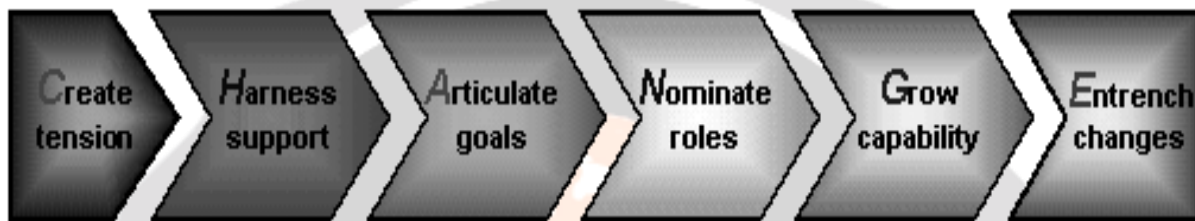
Failed change initiatives leave in their wake cynical and burned out employees, making the next change objective even more difficult to accomplish. It should come as no surprise that the fear of managing change and its impacts is a leading cause of anxiety in managers.

Understanding the organization and matching the initiative to the organization's real needs (instead of adopting the latest fad) is the first step in making the change program successful. Beyond that, recognize that bringing about change is fundamentally about changing people's behavior in certain desired ways. As is apparent from the above list of reasons for failure, lack of technical expertise is not the main impediment to successful change.

Leadership and management skills, such as visioning, prioritizing, planning, providing feedback and rewarding success, are key factors in any successful change initiative.

THE CHANGE MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The approach consists of six phases that successful change programs progress through.



Create tension	Articulate why change needs to happen and why it needs to happen within the planned timeframe.
Harness support	Get on board the key decision-makers, resource holders and those impacted by the change.
Articulate goals	Define in specific and measurable terms the desired organizational outcomes.
Nominate roles	Assign responsibility to specific individuals for the various tasks and outcomes.
Grow capability	Build organizational systems and people competencies necessary for affecting the change.
Entrench changes	Institutionalize the change to make it "the way we do things around here".

STEPS INVOLVED IN CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Three important principles are central to the change management approach:

- Change management is not the goal in itself: it is a means to an end, and the end is an improvement in an organization's performance. It is about effectively managing a process that will lead to an environment where an improvement in performance can be realized.

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- The “targets” of change must play an active role in realizing the change: Successful Change projects will identify and communicate the vision, letting the employees know that they are expected and empowered to play an active role in realizing the planned benefits.
- An organization’s employees are their greatest asset: potentially, they are also the greatest challenge. For a vision to become reality, those at the “coal-face” must believe in the project and have the desire to achieve it.

STEP I: Change Management Planning

Before launching a project, the team should conduct the following:

- **Benefit Identification:** The early identification and agreement to the organizational, functional and personal benefits to be produced from any change programme is essential.
- **Executive Sponsorship:** The programmes must show alignment with senior management’s business objectives. Gaining executive sponsorship and leadership is the first step to verify that the change to be implemented aligns with the business objectives.
- **Readiness Assessment:** An assessment of the readiness of the organization to adopt the changes required will enable a realistic implementation plan to be developed.
- **Benefits Planning:** Having identified the benefits of the programme it is important to structure the plan in a way that demonstrates when and how these benefits will be delivered.
- **Resistance Management:** A major obstacle to successful Change Management is employee resistance at all levels, typically due to; lack of awareness about the change, comfort with the ways things are, fear of losing control or overload of current responsibilities. A strategy will be developed to reduce resistance.

STEP II: Change Management Execution

Once the project has been launched, the project should conduct the following 4 key execution steps.

- **Communications Plan:** If employees know “what” the change is and “why” it’s being implemented, then “how” to implement the change becomes far less challenging. We will develop a carefully structured communications plan to inform the employees about the Change Management programme and how the change will affect them.
- **Implement the Change Management Plan:** We can support the execution of the actions within the Change Management plan, continuously assessing progress and if necessary revising the plan accordingly. where the aim is to equip the employees in the organization with the skills, tools & techniques required for them
- **Education & Training Plan:** A key element of the Change Management plan is the Education & Training plan, to perform an effective role within the organization once the changes have been implemented.
- **Resistance Management:** By actively listening we will constantly monitor feedback on the changes during implementation, to identify any areas where resistance is being encountered.

STEP III: Change Management Reinforcement

Once the project is complete, PMIS can support clients’ through 3 further steps focused upon sustaining the change.

- **Measuring Benefits:** Measuring the benefits delivered by the programme assessing the progress achieved against the objectives identified at the outset.
- **Identify Gaps and Manage Resistance:** If the some of the anticipated benefits have not been realized this may be because of gaps in the actions undertaken or unexpected resistance. The identification of these gaps and resistance will enable the implementation of corrective actions to reinforce the change.
- **Reinforcing Change:** Having achieved the new behaviors, process, practices etc, it is all too common for organizations to slip back to operating and behaving along the original familiar lines.

On a regular basis, monitor the organizational performance relative to the goals of the Change Management project, developing where appropriate corrective actions to reinforce the desired changes.

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CONCLUSION

The approach to change management is to implement change with visible and active executive sponsorship, clear communication, and participative education & training, involved coaches & employees and proactive resistance management. The goal is to ensure that the Change Management project facilitates a smooth transition from the old scenario to the new, with minimum disruption to morale, productivity, output or image.

