



weLEAD Online Magazine

leadingtoday.org
©2007 weLEAD Incorporated

Change Management Strategies: 6 Ways To Take Your Organization To The Next Level With Change Management

By ArLyne Diamond, PhD.



Today's rapidly changing technology, the economy's roller-coaster ride, the constant mergers and acquisitions among companies, upsizing, downsizing and resizing, and, of course, our country's response to terrorism have forced almost all of us to change, in some cases almost daily.

Adapting to new demands is an important mechanism for both personal and organizational survival. Individuals and groups that do it well seem to be more successful than those that resist and accept the inevitable slowly. But change is so difficult and is almost always resisted.

Many ingredients are required to move from the present to your organization's desired change. The process takes time, vision, role modeling, symbols and benefits for all involved. During the necessary incremental transitional changes, motivators and training are necessary. The organization must create an environment that fosters new learning and behaviors -- that "persuades" employees to change.

6 Requirements For Making Organizational Changes In Individuals, Teams, Departments and Divisions:

1. Motivation is essential

Before your employees are really motivated to work at change, they must be convinced of the personal and professional benefits to themselves, as well as to their organization. In addition, management must realize that work will slow during the transitional process. Often temporary help must be brought in or overtime authorized to help get the more mundane tasks accomplished. Learning is often awkward, requiring a great deal of practice before new habits are automated. Practice, of course, means making mistakes and taking time to correct them.

Because of these factors, commitment is mandatory at the highest levels of the organization. Upper management in particular must create a clear, realistic vision. All too often, organizations develop vision statements that are too vague or idealistic. The vision must be something people can buy into. It must be "symbolized" with a theme, and it must have its champions at the highest level of the organization.

Once realistic themes have been developed, upper management must create a mission, goals and objectives specific to individual departments. Then management must sell these missions, goals and objectives to members of the various departments.

2. Procedural and cultural changes require working with the latest tools of persuasion, negotiation and learning.

Persuasion needs a user-friendly approach. User-friendly in this context means giving employees an opportunity to vent, to express their own ideas and to make mistakes. It means that managers involved in the process must remain positive and approachable, and have an encouraging demeanor.

At this point managers should coach and encourage rather than criticize or punish. Self-righteous, critical or condescending behavior will only frighten people back into their old tried-and-true behaviors. In helping employees adapt to new conditions, managers must not assume an "I'm right you're wrong" stance. Workers immediately will become defensive. Moreover, they will tune the managers out, become argumentative or passively resist the changes they're being asked to make.

3. It pays to reward success.

Remember, success builds on itself. By rewarding success, you will create internal champions from among those who are higher risk takers and more aware of the value of the new outcomes. They will become your role models and persuaders. Others will follow them more easily.

4. Promote changes with workshops

Part of the change process involves conducting teambuilding and management development workshops to promote change, get input on needs and work with different management styles.

Keep in mind that people respond better to workshop exercises that have "face validity" -- that is, whose content is related to the work people actually perform. The workshop should combine process and content. Participants must be encouraged to learn more about one another personally, and to build a level of trust. They should be given content-specific tasks to perform together. This will enable them not only to improve their actual working conditions and move toward the desired process or cultural changes, but also to work more effectively with each other in the future.

5. Launch the change management program

While smaller companies and organizations might be able to just dig in and start the process, in larger organizations it may be necessary to create some drama. Thus the firm might want to develop a large-scale kickoff program involving as many people as possible

This all-day affair should be exciting and motivational, and encourage the participation and ideas of all attendees, who should be provided with a means of ensuring their ongoing involvement in the process.

6. Alignment is necessary

Too often, alignment behind a company's goals, objectives, values and beliefs is taken for granted. This is a potentially fatal mistake. So starting from the top, the highest levels within the organization must agree on the values and desired cultural changes. Then they must communicate these and get a buy-in at other levels of the organization. You must ensure that the words and slogans being used have the same meaning across all levels.

When all is said and done, change can be exciting, and if managed correctly, it will be a vital component in the vitality and continued growth of your organization. So go for it!

About the author:

With 30+ years experience in specializing in people and processes in the workplace, Organizational Development and Human Resource Consultant, ArLyne Diamond, Ph.D can teach your management team how to manage your organization effectively and efficiently. For more free tips that will help your organization increase its productivity by cutting the number of conflicts in the workplace in half go to: <http://www.diamondassociates.net/articles/>

This material is copyright protected. No part of this document may be reproduced, in any form or by any means without permission from weLEAD Incorporated. Copyright waiver may be acquired from the [weLEAD website](#).