

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

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Plan Template

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“The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting for the old, but on building the new.”

- The Way of the Warrior, Dan Millman

Change Management Theory

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Reluctance to Change

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- At a fundamental level, people are reluctant to change because they fear the unknown—even when a new path may be advantageous.
- Within organizations, people may be reluctant to change because what they know and value in the organization is based on the status quo—even when the “old” way may present limitations.
- Although a reality, this reluctance is simply one of many issues that a good change management plan will address.

Typical Stages of Change

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- Denial
- Resistance
- Exploration/Interest
- Acceptance

Not everyone enters at the same place or follows the same sequence, but these stages are fairly typical responses to any significant change.

Typical Change Adopter Types

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- Innovators
- Early Adopters
- Later Adopters
- Resisters

Innovators and early adopters are change facilitators. Later adopters are spectators, and resisters are detrimental to the change process.

What is Necessary for Change

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- A Solid Rationale/Purpose
- Supporting Attitudes/Beliefs
- Incentives to Change/Disincentives Not to Change
- Planning
- Communication
- Supporting Processes/Procedures/Systems
- **Leadership**

Key Players

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- Formal/Positional Leaders
- Opinion Leaders
- Gate Keepers
- Innovators/Early adopters
- Resisters

Formal leaders and opinion leaders facilitate change. Gate keepers may support or compromise change efforts and resisters compromise change efforts.

Realities of Organizational Change

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- Change is possible in any organization, but is easier in those where culture supports innovation and change.
- While people are often reluctant to change, most are rational and will ultimately support change if they see a compelling rationale and/or incentive.
- The speed and efficacy of organizational change are inextricably connected to organizational leadership.

The Change Plan

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Three Step Plan

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Step One

- Prepare for Change

Step Two

- Manage Change

Step Three

- Reinforce Change

Preparing for Change

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- Define the change that will occur (and what won't change)
- Identify and prepare the change management team
- Outline a comprehensive communications plan

Creating a Change Management Plan

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Following the identified three step plan, the Change Management team builds an action/project management plan to achieve:

- Awareness, urgency, and commitment
- Specific tasks with individual accountability and timelines
- Follow-up and on-going assessment

Initial/Preparation Tasks

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- Define the nature of the change and identify key elements that will have the greatest impact on the organization and its people.
- Build awareness and urgency around the need for/inevitability of change.
- Assess/articulate the status quo and define specifically how the proposed change will alter the organization.
- Identify the “sacred” and what won’t change.
- Clearly define desired outcomes.

Include all the above in a comprehensive communications plan.

Initial/Preparation Tasks

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- Identify likely points of contention, discomfort, cultural dissonance, etc.
- Identify likely points of improvement, benefit, opportunity, etc.
- Prioritize operational changes based on some tangible framework (ROI, timeline for realizing benefit, path of least resistance, etc.)

Purposefully address and give voice to points of contention and leverage points of improvement in the CM plan.

Implementation Tasks

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- Identify executive sponsor(s)
- Identify early adopters/supporters and co-opt their participation
- Identify opinion leaders (this may not be positional) in the organization and negotiate their supportive participation
- Identify resisters and marginalize them
- Establish communication plan and over-communicate
- Create opportunities for participation/buy-in at all levels

Implementation Tasks

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- Create incentives for participation in and support of change
- Conduct periodic “change updates” and solicit feedback. Discourage participation by resisters.
- Persist
- Generate short-term wins
- Create opportunities to celebrate the old and the new
- Institutionalize change with policy, infrastructure, resources, etc.

Components of the Communication Plan

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The plan must be multi-directional and multi-channel. It is *communication*, not dissemination of information, and should include:

- Clearly articulated rationale for change
- Desired outcomes
- Language of urgency
- Benefits of change to the organization
- Incentives for change for individuals
- Invitation for participation
- Clear explanation of process/what to expect
- Clear explanation of accountability
- On going communications highlighting “wins” and “learnings” from the change process

Reinforcing Change

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- Assess results
- Identify “leakage” and resistance
- Implement course changes or reinforcement of previous strategies
- Re-visit key communication points

Summary

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- Reluctance to change can be overcome with a purposeful, well-implemented change process.
- Keys to success are:
 - An excellent communications plan
 - A change management plan with accountability for specific tasks and time lines
 - Mechanisms for employee participation and buy in
 - Effective use of key players
 - Strong, authentic leadership

If change is the right or necessary thing to do, then the organization will benefit and all stakeholders “win” by focusing energy on the new!

Contact Information

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