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MANAGING CULTURE & ORGANIZATION IS CRITICAL TO CHANGE

By Susan Cohen Butler

There are many factors to consider for successful change. When planning for and implementing change, consider what should the change involve, how will the change impact workflow and technology, who will be impacted by the change, how fast should/can the change occur, what are the costs of change, how will the success of the change be measured, etc. These factors are all important to the process. However, none is more critical than those factors that surround the cultural and organizational change - those changes that impact each and every employee on a personal basis.

It is critical to the success of any transformational project to ensure that people make the required changes in mindset and focus. Those involved in projects tend to forget that for the change around them to be suc-

cessful they must change as well. Similarly, those managing projects tend to overlook personal change factors and focus on the more technical and tangible aspects of the project.

While the project manager and the project team cannot really plan when the personal change will take effect, there are specific factors that help to drive the change throughout the organization. Based on prior experience, ResultWorks has identified five critical success factors (CSFs) that are predictors of how successful a change initiative will be.

Strong executive leadership & commitment

The executives who are serving as the initiative's champions and are driving the change must communicate the reasons behind the change to the organizations involved and to the teams that will be doing the planning and work surrounding the change. It is important to foster the impacted em-

ployees' understanding of the company's strategic direction, the competitive environment, and the business needs driving the change.

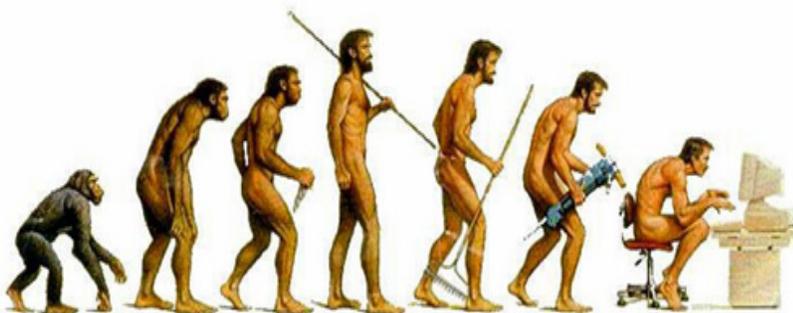
Change Management Critical Success Factors

1. *Strong Executive Leadership*
2. *Aligned & Measureable Goals*
3. *Right Change Team*
4. *Clear Roles & Responsibilities*
5. *Effective Communications & Visibility*

The initiative's sponsors and leadership team must be visible from the beginning and should provide regular reinforcement around the tenets and reasons for change throughout the program implementation. Further, the leadership team must develop clearly defined program objectives and convey a sense of urgency along with the business justification for why it is needed.

Aligned and measurable goals

The goals and objectives for the change initiative must be aligned with the overall organizational strategy and it must be clearly articulated and communicated to the organization. The goals must be measurable and executive leadership and the project team must



define the criteria for measuring progress toward program objectives.

The right change team must be in place

A change initiative's success is directly related to the level of employee involvement in the transformation from inception through implementation and beyond. It is crucial to create an approach to the

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project organization and communication plans that allows for high employee involvement either directly or through communication channels.

It is also essential to identify the right team for the project. Those involved have to have the authority to make decisions around the changes to take place, have insight into the overall workflow that will be affected as well as the larger impacts organizationally. They should also have the respect of the organization from the bench to the leadership team. Typically, ResultWorks looks for change agents, early adopters and organizational influencers to participate in the project. This is particularly important during the definition and engagement phase of the project as this team will set the direction and lay the foundation for the overall project.

Clear roles and responsibilities

Key stakeholders, internal and external, must be identified early in the program. In the absence of other direction, people will continue to operate in the same old way—performing old processes, using old systems, taking on old ownership of issues, etc. New roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined and understood across the organization. The alignment and metrics described above will help to support this. It is likewise important to ensure everyone understands their accountability for their new responsibilities within the changing organization.

Effective communications and visibility

Communication is one of the most critical elements to build buy-in to the change initiative. Successful change projects evaluate the current communications channels, make use of effective communications approaches, and create new channels as appropriate.

It is also imperative to ensure consistency in communications so that conflicting messages are not conveyed to those impacted by the change, either directly or indirectly.

Towards that end, it is useful to build formal and informal feedback channels into the project to allow for employees to share their views and perceptions of the planned changes at strategic times. This feedback must be assessed and responsive so that employees see that their input is considered and valued.

Additionally, the communications plan must be sensitive to corporate culture and the diversity within the

organization and should be tailored to different sites, groups, and functions as needed.

Summary

Culture and organizational issues are among the greatest challenges in managing change. In order to deal with them effectively, there are five critical success factors: strong leadership, aligned and measurable goals, the right change team, clear roles and responsibilities, and effective communications and visibility. Paying attention to these factors are not necessarily guarantees of success, but neglecting any one of these will surely contribute to falling short of objectives.

As Life Sciences companies work to reinvent themselves today, they are spending significant resources to be more effective in bringing new drugs and devices to market. Managing the change process across the organization is fundamental to ensuring that investments in change yield sustainable results. 

For more ideas on how to manage change in your organization, contact ResultWorks.

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