

CHANGE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

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Introduction

Philosophically thinking, change is the only constant in the world. Same as for anything else, this is true for business organizations as well.

Every now and then, business organizations change the way they operate and the services/products they offer. There are new initiatives in organizations and the old ineffective practices are forced to leave.

In addition to that, technology is constantly changing and the business organizations need to par with that as well.

There are many approaches about how to change. Of course, we may all agree that the change is required for an organization, but can we all be in agreement of how the change should take place? Usually not! Therefore, deriving a change management process should be a collective effort and should result from intensive brainstorming and refining of the ideas.

In this tutorial, we will have a look at the change management process suggested by John Kotter. Since this process has shown results for many Fortune 500 companies, Kotter's approach should be considered with respect.

Eight-Step Change Management Process

Let's go through the steps of Kotter's change management approach.

Step 1: Urgency Creation

A change is only successful if the whole company really wants it. If you are planning to make a change, then you need to make others want it. You can create urgency around what you want to change and create hype.

This will make your idea well received when you start your initiative. Use statistics and visual presentations to convey why the change should take place and how the company and employees can be at advantage.

Step 2: Build a Team

If your convincing is strong, you will win a lot of people in favour of change. You can now build a team to carry out the change from the people, who support you. Since changing is your idea, make sure you lead the team.

Organize your team structure and assign responsibilities to the team members. Make them feel that they are important within the team.

Step 3: Create a Vision

When a change takes place, having a vision is a must. The vision makes everything clear to everyone. When you have a clear vision, your team members know why they are working on the change initiative and rest of the staff know why your team is doing the change.

If you are facing difficulties coming up with a vision, read chapter one *Mission and Values* of WINNING, by Jack Welch.

Step 4: Communication of Vision

Deriving the vision is not just enough for you to implement the change. You need to communicate your vision across the company.

This communication should take place frequently and at important forums. Get the influential people in the company to endorse your effort. Use every chance to communicate your vision; this could be a board meeting or just talking over the lunch.

Step 5: Removing Obstacles

No change takes place without obstacles. Once you communicate your vision, you will only be able to get the support of a fraction of the staff. Always, there are people, who resist the change.

Sometimes, there are processes and procedures that resist the change too! Always watch out for obstacles and remove them as soon as they appear. This will increase the morale of your team as well the rest of the staff.

Step 6: Go for Quick Wins

Quick wins are the best way to keep the momentum going. By quick wins, your team will have a great satisfaction and the company will immediately see the advantages of your change initiative.

Every now and then, produce a quick win for different stakeholders, who get affected by the change process. But always remember to keep the eye on the long-term goals as well.

Step 7: Let the Change Mature

Many change initiatives fail due to early declaration of victory. If you haven't implemented the change 100% by the time you declare the victory, people will be dissatisfied when they see the gaps.

Therefore, complete the change process 100% and let it be there for sometime. Let it have its own time to get integrated to the people's lives and organizational processes before you say it 'over.'

Step 8: Integrate the Change

Use mechanisms to integrate the change into people's daily life and corporate culture. Have a continuous monitoring mechanism in place in order to monitor whether every aspect of the change taking place in the organization. When you see noncompliance, act immediately.

Conclusion

In the constantly changing corporate world, the one who welcomes the changes stays ahead of the competition.

If you are not much comfortable with changes happening around you, reserve some of your time to read 'Who Moved My Cheese?' by Dr. Spencer Johnson.

This will tell you the whole story about why the change is required and how you can make use of the change to excel in what you do.

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