

## Simple examples of Change Management-or is that an oxymoron?

Change Management is an interesting topic.

Unless you are doing a really "technical project" like replacing a server, you probably should think about the **Change Management Dimensions** of your project.

### Why?

If your organization is rolling out new processes, software, or integrating a new acquisition, regardless of whether you are an IT -centric project manager or a business/SME-centric project manager, you should stop and think: **Why are we doing this project?**

***I believe you are doing it to help the people who will use the deliverables make the switch.***

Because if they succeed in adopting to the change, then management's expectations of the **strategic value of the project** will more likely be achieved. On transformational-type projects, it also means that people will find:

- The way they used to work has disappeared
- So too have some tasks/processes
- They may be uncertain about what they need to learn, if they will cope, will their job go away?

These changes are not limited to "front line" workers; all levels of management will encounter these changes too, perhaps in varying degrees.

### Some Change Management Techniques

There are many ingredients in the recipe of making a project/transformation program work.

Here are a few experiences I have picked up in my career over many engagements, whether it's a business process re-design, technology strategy and roadmap, or implementing a new ERP/CRM/Accounting system.

### Simple Examples

It's the way you (the reader\*):

- make sure at the start, that the Executive Sponsor introduces the project/ transformation program to the organization and that top management communicate their commitment explicitly and credibly
- evangelize the project, its vision, purpose, goals and timeline along with key members of the organization, especially subject matter experts/product owners
- talk with, not to, people about their pains and their needs; and listen twice as much as you speak.
- answer their concerns about how the new process/system will work
- engage with the skeptics and find out why
- get them to open up and begin to trust you
- tell top management that they have a huge responsibility to practice AND support change; it's not an option for them.
- stay authentic, honest, fair, objective. Always.
- make sure people don't think this is just an "IT project" and lose interest
- make sure the project team members realize their soft skills are really important when working with their stakeholders
- encourage your implementation consultants to be actively aware of change management opportunities, even though they are unlikely to be responsible for delivering it
- make sure that training materials, and trainers, factor in Change Management considerations
- ask top management what recognition (not just monetary) they will give to project team members and how they will react to mistakes and misunderstandings when (not if) they happen
- identify situations that arise which become a great topic for a Change Management action (e.g. learning about fears of staff and arranging a briefing session, or providing them with a guided demo of a prototype)
- ensure that regular communications updates (meaningful ones) are dispersed throughout the organization.

\* a reader may be anyone involved in the program/project who is interested

## How can you ensure Change is managed successfully?

- Firstly, don't expect perfection. But do set the expectation that you and your colleagues will strive to do your best. Mistakes are OK, learn from them, don't criticize.
- Secondly, create an alliance or coalition of people in the organization to help foster change. And budget for it. The value is there.
- Thirdly, measure readiness to change at defined points in the project. And adjust your approaches based on what these surveys/feedbacks indicate.
- Finally, don't do it as an aside to the project. Just don't. Like salt is an ingredient in a stew, change management is part of your program/project activities.

## When should you start working on Change Management?

If your project has started, you're late. But you can catch up. If you're planning your project or program, make sure you plan for change management now.

## Change Management Methods

I especially like the 8 step approach espoused by John Kotter at <http://www.kotterinternational.com/KotterPrinciples/ChangeSteps.aspx>. What elements of it would be especially important in your organization?

### What's your view?

So, what experiences have you had about successful (and failed) change management initiatives? What methods do you find work better? Join the conversation here. Thanks!

## About the author

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**His motto: "Listen Intently, Think Holistically, Ask Incisively"**

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