

CASE STUDY: CHANGE MANAGEMENT

HOW DO YOU GET EVERYONE ONBOARD?

Situation

Considerable time and expense is devoted to the tools of change (Six Sigma, Lean, etc.). While those tools are valuable, success may be far more dependent on the change management approach employed.

One determined individual can sabotage the best of initiatives.

Conversely, an impassioned, engaged team can overcome almost any obstacle.

Consensus is not the goal and may actually work against a team.

Ensuring you have a clear, coherent, and aligned team should always be the focus. While there are many ways to achieve this focus, the critical element is trust. Armed with trust, a team can engage in unfiltered and passionate debate of ideas and issues.

Action

I found two books especially helpful: "Traction" by Gino Wickman and "The Five Dysfunctions of a Leadership Team" by Patrick Lencioni. Additionally, one theme from "Managing Transitions, Making the Most of Change" by William Bridges, is key to success. William suggests that different levels of the organization engage with change at different times. About the time senior leadership has fully embraced a change initiative, the lowest levels of the organization are just hearing about it, and likely not feeling very happy.

Creating a high performing team starts with the senior leadership team and getting agreement on core values, long range and intermediate objectives. Next, you need to get the right people in the right "seats". Subsequent steps include a few measurable objectives for everyone, including junior employees, so that everyone knows what they must do for the organization to succeed.

Result

Change management is about the people. Including and empowering them will yield wonderful results. Losing control of the message, either through poor communications or inattention, will sabotage the best-intentioned change management efforts.

Keys to success:

- Patrick Lencioni identifies 5 dysfunctions which must be overcome to have a successful team:
 - Lack of trust/vulnerability
 - Fear of conflict (artificial harmony)
 - Lack of commitment
 - Avoidance of accountability
 - Individual successes rather than team focus
- Most small to mid-sized businesses should engage a business coach. The most typical response is that the coach won't know the business as well as the current leaders. That is true, but the coach delivers two missing elements. One is capacity; is anyone on your team not already working hard? The second is an impartial, outsider view which is not distorted by internal strife and politics.
- Well-managed meetings are an integral part of sustainable success. All stakeholders should attend and there should be a consistent agenda, including goal review, financial review, issues, cascading messages.



What people are saying....

- *"He is a keen judge of character, able to identify minor changes which might strengthen the performance of a single employee while also understanding broader organizational dynamics and associated opportunities for improvement."**
- *"I met Ed when he helped found a site-wide task force called "The Voice of the Scientist." Ed has facilitated our meetings with a rare mixture of candor, humor, and a clear vision of deliverables."**
- *"Ed led a series of events and meetings designed to meld the group into a cohesive team. I witnessed first hand as Ed coached the group through the difficult early interactions and later as he enforced the structure needed to keep us on track as we organized, mapped out the initial 100 day objectives and successfully executed them."**
- *"Ed's greatest strength is his sincere interest in others, ability to analyze complex situations, and being a trusted advisor."**

* Comments offered by colleagues and managers in an anonymous online survey.