

The Issue: Everything is constantly changing around the world at a breakneck pace. The good old days were last Friday, but now it is Monday and the rules have changed. Yesterday's competitors are today's partners. What was out of the question yesterday is practical today and obsolete tomorrow. If you feel comfortable with your business plan, you probably took too long to develop it. In many organizations by the time you have obtained all the approvals necessary to buy a computer, that computer is obsolete. Structures need to be fluid so organizations can flow around obstacles as though they were not even there. We are evolving from organizations that depended upon capital to drive their success to organizations whose success is primarily dependent upon their knowledge.

In this environment of continuous change things are changing so fast that you probably don't feel comfortable with one change before it is changed again. This means that you need to understand the big picture that defines the direction the organization is going and embraces each change as an opportunity. The winners look at each change as a stepping stone; those who fight change soon find themselves as the foundation upon which everyone else's stepping stones are laid. The difference between "getting by" and "being great" is not what you do, but how you manage the change process.

To bring about the required changes to an organization, the organization needs to understand their business processes, the technology enablers required to change these processes, and the people enablers required to prepare the organization to accept these rapid and drastic changes. Most organizations have some understanding of their critical business processes and employ or have contracted skilled technologists that have mastered the technology enablers. Projects fail not because of inappropriately applied technology, but due to the lack of skilled change agents that are required to prepare the organization to accept these new processes.

Research confirms that as much as 60% of the change initiatives and other projects fail as a direct result of the fundamental inability to manage their social impacts. (Gardner Group)

The Solution: It is important to realize that change is a process and can be managed much the same as any other process. It is a process of moving from a current state through a transitional period that is very unstable to a future state that is supposedly improved. It is absolutely essential that we realize that resistance to change is normal and should be expected.

At Harrington Institute we use a nine-phase process to implement effective change management:

1. Defining which changes need to be managed.
2. Defining the pain related to the status quo.
3. Establishing clear visions of the future state.
4. Developing sponsor commitment from the top to the bottom.
5. Developing a change structure.
6. Preparing the individuals and management to understand the emotions related to change.
7. Aligning the change with the organization's culture.
8. Preparing a risk management plan.
9. Sustaining communication and knowledge gathering.

There are many things that impact an organization's ability to undergo change. Our change agents understand the personal side and have surveys and other tools that they use to identify roadblocks to change and eliminate them. They will work with your key personnel and turn them into change masters. When change is managed correctly, you will know it. When it is time to implement the change, your people will be saying: "Let me show you how to make it work." Not "let me tell you why it will not work."

For additional information on Organizational Change Management, other consulting engagements or to request a price quote, please contact Tom Quinn at tquinn@harrington-group.com or call 407-ISO-9000.