
10 Tools for Change Management



Technology, rising competition and consumer trends are only some of the many challenges that companies have to deal with in today's ever-changing business environment. In this kind of environment, the ability to adapt to change becomes imperative. Successful companies, as Harvard Business School professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter has noted, develop "a culture that just keeps moving all the time."

Top executives involved in transformation conventionally focus their attention on devising the best strategic and tactical plans. But to succeed, they should also look at the human side of change management — the alignment of the company's culture, values, people, and behaviours — to encourage the desired results, according to an article published in *strategy+business* website. Leadership teams that fail to plan for the "soft" side of change often find themselves wondering why their best-laid plans have gone awry.

The online article provides a "**Top 10**" list of tools and techniques to help companies transform quickly.

- 1. Address the "human side" systematically.** Any significant transformation creates "people issues." When jobs are changed, new skills and capabilities must be developed. This creates uncertainty among employees and they become resistant. A formal approach for managing change — beginning with the leadership team and then engaging key stakeholders and leaders — should be developed early, and adapted often as change moves through the organisation.
- 2. Start at the top.** Change is inherently unsettling for people at all levels of an organisation, so it's understandable that they will look to the CEO and the leadership team for support and direction. The leaders themselves must embrace the new approaches first, both to challenge and to motivate the rest of the organisation. They must speak with one voice and model the desired behaviours.
- 3. Involve every layer.** Change efforts must include plans for identifying leaders at each layer of the organisation. These leaders who are identified and trained must be aligned to the company's vision, equipped to execute their specific mission, and motivated to make change happen.
- 4. Make the formal case.** Individuals are inherently rational and will question to what extent change is needed or whether they want to commit personally to making change happen. This can be avoided if a formal case for change is articulated — ie, a written vision statement. Leaders must then customise this message for various internal audiences, describing the pending change in terms that matter to the individuals.
- 5. Create ownership.** Leaders of change programmes must be willing to accept responsibility for making change happen in all of the areas they influence or control. Ownership is often best created by involving people in identifying problems and crafting solutions. It is reinforced by incentives and rewards. These can be tangible (for example, financial compensation) or psychological (for example, camaraderie and a sense of shared destiny).
- 6. Communicate the message.** The best change programmes reinforce core messages through regular, timely advice that is both inspirational and practicable. Communications flow in from the bottom and out from the top, and are targeted to provide employees the right information at the right time and to solicit their input and feedback.
- 7. Assess the cultural landscape.** Cultural diagnostics can assess organisational readiness to change, bring major problems to the surface, identify conflicts, and define factors that can recognise and influence sources of leadership and resistance. They serve as the common baseline for designing essential change elements, such as the new corporate vision, and building the infrastructure and programmes needed to drive change.
- 8. Address culture explicitly.** Once the culture is understood, it should be addressed as thoroughly as any other area in a change programme. Leaders should be explicit about the culture and underlying behaviours that will best support the new way of doing business, and find opportunities to model and reward those behaviours.
- 9. Prepare for the unexpected.** No change programme goes completely according to plan — ie, people react in unexpected ways, the external environment shifts and so on. Effectively managing change requires continual reassessment of its impact and the organisation's willingness and ability to adopt the next wave of transformation.
- 10. Speak to the individual.** Change is both an institutional journey and a very personal one. Individuals (or teams of individuals) will react to what they see and hear around them, and need to be involved in the change process. Most leaders contemplating change know that people matter. It is all too tempting, however, to dwell on the plans and processes, which don't talk back and don't respond emotionally, rather than face

up to the more difficult and more critical human issues.

Source: [strategy+business](#)

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