

Skidmore Consulting LLC

Innovation + Leadership + Marketing

White Paper:

Leadership Principle: Change Management

Sarah Skidmore, MA

sarah@skidmore-consulting.com



Change Management

Many factors can affect shifts and transformations within an organization. As a leader grows within an organization, vertical job changes, horizontal job promotions, and expanded responsibilities affect one's involvement in corporate decisions. One's leadership skills, or lack thereof, play an extraordinary role in the success or demise of an organization.

In addition to a leader's involvement in change are the variety of external and internal factors. For example, organizations face change due to the economic climate, which can be directly impacted by political systems, governments, globalization, and other outlying factors. Change is not necessarily associated with just a positive or negative consequence, but rather a complex mix.

Depending on the type of change, a leader may be placed in a reactive or proactive role when responding to change. And, depending on the situation, a change may be either pushed or pulled by the leader. A leader may be in a situation where she is willingly implementing the change; and at other times, she may be forced to enact change.

Regardless, this is where the role of a change manager becomes vital for organizations seeking to leverage change as a competitive advantage.

What is Change?

Though the definition of change is quite basic, it is a phenomenon that is extremely difficult to accept and implement.

A change often proves to be a discomfoting experience and leads to resistance, where a leader plays the pivotal role of making this experience as seamless as it can be by shared vision and an active support of Change Agents or Change Manager.¹

When thinking about change, there are several criteria that a change manager must consider. These criteria include:²

- Identifying the area where the change is required,
- Creating awareness about the need for change,
- Suggesting ways to apply the change,
- Executing the change,
- Helping people in adjusting with the change and
- Dealing resistance to change.

Change within an organization is often not synonymous with additional resources; thus, individuals within an organization must use the same resources they currently have – capital, budget, and personnel – to meet new or differing organizational demands.

There are several components that an individual works through when dealing with change, including:

- Personal feelings,
- Rational understanding, and
- Reactionary behavior.

As change is happening, it is vital that all individuals rely on critical thinking when accepting, implementing, and evaluating change.

¹ Abbas, 2014

² Abbas, 2014

Implementing Change

Identifying necessary change is just the initial step, implementing change is where a change manager must overcome serious challenges. Communication with individuals from an upward, lateral, and backward perspective is paramount to ensure everyone is working towards the same goal.

Individuals often face insecurities during times of change that can manifest itself through fear and a leader must walk individuals through this process. Investing in personnel is vital during times of change as retention, recruiting, and empowering individuals demonstrates appreciation in the organization's workforce.

Gaining an initial win at the forefront of the change implementation serves as a catalyst for the team to build momentum upon. And, understanding that conflict will arise and knowing how to handle that conflict is another important factor with successful implementation. When implementing change, overcoming these challenges aim to minimize resistance from other team members.

Success with Change Management

Change management requires effective implementation of a specific strategy. Key aspects of success for change managers includes:

- Actively guiding the team through the shift and transformation and
- Facilitating involvement will all team members.

Both of these aspects require two-way communication among all individuals in order to promote awareness and acceptance.

As a leader within an organization, a change manager must understand that change will eternally be part of organization life. Though leaders differ in individual leadership style, managing change can be successful regardless. Change processes may include

- Analysis
- Design
- Support
- Coalition-building
- Inspiration, and
- Creating experience.

In order to implement successful change, a leader can use these leadership processes to aid in:³

- Developing a change strategy,
- Executing the change communication,
- Carrying out elements of change implementation,
- Acknowledging those who have made the transition, and
- Accessing progress.

Change does have multiple components and a successful change manager is able to act accordingly.

³ Wilson, 2014, p. 39

For more information, please contact Sarah Skidmore at sarah@skidmore-consulting.com.



About the Author

Sarah Skidmore, Chief Strategist at Skidmore Consulting LLC, brings innovative and transformative thought to non-profit organizations and for-profit businesses. Guiding executive leaders, she delivers forward-thinking strategies founded on integrity. She spurs the creative application of theory & strategy for leaders and organizations seeking to enhance their competitive advantage. Sarah serves as a consultant, freelance writer, and speaker for industries including plastics, construction, medical & pharmaceutical, food & beverage, and consumer products. Sarah is pursuing a Doctor of Strategic Leadership from Regent University.

References

- Abbas, M. (2012). Effective Change Management. *Pakistan Business Review*, 14(3), 653-662.
- Abbas, M. (2014). Key to Sustainability: Embracing Change. *Pakistan Business Review*, 16(3), 516-541.
- Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (1991). Leadership and Management Effectiveness: A Multi-Frame, Multi-Sector Analysis. *Human Resource Management*, 30(4), 509-534.
- Fellman, S. (2014). Prosopographic Studies of Business Leaders for Understanding Industrial and Corporate Change. *Business History*, 56(1-2), 5-21.
- Park, K. O., & Koh, C. E. (2015). Effect of change management capability in real-time environment: an information orientation perspective in supply chain management. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 34(1), 94-104.
- Piper, A. (2016). THE CHANGING BUSINESS WORLD. *Internal Auditor*, 73(1), 58.
- Raisiene, A. G. (2014). Leadership and Managerial Competences in a Contemporary Organization from the Standpoint of Business Executives. *Economics And Sociology*, 7(3), 179-193.
- Wilson, J. (2014). Managing Change Successfully. *Journal Of Accountancy*, 217(4), 38-41.