

## Managing Organisational Change

Managing organisational change is complicated. Leaders must align people to the reason for the change, often working against long-standing habits and beliefs. Organisations are more likely to succeed when they plan change initiatives proactively and engage employees before, during and after the change. Below are the seven ways leaders can effectively manage change in their organisations.

### 1. Put people first

Successful change management prioritizes people. People fuel change and sustain its momentum. Change initiatives fail when the people involved don't understand, believe in or engage in the change.

Leaders make change easier when they engage employees in the change. Leaders accomplish this through proactive change management communication that creates a desire to change across the workforce.

This aligns with the Prosci change methodology, Beehive's change model of choice. Prosci's methodology is based on more than 20 years of research, with 45,000 people trained and certified globally, making it a strong option for global businesses.

Change initiatives will fail if people don't believe in the change and aren't mobilized by others to act.

### 2. Work with a change management model

Leaders are up against company culture, organisational momentum and human psychology when enacting change. To make change happen, they need the right tools to guide them. Change management models help leaders connect business strategy to action, which increases the likelihood of success.

There are a variety of change management models from which to choose (e.g., Prosci's ADKAR model, Lewin's Change Management Model, Kotter's Change Management Model). Each model varies, but all follow similar core tenants of identifying needs and planning for and implementing change.

Prosci's methodology is Beehive's change management model of choice because it:

- 1) blends the psychology of individual change with organisational change,
- 2) is globally backed with more than 20 years of research and
- 3) clearly addresses the role of communication in change.

### **3. Empower employees through communication**

Communication is an essential part of effectively managing organisational change. A vision for change is only as powerful as the communication that supports it. Effective change management communication provides clarity for why the change is needed and mobilizes employees with a sense of urgency for the change. Companies fail to drive meaningful change when they fail to communicate.

Change management communication isn't a one-time transfer of information. It requires commitment, clarity and consistency. It should engage employees through two-way communication methods like surveys, focus groups and informal feedback collection. When leadership involves employees, they feel valued. When employees feel valued, they are more likely to embrace change and participate in making it happen.

Two-way communication also helps leaders identify barriers to change before they become a problem. Proactively identifying barriers can enable the organisation to respond to and dissolve issues that create change resistance.

### **4. Activate leadership**

A recent Prosci survey cited "active and visible executive sponsorship" as the top reason change initiatives succeed. Leadership's impact on change is well-understood. The problem is that many leaders don't understand the vital role they play in change. Educate leaders on their roles, and you'll enable them to advance change successfully.

#### **Leaders:**

- are responsible for achieving change goals from start to finish.
- help the organisation understand and interpret what the change means for their teams, the organisation and the marketplace.

- ensure those who enable organisational change stay actively involved.
- keep the train on the tracks and are ready to switch directions, choose a new path or create a new approach if necessary.

### **5. Make change compelling and exciting**

Employees can better understand the rationale behind a change when organisations prioritize purposeful, clear and consistent communication. This targeted communication strategy provides the context to understand the why, what and so what of the change. Effective communication answers the most important question people are thinking: What does this mean to me; how will it impact my work? With a deeper, clearer understanding of the change, employees are much more likely to ask, “How can I help?”

The shift from rote compliance to true engagement and belief is powerful. Strong employee support deters change resistance that could hold the organisation back.

### **6. Pay attention to high and low points in momentum**

There will be both high and low points during change initiatives. Leaders can proactively manage and leverage these points in time. During the high points of change, leaders should celebrate wins to fuel momentum. At the low points, leaders can reset communication strategies to listen to employee input and build trust and support. Being proactive helps leaders manage momentum for the greatest success.

### **7. Don't ignore resistance**

Change resistance is poisonous to an organisation's transformation. Resistance is much easier to counter when it's identified early. Leaders should pay attention to the signs of change resistance, including inaction, procrastination, withholding information and the spread of rumors. Communication is the key to identifying resistance. Create feedback loops with employees, like surveys, feedback channels and input sessions to proactively identify signs of resistance, then take fast action.

Change is the lifeblood of successful, growing organisations, and the heart of change is people. Leaders position themselves and their companies for



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managing organisational change effectively when they proactively engage employees and ensure communication is clear, consistent and transparent.