

"...often the best ideas come from cutting across disciplinary boundaries and looking into other fields for new ideas. And...nothing will make a field stagnate more quickly than keeping out foreign ideas." Roger von Oech

Change Leadership Thought Topics You Want Us To Do –What? Implementing Change: Tips from the Front Lines

The following tips are based on our experiences in helping thousands of people in client companies implement change successfully.

- ✓ Change, by its very nature, is dynamic. Quality principles and other change guidelines are philosophies not ideologies. Both provide direction, but a philosophy can be flexible according to the circumstances. An ideology tends to be more rigid, which can make it difficult to entertain new ideas or a different way of doing things.
- ✓ Focus on changing attitudes. When attitudes change, behaviors change. Remember that it takes approximately 15 contact hours to learn a skill or gain knowledge. It takes 45 contact hours to develop new attitudes.
- ✓ Educate as well as train. Share articles with staff and encourage staff to do the same.
- ✓ Form book clubs and discussion groups that meet monthly. Invite speakers who inspire staff to focus on doing the right thing not just doing things right. Go slowly -build in some time for reflection.
- ✓ Build change efforts on attaining your vision, not on avoiding a crisis. Crisis-based change tends to disintegrate as soon as the crisis abates. Build a strong, positive vision of your future possible selves and revisit it often.
- ✓ Revisit these questions frequently: What is the aim of your organization? What is your mission? What do you exist to do? What are your core beliefs about the best way to pursue this mission? Why are we doing this? Is this in line with the established purpose of the organization? Where's the supporting data?
- ✓ Before making change, examine and address the effects of this change on all parts of the system. Much change is episodic in nature, proceeding from event to event without looking at how these different events affect the entire system.
- ✓ Become data driven. Continuously ask How do you know? Compared to what? Where's the evidence?
- ✓ Be clear about expectations and develop early indicators that show expectations are being met successfully

- ✓ Don't assume you know what your customers want, ask them. Survey often - especially your lost customers. When you design survey questions, ask respondents how important as well as how much they liked an item. Remember that you can (and should) negotiate with and educate your customers. You can't ignore them or forget about them.
- ✓ Continuously work at building and maintaining support among all groups involved in the change. Make a comprehensive list all of all of these groups. Who are the stakeholders? Who are the customers? Who must change? Who will be affected by the change? Try to develop champions for change in each of these groups.
- ✓ Develop a common language for communicating change. Today all issues of significance depend on building constituencies that cross over traditional boundaries. To prevent a lack of understanding or mis-communication, check to see that all groups understand the language of Change. Are they using the same terminology to describe Change? Do they all understand these terms in the same way?
- ✓ Just because people are in teams and getting things done doesn't mean that they are working well together. Watch the communication flow, seating arrangements, and body language. Who wants to please whom? Is everybody participating? Do team members keep on proposing and counter-proposing ideas or do they build-on and add-to the ideas of others? How do they handle divergent points of view? Have an independent observer check this out. If there is a need for changing the power structure or how people interact, it is usually best to have an objective outsider be the lightning rod.
- ✓ Work on developing conviction and be wary of consensus. Consensus often is built on compromise. What we see too often is that when the going gets tough (and it always does), those who are convinced and committed will stay the course and find ways to make things work. Those who agreed, but were not committed, will form an I told you so group, back out and even become a negative force.
- ✓ Change takes place over time and in stages. Focus on supporting early adopters. Help them succeed. Don't get thrown by occasional backtracking. Remember your vision. Gather data. Revisit your plan in light of these data. Make adjustments as needed and stay the course.

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