



CHANGE MANAGEMENT – A PROCESS NOT A PROJECT

In the last issue, I touched on whether change management has been forsaken by information management vendors for a number of reasons. These included the unknown quantity of change activities, and the difficulties in defining success and measuring results making change management an awkward solution to package, cost and market.

Other reasons for forsaking change management: - there are few resources that deal with change management and fewer relating to changing information management practices; vendors and project staff find it difficult to influence the internal environment; many lack experience in internal selling etc. the list is endless.

Nevertheless change management is still an essential element for successful implementation and both vendors and their customers need to be closely involved with all of the various aspects of change management to influence the outcomes.

This article looks at some of the essential elements of change management that should be considered, presented in jargon the industry should understand.

Change Management – A B2B Activity

B2B = Back to Basics.

There are no magic bullets or tricks here, only simple tried and true concepts that have worked since Adam was a cowboy, and that tend to get left behind in the need to save time, cut corners, and reduce costs.

1. Consult at all levels, at all stages of the project. Consult about what is happening, why is it happening, how is it happening and to whom it is happening and what the effects will be? Consultation is a two way process – you will benefit as much as the people you consult with.
2. Involve staff at all levels and at all stages. Throughout the process you will identify people who want to be involved. Incorporate and use them in your team in meaningful ways. These people are your change agents and internal sales force.
3. Communicate regularly to keep people informed and up to date with progress; to provide advance notification of change. You will need to structure a range of different communication methods as people receive messages in many different ways.
4. Provide a genuine range of training options that address the different ways in which people learn and take-up new systems.
5. Provide feedback mechanisms – so that people can express their views and be heard. Make feedback forms available and list all issues in a database so that they can be followed through to a satisfactory conclusion. Remember that issues aren't resolved until they are resolved to the satisfaction of the initiator.
6. Make management endorsement of the process obvious. This can take many forms including management introductions at meetings and presentations, and management contributions including sign off on all forms of communications.
7. Schedule regular agenda items so that the new system and its progress can be discussed at all relevant meetings, up to and including board meetings.



The KISS Principal of Change

KISS = Keep it Systematic and Sustained.

Make change management a process not a project. Your change efforts should be ongoing and persistent. Recognise that change creates distrust. Therefore the challenge is to build up stores of trust to overcome this. Regular and predictable change efforts will assist in building trust and will reinforce commitment to your information management systems.

A Change Management Strategy is an essential tool to help you develop and maintain systematic and sustained change efforts. The above change efforts should be scheduled and incorporated into all project planning associated with the new system. Not only will this assist with resourcing and costing but will also provide a tangible and visible focus to your change management efforts.

Next – Developing a Change Management Strategy.

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