People Biz, Inc.

PEOPLE DON'T RESIST CHANGE; THEY RESIST BEING CHANGED

TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION

Guiding change may be the ultimate test of a leader; no business survives over the long term if it can't reinvent itself and adapt to its changing environment. But, human nature being what it is, fundamental change is often resisted by most of us until there is a crisis of sorts. Usually, by the time leadership sees the need for change, those most affected are at the mercy of a potentially career altering situation. As a leader, leading change is both absolutely essential and seemingly difficult. The most effective leaders realize change is always happening and that change management isn't an event with a beginning and an ending. They embrace "best practices" that can be adopted and repeated with every team and organization at any level. Let's just assume for the sake of this conversation that your organization is now at a point when you need to make change official.

The steps below are not necessarily linear. In most cases, you will want to create a system of cycling through all the steps as you are leading a change initiative.

Step one:

What is the gap?

Define the growth and change desired, not the problem.

- Where are we now (size, service, product, revenue, geography, experience, talent)?
- Where do we want to be and what does it look like when we have arrived (size, service, product, revenue, geography, experience, talent)?
- What will the impact of the change be?
- What is our overall business strategy? Does it stay the same?
- Why is it urgent? Or what will happen if we don't change?

Step two:

Engage key leaders. Be careful because this doesn't always mean positions or roles. Consider all of your people, especially individual contributors or middle managers. Research shows that change happens in the middle, if you ignore this fact you will likely encounter many avoidable issues. Answer these questions.

- Who is fully engaged?
- Who has an obvious ability to focus on the organization over and above their own team or department?
- Who is articulate and curious?

- Who is highly sought after for informal counsel?

Step three:

Create a team to define a vision with relevance and meaning. When your people can see how the change contributes to business success, individual success, the company vision, and the execution of strategy to achieve the vision, they perceive the change as relevant. This big picture view gives the change purpose, and raises the awareness of all your people. Leaders are responsible for ensuring stakeholders have this larger understanding. They must communicate to employees, in the employee's own terms, the relevance and meaning of each change effort occurring in their organization. In other words, your people are the levers for change.

- Create your team from your people assessment. Focus on no more than 20 people and no less than ten people to start.
- Facilitate and collaborate a written list of overall objectives, strategies and key messages that shape the vision brought by the desired change.
- Practice articulating the change, the vision, the impact and the process moving forward. Consider "what's in it" for all stakeholders. Make sure to include why it is urgent and why you are changing.
- Don't rush this process; every member of your team should be able to articulate a compelling picture of the future and in numerous ways for your different audiences (investors, employees, customers etc.). A well-articulated vision ties the organizational vision with the individual's desire and vision. This takes training and ongoing practice.
- Consider hiring a trained facilitator to manage this process. Having an objective facilitator to prepare your leaders is a very smart way to engage outside support.
- Have each team member identify who they will be communicating the vision to and when.
- Formalize your communication strategy after you have gone through this process.

Step four:

Don't just tell them, show them. People believe what they see. Implement changes in a strategic and methodical way. Your organization will better understand your case for change and the desired outcomes of your overarching initiatives as logical extensions of your business strategy when it is illustrated plainly. This will go a long way toward building understanding within your workforce about the needs of your business, motivating action where it counts, and streamlining the amount of organizational change happening at one time. A lot of change initiatives fail because your workforce does not actually see the incremental progress towards the change. Or, initiatives get dropped without appropriate communication, creating morale issues.

- Identify the highest leveraged changes based on your business strategy and resources first, and then describe those change initiatives to your organization in ways that overtly link them to the realities of the market place and your key business objectives.
- Illustrate and map this plan out in a model for all to see so everyone is clear.
- Evaluate with your team how many major change efforts are underway in your organization.
- When getting started, ask yourself and your team these questions:

- o Do we have a mechanism in place to list and track all of the significant change efforts in the organization?
- o Are the organizational changes underway all necessary to the business' strategic direction?
- o Do we have a mechanism in place to ensure that we have the right change efforts to deliver on our business strategy?
- o Are they prioritized and resourced accordingly?
- o Are we clear on how a major change effort gets added to our change agenda?
- o Do we have a way to ensure that low priority changes do not get started ahead of high priority ones?
- o Do we have a way of managing our organizational change resource expenditures to ensure maximum ROI?
- o Do we have a way to identify what should be taken off of our change agenda as priorities shift?
- o Do we have the capacity to undertake and succeed in the key changes on your agenda?

Step five:

Environment Rules! With your team, assess your environment, structures and processes that are *not* consistent with who and what your organization is becoming. Examine all threats and barriers to the vision being realized.

- Assess your "sacred cows". What is redundant, complicated, outdated or inconsistent with the vision?
- Create tools, agendas, timelines, meeting plans and shared platforms for tracking each structural change and **measuring everything**.
- Re-visit progress consistently and align on steps moving forward.
- Celebrate small wins as well as big changes in the process with the entire organization. Tie each win to the overall vision and objective.
- Keep telling people what is happening and why; practice communicating steps moving forward before leaving each meeting.

Step six:

Encourage Leadership Modeling. What got you here won't get you there especially when it comes to culture. Leaders must be willing to develop themselves or change their mindsets, behavior, or style to overtly model the changes they are asking of the organization.

Organizational culture is the collective mindset of an organization. It is the pattern of widely shared (often unconscious) assumptions, beliefs and values that form the basis of people's ways of being, relating and working, as well as the organization's interaction with its environment and its success within it. Essentially, organizational culture determines "how things are and how things get done around here." While somewhat intangible and hard to address pragmatically for most leaders, organizational culture permeates virtually every aspect of an organization. It dictates what decisions are made and how they are made, the way

structure, systems and business processes are designed and executed, and the behavior of leaders and staff all are influenced by the existing organizational culture.

In transformational culture, the new strategy we endorse, structure, systems, processes and/or technology that are being implemented, are so different from the current state that they require people to adopt new ways of being, working and relating in order to perform effectively. Without these new ways of being, the new state does not come to life and deliver the performance edge for which it was designed. When organizational culture is mentioned as a factor needing attention in a change effort, leaders respond with, "We don't have the time or desire to deal with this 'soft stuff'!" Typically, they delegate it to HR. If leaders see change as strictly "organizational," and ignore the human and cultural dimensions, it is a recipe for failure. As one of our leaders Paula Fracasso likes to say "there is nothing soft about soft skills".

In order to shift organizational culture, or make any sort of change, leaders must want it, commit to it and fully participate to make it happen. They intentionally design the new culture to deliver what the business strategy requires for success and see that the changes take place.

Organizational change sticks to the degree that leaders overtly model it. If you want a high performing team-based organizational culture, then the leadership team must become one with this new way of being. If you want collaboration across boundaries, then the leaders must collaborate themselves. If you want a learning organization, then leaders must promote learning through active debriefs and best practice sessions, rather that delivering reprimands for failure.

- With your leadership team, identify what behaviors and practices could be reinforced, rewarded and measured to see a total transformation of your organization.
- Design training and coaching program to support your leaders in transforming themselves before expecting your workforce to adopt.

In summary , when that time for reinvention and adaptation approaches, define what changes need to take place for the desired outcome to occur, and remember to take into account key leaders' opinions (those at every level). With a core team, define your vision clearly and with meaning. Lead the way for change by practicing what you preach and modeling the change efforts clearly. Take into consideration your environment to plan around obstacles and celebrate successes. Make sure your team is clear as to why change is happening, take steps to ensure that they can see the progress they are making, and provide them with an understanding of the vision propelling them forward. People don't resist change; they resist "being" changed. Rather than forcing your team into change, invite them along for the ride.

Alicia Marie, Founder and Managing Director of People Biz, Inc., has become a national leader in the field of leadership development. She founded People Biz, Inc. in 2000 with the intention of providing total personal and professional development solutions for individuals, teams and organizations. She specializes in creating customized programs based on desired outcomes that include learning vehicles such as training, professional coaching and consulting.