



The Human Dimension

THE LEADER WITHIN

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We work with executives and their teams who are challenged by complex issues, changing directions and increasing workloads.

We find improved performance is the reward for your investing in people.

The emphasis in THE LEADER WITHIN is on the changes and growth we make within ourselves, as leadership is basically a personal growth experience over time.

'For things to change first I must change.'

Change? A failure to communicate...

One of the key reasons the changes we envisage or intend are unsuccessful is that we fail to communicate effectively.

Change does not invariably result from large scale restructures – it can come from a new outside appointment or you taking on a new role. It may result from a review of your business plan or from conversations in a management retreat or team review day.

Typically in today's workplace change is endemic and constant. The problem is that while we acknowledge this, we fail to implement a communication change plan which works.

An effective change plan would contain the following.

1. Begin by reviewing your current strategic plan and any business plans which stem from this. Are they up to date and reflect your current thinking and priorities. Do the plans show the way forward and account for new and emerging trends? If not, then take time out to review and update your current plans as these are the starting point and provide a platform on which to initiate reforms or change.
2. Spend sufficient time to develop a broad framework change strategy which covers:
 - what you wish to achieve,
 - when you expect certain results,

- how this will be done,
 - who will be responsible,
 - the approach and process you intend to use to effect change.
3. Discuss what you intend with your leadership team and identify what will be different as a result of the changes. What will be the outcomes and what different behaviours do you expect to observe once some of the strategies are implemented.
 4. Think about the implications and impact on the present roles, priorities, culture and present work practices. What do you want to stay the same and what do you want be different?
 5. Know your responses to the typical questions which will come up and develop contingency plans and options for different scenarios which might eventuate as the change is implemented. You have to show you have thought about some of this as what you propose affects people's work and lives. You may not have all the of the answers – in fact you won't – however better to say, *'I have thought about that and what I can say is ...'*
 6. Communicate continually around the following:
 - a. Explain the rationale for the change,
 - b. provide background and context,
 - c. have answers to the following questions
 - *Will I keep my job?*
 - *How will pay and benefits be affected?*
 - *How will this affect my opportunities for advancement?*
 - *Will I have a new boss?*
 - *What new skills will I need?*
 - *What will be expected of me?*
 - *How will I be trained / supported for the new challenges?*
 - *How will I be measured?*
 - *What are the rewards or consequences?*
 - d. be able to identify at least the larger outcomes you intend,
 - e. explain the intended process, clarify your expectations,
 - f. build early commitment and look for those who are ready to embrace change,
 - g. engender ownership - so allow conversations, debate and questions, involve others to resolve dilemmas and inconsistencies and respond to duplication which invariably arise,
 - h. be clear on what is negotiable and what is not, where is the flexibility and what can people influence,
 - i. reward and acknowledge new desired behaviour.

7. Maintain energy, focus and momentum, (establish a guiding coalition, and incorporate the early adopters).
8. Identify success as well as blockages – make any adjustments and constantly check progress against your intended outcomes.
9. Embed the changes you intend to keep – keep what works and discard what doesn't. Systematise, support new behaviours, shape the future desired organisational culture.
10. Capture and implement new behaviours and ideas which arise from the creativity and energy being generated.

Call to Action:

The future focus – here is what your change communication needs to keep in mind:

1. Human factors in the workplace are increasingly important as the pace of change and the knowledge explosion accelerate.
2. Several decades worth of research studies identify team building, adapting to change, being a change catalyst and leveraging diversity as critically important in today's competitive environment.
3. The days of life-long employment and meritocracy are fading. Today, internal qualities such as resilience, initiative, optimism, and adaptability are increasingly required.
4. A national survey of employers in the USA revealed that, for entry-level workers, specific technical skills are less important than the ability to learn on the job. Next in importance were: listening and oral communication, adaptability and creative responses to setbacks and obstacles, personal management, confidence, motivation, initiative and pride in one's accomplishments.
5. A similar study of corporations' requirements for in-coming MBAs identified the three most desired capabilities as communication skills, interpersonal skills and initiative.
6. Harvard Business School identified empathy, perspective taking, rapport and cooperation as the most desirable qualities in their applicants.
7. Identifying and nurturing your top talent so that those best able to lead and create the future are given the opportunities to stretch and grow. Often today's managers need to develop new approaches and attitudes to give effect to this. The pressing issues of the day tend however to take over.

Being a developer of people is one of those important yet neglected areas requiring constant focus.

Over the coming month begin to shift your focus so that you eventually spend a minimum of 60% of your time developing and focusing on building talent and creating the conditions for innovation and creativity in the work place.

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