MERAKI HR

The Five things you should know about :
Managing Change

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The Five things you should know about managing change.............

1. **Why change**? Many years ago Charles Darwin's theory of evolution put forward that only those species that were able to change and adapt to their environments would survive. This is true of not only nature but of businesses too, as those businesses that fail to change and adapt to the ever changing business environment that we are in, are failing to succeed or even exist.

   There are some good examples of businesses who have failed to change. If you think back to just 10 years ago, Kodak, were the dominant player in the photographic market, HMV were a dominant retailer for music and Nokia were the dominant manufacturer of mobile phones. These companies are still in business, but they are no longer the leaders in their filed as they failed to change and adapt to the environment around them.

   So, what are the catalysts for change? Often it is change in customer demands, changes in technology, market changes, change in input costs such as suppliers, changes in legislation which enforce the need for change and an organisational change such as a merger.

   But **first you must define what the change is, why it is needed, and be sure this explanation is clear and logical for people to understand.**

2. Decide **who you need to involve in the change programme, and gain their commitment.** The importance of having the right people involved in managing the change really can't be underestimated. My personal advice would be that once you have defined why you need the change, then identify who will be most affected by this change.

   Once you have determined who these key people are (often known as "key stakeholders") I would suggest getting a small group of them together, ideally those that you feel will be positive about the change and honest in their feedback, and talk to them about the proposed changes, the reasoning for these changes and get their feedback on the proposed changes.

   These discussions are really important as you will start to see what the objections to the change may be and even identify who the resistors might be. Through these meetings, you can identify who your "Change Sponsors" and "Change Champions" will be.

3. There are two key roles that need to be found when managing a change in business, your **Change Sponsors** and your **Change Champions.**

   The **role of a Change Sponsor**/s should be taken by some of the leaders in the business as many people will be influenced by what their leaders say and do. But also what their leaders don't say and don't do! The sponsors of a change management programme need to;

   - Take ultimate responsibility for the success or failure of the change transformation.
   - Provide the necessary resources for the change to take place
   - Demonstrate their dedication towards the change through their words and actions

- Take a keen interest in the progress of the change transformation.

A **Change Champion** is not necessarily a leader in the company, although they could be, they need to come from all levels of people in the business Overcoming resistance from people who don't want to accept the change is an important part of any change process. To get to the acceptance of the change as quickly as possible, you need to establish who will accept the change and champion it. The role of the Change Champions can be to;

- Test communication messages
- Support two communication and encourage people to speak out about how their feel, their concerns or objections.
- Identify potential issues and provide insight into potential issues that others at a more senior level may have missed
- Overcome resistance at their level in the organisation
- Help develop any training or materials needed to help with the change

4. We are always being told that **Communication is key when dealing with all employee related matters,** however it is sometimes hard for managers to know and truly understand what is meant by this ambiguous statement! In respect of change management there are some clear guidelines about what is needed;

- Deliver the vision about the need for the change, what the change will achieve and how individuals will be affected.
- Try to tailor these messages to specific groups
- Deliver messages that make it clear about what will be expected as a result of the change in terms of actions, behaviours, and culture.
- Provide regular updates and progress reports to all employees
- Provide a means for those with concerns about the change to feedback their concerns to the Change Transformation Team and tell them how they do this. Maybe an email address that people can email their concerns to, or a box, (like a suggestion box) where people can give their anonymous feedback or even through the sponsors or champions.

5. **Cementing the change is all about making the change stick**. It's also about performing a health check or two to make sure that people really are embracing, living and adapting to the change and that it is also sustainable.
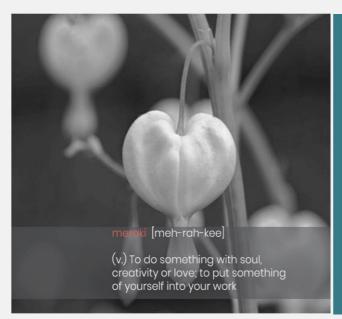
Quite often in projects where change is a key objective, the project is deemed to be finished once the change has been delivered and is in place. However, real transformative change takes time, and you need to have some agreed reviews in place after the change has been implemented to ensure it is sustainable and validated. Validation can only happen if measurements are agreed using Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) that will demonstrate that the transformation has been successful. A KPI should;

- Have a **Title – For** example – sales by revenue
- A **Definition –** Total sales excluding returns
- A **Calculation –** Total sales in the calendar month
- A **Target –** £10,000 per month

KPI's could also include some areas of the business such as; Customer Satisfaction scores improving, Operational performance levels improving, Staff retention levels improving or Sales revenue improving.

There should be **a set of clearly defined KPI's that the change team can refer to and that will show noticeable improvement in scores as a result of the delivered transformative change.** Otherwise, employees' are going to be able to state that nothing has improved or may not see why there is a need to change the next time a change is needed?

meraki [meh-rah-kee]

(v.) To do something with soul, creativity or love; to put something of yourself into your work

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