

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Change management is a systematic approach that includes dealing with the transition or transformation of organizational goals, core values, processes or technologies.

The purpose of every organizational change management initiative is to successfully implement strategies and methods for effecting change and helping people to accept and adapt to change.

As organizational changes in the agile workplaces happen daily, change management and change communication teams have become crucial performance drivers for many companies.

People are Resistant to Change

A research shows that only 38% of people like to leave their comfort zone. When these people are presented with a change, they think, "Hey, this is so exciting." Those positive interpretations of change result in positive emotional reactions, such as happiness and satisfaction, which result in greater employee productivity.

The other 62%, however, look at that same exact statement and immediately feel fear and discomfort. They may think, "Oh great, this change will have an effect on my career growth." or "I will not do what I like doing any more." or "Will they keep me in?".

Common Examples When Change Management Is Needed

With all the changes happening in the business world, change management has become one of the most important business functions.

Some of the most common examples when change management is necessary to successfully implement changes within organizations include:

Implementation of a new technology

Mergers & acquisitions

Change in leadership

Change in organizational culture

Times of a crisis

3 Types of Organizational Change

The 3 most common types of organizational change include:

Developmental change - Any organizational change that improves and optimizes on previously established processes, strategies and procedures.

Transitional change - Change that moves an organization away from its current state to a new state in order to solve a problem, such as mergers and acquisitions and automation.

Transformational change - Change that radically and fundamentally alters the culture, core values and operations.

Managing Organizational Change During Crisis

Under normal circumstances, driving change in the workplace is already quite challenging. Today, workplace transformation needs to be more agile.

In a survey with nearly 3,000 executives about the success of their enterprise transformation efforts, McKinsey found the failure rate to be higher than 60%. But COVID-19 makes organizational change even more complex and challenging.

OBSTACLES IN CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Most Common Change Management Challenges

Change is not always perceived as positive, and many employees may be resistant to changes within their organizations. Therefore, successful business transformation is all about getting employees' buy-in and embedding new behaviors in the workplace.

Here are some of the most common challenges that change management professionals face

1. Defining goals in a timely manner

Most changes get implemented with a goal to improve current processes, products, services or organizational cultures. However, it is critical to identify clear goals and milestones.

Some of the common change management goals and objectives include:

Build a culture of innovation

Change or update company's best practices

Implement new technology

Establish milestones and incentives programs

Implement knowledge sharing initiatives

Shift in targeted customer base

2. Poor leadership and lack of alignment

Leadership has a big impact on employee engagement. If your leaders are not convinced about the benefits of change, it will be hard to implement it.

Poor leadership and lack of alignment among the leaders are some of the main reasons for organizational change fails. On the other hand, great leaders know how to inspire their workforce and embrace the change.

Read on: [Top 5 Communication Skills and How to Improve Them](#)

3. Identifying the resources needed to make change a success

Before starting the change process, identifying the resources and individuals that will facilitate the process and lead the change is crucial for success. However, it can be hard to identify those resources and budgets before the process even starts.

4. A Lack of agility and slow approval process

Organizations that are not agile struggle to implement changes. Slow approval processes can cause delays in change implementation.

Therefore, it is important to have everyone on the same page in order for the process to get implemented smoothly and on time.

5. Planning the next steps

Every change management process should have a well set plan. The plan should consist of a timelines, and change milestones should be identified. Without planning, it may be hard to understand the overall success of the change process.

6. Fear and conflicts

Changes within organizations can develop emotions of uncertainty and fear. This may cause employees take their frustrations out on each other. Here, it is leaders' responsibility to overcome the difficulties and resolve conflicts.

An active leader should always be ready to dive deeper into the problem while working in accordance with their organizational change management.

7. Resistance to change and lack of commitment

Some employees are resistant to change, do not want to collaborate or commit to new practices. Leaders should be able to address resistance on a psychological level and proactively remove behavioral barriers that restrict change.

8. Poor communication in the workplace

Communication is crucial for successful change management, and the cost of poor communication can be significant. Every employer that has a successful change management team expresses the need for constant communication during the change experience.



9. Aligning all the teams with the new strategy

Having everyone on board and informed before and during the implementation process may be a challenge. This is especially true for large organizations with various offices and departments across the world. Therefore, global and interdepartmental communication has to become a priority.

WHY NEEDED?

1) Handling the changes occurring frequently:

There are frequent changes that take place in an organization today, becoming better at implementing change is necessary.

2) Aligning organizational practice with organizational values:

This case is particularly important for organizations that adopt the significance and value of their people.

3) Driving more successful change:

Experience and data show that effective change management drives greater advantage realization and achievement of outcomes and results.

change is constant, We have so much change happening all the time and we need to manage it more consistently

4) Addressing the costs of poorly managed change:

A number of organizations have examples, or even a legacy, of changes that were poorly managed, did not deliver results and create confusion and stress in the organization. Under-delivering on change is unbearable to go forward.

5) Preparing the organization for the future:

The horizon for a number of organizations and even industries consists of crucial changes, which are essential to remaining competitive and successful.

It is essential for the success of the organization

Our company's growth and future success depends on our people's ability to adapt to market forces in and out of our control

It would make us more effective and more profitable

It's clear our industry is changing rapidly and we don't want to be left behind

6) Creating consistency and efficiencies in approach:

Change management practices throughout an organization can be more effective when there is a common approach in place.

7) The building needed internal capabilities:

Change management is considered as a necessary organizational and individual competency for employees.

8) Help to select critical projects and training the project team:

The selection of key projects is critical to the organization's success change. Change management practice helps train the project team to avoid any kind of consequences or unsatisfactory results. Building change management capabilities give greater success on critical projects and initiatives.



73%

of change-affected employees report
experiencing moderate to high stress levels

McKinsey&Company

However, there are some rules and best practices every organization should follow.

Here they are.

1. Define clear goals

Every change management initiative should be clearly defined. Even though SMART goals are not easy to define for change management, companies should strive towards setting up as clear goals as possible.

This way, employees and leaders will have something to reference to when evaluating their change management efforts.

2. Be honest and transparent

Over 30% of employees say that their employer is not always honest and truthful.

In order to implement transitions successfully, employers should be honest and transparent. As most employees don't feel comfortable with changes, being transparent at every step of the change management process helps build trust and connection with employees.

3. Train and reassure your teams

Support your employees with reassurance, offer new training sessions and give employees time they need to adapt to new practices. Empathy and reassurance help fasten the process and eases future organizational changes.

Yet, many line managers don't even understand why the change is happening.



4. Encourage conversations and communicate regularly

Employee relations have a big impact on encouraging conversations before, during and after the changes are implemented.

Start a conversation among your employees in order to find out how they feel about the new initiatives.

Understand that true communication is a two-way conversation.

5. Listen to your employees

When driving engagement and communication, you should not be the only one talking. Listen to what your employees have to say. Allow them to lead the conversation where employees can ask questions, comment and suggest their ideas for improvement.

6. Bring your leaders on board

The evidence is clear- excellent change management increases business outcomes of change initiatives. So why is it so difficult to communicate these benefits to business leaders?

Companies should work on proving the real ROI of change management and communicate that to the business leaders to bring them on board and support the change.

7. Choose the right communication tool

Millennials in the workplace expect an easier way of communication than through emails. In fact, many emails are never read which causes important information to get lost.

Choose the right employee communication and engagement solution that your employees will actually want to use.

Make sure that your solution is mobile friendly. Younger generations are used to being able to do everything on their mobile phones. Company tools should, for that reason, be mobile-friendly.

8. Empower your employees

Empower your change management leaders as well as employees to engage in the change process by giving them freedom to make their own decisions and implement new ideas.

If your employees don't feel empowered, the engagement level will drop and result in resistance to change.

9. Encourage knowledge sharing

Some employees will learn and adapt to change faster than the others. However, knowledge sharing among employees can fasten this learning process significantly.

10. Document and make information easily accessible

Documenting everything does not help if this information is not easily accessible to employees. Having a central place where all the important documents and information are kept, makes change management much more efficient.

Did you know that employees, on average, spend 2.5 hours every day searching for information? In the process of change management, this can be very frustrating and discouraging to employees.

11. Recognize and reward

77% of employees say that they would work harder if they were recognized for their work. Therefore, this approach can be a great motivation to comply with and implement the changes faster.

Recognize and reward employees for accomplishments and for adopting new behaviors during the transformation process. Celebrate the wins and milestones.

The Four Principles of Change Management

Successful change management relies on four core principles:

Understand Change.

Plan Change.

Implement Change.

Communicate Change.

Let's explore each of these in turn, along with some tools and techniques that you can use to put them into practice:

Principle 1: Understand Change

To successfully promote the benefits of the change, you need to understand them yourself. So, think about:

Why you need to change. What are your key objectives?

What will the benefits of the change be to the organization?

How will it impact people positively?

How will it affect the way that people work?

What will people need to do to successfully achieve the change?

It can also be helpful to think about what the negative outcomes of not making the change would be. Beckhard and Harris' Change Equation shows that, for change to work, there has to be sufficient dissatisfaction with the old way of doing things. But people also need to feel confident that the new approach will be better – and that there's a clear route to get there.

Principle 2: Plan Change

Effective change doesn't just happen by chance, and any plan you make has to be right for your organization. The way that change projects are managed can vary from organization to organization. Some have very rigid change methodologies, while others are more open and flexible in their approach.

Principle 3: Implement Change

So how exactly are you going to make change happen?

As we've seen, there are many different strategies that you can choose to put your change into practice. Kotter's 8-Step Change Model, for example, explains how to inject a sense of urgency into your actions, so that you build momentum and encourage everyone to get behind your changes.

Meanwhile, the Change Curve reminds you to be mindful of people's feelings while putting your plan into action. It shows the stages that we all tend to go through during organizational change – from shock and denial, to the point where we're fully invested in the new approach.

Principle 4: Communicate Change

Communication can be a make-or-break component of change management. The change that you want to implement has to be clear and relevant, so people understand what you want them to do and why they need to do it. But you also have to set the right tone, so that you get the emotional reaction you're hoping for.

It's a good idea to link the changes that you're planning to your organization's mission or vision statements. Not only will this help people to see how the change positively impacts the "bigger picture," it will also provide them with an inspiring, shared vision of the future.

Also be sure to practice good stakeholder management. This will ensure that you give the right people the right message, at the right time, to get the support that you need for your project.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

We all have different personalities, different wants and needs, and different ways of showing our emotions. Navigating through this all takes tact and cleverness – especially if we hope to succeed in life. This is where emotional intelligence becomes important.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize your emotions, understand what they're telling you, and realize how your emotions affect people around you. It also involves your perception of

others: when you understand how they feel, this allows you to manage relationships more effectively.

People with high emotional intelligence are usually successful in most things they do. Why? Because they're the ones that others want on their team. When people with high emotional intelligence send an email, it gets answered. When they need help, they get it. Because they make others feel good, they go through life much more easily than people who are easily angered or upset.

In his book titled "Emotional Intelligence - Why It Can Matter More Than IQ" 1995, Daniel Goleman, an American psychologist, developed a framework of five elements that define emotional intelligence:

Self-Awareness – People with high emotional intelligence are usually very self-aware. They understand their emotions, and because of this, they don't let their feelings rule them. They're confident – because they trust their intuition and don't let their emotions get out of control.

They're also willing to take an honest look at themselves. They know their strengths and weaknesses, and they work on these areas so they can perform better. Many people believe that this self-awareness is the most important part of emotional intelligence.

Self-Regulation – This is the ability to control emotions and impulses. People who self-regulate typically don't allow themselves to become too angry or jealous, and they don't make impulsive, careless decisions. They think before they act. Characteristics of self-regulation are thoughtfulness, comfort with change, integrity, and the ability to say no.

Motivation – People with a high degree of emotional intelligence are usually motivated. They're willing to defer immediate results for long-term success. They're highly productive, love a challenge, and are very effective in whatever they do.

Empathy – This is perhaps the second-most important element of emotional intelligence. Empathy is the ability to identify with and understand the wants, needs, and viewpoints of those around you. People with empathy are good at recognizing the feelings of others, even when those feelings may not be obvious. As a result, empathetic people are usually excellent at managing relationships, listening, and relating to others. They avoid stereotyping and judging too quickly, and they live their lives in a very open, honest way.

Social Skills – It's usually easy to talk to and like people with good social skills, another sign of high emotional intelligence. Those with strong social skills are typically team players. Rather than focus on their own success first, they help others develop and shine. They can manage disputes, are excellent communicators, and are masters at building and maintaining relationships.

WHY EI? BENEFITS OF EI AT WORK PLACE

Every day we make emotionally charged decisions. We feel plan A is better than plan B and we sometimes make choices based on our emotions or gut feelings. When we understand the origin and source of these emotions, especially when working in a team, we are more attuned to each other. With globalization, emotional intelligence is more significant than ever when teams are cross-cultural and global, increasing the complexity of interactions of emotions and how they are expressed. Essentially, emotional intelligence in the workplaces comes down to understanding, expressing and managing, good relationships and solving problems under pressure.

Better Team-Work

It's undeniable that employees are able to work better on a team when they have higher emotional intelligence. People with higher EQ communicate better with team members than those who are not in tune with their emotional intelligence.

They share ideas and are open to others' ideas. They are less likely to completely take control of a situation and "run the show" on their own without thinking of others first.

These employees are more likely to trust their coworkers and value their ideas and input. They are respectful and thoughtful as the group works together. This is an ideal situation for an employer.

Better Office Environment

Morale boosting is one of the many benefits of emotional intelligence in the workplace. When you have an office full of a staff that gets along and respects one another, the company culture is bound to be much stronger.

Suddenly, the workplace also becomes an area of enjoyment. Not only will staff members enjoy the work they are doing, they will also enjoy the people with whom they do it with.

Office managers will see this ultimately reflected in other areas of business as well, such as customer service. This positive customer service will result in happy customers. That's a win-win for everyone!

Adjustments Can Be Made Easier

It's important for a company not to remain stagnant. By constantly focusing on self- and company geared improvement, a business is bound to experience change.

Although employees likely know that changes within their company are happening based off of what is needed or what is best for the business, however, they might not always welcome it with open arms. We, as humans, have always struggled with change.

However, employees with high emotional intelligence adjust easily and often times, embrace the change and grow alongside the company. This is a valuable personality trait that can be contagious among the team.

More Self-Awareness

One of the benefits of emotional intelligence in employees is that it helps them understand their own strengths and weaknesses. These employees are able to take feedback and use it in a positive way to improve and grow as an individual.

Often times, managers will run into defensiveness when offering constructive and necessary feedback to an employee. This alone can cause frustration and a halt in productivity. Another problem leaders run into is employees not understanding their own limitations.

While emotionally intelligent people know themselves and what they are able to accomplish in a set amount of time, others are more likely to overpromise and underdeliver.

Employees with a high emotional intelligence can learn from constructive criticism as well as be aware of what they are able to do. These are incredibly valuable tools.

More Self-Control

People with high emotional intelligence know how to handle tough situations. In business, there are bound to be situations that don't always feel comfortable, particularly for a person that is acting in a position of leadership.

A tough situation could be involving a client that is unhappy. Dealing with unhappy clients means staying calm and positive, even if you don't necessarily feel that way on the inside.

A tough situation could be a superior that is unhappy with your work. This creates a sense of unease and embarrassment.

It could be a tough conversation with a subordinate, either involving disciplinary action or firing. In situations like these, a person needs to be firm yet kind. A tough situation may even be a co-worker that is posing a problem or offering a disagreement.

This means holding an understanding mind and remaining calm. If an employee is able to refrain from an emotional outburst and remain calm in situations like these, it can result much better.

People who have a high EQ understand that acting in a negative, provocative, or irrational way will escalate a situation unnecessarily. These employees can easily practice restraint and only reveal their emotions when it's appropriate...and even then, do so in a controlled manner.

Compassion

One of the greatest benefits of emotional intelligence, both within the workplace and in one's personal life, is the ability to maintain and display compassion for fellow humans. Compassion allows a person to connect with others on an emotional level.

This can be a great benefit to an employer when their workers display compassion. Compassion can be shared with a client that missed a payment due to a tough circumstance.

Compassion can be shown to a co-worker dealing with a personal issue and needing someone to cover their responsibilities. Compassion can also be shown to leadership for the decisions they need to make on a daily basis.

Time's Managed Better

A leader has the right to expect that his or her employees meet deadlines. Depending on the company, this can mean the difference between earning the dime or going hungry.

One of the greatest benefits of emotional intelligence in the workplace is that a leader doesn't feel the need to micromanage his or her employees. By hiring people displaying a high emotional intelligence, he or she can be sure projects will be completed and deadlines will be met.

It's simply that these people know how to prioritize tasks and get them done in a timely manner. What a great feeling!

There's More Motivation

Emotionally Intelligent individuals are optimistic and are always naturally working towards a goal, whether personal, professional or both. These individuals have a growth mindset and they persevere no matter the obstacles they face.

These employees are often times not motivated by external means, but rather are driven by their inner ambition. People with high emotional intelligence work hard for the benefit of knowing they completed the job successfully.

Leadership Capabilities

Companies are constantly searching for quality leadership, as they should. This type of leadership makes a huge difference in productivity and profitability, allowing each employee to feel respected and valued.

It makes sense, then, that business owners and hiring agents would seek out talent with high emotional intelligence. These employees have empathy for others' feelings and situations.

They have a proper understanding of human nature. Because of this, they have a positive effect on their subordinates. They are able to be nurturing yet firm.

Better Professional Relationships Are Able to Form

One of the benefits of emotional intelligence is understanding others. People with high EQ know what makes others tick. They are able to hone into what others like and don't like.

This helps a relationship, professional or otherwise, grow and develop into a strong, solid one. Having high emotional intelligence also allows a person to be very tuned in to body language and facial expressions of the people with whom they are communicating.

EI Quadrant Descriptors

Self-Awareness.

Description. The core of Emotional Intelligence is self-awareness. Self-awareness is comprised of three competencies; emotional self-awareness, where you are able to read and understand your emotions as well as recognise their impact on work performance and relationships; accurate self-assessment, where you are able to give a realistic evaluation of your strengths and limitations; and self-confidence, where you have a positive and strong sense of one's self-worth. The starting point and key in these areas is the ability to be critically self-reflective.

Self-Management

Description. Self-management is comprised of five competencies; Self-control, which is keeping disruptive emotions and impulses under control; transparency, which is maintaining standards of honesty and integrity, managing yourself and responsibilities; and adaptability, which is the flexibility in adapting to changing situations and overcoming obstacles; achievement orientation, which is the guiding drive to meet an internal standard of excellence; and initiative, which is the readiness to seize opportunities and act.

Social Awareness

Description. Social Awareness is comprised of three competencies; empathy, which is understanding others and taking an active interest in their concerns; organisational awareness, which is the ability to read the currents of organisational life, build decision networks and navigate politics; and service orientation, which is recognising and meeting customers needs. The adaptable, success-oriented type.

Relationship Management

Description. The Social cluster of Relationship Management is comprised of seven competencies; visionary leadership, which is inspiring and guiding groups and individuals; developing others, which is the propensity to strengthen and support the abilities of others through feedback and guidance; influence, which is the ability to exercise a wide range of persuasive strategies with integrity, and also includes listening and sending clear, convincing and well-tuned messages; change catalyst, which is the proficiency in initiating new ideas and leading people in a new direction; conflict management, which is resolving disagreements and collaboratively developing resolutions; building bonds, which is building and maintaining relationships with others; and teamwork and collaboration, which is the promotion of cooperation and building of teams.

How to Improve Your Emotional Intelligence

The good news is that emotional intelligence can be learned and developed. As well as working on your skills in the five areas above, use these strategies:

Observe how you react to people. Do you rush to judgment before you know all of the facts? Do you stereotype? Look honestly at how you think and interact with other people. Try to put yourself in their place, and be more open and accepting of their perspectives and needs.

Look at your work environment. Do you seek attention for your accomplishments? Humility can be a wonderful quality, and it doesn't mean that you're shy or lack self-confidence. When you practice humility, you say that you know what you did, and you can be quietly confident about it. Give others a chance to shine – put the focus on them, and don't worry too much about getting praise for yourself.

Do a self-evaluation. Try out our emotional intelligence quiz. What are your weaknesses? Are you willing to accept that you're not perfect and that you could work on some areas to make yourself a better person? Have the courage to look at yourself honestly – it can change your life.

Examine how you react to stressful situations. Do you become upset every time there's a delay or something doesn't happen the way you want? Do you blame others or become angry at them, even when it's not their fault? The ability to stay calm and in control in difficult situations is highly valued – in the business world and outside it. Keep your emotions under control when things go wrong.

Take responsibility for your actions. If you hurt someone's feelings, apologize directly – don't ignore what you did or avoid the person. People are usually more willing to forgive and forget if you make an honest attempt to make things right.

Examine how your actions will affect others – before you take those actions. If your decision will impact others, put yourself in their place. How will they feel if you do this? Would you want that experience? If you must take the action, how can you help others deal with the effects? Take time to think before making any work-related decisions. Often, emotions interfere with the ability to consider all options, so keep your cool and give yourself some time to think.

Develop active listening skills. They involve asking questions, showing attention, and providing feedback to the other person.

Try viewing situations from the point of view of others. It would be an excellent first step toward finding a common ground between two opposing points.

Try to maintain a positive attitude. Focus on what you love and build your intrinsic motivation, and you'll become more optimistic.