

If You Want to See Your ROI, Build Change Management into Your Project

It happens so often – a major business initiative, after absorbing months of effort and resources, meets all its technical targets. The new system does what it was designed to do. Critical processes have new capabilities and better workflow. The project looks like a great success.

And yet, the benefits that were expected just aren't materializing. People aren't changing their behavior the way they were supposed to. They're not taking advantage of the new capabilities and workflow – worse, they may be actively finding workarounds to get things back they way they used to be. After all the work put into it, the project's ROI is spiraling down the drain. Not so successful.

Where did things go wrong? Not in the technical side of the project, but in the people parts. Without attention to the human component, even the best technology and process changes will fail to achieve their goals.

Expect Resistance and Prepare

Nobody really likes change, whether large or small. No matter how wonderful your project is, resistance is inevitable. You can't prevent it, but you can minimize it. And you'd better know how to deal with it when it appears.

So don't treat change management as an incidental or afterthought. It needs to be an ongoing focus throughout the project.

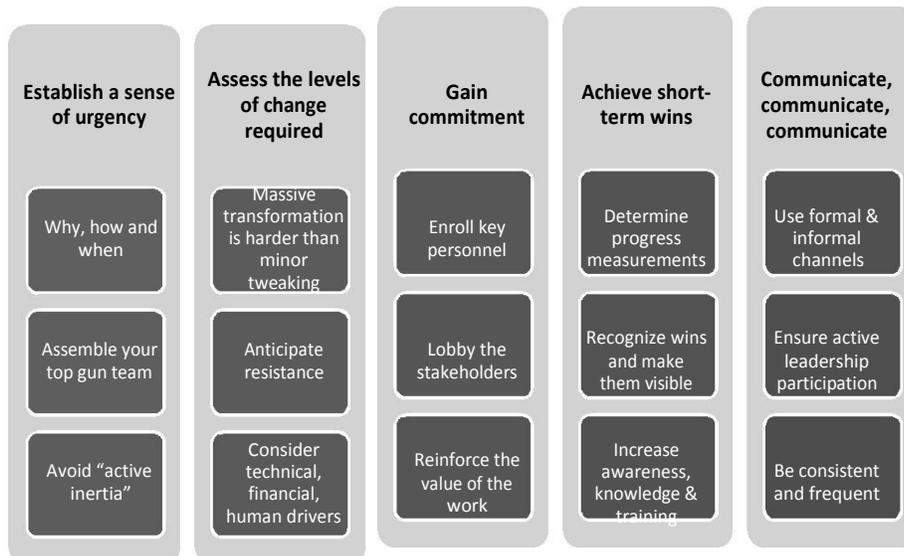
- f Recognize that people may respond to the project with anxiety and resistance because they are worried about their jobs changing or disappearing
 - f People may also be stressed about performing their normal jobs when projects are going on, and reluctant to give their time and energy to your project even if they accept its goals
 - f Don't ignore or minimize these concerns: that only breeds distrust and opposition. Better to be

honest, and to give people positive reasons to support the project anyway

- f Know who the key influencers are in your organization and keep them actively engaged in your project's success
 - f Active participation of leadership is invaluable
- f Work with those who know the process best and let them "own the change"
- f Show people the value in the project with quantifiable results
 - f Give your allies the tools to persuade others that your project is worthwhile and important

Communication, Marketing & Training for Project Success

- f Communicate early, often, and broadly
 - f Remember that poor communication is a major cause of project failure
 - f People have to hear a message **at least 5 times** before it starts to sink in
 - f So make use of many different forms of communication to reach people – frequency and consistency are important to success
- f Keep all the stakeholders in the loop throughout the project
 - f Management commitment is essential in order to get people to practice what they preach
 - f Meet with peers and mid-level managers to get them involved from the beginning, and keep them involved throughout
- f Use short-term wins to generate support from results
- f Provide the training and support people will need to implement the project effectively



An effective change management program addresses many sources of possible resistance and builds support at multiple levels