

CASE STUDY

Change Management Practitioners say communication is key to successful transformation

Business change is complex because of relationships between the business environment, the organization, its people and supporting technologies. Any change in one of these aspects will have a knock on effect on the others. Yet many businesses underestimate the implications of change and don't utilize the right people or mechanisms to help them achieve their desired outcomes.

Rod Sowden of Aspire Europe is a consultant who works with different kinds of organization to deliver change. He believes the pressure to change has increased but many organizations fail to achieve what they want; even if they have completed programmes that were meant to deliver change. He believes this is because people don't understand the fundamental concepts of change.

“Organizations have a lot of different issues to deal with when they implement change – these could be staff resistance, management inertia, lack of organizational capability and policies that obstruct progress. **It's very common to have too many initiatives and a lack of clear priorities.**”

Rod argues that organizations must understand how change affects individuals, teams and the organization as a whole.

“For individuals affected by change there can be real resistance when they don't understand why it is necessary or they disagree with what is being done and can't see the prospective benefits. In teams there can be stress and conflict while organizations as a whole can suffer from a perceived loss of identity if their leadership is weak.”

Working with Esther Cameron and Mike Green and building on the concepts in their book “Making Sense of Change Management,” The APM Group has developed a unique Change Management Certification programme. There are two qualifications – the first at Foundation level and the second at Practitioner level – which guide candidates through the complexities of change. The courses explore how change impacts and is affected by:

- the individual
- the team
- the organization
- the person responsible for leading the change.

Rod says, “Coming on the course helps candidates appreciate what makes them and their colleagues tick; they come to understand the sources of positive and negative experiences and can become stronger leaders and be more sensitive colleagues.”



Rod Sowden





Tiffany Childs, lead Change Management trainer, Maven Training, says, **“The common thread in change management is that you can never predict how an individual will respond to change** - it is a complex process that happens internally. Everyone is involved in change, especially when

viewed from an individual’s perspective. Projects focus on what you are responsible for but in the change management course we focus on the change that you are part of.

“A lot of delegates on the course have done PRINCE2®. They feel that PRINCE2 ‘parks’ the people aspects of managing projects and they want a greater understanding of the complexities of change. The Change Management qualification dives into the human psyche.”

Tiffany says many delegates acknowledge resistance to change in their organizations but they don’t know how to deal with it. The analytical approaches to resistance explored in the Change Management course give delegates tools they can use to help with people’s reactions.

“These tools can also become the foundation of a communication plan which is fundamental to successful change delivery,” Tiffany says. **“At least 70% of the effort on change should be devoted to communication.”**



This is an ethos which Lucinda Garrett, a Programme Manager for Centrica Energy, agrees with. Having tripled size in a few years, Centrica Energy Upstream wanted to be able to continue to grow sustainably, enter new countries quickly, integrate acquisitions effectively and ensure continued compliance with a

complex set of international regulations.

To do this it established a programme to create and embed a global management system. This would mean the whole organization would adopt standardized processes where it made sense to do so, and there would be a common language, helping users collaborate.

“When we started the roll out of the management system we were already experiencing change fatigue in some areas of our business and we knew that some personnel across the organization were not going to embrace more change if they felt it was being done to them and not with them,” Lucinda says. “There was also pressure to get the system right first time as the oil and gas industry is highly regulated. Licenses can be taken away if strict environmental and health and safety policies are not adhered to. We needed to be confident that people were up to date on all the changes.”

As a multicultural organization, Centrica Energy was aware that it needed to understand the needs of its employees so it consulted them extensively about what they felt would work best and involved them in designing the system.

“We had a full time change resource which focused on stakeholder engagement. We went to a lot of effort to understand the priorities of senior management. To get people on board it was important to highlight problems in our business and sell the benefits of the new system as a solution to those problems.”

The programme team also embraced the views of their sceptics. “We invited sceptics to give us their in-depth feedback and we considered their viewpoints. We also asked them to support the development our risk register so they had evidence we were listening to them and addressing their concerns.”

Lucinda firmly believes that **change is a two way relationship**, and to be successful you need to work in partnership with the people who will be affected by the change. She also says that embedding change is not a one hit wonder – you have to keep working at it, otherwise you will just go straight back to where you started.

Lucinda attended The APM Group’s Change Management Practitioner course. “I wanted to reflect on our change management programme and have the opportunity to put what we did in context. I found the organizational models and different approaches to change very interesting.”

Tiffany Childs says she finds her candidates get a confidence boost from gaining the Change Management Practitioner certification. “Sitting the exam and getting accreditation gives people the confidence to say they know what they are talking about.”

The APM Group’s Change Management certification explores how the dynamics of effective change work and shows how to unlock resistance to change, enabling teams to work together and speeding up the implementation of change programmes. If you would like further details please visit: www.apmg-international.com

LUCINDA GARRETT’S TOP THREE TIPS FOR GETTING PEOPLE ON BOARD

Recognise resistance: *Acknowledge why it is happening and align the needs of senior management to your requirements.*

Engage with people: *Include cultural considerations and be able to answer the question: “What’s in it for me?”*

Continuous consistent communication: *Ensure people view the change as happening with them and not to them. Don’t use jargon - make sure people understand the language you are using.*