

## Managing change in organizations

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With more than 20 years of HR experience, I have seen some recipes for failure or success in change processes. Leading the HR Dept.in different multinational companies has allowed me to manage change or participate in change efforts.

I want to share with you some key discoveries that hopefully will help you succeed in your own change projects.

### **Get support.**

No matter how good your project is or how much benefits it will bring to the organization, it will come to nothing if you don't have the support of the Administration. You must ally yourself with the key decision makers (CEO, other Managers, Union, opinion leaders) or else it's going to be an uphill battle.

So, the first thing to do is make sure everyone's aligned after your project.

### **Empathize.**

I like this one because is not part of the usual recipes. But it can make the difference between accomplishing your goals or not.

Your change project will certainly touch employee's lives, and interests, and comfort zones. So it makes sense to take a little time and reflect on the possible conflicts your project may create. In other words, empathize with people who can be affected and try to minimize disruption.

Communication and negotiation are the tools to use for this purpose. Acknowledge the problem and try to find a creative solution that will turn an opponent into an ally.

### **Time management.**

Projects usually run against time since their inception. And then obstacles appear, making deadlines even closer.

So it's key to have a strict control of the agenda, the time, and deadlines. Good management of other people's work, support to anyone getting behind, and timely negotiation of an extension if necessary are moves you must consider on a daily basis.

**Participation.**

There are many employees involved in a change project, who not only want to sweat their seats but also want to have a say in how things are being conducted. To gain support and good will from your team and other people, it's critical that you listen to all opinions, go for the best ones and make all stakeholders feel part of the project.

For this, you must bring up your leadership skills and let people in. And also, be able to solve any conflicts among supporters.

**Communications and benefits.**

These two words go hand in hand. If you are leading a project it must be to attain some kind of benefit. So it's only natural that you must devote time to communicating and evangelizing this effort among the company.

I've seen good initiatives get stuck only because of poor communications. And even worst blaming the audience for not understanding your bright idea.

If people are going to support you, they must have clarity about what you're doing. And they should be able to see the benefits. And here we get to a key discovery: many times there's no direct benefit for the employee, just more work or delays or a more complex scenario. So, your communication and influence skills become a top priority.

Recognition is another key element to have in mind. Not only it reinforces the support for future projects, but also creates a positive culture and a powerful retention tool.

There are many recipes and lists about what makes a change project successful. But these are the factors I've personally seen as determinants of a successful outcome.

Are there other factors you would like to add?