

Managing Change through the New Normal

As we will all be experiencing another period of change in our professional lives, we wanted to take the opportunity to look at how best to manage this change.

It is often natural for us to resist change, but as business and team leaders, we know that change is important, but helping people and organisations through this is something that may not be straight forward. This article explores barriers and how to help implement fundamental and positive ways forward with your team.

Research by the Chartered Management Institute suggests that barriers to change can be complex, and the main challenges can include:-

- the culture of an organisation resisting the power structure
- managers feeling threatened by the process of change
- resistance from employees
- lack of understanding about why change is to take place
- lack of communication or trust
- employees fearing the unknown

Within your organisation, if you are experiencing resistance to change here at Neish Consultancy we have put together some tools that may help.

Kotter's Model of Change



John Kotter's 8-Step Change Model sets out 8 key steps of the changes process, arguing that neglecting any of the steps can be enough for the whole initiative to fail. Below are the eight steps that were created following decades of business leaders as they transformed to introduce new strategies.

Step 1: Create Urgency

To make change to happen, it helps if everyone really wants it. It is imperative that communication is at the centre of any change. Create an appetite with people so that the need for change is positive and create a sense of urgency around it. This will help motivate people to be part of the change.

Step 2: Form a Powerful Coalition

Identify the people who strongly believe in your change and make them champions of change. This will provide strong leadership and visible support from key people. Remember these do not need to be the leaders – often influential team members are great champions.

Step 3: Create a Vision for Change

Create a vision that everyone can relate to, understand, and remember. This will help people understand why you are asking them to do something different.

How to do this: -

- Determine which of the company values are driving the change
- Create a couple of sentences that describes the future
- Describe the steps that will achieve the vision
- Make sure you and your champions can describe the vision in five minutes or less
- Keep describing it to others

Step 4: Communicate the Vision

This step is critical to your success. It will have competition from day-to-day communication, so communicate frequently and embed it in everything when you have a chance. Keep it fresh so that people remember and respond. You must lead by example and walk the walk.

Step 5: Remove Obstacles

Constantly check out if anyone is resisting the change or if processes are getting in the way of change.

How to do this:-

- Use your change champions to deliver the change
- Check out your company structure, job descriptions, and performance management system etc to ensure they are in line with your vision
- Recognise and reward people for making change happen
- Identify people who are resisting the change, and help them move forward
- Act quickly remove barriers

Step 6: Create Short-Term Wins

Success motivates people. Quick wins are critical for staff to see that the change is really happening. It will also give your critics less to talk about.

Create short-term targets as well as long-term ones. You want each smaller target to be achievable, with little room for failure.

Celebrate success by rewarding the people who helped you achieve the quick wins.

Step 7: Build on the Change

Kotter believes that change projects often fail because success is declared too early. Real change runs deep. Quick wins are only the beginning of what needs to be done to achieve change long-term.

Each win provides an opportunity to build on what went right and identify what you can improve.

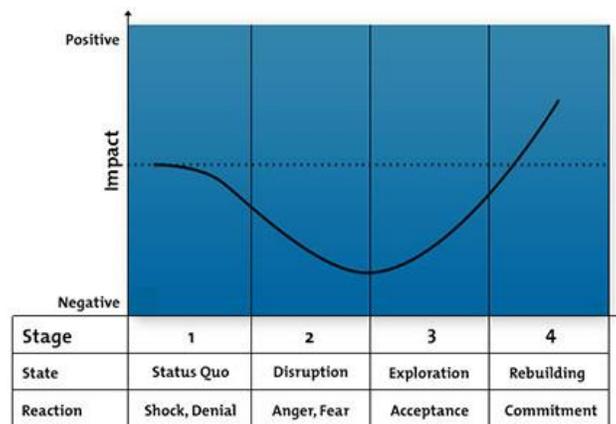
Step 8: Anchor the Changes in Corporate Culture

The last step is making sure the change sticks. Your culture will determine what sticks, so the values behind your vision must show every day. Make continuous efforts to ensure that the change is seen everywhere.

How to do this: -

- Tell success stories every chance you get
- Include the ideals and values in your induction process
- Publicly recognise key change champions
- Create succession plans to replace change champions as they move on

The Kubler Ross Change Curve



The Kubler Ross Change Curve comes from psychiatrist Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, from her work on personal transition in grief and bereavement. It describes the four stages most people go through during the change process.

Stage one occurs when a change is first introduced, and people's initial reaction may be shock or denial, *"this isn't happening to me"*, *"they won't really implement it"* are often what they are thinking as they react to their status quo being moved.

At stage two reality starts to kick in and people often react negatively as they feel fear, anger, and actively resist the changes. We often here them saying *"why me?"* *"This isn't fair"*, *"I am not going to do it that way"*.

At stage Three of the Change Curve, some acceptance and starting to explore options at this stage we hear people say things like *“it could work for me”, “I wonder what would happen if...”*

At stage four, people have accepted the changes and start to embrace them: they rebuild their ways of working. This is when the company really starts to reap the benefits of change.

It can be easy to think that this process happens naturally from stage one to stage four, but it is worth remembering that people can be triggered backwards on the curve. For example, in redundancy situations the anger of family member can trigger another angry response. I refer to this as the washing machine effect as it can feel as if they are going around in circles. It can be helpful for people to identify these triggers and find ways to remove them for example asking family member to help explore options or to stop talking about the redundancy situation.

If you would like to explore this further, we are running two courses on change management that we would like to invite you to be part of.

1. Three 2-hour on-line Training Session via Zoom on, Wednesday 10th June, Wednesday 17th and Wednesday 24th June 2020 from 1.00 pm – 3.00 pm for £99.00 +VAT
2. A one-day session in Derby on Tuesday 14th July for £150.00 + VAT

We have many years of experience in effectively and positively managing change in a wide range of organisations, large and small.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss further with you or any member of your team, feel free to contact me shona@neishconsultancy.co.uk for an informal and initial discussion.