

Most change projects run out of steam early – maybe ‘outsourcing’ project management can take the strain

“The planning is the easy bit - it’s the implementation that lets you down!” ... Perhaps we have all either thought that or said that when faced with the need to implement a change agenda. Change is inevitable, adapt or die is the name of the game and organisations need to be flat and flexible to cope with change as they struggle to maintain or gain a competitive edge. The process of change is timeless and old lessons need to be remembered, or in some cases re-learned. Cultural change takes time and every individual will go through the coping cycle at his or her own pace. Because it takes time, many change projects “run out of steam” as senior management get frustrated with the slow pace or fail to “walk the talk” and those lower down the organisation get disillusioned or even cynical.

NATION has been involved with helping its clients manage the change process for many years and we have gained much in-depth experience.

Communication is a key to success because it provides ...

- Everyone with the reasons for the change project
- Disseminates details of the change project
- Feedback & progress reports
- Notification and praise for both results & successes

However, in reality problems grow, objectives often change, resources are not always available, implementation is patchy and results do not get measured. The result is that the change objective is never fully met.

In observing why many major change projects fail one has to look at several key factors ...

- Was the objective of the change valid, realistic and necessary?
- Was the result measurable in terms of improvement over the existing situation?
- Was there real commitment from senior management?
- Did the employees buy-in to the change?
- Was there resource and time available to undertake the implementation, validation and evaluation?
- Is there a follow-on or re-cycling process?

In most cases the most common reasons for failure are ...

1. Senior management did not walk the talk
2. Measures of improvement were not set
3. Implementation resource was not allocated
4. Timescales were unrealistic
5. Evaluation did not take place

These pitfalls can be avoided ...

Firstly, it is necessary to ensure that senior management provide a 100% commitment to the project as well as actively and publicly demonstrating this commitment in the way they act and talk.

Secondly, project managers must ensure that they spend enough time analysing current measures of performance, specify expected improvements and gaining agreement to these increases.

Thirdly, project managers must allocate enough resource and time to promote, monitor, encourage, report and measure the implementation phase of the project

Fourthly, they must take an objective view of the real outcomes, publish the results and modify - if necessary - before re-cycling.

**Outsourcing your Project
Management requirement can be the
answer ...**

Experience tells us that the easy bit is coming up with new initiatives and planning for them. The tough part is implementing them and making them work. Most people don't PLAN TO FAIL they just FAIL TO PLAN! Planning is all about identifying the necessary resources for proper implementation and then making sure it happens. Frequently, internal resource is not available or the resource that is just does not have the time or bandwidth to cope with any more workload. Therefore the answer is to outsource the management of the project to an organisation with a proven track record; an organisation with a proven methodology and process; an organisation that is independent enough to be objective in its approach and unaffected by internal politics. The efficiencies of outsourcing and the fact that the project will get completed do offset the cost incurred. Better to pay professional Project Managers to get a project completed on time rather than divert internal resource that may not cope, will probably 'run out of steam' and who's normal job will usually suffer as a consequence!

For more information on this topic or for a face-to-face meeting with the NATION specialist on this topic, please e-mail:

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