

Implementing and Dealing with Change

All organizations need to adapt and change in order to survive. It is important that the work environment fosters the ability to change and encourages employees to seek out new ideas and new ways of doing things. The business world is always dynamic and unexpected. All businesses need to be able to plan for change and be able to react to unexpected problems as they arise. It is easier for companies to stay satisfied where they are at instead of working for improvement. That is not a healthy business plan, and is a result of taking the easy road.

Pursuing change and growth is necessary to be competitive. Examples of necessary changes that have to be made on a continuous basis are changes in technology. Could you imagine running a business with out being able to use the Internet or fax machine? What if you couldn't make use of tax and bookkeeping software? These are all tools that have to be learned. Could you imagine what civilization would be like if there were no changes? Reflect on how growth and change has improved health, affordability, convenience, and efficiency. As a matter of fact, many occupations require their workers to keep up with changes by participating in continuing education.

Change is the instrument that has provided for better businesses and services. Many large organizations have continued to seek change and accept any mistake that they might need to make along the way. Research and development is one way to produce change internally. Customer feedback may also show what strengths could be developed and what weaknesses could be diminished. External customers and market conditions dictate what must be done in order to have successful operations. If your product is trendy will it still be necessary in a few years? If your product is not unique are there substitutes that could wipe you out? Are your policies and mission outdated?

There are many categories of change. The easiest way for an organization to create change is to plan for it. Planned changes such as hiring, office set up, and vacation scheduling are things that can be looked at ahead of time. These types of changes are easier for people to deal with and implement.

Reactive changes usually pose more of a problem. A reactive change is when a situation or problem occurs and something has to be done about it. These types of changes cause apprehension and leave little time to evaluate what the best plan is. Reactive changes are a necessary part of change, because no circumstance can be absolutely predicted.

Incremental changes are also easier for people to implement because they are slight adjustments to situations that are already in place. Incremental changes are usually phased in over time. They do not create the initial shock and disturbance of rapid change. Incremental changes allow an organization to test out the waters of change without the worry of jumping in with both feet.

Strategic changes are drastic and alter already existing plans, structures, or goals. Strategic changes are usually very complex and are the most resisted and hardest to stick with. Strategic plan requires careful analysis of the business and goals. It usually requires individuals in the process to overturn every nook and cranny of the company. Strategic planning is best done with the help of experts, experience, and various consulting data.

Why is it so hard to get out of a rut and seek new and potentially better alternatives? Many workers are comfortable with the same thing and enjoy habit. Many

people fear their job security and “what if” scenarios. For example, what if this is more efficient and the company needs to lay people off? What if my idea does not go as planned? Other factors such as surprises and inability to understand the situation also create blocks to change. Some may not want to put any effort in unless they can feel the effects benefiting them. Employees with a planned salary may not want to do extra work. Workers within an organization that do not feel pride, duty, happiness, and responsibility for their work simply will not have the seeds to sow effective change.

How do you facilitate change, acceptance, and growth at your business? One of the best things to do is to make sure that workers are educated about the positive benefits of proposed changes. Additionally, specialized training, drawing on past knowledge, and special meetings can be used to have others understand the changes going on. It can even be simple changes such as extra measures or policies to ensure confidentiality of secure information. Maybe it involves a policy change to make employees safer. Do take note, however, that sometimes information may need to be left out in order to have people buy into it. For instance you might tell employees that there will be a security camera in the front room. You might tell everyone that it is to promote security, and not specify that it also discourages employee theft. Do not lie, but do not emphasize the negative when it is unnecessary. For all changes when employees are a part of the process or see the value in a change, they are able to stay with it. Initial barriers such as surprise, bias, timing, and misunderstanding may take awhile to wade through.

Once a change is brought to light certain enforcement policies can be used to ensure the plans success. Continued communication can ensure that all questions are answered and that problems are dealt with. Ongoing research can provide information on additional changes or if the current changes are working. Negotiating for a middle ground when there are disagreements make a better chance to have a winning situation. Keeping everyone involved and making others responsible for results creates additional buy in. Use these simple tips to benefit your workplace, community, and society as a whole.