

Eight Steps to Successfully Implementing Change

Prepared by The Sewells Team

Step One: Create urgency for change

For change to happen, it helps when the whole company really wants it. Organisations are not good at this. Developing a sense of urgency around the need for change helps you spark the initial motivation to get things moving.

This isn't simply a matter of showing people poor sales statistics, talking about increased competition, or the old "burning platform". It's about opening an honest and convincing dialogue about what's happening in the marketplace and with your competition – and why the change needs to happen, and the benefits it will bring.

By getting people talking positively about how they can contribute towards the change you are proposing ... the urgency can build on their ideas and enthusiasm.

What can we help you do?

- Conduct diagnostic interviews, at all levels, to gain some different perspectives and priceless insights on the real challenges and opportunities that get in the way of, or that will assist in, the business being as successful and as enjoyable a place to work as it can and should be. This is done in conjunction with finding out what may help in the future.
- Examine the opportunities for improvement that should be, or could be, exploited.
- Enable honest dialogue about the best way to get from where the organisation is now to where it wants and needs to be.
- Winning everyone's hearts and minds to support the change in the workplace

Step Two: Form a powerful “driving change coalition”

Managing change isn't enough - you have to lead it and communicate it brilliantly. Use the Diagnostic Feedback to convince people that change is necessary. This takes strong leadership and visible support from key people within your organisation.

You need to create effective "change leaders" throughout your organisation - don't necessarily follow the traditional company hierarchy. To lead change, you need to bring together a coalition, or team, of influential people whose power comes from a variety of sources, including job title, status, influence, expertise, and political importance.

Once formed, your “driving change coalition” needs to work as a team, continuing to build urgency and momentum around the need for, and the benefits of, change.

What can we help you do?

- Turn managers into true leaders to win hearts and minds in your organisation to land change successfully.
- Connect with your key people and obtain from them all their ideas and develop a deep emotional commitment to make change happen.
- Generate brilliant teamworking within your “driving change coalition”.
- Ensure that you have a good mix of people from different departments and different levels within your company to drive the change.

Step Three: Create a "vision" for change that people want to be part of ...

When you first start thinking about change, there will probably be many great ideas and solutions floating around. Link these behind an overall "vision" that people can grasp easily, buy into and remember.

A clear "vision" can help everyone understand why you're asking them to change something. When people see for themselves what you're trying to achieve, then the directives they're given tend to be taken on board more readily ... and become permanently embedded in the day to day "business as usual".

What can we help you do?

- Devise an evocative "vision" that drives behavioural change.
- Determine the values that are central to the change and support the "vision".
- Develop a short summary (a few sentences) that captures why you're doing this, why now and why in this way.
- Create robust strategies to execute that "vision".
- Ensure that your "driving change coalition" can describe the "vision" in five minutes or fewer and capture everyone's hear, mind and body.

Step Four: Communicate the "vision" to ensure maximum buy in

What you do with your "vision" after you create it will determine your success. Your message will probably have strong competition from other day-to-day communications within the company, so you need to launch it properly and communicate it frequently and powerfully embed it within everything that you do.

Don't just use the launch to communicate your "vision". Instead, talk about it every chance you get. Use the "vision" and "values" daily to make decisions and solve problems. When you keep it fresh in everyone's minds, they'll remember it and respond to it.

It's also important to "walk the talk". What you do is far more important - and believable - than what you say. Demonstrate the kind of behaviour that you want from others ... be a "black belt" role model. Leaders / managers need to be role models.

What can we help you do?

- Passionately and powerfully communicate your change "vision" and "values" so people completely "get it".
- Openly and honestly address people's concerns, anxieties and fears.
- Apply your "vision" to all aspects of operations - from accepting accountability to day to day performance management. Tie everything back to the vision.
- Lead by example and become role models.

Step Five: Remove the obstacles to change

When you follow these steps and reach this point in the change process, you've been talking about your "vision" and building buy-in from all levels of the organisation. Your staff will want to get busy and achieve the benefits that you've been promoting.

But is anyone resisting the change? (See "The Roles People Play in Teams" video on our website). And are there processes or procedures that are getting in its way?

Put in place the plans for change and continually check for any barriers to them. Removing obstacles can empower the people you need to execute your "vision" and help the change move forward.

What can we help you do?

- Identify and develop change leaders whose responsibilities include delivering the change.
- Look at your organisational structure, job descriptions and performance and compensation systems to ensure they're in line with your "vision".
- Recommend recognition and reward initiatives for people making change happen.
- Identify people who are resisting the change and help them respond positively (or move them on!)
- Take action to quickly and compliantly remove barriers (human or otherwise).

Step Six: Create short-term wins

Nothing motivates people more than success. Give your company a taste of victory early in the change process. Within a short time-frame (this could be a month, or a year, depending on the type of change), you'll want to have results that your staff can see. Without this, cynics, critics and negative thinkers might hurt your progress.

Create short-term targets - not just one long-term goal. You want each smaller target to be achievable, with little room for failure. Your change team may have to work very hard to come up with these targets, but each "win" that you produce can further motivate the entire staff.

What can we help you do?

- Look for sure-fire projects that you can implement without help from any strong critics of the change.
- Avoid choosing short term wins that are expensive and time-consuming. You want to be able to justify the investment in each project.
- Thoroughly analyse the potential pros and cons of your targets. If you don't succeed with an early goal or two it can hurt your entire change initiative.
- Effectively reward and recognise the people who help you meet the targets.

Step Seven: Build on the change

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

Launching one new product using a new system is great. But if you can launch 10 products, that means the new system is working. To reach that 10th success, you need to keep looking for improvements.

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

What can we help you do?

- Analyse, after every win, what went right and what needs improving.
- Set goals to continue building on the momentum you've achieved.
- Learn about the practice of continuous improvement to make change self-perpetuating.
- Keep ideas fresh by bringing in new "change leaders" for your change programme.

Step Eight: Anchor the changes in corporate culture

Finally, to make any change stick, it should become part of the DNA of your organisation. Your corporate culture often determines what gets done, so the values behind your "vision" must show in day-to-day work.

Make continuous efforts to ensure that the change is seen in every aspect of your organisation. This will help give that change a solid place in your organisation's culture.

It's also important that your company's leaders continue to support the change. This includes existing staff and new leaders who are brought in. If you lose the support of these people, you might end up back where you started.

What can we help you do?

- Communicate effectively about progress every chance you get. Tell success stories about the change process and repeat other stories that you hear.
- Include the change ideals and values when hiring and inducting new staff.
- Publicly recognise key members of your original change coalition and make sure the rest of the staff - new and old - remember their contributions.
- Create plans to replace key leaders of change as they move on. This will help ensure that their legacy is not lost or forgotten.

Every organisation needs help implementing and landing much needed change to create the performance breakthroughs they need ... please get in touch. We love to help.

Call us on 01244 681068 or email sales@sewells.com

We've had remarkable results across all sectors and we'd love to help you achieve your business performance goals.