Peak Enterprise Solutions
Adding Value to Our Client Organizations

Git-r-Dun to Make Change Successful

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Any organization that is trying to make a change to how it operates will encounter issues of making the change that will dictate the level of success achieved. People tend to stay "in the mode" as long as there is more of a reason to do so than not. The longer the current practice has been in place, the more fundamental the change or the more the entire organization is affected are key issues that will determine how successfully the change is made.

Resistance to change is the norm, not the exception. Expect it, prepare for it and manage it to minimize the impact that it has. Ignoring it and hoping it will go away will certainly fail and there are plenty of change management tactics that can be used to reduce this resistance. Both individual and organizational values affect how a change is received in the organization and both need to be addressed in order to be successful.

People must be informed, empowered, willing and able in order for changes to be made effectively. They need to be able to understand the context of what they are being asked to do as it relates to the overall business and they need to be given the tools and skills needed for the new way of doing things. By being engaged and involved, people will often times accept a change that is deemed negative to them as individuals if they understand that the organization as a whole will benefit.

People go through the change process in stages and go through these stages <u>as individuals</u>. By nature, people want to know what it means to them. Change management tends to focus on the organization as a whole or on parts of the organization based on some definition (department, function, etc.). In failing to recognize that individuals need to make the change, issues or opportunities may be missed that affect the success of the effort.

There are several reasons that organizations fail to succeed with changes that are attempted:

- There are unclear or unrealistic expectations for what the change is trying to accomplish.
- The company culture is misjudged or ignored as it relates to how the change will be accepted.
- Change management is viewed as expendable and/or is not done proactively.
- Communication to those involved and affected is not done effectively or is done too late in the process.
- End users who must participate in the change are neglected in the overall process.
- No action plans or meaningful metrics are developed to provide guidance or monitor progress.

In order to manage the change that is being attempted, managers need to realistically understand what the change means to the organization and to the individuals. They need to assess the readiness of those

involved, identify the talents to be used and build a team that is made up of people with the skills, attitudes and rapport needed to make it happen.

The plan that is developed needs to incorporate realistic timelines and appropriate metrics that are simple and easy to understand. This plan has to also realize that unless special circumstances exist, most of those involved with the change will also have regular, daily jobs to perform in order to support everyday ongoing business. People cannot be expected to give a full time effort unless they have been relieved of their normal daily duties. Once the change is underway, all of those involved need to assess results and make adjustments as required. No plan will be exactly correct, but adjusting to ups and downs as they happen will minimize their impact on the project.

As one who spends a lot of time as a change agent helping organizations make a change to business processes, I find that change cannot be managed by remote control. Being involved, talking to people and working the issues first hand is a must for anyone who is leading an organization to a different way. Keeping your ear to the ground and addressing challenges right away in a direct manner will minimize the issues that get in the way. In this effort, my favorite expression is

Git-r-Dun!

- Spend time where the action is.
- Get feedback from others.
- Push to the next level of improvement.
- Follow through with expectations.
- Let people ask questions.
- Give honest assessments.