

A wise person once said that "the only constant, is change!"

Certainly this is the case in the business world. Markets are constantly subject to change; fashions are fickle and fleeting, and consumer tastes and preferences are volatile. Innovative competitive practices are forever appearing; regulatory regimes are ever expanding; environmental, political, social, and cultural views and circumstances are ever changing.



Many of these changes we are alert to; some we are not. Many we respond to; some we do not. The challenge for better business managers is to:

- Recognise the constancy of change
- Establish protocols and practices that (ideally) pre-empt, assimilate, analyse and interpret the implications of change
- Ensure organisational structures are sufficiently flexible to enable the business to remain dynamic, and capable of rearrangement if necessary
- Ensure implementation of well thought out response strategies.

Usually our responses are on a case by case basis. But the sheer constancy, pace and extent of changes inevitably means that we should periodically revisit the "big picture" and objectively review the effectiveness of continuing business structures and practices. Often this highlights the need for some significant structural adjustment. Therein lies the next significant challenge; how to best manage the implementation of the proposed changes.

Some people are stimulated by change, but many are not, and indeed many actually find change to be confronting and threatening.

Some change management principles are helpful to follow:

**Define the strategies:**

- Define the desired business objectives, and establish the desired timescales;
- Consider alternative strategies, in an "all of business" context;
- Question what wishful thinking is involved; are we being realistic that this can be achieved?
- Undertake an impact analysis; what are the changes that will be required and what will be the related business impacts?
- Identify the anticipated benefits, and relevant performance indicators;
- Define what the new organisation will look like.

## **Plan the Change Implementation Process:**

- Identify the stakeholders (both internal and external); who will be affected by the proposed changes, and what will those effects to them be?
- Identify the leaders of change and what they need to do; effective change implementation requires absolute buy-in and commitment, as well as unanimity and common clarity as to ambitions and process;
- Define new jobs and teams designs; how will individuals' jobs change, which staff will need to be involved in the new organisation, and what training will be required? Will remuneration structures require amendment?
- Consider how individuals might be incentivised and rewarded to make the new organisation a success;
- Define business policies and procedures; what new work practices and protocols will need to be observed?
- Define performance management parameters; What are the timescales of actions, and measures of success? When are the review dates?
- Create a communications plan; what are the key messages people need to know about the strategies, action plan and when do they need to know them?
- Communicate, communicate, communicate!!!

The single most important aspect of effective change implementation is ensuring that all players clearly understand the reasons for change, the likely impacts, the details of the change process, and the expected benefits.

Cheers

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