



# SEASONS OF CHANGE

Achieving Staff Acceptance of  
Organizational Changes



**70% of all change initiatives fail** (Mauer, 2010)

Why?



# WHY MOST CHANGE INITIATIVES FAIL

- “We don’t have the time”
- “We know point Z, but forgot about point A”
- “The honeymoon is over”
- “The telephone game takes over”
- “Wait, I gotta lead?”

(Barger, 2016)



## WHY MOST CHANGE INITIATIVES FAIL (CONT'D)

What is the one common thread in all of these reasons?

**Employees!**



## WHY MOST CHANGE INITIATIVES FAIL (CONT'D)

- Getting employees to buy into the change is one factor that will affect all aspects of the project
- How do you get employee buy in?
  - Sell the change
  - Fix the right problem
  - Know your staff
    - Look for feedback
  - Manage fears
  - Lead by example



# SELLING THE CHANGE



# SELLING THE CHANGE

- Sell the change – Not the solution!
  - Everyone involved needs to understand the reasons for the change
  - Don't confuse announcing the change with implementing the solution
    - Employees resist being controlled more than they resist change
    - Changes need to be done *with* employees, not *to* them



## SELLING THE CHANGE (CONT'D)

- Employees closest to the problem should have input into the solution
  - Top down changes are bound to fail without the buy in from the frontline workers
  - By soliciting ideas and suggestions from staff doing the job day to day, you'll establish their input as part ownership of the project, and more easily gain their buy in
  - Staff buy in to the solution is critical to achieving lasting results as opposed to initial change followed by a subtle revert back to old ways





# FIXING THE RIGHT PROBLEM



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- In order to ensure that you're fixing the right problem, you must involve staff in the change process
- Do not make decisions in a vacuum
- Involve staff in the development of the solution by:
  - Conducting surveys
  - Hosting focus groups
  - Holding town hall meetings
  - Including representatives on the project planning team



**KNOWING YOUR  
STAFF**



# KNOWING YOUR STAFF

- Knowing your staff and the best ways to communicate with them is critical for project success
- Identify the holdouts and engage them in the planning
  - The best way to combat resistance is to involve those employees in a way that gives them input and ownership into the change
  - Some employees will never come around and it's important to limit their influence on team morale
- Involve all stakeholders
  - Involve all employees affected by the change, not just those closest to it
  - Customize the message to each stakeholder's point of view



## KNOWING YOUR STAFF (CONT'D)

- Heed employee warnings
  - Provide a legitimate outlet for their concerns in order to reduce private venting that affects team morale
  - Acknowledge and address concerns in a timely and effective manner in order to ensure that employees feel heard and not discouraged
  - Solicit feedback throughout the project, and review it carefully
    - Provide suggestion boxes
    - Conduct surveys at key milestones
    - Host peer user groups
    - Have a dedicated regular time to openly discuss feedback

A tropical beach scene with palm trees in the foreground, turquoise water, and a clear blue sky. A white rectangular box with a thin black border is centered on the right side of the image, containing the title text.

# MANAGING FEARS



# MANAGING FEARS

- Change is scary!
  - Major change can be overwhelming for anyone and it's important not to minimize this
- Plan, plan, plan!
  - Include the end goal, but also include major milestones along the way
- Take baby steps!
  - Keep the end goal in sight, but focus on one milestone at a time and celebrate the achievement of each milestone



## MANAGING FEARS (CONT'D)

- Do not bite off more than you can chew!
  - Do not try to make multiple changes at one time
  - Do not set an end goal that is so distant that the organization's direction may change before it is achieved
- Set a routine
  - Hold regular project meetings
  - Update staff on progress
  - Provide an opportunity for questions and feedback, make sure employees know they can count on





## MANAGING FEARS (CONT'D)

- The Devil is in the details
  - Be prepared for concepts to not work in process
  - Adjust the plan as needed
  - Don't overestimate capacity
  - Create written procedures for staff to follow

The background of the slide is a soft-focus image of autumn leaves in various colors including red, orange, yellow, and green. A large, prominent leaf in shades of red and orange is on the left side. Other leaves in yellow and green are scattered throughout the scene, creating a warm, seasonal atmosphere.

# LEADING BY EXAMPLE



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- By walking the talk you prove to your staff that:
  - You're invested in the change
  - You believe in the change
  - You are partners in the change
  - You can be trusted



## LEADING BY EXAMPLE (CONT'D)

- How to prove to your staff that you can be trusted:
  - Take responsibility
  - Be truthful
  - Be courageous
  - Acknowledge Failure
  - Be persistent and reliable
  - Create Solutions
  - Listen
  - Delegate
  - Roll up your sleeves and work with them



# CONCLUSION

## As a Leader....

- YOU need to sell the change, not the solution
- YOU need to fix the right problem
- YOU need to know your staff
- YOU need to manage their fears
- YOU need to lead by example

If you don't do these things, it will be very difficult to get staff buy in to the change. Without staff buy in, the change cannot succeed.



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