

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING AN AGILE-PERFORMING AND PRACTICAL-TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE LEADERSHIP MODEL AT THE COMPANY LEVEL

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Abstract

Change is a common thread that runs through all businesses, regardless of size, industry and age. The business world is changing rapidly, and organizations must change just as quickly. Organizations that engage in change thrive, while those that do not end up struggling for survival. Change leadership plays a key role in any successful business, representing an important part of leading a high-performing team as well as a successful business. Regardless of whether a company's team is working on a project, a software update, or an ongoing optimization idea, change leadership is extremely important. As the business grows, so does the team. With more employees and more tasks, any business needs a plan to manage change and

stay on track for performance. Given the fact that resistance to change can play a major role in determining how a company operates, it is necessary for those who deal with change leadership to find strategies and solutions to avoid mass resistance when a change occurs. In this paper we will address precisely the strategies, solutions and planning of a permanent leadership of change at the company level, so that a business becomes successful. We will go through the steps that were taken by a company to get the agile-performing and practical- transformational change leadership model, which comes with strategies, principles and modern business tools and solutions.

Keywords: *optimization idea, successful business, transformational, agile, change leadership, human resources, strategies*

JEL Classification: *M12, M15, M29*

Introduction to change leadership through a specialized literature review

Change leadership is the process by which organizations manage any change, whether planned or unplanned, within an organization. The term "change leadership" is very broad and can refer to planning change, managing change within an organization and/or managing the impact of change within a company. (Jabri, M., & Jabri, E. , 2022).

The concept of "change leadership" is a familiar one in most businesses today. But how companies manage change, and how successful they are at it, varies enormously depending on the nature of the business, the nature of the change, and the employees involved. A key part of change leadership depends on how well employees within the company understand the change process. (Ali, BJ, & Anwar, G.,2021).

According to the definition given by SHRM (Society for Human Resource Leadership), change leadership is the systematic approach and application of knowledge, tools and resources to deal with change. Moreover, it involves defining and adopting strategies, structures, procedures and technologies to deal with changes in external conditions and the business environment. (Jotabá, M. N., Fernandes, C. I., Gunkel, M., & Kraus, S., 2022)

The main goal in change leadership is the successful implementation of new processes, products and business strategies, in which undesired effects are at a minimum. (Diana, D., & Aslami, N. , 2022).

Companies, like any organization, go through change processes, more or less radical. Changes can be caused by changes in the external environment or internal changes, they can be an effect of changes in other systems or they can be caused consciously, with the intention of optimizing the activity. (Kitchen, P. J., & Daly, F., 2002).

In an organization, aspects of effective change leadership are important to successfully manage changes to processes or the general way the company operates. (Franklin, M., 2021).

Change-impact factors for performant corporate strategies

Corporate strategy came to be seen as "value leadership", where the job of corporate managers was less to act as a proxy investor and more to extract maximum value from the businesses in hand. As the business environment evolved there are arising new and different demands on corporate strategies. (El-Amin, A., & George, B., 2020). Here are the most important factors that are driving these changes in leadership strategies, seen by authors Martin Reeves and Annelis O'Dea in their article entitled *Six Factors Driving Changes to Today's Corporate Strategies*, published in June 2022 by Harvard Business Review :

1. *Dynamism*. Active business portfolio leadership is again important: companies need to ensure that their business portfolios are continuously rebalanced to maintain growth expectations. New businesses need to be seeded at a higher rate, requiring large companies to behave more like entrepreneurs in one part of their business and to build the skills and structures necessary to ensure this. Recovery or transformation has become a dominant and strategic capability for repairing or renewing businesses that have experienced competitive disruption, matured, or fallen into decline. (Narisetti Raju, 2020)

2. *Uncertainty*. As a product of the technological revolution, business plans have become less predictable. This is expected to continue with other waves of technological disruption, such as artificial intelligence (AI) or machine learning (ML) washing through the corporate economy. (Smith, T. G., Norasi, H., Herbst, K. M., Kendrick, M. L., Curry, T. B., Grantcharov, T. P., & Cleary, S. P., 2022). In addition, it appears that climate-based technologies and business models will have at least as large an effect. (Buschmeyer, K., Hatfield, S., Heine, I., Jahn, S., & Markus, A. L., 2022). In environments with high rates of change, scale can help companies manage risk through superior access to information, maintain operational and financial buffers, and conduct rapid experiments. These

capabilities combine to create a new type of dynamic advantage: resilience, which provides long-term performance in uncertain times. (Fritz Nauck, Luca Pancaldi, Thomas Poppensieker, & Olivia White, 2021)

3. *Contingency.* The business environment has become more dynamic and uncertain. The variety of competitive environments facing businesses has increased. Depending on the uncertainty, malleability, or rigidity of each, corporations must take very different approaches to strategy development, each with its own distinct processes and tools. (Valene Jouany, Mia Makipaa, 2022). These approaches include: classical strategy (where firms compete on scale and position), adaptive strategy (they compete on their ability to learn), vision-based strategy (they compete on imagination, creativity and innovation), shaping strategy (they compete on their ability to collaborate with partners) or turnaround (they compete on their ability to renew a business). (Levonen, S., 2022). In this case, corporate strategy must cultivate capabilities to apply and balance these different frameworks, choosing the right approach to strategy for each business and creating a common platform to operationalize them. (Allaya Cooks-Campbell, 2022)

4. *Connection.* The orchestrators of the digital ecosystem (like Amazon), profoundly changes the role of corporate strategy, as the diversity of offerings and capabilities that contribute to a firm's value creation may now reside beyond firm boundaries. (Addo, A., 2022). The goal of corporate strategy becomes to create an advantaged position within an advantaged ecosystem. The strategy has become more open to external influence and collaboration, even for non-platform businesses. (Kasemsap, K., 2017).

5. *Contextuality.* The sheer size of the footprint of business, the size of individual corporations, and increasing concerns about societal and planetary externalities no longer permit managers to adopt a simplified view: corporations now need to demonstrate purpose, social contribution, trustworthiness, and ecological responsibility. (Abbas, A., Ekowati, D., Suhariadi, F., Fenitra, R. M., & Fahlevi, M., 2022). This involves not only matters of intent, measurement, compliance and communication, but also increasingly issues of competitive advantage. A corporate strategy must now create credibility, social contribution, and generate advantage by dealing creatively with new social and ecological constraints, as well as deliver on the traditional variables. (Gregor Pfajfar, Aviv Shoham, Agnieszka Małecka, Maja Zalaznik, 2022)

6. *Cognition.* Machine learning (ML) and IoT (Internet of Things) has now reached a level of sophistication that rivals or exceeds human expert capabilities

for an increasing scope of tasks. This has profound implications for corporate strategy. (Buschmeyer, K., Hatfield, S., Heine, I., Jahn, S., & Markus, A. L., 2022) The cognitive advantage of corporations becomes a potential axis of competition, determined by its ability to deploy AI/ML/IoT in each business effectively, and also to shift the focus of human minds to more uniquely advantaged areas like ethics, empathy, and creativity. (Muttaqin, R., Alam, G. N., & Saputera, D., 2022). Similarly, companies will compete on designing and orchestrating new types of “bionic” organization that combine human and machine cognition synergistically. (Clementino, E., Perkins, R., 2021).

Strategy is competitive and always evolves in response to competition. The magnitude of the changes in the technological, social, and natural environment are such that corporate strategy will need to be qualitatively reinvented again for new circumstances. (Li, R., & Feng, Y., 2022).

Through a well-designed human resources policy, and with the adoption of the correct strategies, the transition to new situations and ideas will be easier for those companies directly involved. (Mazikana, A. T., 2022).

The need for transformational change or fail to change leadership

When an organization goes through a process of changing or transforming the values of the company culture, there are many details and information that need to be communicated, and the individuals involved want to understand what this change means for them. (Sulistiyani, E., Ali, A. H. N., & Astuti, H. M., 2020)

The needs for change in business organizations can be caused by aspects such as:

1. Market competition. According to the Report *State of Digital Transformations Worldwide 2019-2020* issued by TRIANZ , a principal analyst Bryan Solis reveals in his research that at least 51% of survey applications chose market competition and growth opportunities as a cause for change. (van der Heijden, B., Viaene, S., & Van Looy, A., 2022).

2. Competitive pressure. The KMPG study entitled *Succeeding in disruptive times. Three critical factors for business transformation success* released in 2016, pointed out that 41% of survey applicants selected competitive pressure as the main reason for change. In a market where new business startups are constantly emerging, 79.7% of people need to adapt their enterprises every two to five years to survive. (Olimova, N., Teshabaev, O., & Usmonaliev, I., 2022).

3. Evolution of technology. The main driver of change over the years has been advancements in technology. People do not, however, keep up with the rapid advances in technology. (Vaahs, D., & Weiland, A., 2020). Because change affects a team's performance and, by extension, the entire business, organizations need to keep their employees informed of new developments and mentor them through the transition. (Attaran, M., Attaran, S., & Kirkland, D., 2020).

4. Crisis response. Every organization ought to be ready for these crisis situations. A fresh strategy that will stop the crisis from doing more harm to the organization should be put in place right away as the organization's response. While the leadership component focuses on the plan, another area of attention should be on the employee, understanding how they will adjust to that change and by consistently giving them an impression that their opinions are valued. (Thakur, R., & Hale, D., 2022).

On the other hand, one in three CEOs admit that they have failed to achieve the desired outcome from past transformation initiatives when it comes to bringing new strategies within the organizations. So, *the causes of fail in organizational transformations* are mainly the results of processes such as (Eaves, D., & Lombardo, L., 2021):

1. Underestimation of Operating Model Changes. The most common barrier to transformation failures is that 37% of executives tend to underestimate the importance of operating model changes within the organization and their impact through the transformation phase. (Parida, V., Sjödin, D., & Reim, W., 2019).

2. Employee Resistance. According to the article entitled *Changing change leadership*, released by McKinsey & Company in 2015 and written by Boris Ewenstein, Wesley Smith, and Ashvin Sologar, the most crucial aspect of organizational changes is the cooperation of the workforce. If they don't support the change, the transformation won't succeed. As a result, employee resistance in regard to change and lack of leadership support causes at least 70% of change initiatives to fail. However, there are some cases when 30% of employees commit to the change and continue with the transformation. (Ewenstein Boris, Wesley Smith, & Ashvin Sologar, 2015)

3. Lack of communication by the upper leadership. If there is a lack of communication, clarity, and unmanageable workload by the manager, that will lead to employee burnout crisis—a state of physical/emotional exhaustion. In a survey conducted by Gallup in 2022 and written by Denise McLain, entitled *How Leaders Can Communicate Change to a Burned-Out Workforce*, with over 7,500 full-time

employees involved, it was found that two-thirds of workers feel workplace burnout. As a result, employee burnout causes a loss of productivity, engagement, motivation, impatience, and increased stress, which can conflict with the organization's goals and new strategies. (McLain Denise, 2022). From a study conducted by Michael Blending in 2015, entitled *National Health Costs Could Decrease if Managers Reduce Work Stress*, published in Working Knowledge. Business Research for Business Leaders and issued by Harvard Business School, it appears that workplace stress also impacts employee health, accounting for 8% of national health care spending (\$125 to \$190 billion) and causing 120,000 deaths yearly. (Blending Michael, 2015)

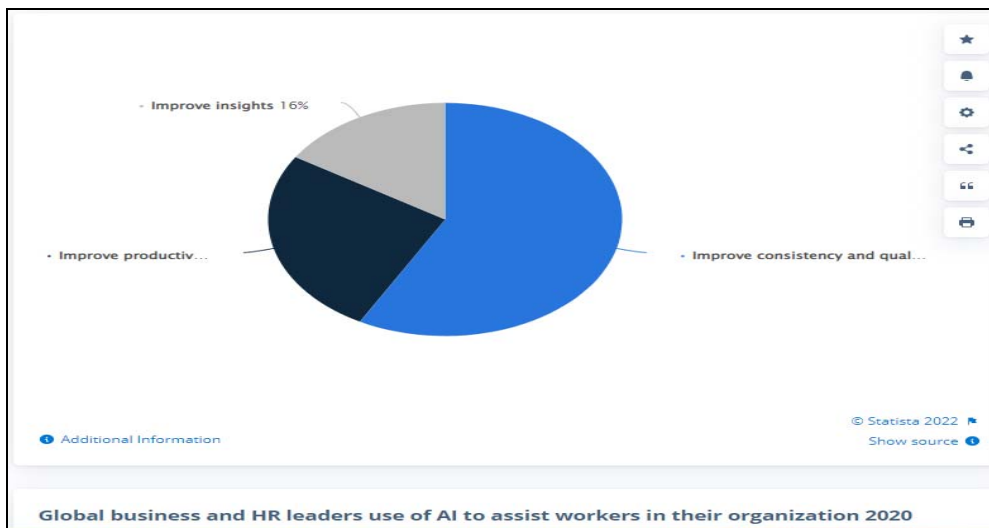
4. Digital Change Transformation. What sets digital change transformation apart from change leadership is the drive to integrate digital technology into businesses—a transformation within the firm that affects technology, culture, work, and much more. (Jedynak, M., Czakon, W., Kuźniarska, A., & Mania, K., 2021). For more than 20 years, various businesses have been gradually converting themselves with digital technology in order to adapt to the constantly shifting market. Then COVID-19 occurred, which altered the process for nearly all businesses. (Abbas, A., Ekowati, D., Suhariadi, F., Fenitra, R. M., & Fahlevi, M., 2022).

The role of AI, ML, IoT, big data, cloud computing and analytics in agile-performance and practical-transformational leadership

According to a survey conducted by Twilio in San Francisco and published on 15th of July 2020, at least 97% of decision-makers believe that the pandemic sped up their company's digital transformation process. As a result of the pandemic, 95% of all companies are looking for new methods to interact with their customers. (Twilio, 2020)

Steve Van Kuiken, who is a senior partner in McKinsey's New Jersey office, wrote an article on 21 October 2022 entitled *Tech at the Edge: Trends Reshaping the Future of IT and Business* in which it draws the attention that the digital transformation market is more focused on cloud computing, artificial intelligence (AI), big data and analytics, mobility/social media, cyber security, and so far. (Olabode, O. E., Boso, N., Hultman, M., & Leonidou, C. N., 2022). Further, the global market for digital technology has been expanding quickly, reaching \$421.8 billion in 2020 and projected to reach \$1,692.4 billion by 2030. Leaders are now using AI to assist employees with the aim of bringing more success within their organization. (Van Kuiken Steve, 2022)

According to a Statista 2020 study, entitled *Global Business and HR Leaders Use of AI to Assist Workers in the Organization*, written by Thomas Alsop and issued on 22 February 2022, 58% of the business and HR leaders surveyed worldwide who use artificial intelligence (AI) to assist workers in their organization use AI to improve consistency and quality, 26% to improve productivity, and 16% to improve insights. AI is being implemented in today's world in big companies such as Google, Facebook, and Amazon; however, it is just the beginning, as employees will be affected by automation, advancement in digital skills, and so on. (Statista, 2022)



Source: Statista, 2022

The same study highlights the fact that by 2030 it is predicted that human labor will no longer be necessary in specific industries as a result of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML). Some of the positions expected to be automated are (Jallow, H., Renukappa, S., Suresh, S., & Al-Meraikhi, H. S., 2022):

1. Warehouse and manufacturing jobs
2. Customer service
3. Production line evolution
4. Banking services and retail checkout

The digital transformation will only increase as new software platforms are released daily, so to survive, companies will have to adapt and integrate new tools, as well as install and deploy them. (Alsop Thomas, 2022)

The World 2022 Stats Report, named *Internet Growth Statistics, Today's Road to the E-commerce and Global Trade Internet Technology Reports*, highlights the fact that even though it was COVID-19 that increased the rate of digital transformation through modern technology within the company, that will continue in the future as 92% of decision-makers believe that their organization is very likely to expand digital communication channels. Established change frameworks, resistance leadership, and risk analysis processes will not change. (Grodal, S., Krabbe, A., & Chang-Zunino, M., 2022). However, technology will impact the future of change leadership as it is advanced every day, with more than 5,382 million users active in 2022. (<https://www.internetworldstats.com/emarketing.htm>)

In a 225-company research study entitled *The Hard Side of Change Leadership*, issued in 2015 by Harvard Business Review, authors Harold L. Sirkin, Perry Keenan and Alan Jackson revealed a consistent correlation between the outcomes (success or failure) of change programs and four hard factors: project *duration*, particularly the time between project reviews; performance *integrity*, or the capabilities of project teams; the *commitment* of both senior executives and the staff whom the change will affect the most; and the additional *effort* that employees must make to cope with the change. (the DICE factors) (Lauer, T., 2022):

1.Duration. Time is of the essence especially in crisis situations where companies need to respond. Harvard Business Review demonstrates that a long project that is reviewed frequently has a higher success rate than a small project that isn't reviewed frequently. (Kim, W. C., & Mauborgne, R. A. , 2017).

2.Integrity. Companies should choose a team leader which will guide the other employees towards success. Most importantly, leaders should clarify the employee's roles and responsibilities in terms of the strategy in place. (Ali, BJ, & Anwar, G., 2021).

3.Commitment. Commitment is a mutual part between the company and employee. As companies expect employees to commit to the strategy, the company should as well commit to employees. It is not enough for the company to commit to managers as what may be seen as a good strategy will not be the same for employees. So, the leaders must encourage building staff support in their organizations. (Bankar, S., & Gankar, S. , 2013).

4.Effort. Companies often overlook the fact that their staff members are already occupied with daily responsibilities while planning for transformation. Therefore, implementing a strategy that only results in a 30–40% increase in employee workload would simply cause resistance and failure inside the firm. (Kasemsap, K., , 2017). So, the leaders must estimate the necessary adjustments and how much extra work the employees will have to complete on top of their regular tasks, and try not to go over 10% of each employee’s workload. (Sirkin Harold L., Keenan Perry & Jackson Alan, 2015).

Change leadership vs. change management for agile-performant organizations

Often change leadership and change management are used interchangeably. However, the question here is whether or not it’s just a matter of semantics. Both these concepts are significantly distinct. (Lang, M., & Wagner, R., 2020).

Change management usually is associated with small-scale changes and is a set of tools and/or measures to keep a change effort under control and to provide solutions to any organizational resistance to a change. (Obina, F., & Adenike, S., 2022). The goal is to minimize the change initiative’s disruption, make it cost-effective, and reduce the chances of change failure. On the other hand, change leadership is related to the vision and driving force behind large-scale transformational changes, ensuring the implementation process quicker, more innovative, and efficient. (Bagga, S. K., Gera, S., & Haque, S. N., 2022)

A change leader makes the difference. Most organizations have a dedicated change leadership team to combat employee resistance, yet the failure rate of change projects still exceeds 70%.

The actions taken differently by change leaders to set organizations up for success are as follows:

- *Linchpin Linkages:* Change leaders connect top leadership’s aspirations and strategic intent with market insights, allowing them to convert into responsive workforce actions. (Scott, T., & Asavisanu, P., 2021).
- *Holistic Impact:* Change leaders aim to create a holistic impact on their reports, peers, and superiors instead of following the conventional top-down approach. They often influence people to get on board and use several motivational tools to achieve this result. For example, according to an article published on *Whatfix* in the 19th of November 2021 by Pryanka Malik, entitled *Change Leadership: How to Lead Change Effectively (2023)* it is highlighted that *Netflix*

takes a result-oriented approach instead of microleadership. It motivates its employees with perks such as unlimited PTO, flexible work schedules, and more as rewards.

- *Multiple Approaches*: Change leaders aren't afraid to use various approaches or a combination of leadership models for effectively solving a problem. (Jaaron, A. A., Hijazi, I. H., & Musleh, K. I. Y. , 2022). If their methods cannot adapt to the situation, change leaders delegate others to help lead the current vision to lead the team to the finish line. (Cameron, E., & Green, M., 2019).

While different change leaders may opt for unique leadership approaches & techniques to drive their company to a unified vision, here are some significant piece of advice for change managers to become successful change leaders (Franklin, M., 2021):

1. *A clear vision*. A successful change leader is an inspiring visionary. Successful leaders anticipate employee concerns well in advance and address them throughout their vision to support the change. This clarity in vision will help employees overcome fears and keep them engaged throughout the process. (Obina, F., & Adenike, S., 2022)

2. *An action-oriented, strategic plan*. It's imperative for a change leader to create a well-detailed strategic plan to kickstart the change initiative and achieve critical milestones. A well-drafted plan helps employees connect with the vision and understand their roles and responsibilities in making the initiative successful. It also highlights the underlying tasks, priorities, structures, behaviors, and resources. (Scott, T., & Asavisanu, P., 2021).

3. *Proactive in creating relationships across the organization*. Since change leadership demands a people-centric approach, a change leader must build a strong foundation by creating relationships with internal and external stakeholders. These relationships reduce friction and ensure a smoother change transition. (Brown, C., 2022).

4. *Exploring technological trends*. In the age of digital transformation, harnessing the strength of technology such as digital adoption platforms can make the change leadership more effective. (Boratyńska, K., 2019). Digital Adoption Platforms (DAP), for example, helps employees steer through change by providing contextual in-app guidance and on-demand support. It offers intuitive UX features such as pop-ups and beacons, ensuring that small changes don't go unnoticed, said Nikolette Lorincz in her 25th of November 2022 article, entitled *Popup UX Design: Best Practices, Tips & Examples*, released on *OptiMonk.com*

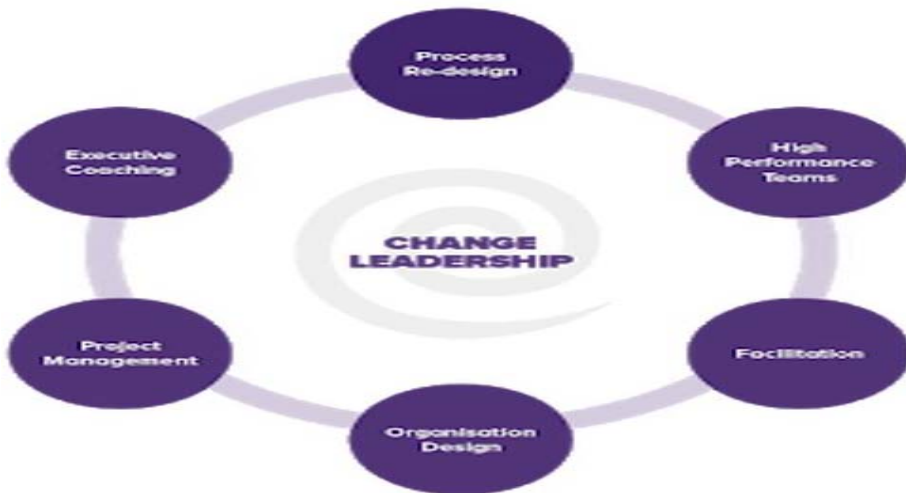
5. *Communicating effectively and transparently.* 65% of change leaders feel that clear and frequent communication with employees was the most crucial factor in driving their change efforts. Effective change communication must address the questions such as ‘the need for change’, ‘benefits of change’ and ‘what’s in it for me’. This communication must be bi-directional and encourage employees to voice their concerns. (Fyshchuk, I., & Evsyukova, O., 2020).

6. *Identifying & confronting barriers and resistance to change head-on.* Change imposition is often met with pushback. Change leaders must conduct baseline assessments and ensure employees look at the change as an opportunity instead of a threat. It is equally important for the change leadership of the companies to provide consistent support and provide employees with onboarding training to succeed in the change effort. (By, R. T., 2021).

7. *Collaborate with team members across the organization.* Change leaders must lead the change by setting an example. They should create a collaborative culture within the organization so that people can step-up in case of emergencies. They should also collect regular feedback to improve the leadership approach and change techniques for future initiatives. (Brown, C., 2022).

8. *Hold the employees accountable.* According to a CEO survey, 18% of the leaders cited “holding people accountable” as their biggest weakness. Since people drive change initiatives, it is essential for a change leadership to hold the employees accountable. Fostering a culture of accountability improves employee performance, empowers team members with a sense of ownership, and drives organization growth. (AlKhoori, I., 2022).

The Baldrige Criteria related to Shannon Connon’s article entitled *Change Leadership*, issued on 27th of June 2019 in *Quality in Mind* which can be found on *asq.org*, defines change management as a leadership-induced process that involves transformational organizational change that leadership controls and sustains. (Klein, N., Ramos, T. B., & Deutz, P., 2022). It requires dedication, involvement of employees at all levels, and constant communication. Transformational change is strategy-driven and stems from the top of the organization. Its origin may be from needs identified within the organization and it requires active engagement of the whole organization. (Valene Jouany, Mia Makipaa, 2022). Below it can be observed the *Change Leadership Process*, made schematic by *KnowledgeBrief (KBM)*, on *asq.org*.



Source: *The Change Leadership Process, KnowledgeBrief (KBM), on asq.org.*

According to Luciana Paulise, who wrote in *BIZTORMING.COM* on the 26th of June 2019 an article entitled *The Role of the Leader in Agile Organizations*, many companies around the world are moving towards an agile way of work to be able to tackle constant changes and capture the opportunities those changes bring. Agile organizations can develop products five times faster, make decisions three times faster, and reallocate resources adroitly and quickly, based on the research of the authors De Smet, A., Lurie, M., & St George, A. (2018). “*Leading agile transformation: The new capabilities leaders need to build 21st-century organizations*”, published by *McKinsey & Company*.

Agile companies work in small teams that are multidisciplinary and autonomous, some don't have leaders, some simply have facilitators to ensure successful interactions among team members, suppliers and customers. (Zu, Y., & Zhang, R., 2022). New leaders need to let go of micromanaging the day-to-day activities to become success facilitators. They will set a long-term vision, promote interaction across the organization, provide support to unleash team member's idea and define priorities. (Arefazar, Y., Nazari, A., Hafezi, M. R., & Maghool, S. A. H., 2022).

Leaders are no longer masters of the people on their team, instead customers are. That's why structures in agile companies flatten to (Jallow, H., Renukappa, S., Suresh, S., & Al-Meraikhi, H. S., 2022):

- Allow fast and online communication top down, bottom up and inside out.
- Facilitate fast decision making within the team, without the need to wait for management approval
- Ensure everybody is connected to the customer needs, and the needs of each of the team members.

In agile companies, every employee can become a change leader within their teams, depending on the task at hand, so everybody needs to be trained to CARE (Method/Tool) for their team, through four main habits (Arefazar, Y., Nazari, A., Hafezi, M. R., & Maghool, S. A. H., 2022):

- *Connect*: Communicate the vision, values and objectives that drive the team and build the network of stakeholders required. Team members now decide the best way to accomplish the goals. (Valdemarin, S., & Mayrhofer, U., 2022)
- *Ask*: Asking more questions at the front-line to deeply understand results, instead of advocating opinion or direction. Analyze risks and always look for outside-in perspectives from the customers to make decisions with the team. (Brown, C. , 2022)
- *Respect*: Build confidence and trust, foster open communication and respect differences in the workforce to allow multidisciplinary teams to thrive. Strengths, skills and ideas work at their best when relationships are based on mutual acceptance. (van der Heijden, B., Viaene, S., & Van Looy, A. , 2022).
- *Empower*: Prioritize objectives visually, build systems and team routines, promote self-discipline and time management and encourage immediate problem-solving. Avoid constant updates, briefings, micromanagement, and approvals, all very costly. (Jaaron, A. A., Hijazi, I. H., & Musleh, K. I. Y., 2022)

According to McKinsey&Company's study, issued on the 1st of October 2018, by the authors De Smet, A., Lurie, M., & St George, A. (2018)., entitled "*Leading agile transformation: The new capabilities leaders need to build 21st-century organizations*", agile organizations, viewed as living systems, have evolved to thrive in an unpredictable, rapidly changing environment. These organizations are both stable and dynamic. They focus on customers, fluidly adapt to environmental changes, and are open, inclusive, and nonhierarchical. They evolve continually and embrace uncertainty and ambiguity. Such organizations, we believe, are far better

equipped than traditional ones for the future. (Ekhsan, M., Sudiro, A., Mugiono, M., & Hussein, A. S., 2022).

Strategies for successfully implementing a company-wide agile-transformational and practical-change leadership model (case studies)

As we mentioned from the beginning of this work, no organization, company or business can afford to remain rigid, without innovating or embracing change. We live in a world that continues to change at a rate of proportion. There will always be new challenges and new approaches to work. Changes in work procedures, company functions, organizational and technical restructuring, these are just some of the procedures related to change leadership. (Buschow, C., & Suhr, M., 2022).

In small companies, implementing new office software solutions is not too much of a challenge. Usually a manager has to deal with the technical support and coordinate the training of the teams. However, the real problem arises when forcing a change in current habits on a group of one hundred, five hundred or even thousands of employees. (By, R. T. , 2021)

Through this study, we will help managers better understand this process of large-scale change and teach them to prepare for such changes with office software tools, such as the Google Workspace office package.

The change leadership process was said to represent a collective name for all activities that prepare employees for significant organizational changes. This set of procedures anticipates, organizes and helps to overcome the challenges that the company may face during the process of changing to new technologies, for example.(Henriette, E., Feki, M., & Boughzala, I. (2016, September).

But, we believe that the easiest way to understand this issue is to use an appropriate example. FOTosic, which is a partner of Google Cloud, is a company specialized in implementing the Google Workspace package in companies in many different industries, regardless of the number of employees (Koll, H., & Jensen Schleiter, A., 2020).

Aparna Pappu, the GM and Vice President of Google Workspace, in an article released on the 11th of October 2022, entitled *Introducing innovations in Google Workspace to help your organization thrive in hybrid work* is talking about the implementation of the standard package at company level, which should include:

- Consultations to select the best service for the company.
- Migrate emails from old mailboxes to Gmail services.
- Help in configuring the administration console and security settings.

- Post-implementation technical support.
- Possible training for users and system administrators.

However, the points mentioned above are only part of the long list of tasks that are part of the entire change leadership process. (Jakobsen, M. L. F., Andersen, L. B., & van Luttervelt, M. P., 2022).

For corporations that want a thorough preparation for the implementation of Google Workspace, according to the same author, Aparna Pappu, the GM and Vice President of Google Workspace (in her article released on the 11th of October 2022, entitled *Introducing innovations in Google Workspace to help your organization thrive in hybrid work*) FOTosic will also be able to offer:

- A series of consultations and trainings that will prepare the decision makers in the company to take the next steps.
- A detailed plan, tailored to the organization's needs, consisting of four steps and a detailed list of additional details.
- The implementation team, consisting of FOTosic representatives and company representatives from the technical, sales and other departments.
- Setting up an information campaign.
- Closed group service testing.
- "Day 0" – start of services for all users.
- A program of internal ambassadors, who will support these changes from within.

The benefits of implementing change leadership with Google Workspace would be (Aparna Pappu, 2022):

- Change leadership shortens the transition time, so these changes will not interfere with the operation of the company.
- Planning reduces the risks associated with adopting new solutions. It helps avoid data leaks, slowdowns and unnecessary frustrations.
- Greater user satisfaction with early clarifications.
- Monitoring the progress of the change together with a Google partner allows the company to detect potential problems in advance and prevent them effectively.
- Change leadership involves employees from all structures, and common direction towards a goal helps the culture of the organization.
- Faster adoption of Google's suite of cloud-based office tools has the potential to increase team collaboration efficiency.

The preparations for the change process would consist of the following phases, described below.

The first step towards a successful change is the understanding by specialists of the existing procedures in the organization. Implementing Google Workspace is a complex, multi-level endeavor. That is why it is very important to have a common vision and a goal that everyone can identify with. When planning the individual stages of implementation, leaders must consider both the roles of each individual and a predefined broad perspective. (Marco-Lajara, B., Sánchez-García, E., Martínez-Falcó, J., & Poveda-Pareja, E., 2022).

The FOTosic methodology implementation strategy consists of the three levels of change that must be taken into account at the company level, namely (Cook , 2022):

1. *Changes at the product level.* The first thing that will be noticed in the company culture is the emergence of new work tools. Depending on the degree of openness to new experiences, employees may receive them with reserve, indifference or enthusiasm. Every end user will have to invest time to get used to the interface of these new applications. Most employees will feel confident using Gmail after a few minutes, but some users may need practical advice, support or additional training. (Niero, M., & Kalbar, P. P., 2019).

2. *Changes at the company's policy level.* Along with new applications, the cloud will bring many new possibilities for the company. The implementation team must decide which Google Workspace features can be safely turned on and which should be kept for security reasons. For example, the following scenarios can be considered:

- Will users be able to sign in to their work accounts immediately on mobile devices?
- Can the files be distributed outside the organization?
- Will the use of two-step verification and a strong password be voluntary or enforced across the company? (Baumgartner, F. R., Berry, J. M., Hojnacki, M., Leech, B. L., & Kimball, D. C., 2009)

3. *Changes at the level of procedures in the company.* The least tangible level of change is a gradual metamorphosis of employee culture procedures and habits. It is worthwhile for this progress to be planned and coordinated by the company's leadership team, but the effects will not be visible immediately. For example, if the company has never managed to use shared mailboxes and resource bookings in a calendar, then leadership should expect it to take some time before this becomes automatic for employees. (Tyler, T. R., & De Cremer, D., 2005)

Change leadership is associated with continuous improvement of business processes, which often can be achieved by deploying one of the following prominent *change models*. Change leadership will necessarily have to go through the four stages of implementation at the company level, to get to the next level, namely agile-performing and practical-transformational change leadership model (Eaves, D., & Lombardo, L., 2021):

Alpha stage - planning and communication. In the first stage of preparation for the implementation, the FOTosic company specialized in the implementation of the Google Workspace package in companies from many different industries, will first have to consult with its client. After preliminary arrangements, FOTosic will appoint a team of shift supervisors, create an individual implementation program and then start an information campaign that will gradually fuel the involvement of the employee community. The FOTosic Change Leadership Assistant will provide templates for promotional materials and become an external consultant monitoring implementation progress. (Maali, O., Kepple, N., & Lines, B., 2022).

Beta stage - testing and training. In the next step, the leadership of the company involved in the change will have to involve in this process first its technical team that will test the capabilities of Google Workspace. In cooperation with FOTosic, user account creation, data migration and administration console configuration will begin. Meanwhile, there are a series of training sessions for future administrators and a group of employees who will become Ambassadors of Change. The implementation team continues the awareness campaign and prepares a support plan to ensure that no employee questions go unanswered. (Wright, D. B., Mayer, G. R., Cook, C. R., Crews, S. D., Kraemer, B. R., & Gale, B., 2007).

Gamma stage - official inauguration of the implemented program. In this stage, the last corrections and a detailed review of the settings of the service implemented at the company level will be carried out. Campaign supervisors will conduct readiness surveys and begin distributing logins to all employees so that on "Day 0" everything is set up. "Day 0" is where the entire organization starts using the new service. (McConnell, C. R., & Brue, S., 2017)

Delta stage - support and control of progress. The last stage of change leadership consists of collecting feedback from administrators, users and ambassadors, and implementing new applications (if not all of them have been immediately made available to employees). If necessary, it is possible to organize additional, practical workshops. (Hayes, J., 2022).

And in this way, the detailed list of tasks to be performed in each of the four phases above will have to be adjusted to the structure and requirements of the organization of each individual client.

Conclusion

Resistance to change can play a major role in determining how a company operates, and that is why it is necessary for those who deal with change leadership to find strategies and solutions to avoid mass resistance when a change occurs.

Thus, to reduce the resistance to change, it is necessary for the leadership to adopt and implement a strategy from the initial stage of the project. By means of it, various activities can be established from the very beginning that can cause employees to be open to change.

The most important aspect that must be taken into account is related to the communication regarding the need for change, the impact and benefits brought by it to the organization as a whole. Also, the human resources department together with heads of departments or divisions can organize various activities to prepare the moment of change by discussing with employees and receiving suggestions from them, to improve the process. This is also the reason why we chose to debate this topic, motivating our choice with the reproduction of two real case studies, on the example of a company. (Justice-Amadi, S. N., & Orokor, F. A. , 2022).

In conclusion, change leadership is important for any type of business, because it helps the company's leadership team to avoid multiple problems that may arise during the development of this arduous process.

Here are some *practical steps* a manager can take to anchor change in the culture of their organization or team:

- building an identity that supports change;
- identifying barriers to supporting change;
- ensuring support from leadership;
- creation of a reward system;
- establishing feedback systems;
- adapting an organizational structure as needed;
- keeping all employees informed in a sustained manner;
- celebrating success. (Nazir, S., Price, B., Surendra, N. C., & Kopp, K. , 2022).

By implementing a robust change leadership process, any company will be able to keep disruptions to its operations to a minimum while reaping the benefits of any new idea or transformation. Effective and ongoing change leadership will ensure

the company has the best chance of success with any new idea or transformation, keeping. (Castelló-Sirvent, F., & Roger-Monzó, V., 2022).

Embracing change requires more than a change leadership approach. It needs change leaders who can provide a path, lead, and diligently work to ensure the organization's success. When change practitioners manage change as it happens, they often attempt to avoid threats. On the contrary, when leaders adopt a change leadership approach merged with technological support, change becomes an opportunity to thrive.

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