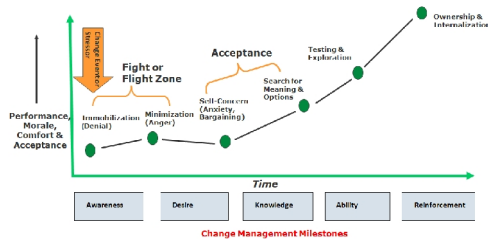


FARRAR'S FAUCET

ACTIONABLE THOUGHTS ON PRINCIPLED BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS

Change Management Milestones

People generally follow a predictable path when dealing with change and transitions



We are embarking on a major change management project. Our implementation consultants are helping us with all the technical aspects of getting this done. We have project milestones for each of the major decision points. Are there some specific change management milestones we should build into our project plan?

Yes! Many times the implementation team will focus on Go/No Go decisions that give special emphasis to executing the change in a way as technically efficiently as possible, without necessarily considering the effects on the people involved.

We know that people generally follow a predictable path when dealing with change and transitions. You can see the path in the diagram here. The stages are Denial, Anger, Self-Concern, Search For Meaning, Testing and Internalization. With small variations depending on methodology and circumstances we see these same stages in people dealing with death and dying, dealing with workplace change, and dealing with divorce and marriage.

From corporate mergers to IT software implementations, it is often quoted that around 70% of change initiatives fail to meet their stated objectives. The top three reasons: Resistance to Change; Inadequate Sponsorship; and Unrealistic Expectations. A good change management or project implementation plan builds in milestones that specifically address the stages of change and reasons for failure.

Here are six milestones that help the Change Management team ensure that people make the transitions that will make the change easier and more likely to succeed.

- 1: We have adequately communicated the reasons for the project so that everyone is AWARE of the need for change.
- 2: We have created and communicated an engaging vision of the future so that people DESIRE the change.
- 3: We have identified legitimate concerns from everyone involved, and provided everyone with the KNOWLEDGE to address their concerns and contribute to project.

4: We have given people the ABILITY to participate, test and explore the options in the project and maximize its potential.

5: We have provided REINFORCEMENT and rewards so that people can own, internalize and celebrate the success of the project.

Think of these as Go/No Go statements where the team should only move on to the next step in the project if they can comfortably agree with the milestone statement.

The model known as **ADKAR**, (Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement), is well researched and has been around for a long time. You can see from the diagram how the milestones fit in with the different stages of peoples' reactions to change.

The vast majority of projects inadequately deal with resistance, lack of support and poor expectations. I worked on an HR project where we successfully changed the way 22,000 employees worldwide were given performance appraisals, and another where an Enterprise Requirements Planning system was implemented so successfully it became a case study at the vendors' customer council. The milestones are practical, and provide structure to the planning team. Planning for the people side of change enables the technical side of change to occur effectively.

(Incidentally, the Return On Investment for engaging a change management expert and putting these milestones into place is enormous. Apart from minimizing the risk that the project will go wrong, you will maximize the speed and success of the project far in excess of the cost of any reasonable person you bring in to help.)

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An Australian living in the US since 2001, David is a psychologist with international experience as a consultant and professional speaker. David studied at the Royal Military College of Australia, (MUR), University of Melbourne, and Northwestern University, (Kellogg Business School). David has degrees in economics and psychology, graduated his master's program with honors, and qualified as a psychologist in Australia. David is the President and CEO of FGRAssociates, LLC. He is also an Adjunct Professor at Saint Mary's University and the College of Saint Scholastica where he teaches Ethics, Leadership and Conflict Management in MBA and other graduate programs.

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