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Newsletter 04/2010

Ensuring Lasting Change

Over the years, many companies have asked us how we can make sure that the change we help to implement will last long after we've completed the project. We give each one the same answer: it's up to you. Once a change has been made, it's the company and the core team who are charged with the task of enforcing it for years to come. But don't worry: that's not as scary as it may sound. Our goal is always to equip companies with the tools they need to maintain their new, efficient work environment, and to provide them with the understanding that change is a long-term process. It takes more than a week, or a month; change requires an ongoing commitment from everyone it impacts. The first step in enabling lasting change is to make sure that you're engaging your entire team, from top to bottom and bottom to top, in the process from the beginning. By getting them involved and excited, you'll find that they will be more open to facilitating change, taking leadership roles in implementing change, and talking with you openly about change.

Start by clearly communicating the goals and objectives of the project to everyone...then, make sure to lead by example. The idea is to demonstrate that everyone individually can contribute to the bettering of your organization of a whole. This creates a noticeable shift in company culture, which is one of the most important elements of successfully maintaining change over the long run.

A helpful approach comes from change management guru John P. Kotter, who outlines eight steps towards driving sustainable change. It's important to follow each step in order, because each builds on the success of the one before it.



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The steps include:

Create urgency. Talk about the immediate need for change openly and honestly, while proactively defusing any fear, anger, or complacency that may be engrained in your employees over time. According to Kotter, 75% of a company's management needs to buy into a change in order for it to be a success. That's why this first step is so essential.

Form a guiding "coalition." To convince people that change is necessary, enlist the help of key people in your organization who can provide strong leadership and visible support for the new goals. This guiding team can build momentum for change, and lead by example.

Create a vision for change. Create a clear picture of how the future of your company will look, so it can be easily visualized. And we literally mean make a picture; an image speaks volumes, and allows for the clearest possible communication about your plans. Include the goals and key behaviors for the future state, and adopt or create new strategies and key performance indicators to support it.

Communicate the vision. Creating the vision is one thing; communicating it will dictate its success. Use every vehicle possible to get the picture of your vision across to your entire organization, in order to achieve buy in at every level of your organization. Here again, a physical drawing or map is key.

Eliminate obstacles to change. Empower others to act on your vision of change by putting a structure in place that will more easily support it, and removing any barriers that might hinder its progression. This can be done by identifying



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ineffective programs and processes, and replacing them with new and improved efficiencies.

Build lighthouses for short-term wins. Establish some short term targets where you can demonstrate visible performance improvements early on. This will generate continued excitement for projects to come.

Build on change. Don't declare victory too soon; remember that change is a continuous process that extends over a long period of time. Continue to analyze improvements and successes and find new ways to expand on their success.

Create lasting standards for change. This is the "new you," so make it last! Build the concept of change into your corporate culture, your systems and solutions, your processes and procedures. Implement continuous improvement processes, and use them as a tool to repeatedly pursue business excellence.

For more information on change management, email us at contactICA@ingenics.com or call 678-528-70



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