

## Organisational Change and Restructuring

When large changes (such as a significant restructure) occur, many Managers do a good job of focusing on the general human and organisational factors which comprise the “big picture”. Yet, if equal attention is not paid to the “small picture” (such as how the staff members will respond to the change) the seeds of a nightmare will be sown, while the fruits of opportunity are wasted.

Often, the single most neglected issue in all of the planning for these new structures is the needs of the individual worker. To manage this, Managers must take steps to address the habits, attitudes and behaviours of their professionals.

1. **New Work Processes and Protocols.** Most information workers have not been taught how to work. While they have been trained on their areas of expertise, they have merely developed methods of working to cope with their environments. When there is a change in that environment, some of those methods don't work anymore. In fact, some of those routines might become counterproductive.

People need to be coached to develop new routines and protocols to fit in their new environments. Establishing standards for how to utilise the new structural changes ensures that the processes work as planned.

2. **The Strategy / Behaviour Paradox.** Many organisations yearn for the benefits promised by the implementing of their strategic planning. When those benefits aren't forthcoming as planned, Managers need to review how the behaviours of the staff coincide with those plans. Investing in e-mail doesn't pay back if people don't act on the messages (procrastinating at the speed of light); or if they use it as an electronic breakout room (the main medium for jokes).

In implementing strategic initiatives, care must be taken to avoid the Dilbert syndrome. If the “we have always done it like this” attitude is supported and rewarded, the strategy becomes moot, regardless of how well thought out it is. Worker attitude is a reflection of their understanding of the culture regarding rewards and punishments. Management must ensure that the tactical realities complement and support the official strategic direction.

3. **The Trauma of the Change.** It doesn't matter whether you're changing the innate structure of the organisation or merely moving some people to the next room, the challenge is the same: to make the change transparent to your customers and seamless for your staff. In spite of intense planning and preparations, most organisational changes have moments of chaos. The breakdown is usually caused by the fact that the

individual is rarely properly prepared for the change. If the worker has not been given time to plan or deal with their personal approach to change, the overall effort is jeopardised.

In summary, an important and frequently neglected aspect of change is the understanding of its impact on individual personal work habits and processes.

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