



CHANGE MANAGEMENT REFERENCE GUIDE: PITFALLS AND TACTICS

Here are some of the major pitfalls that may influence the success of the overall change effort, and suggested tactics. Awareness doesn't ensure success. But it will provide you with ideas about where and why change most often gets off track, and opportunities to implement course corrections.

Costs not recognized: The costs of implementing and supporting change are not adequately acknowledged or planned for. Allocate resources, adjust workloads, and reassign responsibilities; address workload concerns of those committing significant time to the effort. Recognize and plan for direct costs (new systems, external counsel, training, and other support) and indirect costs (ongoing tasks deferred or dropped as attention is focused on the process of change).

Systems not aligned: Existing processes and systems (e.g., sales, rewards, information, accounting, manufacturing, training) don't support the new model. Align systems and processes with the new direction so that stakeholders don't have to struggle with outdated tools. Adjust incentives to reflect new goals; update IT systems to provide data relevant to the changed organizational structure.

Limited and one-directional communication: Leaders expect to persuade by one-way communication, relying on e-mail and other methods of sharing information with limited interaction. Ensure that leaders communicate proactively at all levels, listening as well as informing. Encourage employees and other stakeholders to ask questions, offer ideas, and engage in discussion—promoting commitment and buy-in.

Ineffective or missing business case: Managers communicate a case for change that is unrealistic or incomplete; the case for change isn't readily understood. Develop a robust, concise, business case to provide the platform on which every aspect of change management is constructed. Prepare collateral materials to provide a consistent source of reference on what is being done, why, and how.



Ostrich syndrome: Managers and others think that if they keep working in the same way, the need to do things differently will go away—after all, they've "seen it all before." Senior leaders must demonstrate absolute commitment through their actions, statements, and clarity. This determination must be transmitted to (and displayed by) managers at every level.

Lack of management support: Line managers don't support the direction and approach. They may share the uncertainty and concerns of employees. Inform, persuade, and engage managers; address their questions and concerns to enhance their confidence in leading the charge. Enlist managers by engaging them in planning and development, and making them responsible for change within their organizations.

Failure to follow through: Sponsors may start work on the next challenge before ensuring that the current initiative is truly launched. Guide leaders and sponsors to sustain their focus and effort until the change is truly launched and effectively embedded. Maintain momentum by ensuring that leaders and sponsors stay engaged and continue to listen, guide, and communicate.

Lack of insight: Leaders assume they know what people think; they fail to identify key concerns and obstacles. Leaders must be alert (conversations, meetings, surveys) to the questions, concerns, and ideas of stakeholders. Ensure that these are addressed in plans and communication about change processes.

Failure to document: Responses and tactics don't reflect the needs of stakeholders, and their concerns and questions go unanswered. Note and document all input, questions, and ideas, in a format that enables the data to be readily accessible and regularly updated. Share data with all involved in planning for change; ensure that processes, systems, and communications reflect stakeholder input.

Narrow communication approach: The organization relies on only one communication method (e.g., e-mail) to convey information about complex changes. Communicate using a variety of channels, repeating and reinforcing key messages, including the case for change. Focus on upward communication—seeking input and actively listening—as much as distributing information outward and downward.



Success assumed: Leaders do not clearly define success; they make a premature assumption that all is well and fail to follow up, support, and drive change. Proactively identify issues and challenges, and follow up informally (individual briefings) or formally (surveys and/or focus group discussions). Develop responses and ensure that leaders implement, communicate, and follow up on issues that are blocking success.