

# Alignment a vital element in corporate change

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May 25, 2014 Updated: May 25, 2014 02:34 PM



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When introducing any corporate change such as a new sales process, a technology implementation, a set of corporate behaviours or even a new product range, change processes can easily become a burdensome, isolated business activity unless the state of existing organisational elements are considered. Then and only then can any change process be aligned to add real and lasting value.

Dependency is a key reality of corporate change, bringing with it knock-on effects. Change objectives should be linked through cause and effect relationships, and if this was so, we would not find systems rewarding unwanted behaviours, Key performance indicators that are impossible to achieve, processes yielding poor quality outcomes, managers not supporting a new vision, structures not allowing growth nor misaligned measures for any desired outcome. Yet we do. We do because it's likely that a change process has occurred in isolation of the enterprise's reality, a business practice which must change.

To effectively drive change, begin with an audit to take stock and ascertain how the enterprise looks and operates today while also describing the future once positively affected by the change. The many available diagnostic tools to assist with this may encourage some of the following to be considered:

- What is the likelihood of the leadership team demonstrating active, visible and consistent change capability, representing the new desired state in all actions and words?
- Why build a change if the systems cannot support it? What systems need to exist before the change starts? Which existing systems show no relevance for the change?
- What structure currently exists and what will the change require? How are the skills within that structure a requirement for the future?
- What is the history of the organisation regarding change? Is there a change readiness or rather change resistance, and if so to what degree? What is the degree of disruption this change will bring and what resources will be allocated to this? What level of change maturity exists within the organisation currently?
- How will the operating environment facilitate the change elements to connect, link up and serve desired outcomes? What synergies can be impacted and where are opportunities for this? What may need to be removed from the current environment?
- How well is the intended project defined? How many other changes are currently under way and what is the level of change saturation? How much is known about the people's individual journeys with corporate change?

The above, and many more questions, will provide valuable insights, ensuring that consequences of any change action will be dissected and analysed, thereby reducing or mitigating the risk of temporary or permanent disruption. Taking ill-informed and isolated decisions during change can reduce the speed of success while also negatively affecting the utilisation and adoption of the desired change. Just as the finance function is considered an essential discipline in most businesses, so too should an enterprise-wide approach to change be.

With the No 1 reason for executives being removed from leadership roles being the lack of capability or interest in change, is there really a choice when it comes to integrating change into existing capabilities and business components? When allowing change to serve, its prime purpose should not be to bring pain but rather accelerate intended outcomes. When leaders are serving “in connection” and not “in isolation”, it’s clear that change is not something they do to others but with all others – people, strategies, systems, structures, processes and projects.

Debbie Nicol, the managing director of Dubai-based business en motion, is a consultant working with strategic change, leadership and organisational development. Email her at [debbie.nicol@businessenmotion.com](mailto:debbie.nicol@businessenmotion.com) for thoughts about your corporate change initiative

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