

EXPERT TIPS

Change Efforts Often Fail

Managing Successful Change in Your Organization

Change efforts can and do fail—often. The experts tell us that change efforts in organizations can fail as much as 60-70% of the time. Organizations try what looks like a promising change initiative, only to throw in the towel after the first attempt. It's no wonder that people in organizations often complain of the "flavor-of-the-month" initiatives.

The Challenge:

How can you ensure that changes in your organization are effective and successful? First of all, deciding what changes you will make is not a simple task. Organizations are complex systems. Changes that are made in one part of the organization will have an impact on others. It's important to consider the entire organization when planning and implementing change. Here are some key considerations:

1. Identify areas in your organization where your change efforts will have the greatest impact in achieving the desired results. Start here.
2. Identify other elements in your organization that will help you succeed or hinder your efforts. Plan accordingly.
3. Clarify the overall framework that you will implement so that people in the organization can see how the change fits into the big picture. Communicate often and honestly.
4. Identify others within the organization who are implementing change or spearheading change efforts. Make an effort to align resources. Change is not an individual activity—it requires the efforts of many.



Here are some questions to ask to identify factors that help or hinder your change efforts:

- Do people have the tools they need to do the job well? Are they easy to use?
- Are managers leading in a way that supports the efforts of their subordinates?
- Are expectations appropriate? Are they reasonable? Clear? Presented in a positive and respectful manner?
- Is information about how the employee is to perform clear? Accurate? Logical?
- Are priorities clearly defined and communicated?
- Do employees view the balance of consequences for good performance as positive?
- Are consequences clearly linked to good performance, from the employee's perspective?
- Do employees receive feedback in a way that meets their needs?
- Is feedback provided in a way that does not criticize the employee—just their performance?