



AGILE CHANGE
management limited

Change Management & Transition Business Case

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Contents

Executive Summary	3
Reasons	3
Business Options	4
Expected Benefits	4
Timescale	4
Costs	5
Major Risks	6

Executive Summary

The purpose of this business case is to identify the costs of activities needed to support the implementation of change and to compare these costs against the benefits that well planned, well executed implementation can realise.

These change management and transition activities are distinct from project management activities. Projects trigger change, but in their own right do not create new ways of working.

Projects create deliverables which need to be adopted by their users and incorporated into how work is undertaken. Only when use of the project deliverables becomes normal i.e. they have been fully integrated and are the new 'business as usual' can their benefits be realised.

The activities described in this business case support the psychological process that individuals experience as they leave behind old patterns that were so familiar to them that they were automatic responses. Individuals need support to take risks and show to themselves and others that they are not initially as competent or confident with the new ways of working. They need encouragement to practice new ways of working, possibly making mistakes as they build up their skills and to experiment to discover how best to organise work under these new arrangements.

Reasons

Change management and transition activities ensure that those affected by change are supported as they make the transition from old ways of working to new ways of working.

This involves helping those affected to identify what aspects of their work need to change, helping them to re-design their work and providing encouragement to shift from well established, well understood working practices to new approaches.

During transition the risk of failure increases, stress increases and staff can feel uncertain of their value, their ability and the likely success of their endeavours. Therefore, transition will not succeed without a high degree of support from those sponsoring the change and those in line management positions whose staff are affected.



Business Options

1. Do nothing

Do nothing will lead to delivery of the change without adoption by the intended users. This means that new ways of working will not be created and the project deliverables will not be used as intended and therefore will not realise their expected benefits.

2. Do something

Therefore it is proposed that investment is made in designing and undertaking activities that lead those impacted through a process of transition from their current ways of working to new ways of working which incorporate the project deliverables.

Expected Benefits

1. Individuals are making detailed and specific changes to their ways of working so that change is being pushed into the deepest levels of the organisation.
2. As change is being identified by all, all necessary changes, however small are being identified.
3. As very detailed changes are being identified, inter-dependencies and interfaces between these changes are being identified and any knock on effects of change from one area affecting another area are being managed.
4. Engagement and participation of all levels of staff means that the scope and objectives of the change continue to be challenged and new ideas are continually generated.
5. The wide variety of transition activities creates a high level of participation in the change which has created an energy and a momentum which is helping to draw in those that were initially reluctant to participate in the change.

Timescale

Transition activities are triggered by the start of a project and continue after the end of a project. It is very difficult to estimate an exact amount of time, because transition only finishes when individuals have become comfortable with the new ways of working and have developed a similar or increased level of competence compared to their old ways of working.

As ways of working are about forming habits, a minimum of three consecutive weeks is required for individuals to follow new processes, procedures, policies and standards before they move from being something new to being normal. This is because as a minimum the human brain has to have a concerted period of repetition before a new habit can form, and many psychologists indicate that three weeks is the minimum period of time needed.

Costs

The majority of costs associated with supporting the transition from old to new ways of working come from three areas:

1. Costs of communication activities
2. Cost of facilitated workshops
3. Cost of creating and running the change agent network

Costs of Communication activities

To prepare for change, individuals need to hear about the change many times before it becomes a reality for them. They also need to hear about the change from senior managers who are sponsoring the change and can set it in the context of the organisations strategy and goals, as well as their own managers who will be able to give them more specific information relevant to their role.

The repetitive nature of this communication often requires a creative and innovative approach, because information about a forthcoming change is competing with lots of announcements from other initiatives taking place in the organisation, as well as the constant stream of emails, meetings etc that individuals are subject to.

Costs can include the need for print media e.g. a poster campaign, printed newsletters or newspapers that can be put on every desk. There are also costs for setting up additional pages on the organisations website, and for creating video content and animations that capture the attention of those who need the information.

Costs of facilitated workshops

Changes to working practices have to be designed and that requires collaboration with others as well as the time to define each step in the end to end process of every item of work.

To implement change successfully, many people have to make changes to how they work, and ensure that their changes align with the changes that their colleagues are making. This often means holding workshops with colleagues from a specific department or unit, but also holding cross functional workshops with colleagues representing many different business units who are all affected by the same change, but need to understand how they are each affected.

Workshops are a popular and effective technique for bringing people together and enabling them to work collaboratively to plan and design new ways of working. Each workshop has an agenda, a series of activities which are used to answer key questions about how the change will work in practice, what the consequences of the change are, what the risks are and how they can be addressed.

As a minimum, workshops need a venue which might be in-house but is still cross charged to the change initiative. Alternatively external venues need to be sourced and paid for. Depending on the duration of the workshop there may also be catering costs.

Finally, workshops need to be run by an experienced facilitator. These can be internal or external to the organisation, but external facilitators will require a daily rate.

Costs of creating and running the Change Agent network

Change Agents are those that propagate the change across the organisation. They are heavily involved in the development of new ways of working and act as liaison between different groups impacted by the change. The best Change Agents are often those with an excellent understanding of how work is conducted today, but with a passionate commitment to improving the current situation. They welcome change and are interested in designing new ways of working to overcome current problems and take advantage of new opportunities for greater efficiency, greater levels of customer service or greater process accuracy.

Even though these resources are in-house they will often require training in the fundamentals of change management to ensure that their understanding of how to manage change is strong enough to cope with the demands of their role. They are likely to report to a Change Manager as well as their existing line manager. Therefore, in building a network of Change Agents, the organisation is likely to have to fund the appointment of experienced Change Managers who can plan and manage the changes on a day to day basis.

Major Risks

1. Insufficient time for individuals to take part in the change management and transition activities because of the demands of 'business as usual'
2. Less attention paid to 'business as usual' as individuals prefer to help create the new ways of working instead of continuing to operate the old ways of working.