Transform Innovation with Organizational Change Management

by Zach Friedman

Delivering breakthrough results from innovation is a journey - it's a transformation. And like all transformations, bringing your organization along for the journey isn't easy. In fact, many companies never get their associates on board for large scale changes; they set their sails for some far away innovation goal but forget to bring along the people who actually have to do the work.

To make this journey successful - or any journey for that matter - you need three things:

1. **Clarity** - understand how you are doing on the metrics that matter and acting to drive results
2. **Learning** - access lessons from previous successes/failures and let this knowledge guide your path forward
3. **Change** - set a strategic vision, clearly show a path forward and bring people along for the journey

When most people think of managing change, they think: *Oh, that's easy! All I need to do is communicate the change, find champions and keep resistors at bay. This shouldn't be all that difficult.*

Then they have some extra meetings, send a ton of emails, ask people to champion the initiative and call it a day.

Yes, these are all important components of change management, but they're still missing the point. They are ignoring a fundamental, universal truth:

**All organizations are perfectly designed to get the results they get**

If you don't change the underlying culture of your organization - the way people actually behave and the way work gets done - the change will never sustain itself.

Your people act the way they do because your organization is set up in a manner that allows them to do so. These behaviors in turn drive your in-market results.

Strategy is what you do, not what is written on paper. When managing change, you can send emails, get executive sponsorship and council resisters until you are blue in the face. But this won't have much of an effect.

For the change to stick, you must understand why your employees are behaving the way they do and address the core organizational elements that impact culture. Otherwise, people will shift back to the way they have always done things.

Don't set sail toward your innovation goal without your people onboard. Your brilliant strategy, consumer insight, capability or information system will be a beautiful ship, ready to conquer the marketplace with no one to man it. Instead, design your transformation to change the behaviors that ultimately drive results.

*Originally published on November 18th, 2014*

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Zach is passionate about innovation strategy and environmental sustainability. He loves to cook, snowboard and go on adventures in the wilderness.