



The Only Thing Certain is Change... and the Need for Change Management

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Most companies manage projects by checking boxes on a project plan. They declare victory when the new system is in production, process changes are implemented, or the organization charts are redrawn. While it's all fine and well to celebrate milestones, they ought to save the ticker tape parade for a time when their projects demonstrate real value and their organizations are poised to sustain the changes made.

Change affects people. Call centers have lots of people. Call centers are changing all the time. And unfortunately, most people don't like change. So it's crucial to manage the changes each project creates – for individuals and the organization as a whole. Too often, leaders don't want to fund change management. They think it's too “touchy-feely,” or they don't think it's terribly important. They think people will “just do it” because they say so, or the change is not that big, or the impact is minor and easily absorbed. Project sponsors adopt this attitude at their peril. Time after time, neglecting change management yields sub-optimized results – project delays, increased costs, reduced benefits, missed goals, and/or reversions to previous states (or worse!) after a few weeks or months.

I've been practicing and pushing change management for years. I've seen the difference it can make. If change management isn't part of the projects in which you're currently involved, or is pooh-poohed in your environment, you need to become an advocate for it. Find an approach that works for your company's culture, allocate the appropriate resources, and start applying it as early as you can – not just when things start going badly and you're trying to recover. You'll see the difference it makes. Over time, it will become an inherent part of your organization's program and project management. “Enlightened” companies are taking this approach and getting a competitive edge through the results their projects create.

Want to do some learning to get started? Check out www.change-management.com for free tutorials. Or search on Change Management in Google or Amazon and you'll find a wealth of web sites, books, and other resources that can help you become the advocate you want to be in your company.