



Optimize Contact Center Project Management with Change Management

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We've all heard the clichés about change. "The train is leaving the station. Get on board or be left behind." The message is to accept change "because I said so." Yet today's employees expect more from their leadership. They want to be enrolled in the change process.

A client of ours summed it up very nicely: "The four things you need for a successful project implementation are:

1. An engaged sponsor
2. Collaboration between IT and business
3. Established employee sponsorship
4. The right amount of change management from the beginning"

Change management is a systematic approach to address the "people side" of projects – from an organizational and individual perspective. But a key element is "from the beginning." Most often change management is an afterthought, perhaps even when things start to head south. But it should be considered a requirement and defined within the project plan at inception, including the tasks required and the resources responsible.

Successful change management includes a team of champions that integrate the change management goals with the technology, process and/or organizational project. Successful projects incorporate some or all of the following change management activities:

- Working with the executive sponsor to identify and recruit representatives from each site or function to be part of the team
- Being intentional about messaging and ensuring all levels of leadership are in the loop *before* sending to front line staff
- Developing and tracking change stages to coincide with the project stages [Note: We use Prosci's ADKAR model – Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability and Reinforcement. Visit www.change-management.com for more information.]
- Developing carefully written communication that reinforces progress at each change stage
- Creating a pilot team who are change advocates
- Scheduling the executive sponsor at key events to show continued support
- Communicating frequently using a variety of media – emails, dashboards, posters, team huddles, creative team contests, etc.

It is important to get as creative as your culture allows to produce the proper level of awareness and desire to support change. When done correctly, each individual engaging in the process becomes a change agent.

One organization created a road trip theme and took their team on a trip while a new tool was being developed for performance management. T-shirts, messages about being in the "driver's seat" and a map to track the project progress all helped keep everyone engaged. This project started seeing performance improve BEFORE the tool was even launched due to the successful change management efforts. And



now, six months post deployment, the organization has raised one of their goals because the agents have already raced across the finish line!

There will always be some people that do not like change and will avoid supporting it or actively work against it. Prepare your front line management to coach and encourage every agent, addressing each individual's perspective. By utilizing appropriate change management techniques, the team will better understand the rationale for change and support your efforts to deliver value to the company and its customers.