

A PURPLE PAPER

Keys for Managing Change

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The pace of business is ever accelerating. Speed of change in the modern economy is truly dizzying, even when compared with conditions only 10 or 15 years ago.

The frantic pace in so many industries can, and all too often does, give rise to rudderless, fitful advancement - if organizations advance at all. Ironically, the key to managing change effectively comes not principally from our ability to morph or adapt to changing conditions, but rather from solid foundations built on well-established heritage, sound judgment, and good business/common sense. The adage “back to basics” has never been truer.

What does a sound foundation consist of?

1. Strong leadership
2. Strong teams
3. Strong missions

Leaders

Leadership could be considered market or brand leadership. Both are relevant in the context of managing change. Even more fundamental, however, are the values held and espoused by an organization’s key leaders. Key values of strong organizations include service orientation, honesty and integrity, commitment to quality, appreciation for employees, resource partners, and clients (listed in order of importance to a company’s long-term success), and profitability.

Leadership embodiment of such values is critical to successful change management – leading by example as much, or more, than by principle. Strong leaders inspire loyalty, commitment, and excellence through example, benefits that lay a firm foundation for managing change. Strong leaders have the ability to develop strong teams, the next component necessary for effective change management.

Teams

Effective teams, both employees and resource partners, allow leaders to widen the leadership circle and to keep the organization running beyond their own reach. Strong leaders generally attract strong team members, capitalizing on their individual strengths through thoughtful resource management.

Critical to strong teams are well-developed systems for communication and accountability. Change management requires that solid systems for coordinating tasks, articulating expectations, and reporting be in place.

So much rests on strong leadership and strong teams, with systems in place to enable both. Any organization’s ability to chart a clear course will be hindered from the start if these two elements are found lacking. Effective management of change has to begin with strong leadership and strong teams before effective long-term change management can be attained.

Missions

With key players in place, and functioning well together, the mission now provides the direction and focus needed to move the organization forward. Strong missions point the organization in a clear direction, giving it the focus required to adapt to change while keeping it from getting badly off course.

Strong missions begin with strong mission statements. They reach beyond these, however, to encompass long-term strategies and goals. While a mission statement provides context, clearly articulated strategies and objectives provide specific direction to keep the organization moving effectively forward. Change management then becomes a question of managing changes in such a way as to achieve a specific objective – climbing the hill rather than merely treading water.

Within this context, brands and brand portfolios serve their most useful function. Brand identity should flow naturally from an organization's mission, not stand in contrast to it. Over time, misalignment between mission and brand identity will cause dissonance both within and outside of the organization – a weak position from which to deal with the changes of modern business. Where such dissonance exists, the degree of dissonance must be assessed and corrected before progress can be made. Opinion research, internal and external, can be a critical tool in making such assessments and charting priorities for bringing the organization into alignment.

With the key foundation elements in place, organizations are able to capitalize on the opportunities arising from change, rather than being blown about continuously. They are able to make effective use of information to anticipate and prepare for change, as well as adapting to unforeseen events profitably.

ABOUT THE PERT GROUP

Our goal is simple: to help our clients grow their businesses and their brands. How? By establishing business decision clarity.

We are The Pert Group, a top research-based consulting firm for business leaders who require straightforward, meaningful results that lead to clear, significant decision making.

We begin with fact-based evidence integrating attitudinal and behavioral research, which allows us to create clear strategies for business growth based on fact-based insights, and our team of **market-focused experts** works closely with our clients to consistently relate our work back to their goals and strategies.

Using a balance of creativity, forward thinking and pragmatism, we **completely immerse** ourselves in our clients' businesses and apply strategic methods to help them increase business and brand performance, differentiate their companies from the competition and take advantage of all opportunities in the market space.

The result? Clarity established.