

The Importance of Change Transition within Business Management ¹

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Overview

Change is a constant in business, and how a business manages change can have a big impact on its success. Proper transition planning and management can help a business navigate changes smoothly and minimize disruption.

There are several reasons why change management is important in business:

- To adapt to new circumstances businesses must be able to adapt to changes in the market, technology, and other external factors in order to stay competitive.
- To improve efficiency changes in business processes, systems, or structures can help a company operate more efficiently and effectively.
- To drive innovation change can be a catalyst for innovation and can help a business stay ahead of the competition.
- To retain employees who may resist change, especially if it affects their job responsibilities or workflow.
- Proper change management can help employees understand the reasons for the change and how it will benefit them, which can help reduce resistance and increase acceptance.

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Adapting to new circumstances is an important aspect of change management in business. This can include changes in the market, such as shifts in customer preferences or changes in the competitive landscape.

It can also include changes in technology, regulations, or the economy. For example, consider a business that sells physical products in a brick-and-mortar store. If there is a shift towards online shopping, the business may need to adapt by adding an online store or offering curb-side pickup. This would be a significant change that would require careful planning and management in order to be successful.

Summary

Effective change management is crucial for businesses:

- ✓ to adapt to new circumstances,
- ✓ To improve efficiency,
- ✓ To drive innovation, and
- ✓ To retain employees adapting to new circumstances.

Similarly, if there are changes in regulations, such as new environmental laws or changes to labour laws, a business may need to adapt by updating its practices or processes. This could involve investing in new equipment or training employees on new policies.

In order to adapt to new circumstances, it is important for businesses to stay informed about changes that may affect them and to have a plan in place for how to respond. This might involve regularly monitoring industry trends, keeping in touch with industry associations or regulatory bodies, and being open to new ideas and approaches.

So, how do we start improving efficiencies?

Improving efficiency is often a key goal of business change management. Efficiency refers to the number of resources (such as time, money, and effort) that are required to produce a given output. By improving efficiency, a business can reduce costs, increase profitability, and improve customer satisfaction.

There are many ways that businesses can improve efficiency through change management. Here are a few examples:

✓ **Streamlining processes**

This might involve identifying and eliminating unnecessary steps in a process, automating tasks, or standardizing processes across the organization.

✓ **Implementing new technologies**

New technologies can often help businesses operate more efficiently by automating tasks, improving communication and collaboration, or providing better insights into operations.

✓ **Changing organizational structure**

Changing the way that a business is organized can help improve efficiency by clarifying roles and responsibilities, reducing duplication of effort, and improving decision-making.

✓ **Improving data management**

Better data management can help businesses make more informed decisions and improve efficiency by reducing the time and effort required to access and analyse data.

Overall, there are many ways that businesses can improve efficiency through change management. It is important to carefully assess the current state of the business and identify areas where efficiency can be improved before implementing changes.

So, what can we do to drive innovation?

Innovation refers to the introduction of new ideas, processes, or products that add value to a business. Innovation can be a key factor in a business's success, as it allows the business to stay ahead of the competition and meet the changing needs of customers.

Change management can be a powerful tool for driving innovation within a business. By regularly reviewing and reassessing business processes and practices, businesses can identify opportunities for improvement and come up with new ideas for products or services.

Here are a few ways that businesses can drive innovation through change management:

✓ **Encouraging a culture of innovation**

This might involve promoting a culture of continuous learning and experimentation and encouraging employees to suggest new ideas.

✓ **Investing in research and development**

Businesses can allocate resources towards research and development in order to come up with new ideas and technologies.

✓ **Collaborating with external partners**

Businesses can work with other organizations, such as universities or start-ups, to access new ideas and technologies.

✓ **Experimenting with new business models**

Businesses can try out new ways of operating, such as implementing a subscription model or switching to a lean start-up approach.

Overall, change management is a crucial tool for driving innovation in business. By regularly reassessing business practices and being open to new ideas, businesses can stay ahead of the competition and meet the changing needs of customers.

Can change management really be a benefit for employee retention?

Employee retention refers to the ability of a business to keep its employees over time. High employee retention is important for businesses because it can reduce costs associated with training new employees, improve productivity, and enhance the overall performance of the organization.

Proper change management can help businesses retain employees by minimizing disruption and reducing resistance to change. When employees understand the reasons for a change and how it will benefit them, they are more likely to accept the change and stay with the organization.

Here are a few ways that change management can help improve employee retention:

✓ **Communicating effectively**

Clearly communicating the reasons for a change and how it will affect employees can help reduce uncertainty and increase acceptance of the change.

✓ **Providing support**

Providing resources and support to help employees adapt to the change can make the transition smoother and more successful.

✓ **Involving employees in the change process**

Involving employees in the planning and implementation of a change can help them feel more ownership over the process and more committed to the success of the change.

✓ **Providing opportunities for growth and development**

Offering employees opportunities for training and development can help them feel more engaged and committed to the organization.

Overall, proper change management can help businesses retain employees by minimizing disruption, communicating effectively, providing support, involving employees in the change process, and offering opportunities for growth and development.

Successful change depends on how well PEOPLE adapt!

What Change Models could help support transition?

There are many different change models that can be used to support transition. ⁵ Some examples include:

✓ **Lewin's Change Model**

This model, developed by psychologist Kurt Lewin, involves three steps: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. "Unfreezing" involves breaking down the current status quo, "changing" involves implementing the desired new changes, and "refreezing" involves stabilizing the new changes and making them the new norm.

✓ **Kotter's 8-Step Change Model**

This model, developed by John Kotter, outlines eight steps for successfully implementing change:

- o establishes a sense of urgency,
- o creates a guiding coalition,
- o develops a vision and strategy,
- o communicates the change vision,
- o empowers others to act on the vision,
- o creates short-term wins,
- o consolidates gains and produce more change
- o anchors new approaches in the company's culture.

✓ **ADKAR Model**

This model, developed by Prosci, is a goal-oriented change model that focuses on helping individuals move through the process of change. It stands for Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement.

✓ **Bridge's Transition Model**

This model, developed by William Bridges, is a psychological model that focuses on the individual's internal experience of change. It involves three stages: ending, neutral zone, and new beginning.

These are just a few examples of change models that can be used to support transition. There are many other models available as well, each with its own unique approach to helping individuals and organizations navigate change.

So, what would be an effective way to transition a business from planned response work to emergency response work?

Transitioning a business from planned response work to emergency response work can be a complex and challenging process, as it involves shifting the focus and priorities of the organization.

Here are a few steps that may be helpful in effectively managing this transition:^{1 2}

✓ **Communicate the change**

Clearly communicate the reason for the transition and the benefits of shifting to emergency response work. Make sure that all employees understand the new direction of the organization and how it will impact their roles.

✓ **Train and equip employees**

Provide training and resources to ensure that employees have the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively handle emergency response work. This may include training in emergency response procedures, first aid, and other relevant areas.

✓ **Review and update policies and procedures**

Review and update your policies and procedures to reflect the new focus on emergency response work. This may include revising your emergency response plan and establishing new protocols for handling emergencies.

✓ **Develop partnerships and relationships**

Building relationships with other emergency response organizations and agencies can be helpful in effectively managing emergency situations. Consider partnering with local first responders or establishing relationships with other emergency response organizations.

✓ **Test and practice**

Conduct drills and simulations to test your readiness for emergency response work. This will help identify any weaknesses or areas that need improvement and allow you to make necessary adjustments before a real emergency occurs.

By following these steps, you can help ensure a smooth transition to emergency response work and ensure that your organization is prepared to effectively handle emergencies.

What are the key risks to this kind of transition?

There are several key risks that may be associated with transitioning a business from planned response work to emergency response work. ⁴

These risks may include:

✓ **Lack of preparedness**

If employees are not properly trained or equipped to handle emergency response work, there is a risk of inadequate response to emergencies.

✓ **Poor communication**

If there is a lack of clear communication about the transition and how it will impact the organization, there is a risk of confusion and disruption among employees.

✓ **Resistance to change**

Some employees may resist the change to emergency response work, which could create challenges in implementing the transition.

✓ **Legal and regulatory issues**

There may be legal and regulatory issues to consider when transitioning to emergency response work, such as insurance requirements and liability concerns.

✓ **Financial risks**

Transitioning to emergency response work may involve additional expenses, such as training and equipment costs. There is a risk that these costs may not be fully covered by revenue from emergency response work.

By identifying and addressing these risks, you can help ensure a smooth and successful transition to emergency response work.

What would be the initial actions post transition? ³

The initial actions taken after transitioning a business from planned response work to emergency response work will depend on the specific needs and goals of the organization.

Here are a few general recommendations for the initial actions that could be taken:

✓ **Assess the transition**

Take the time to evaluate how the transition went and identify any areas that may need further attention. This may involve conducting surveys or focus groups with employees, or reviewing performance data.

✓ **Address any issues or challenges**

Identify any issues or challenges that arose during the transition and develop plans to address them. This may include providing additional training or support to employees, or revising policies and procedures.

✓ **Set goals and priorities**

Establish clear goals and priorities for the organization, with a focus on emergency response work. This may involve setting targets for response times or developing metrics for evaluating performance.

✓ **Communicate with stakeholders**

Keep stakeholders informed about the transition and the progress of the organization. This may involve holding meetings or issuing updates to employees, clients, and other stakeholders.

✓ **Continue training and development**

Invest in ongoing training and development for employees to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge needed to effectively handle emergency response work.

By taking these initial actions, you can help ensure that the transition to emergency response work is successful and that the organization is well positioned for the future.

So, how would you assess the transition?

Assessing the transition from planned response work to emergency response work can help identify any areas that may need further attention or improvement.

There are a few key steps to consider when assessing the transition:

✓ **Gather data**

Collect data on various aspects of the transition, such as employee satisfaction, performance, and any issues or challenges that arose. This data can be gathered through surveys, focus groups, or other methods.

✓ **Identify successes and areas for improvement**

Analyse the data collected. For example, you may find that employee satisfaction is high, but there were challenges in training employees on new procedures.

✓ **Develop a plan**

Based on the data and analysis, develop a plan to address any areas for improvement and capitalize on successes to identify any successes or areas for improvement. This may involve providing additional training or support to employees, or revising policies and procedures.

✓ **Monitor progress**

Regularly monitor progress against the plan to ensure that the transition is moving in the desired direction. Make any necessary adjustments as needed.

By conducting a thorough assessment of the transition, you can identify any issues or challenges that may need to be addressed, and develop a plan to ensure a successful transition to emergency response work.

What types of data should be collected?

There are many different types of data that can be collected when assessing the transition from planned response work to emergency response work.

Some examples of data that may be relevant to collect include:

✓ **Employee satisfaction:**

This can be assessed through surveys or focus groups to gauge how employees feel about the transition and their experience during the process.

✓ **Performance data**

This may include metrics such as response times, customer satisfaction, and efficiency. Collecting performance data can help identify any areas where the organization is excelling or where there may be room for improvement.

✓ **Issues and challenges:**

Gathering information about any issues or challenges that arose during the transition can help identify areas that may need further attention. This may include challenges in training employees, difficulties in adapting to new procedures, or other issues.

✓ **Cost data**

Collecting data on the costs associated with the transition, such as training expenses or equipment costs, can help understand the financial impact of the change.

✓ **Stakeholder feedback**

Gathering feedback from stakeholders, such as employees, clients, and other partners, can provide valuable insights into the transition process.

By collecting data from a variety of sources, you can get a well-rounded view of the transition and identify any areas that may need further attention or improvement.

Summary

Transitioning a business from planned response work to emergency response work can be a complex and challenging process. It is important to clearly communicate the change and provide training and resources to employees to ensure that they are prepared for the transition.

Reviewing and updating policies and procedures, and developing partnerships and relationships with other emergency response organizations, can also be helpful in effectively managing the transition.

Risks associated with the transition may include lack of preparedness, poor communication, resistance to change, legal and regulatory issues, and financial risks.

After the transition, it is important to assess the process, identify any areas for improvement, and develop a plan to address any issues or challenges. Collecting data from a variety of sources, such as employee satisfaction, performance data, and stakeholder feedback, can be helpful in conducting a thorough assessment.

By following these steps, you can help ensure a smooth and successful transition to emergency response work.

Sources:

1. "Emergency Response Planning: An Overview" from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): This document provides an overview of the emergency response planning process and includes information on the key

elements of an emergency response plan, as well as tips for developing and implementing a plan.

https://www.fema.gov/pdf/areyouready/areyouready_full.pdf

2. "Transitioning from Emergency Preparedness to Emergency Response" by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA): This article discusses the key steps involved in transitioning from emergency preparedness to emergency response, including the importance of clear communication, training and education, and establishing partnerships and relationships with other organizations.

<https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/News-and-Research/Resources/Preparedness/Transitioning-from-Emergency-Preparedness-to-Emergency-Response.ashx>

3. "Managing the Transition from Response to Recovery: A Framework for Success" by the National Governors Association (NGA): This report provides guidance on managing the transition from response to recovery in the aftermath of a disaster. While it is focused on recovery rather than emergency response, many of the principles and strategies discussed are relevant to transitioning from planned response work to emergency response work.

<https://www.nga.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Managing-the-Transition-from-Response-to-Recovery.pdf>

4. "Risk Management for Emergency Response to Natural Disasters" by the World Health Organization (WHO): This document provides an overview of the key risks associated with emergency response to natural disasters, including the importance of risk assessment, risk communication, and risk management strategies. While it is focused on natural disasters, many of the principles and strategies discussed are relevant to transitioning to emergency response work more broadly.

https://www.who.int/hac/techguidance/tools/manual_risk_management_for_emergency_response.pdf

5. Making Sense of Change Management 2nd Edition (Cameron and Green) 2009

About the Author



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Dr Mark Reeson, MBA ChPP RPP FAPM is a project management specialist with over thirty-five years' experience. A Fellow of the Association for Project Management, he has been involved in many project and programme consultative roles. Most recently Mark has become the Strategy Programme Manager for United Response, a charity within the UK that supports children and young adults with learning difficulties and autism, to develop their long-term plan to raise the awareness of the treatment and care of the people they support.

Still working as both an APM ChPP and IPMA Level A/B assessor, Mark is committed to the ongoing develop of the future generations of project managers.

Mark started his career in the Royal Air Force, serving twenty-four years, before continuing his professional development by training, consulting, and delivering projects in multiple fields of industry including nuclear, pharmaceuticals, finance and the international sporting events.

As a regular public speaker Mark now shares his experience, knowledge and commitment with those associations wanting to progress project management in a more sustainable and successful manner. Mark's next aim is to develop this further and to spread project management knowledge and competency into areas not typically recognised for the discipline to deliver more projects successfully, globally.

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