

Email not displaying correctly? View it in your browser.

# Pearce Consulting Ltd

## Newsletter



**Newsletter No 2**  
**July 2009**

**Making process  
change  
sustainable**

*Companies that change  
their processes  
need to make sure they are  
adopted by the users.*



## **Sustainability is the key to successful process change**

*"It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory" Dr W.  
Edwards Deming*

One of the issues that we keep coming across with clients is about sustainability of process change. Organisations have been through a change project. The consultants have departed, having redesigned and made the processes lean, yet after a few months staff start reverting back to the old ways of working or worse a mixture of some of the new processes mixed with the old. This results in a lot of frustration and confusion at all levels, expensive mistakes get made, and then the blame culture kicks in.

Without real adoption of the new processes by all staff with active support from management it will be very difficult to make the changes stick.

### **How do you make change successful?**

It's a popular myth that people generally don't like change. Humans have always been adaptive; it is the secret of our success. Few people want to work in an organisation where nothing different ever happens, yet we all know of a situation where change has been resisted.

Change can be perceived as creating uncertainty and might be threatening. However if we can show people that the new way of working is better for customers and for staff then there is a good chance that the change will be welcomed by staff. It is generally poor communication about the change project and the way it will be

*Manage stakeholders to avoid derailing the project*

delivered that causes the uncertainty and creates the resistance. A survey by Accenture showed that one of the main reasons why change projects failed (64%) was a lack of buy in that change was necessary.

We have recently been working with Reading University Department of Construction Management on their generic project management process map. One of the key tasks in the project initiation stage is to develop a stakeholder management plan which sets out the strategy for engaging and managing the stakeholders throughout the project.

We adopt a similar approach to change projects, if we know where the resistance is likely to come from then we can put measures in place to deal with this and get greater buy-in from staff at all levels.

Managers also need to develop a clear strategy for change projects and recognise the effect of change over time. Initially performance will decline when a change is adopted as it takes time for the new ways of working to bed down. Attention to detail, good communication with all levels of the organisation throughout the change process will minimise the disruption and ensure that performance improves above the original levels as quickly as possible.

A study of financial services firms revealed that companies involved in change projects get as little as 20% of the promised pay-off after having completed 80% of the work. The remaining 80% of the benefits comes from dealing with the people issues.

A lot of organisations' use the Lean Sigma DMAIC approach to improvement projects.

- Define
- Measure
- Analyse
- Improve
- Control

The success of this approach relies on buy-in and engagement to



*Most regretted not removing the cynics*

be built in to every stage and also addresses the issues of the stakeholders so that they do not de-rail the project. A recent article in the Times cited a McKinsey report of 3,000 senior executives who when asked about any regrets they had about previous change programmes, most said they regretted not removing cynics – members of staff who could not be persuaded of the need for change – and not spending enough time communicating with staff and exciting them about the changes.

Having a CEO or Board Director visibly involved means that change is more than twice as likely to be successful.

### **How do you make change sustainable?**

Having successfully completed the change project and got everyone working from the same hymn sheet, there is a great temptation to move on to the next project leaving the process owner and key stakeholders to keep the momentum going.

Without adequate training of key stakeholders and users there will be little enthusiasm to maintain the change momentum and the processes will rapidly become “shelfware” gathering electronic dust on a soon to be forgotten server that no one visits. People make adhoc changes to the processes which do not get recorded and soon there are multiple versions of the new process.

To overcome these problems the owners and stakeholders need to be trained in how to manage and monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of their process and be given the tools to help them do this.

Process owners need to be able to introduce measures to their processes that will help them evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the process.

They need to receive feedback from stakeholders and users of the process so that they can create a culture of continuous improvement, all of which should be transparent so that other users can contribute to the debate.

Regular formal reviews need to be scheduled for the processes, and

*Sustainable business  
process models link  
performance measures to  
the processes*

objectives and outputs should be monitored so that senior managers can see that the system is being proactively managed.

The platform that is being used to disseminate the processes throughout the organisation should provide feedback to the owner on a regular basis on who is using the processes and more importantly who is not, so that owner has the opportunity to find out why.

This feedback maybe the first indication that the process is broken or does it not cater for the needs of these individuals.

Using these techniques will help provide the foundations for sustainable processes that are regularly used by staff, clients and suppliers and most importantly can easily be continuously improved as the need arises.

If you would like to find out how to make your processes more sustainable contact Mark Pearce at [mark@pearceconsult.com](mailto:mark@pearceconsult.com)