

Elevating Change Management: From Point Solution to Continuous Transformation

By Tonia Breckenridge, Michelle Bright and Ryan McPherson

The healthcare industry is transforming at an increasingly rapid pace. Leaders across the industry are grappling with unprecedented disruption, resulting in a greater need for agile, change-ready cultures. A change-ready culture accepts that change is constant and understands success will not come from point-in-time solutions but from meaningful and perpetual improvement. To create a change-ready culture, leaders must shift the organization's perceptions of change management from an episodic solution to an ongoing strategy that becomes part of the organization's DNA.

As a leader, you must be an active sponsor of change by expressing, modeling and reinforcing the behaviors required for changes to be successful.

A Mindset Shift for Leaders

Leaders seeking to transform their organization must recognize that just as their traditional view of change must shift, leadership practices must evolve to align with their organization's aspirations. As a leader, you must be an active sponsor of change by expressing, modeling and reinforcing the behaviors required for changes to be successful.

To be a leader who contributes to an organization that's able to adapt and evolve continuously, you should:

- See change as a transformative competency. Recognize that change must occur continuously, and multiple changes must occur simultaneously. This requires a culture that accepts change as the norm and becomes so good at changing that it thrives during disruption.
- Focus on your mission. This is your "why" for transformation and must be clearly, compellingly and continuously articulated in order to engage key stakeholders.
- Invest in initiatives that will elevate leader performance. Leaders need to bolster their leadership skills to effectively lead during this time of transformation.

- Hold employees accountable. Make it clear that adapting is not optional and reinforce this mentality through validation, coaching, rewards and recognition.
- Be comfortable with the uncomfortable: Change is difficult, but leaders must embrace disruption as they move toward business goals.
- By infusing a desire for change rather than dictating new behavior, leaders can create a transformational environment and make it easier for employees to engage in the transformational journey.

The People Behind Transformation

Establishing change-ready behavior doesn't come through mandates or communication alone. It requires everyone in the organization to understand why their effort is critical, what they're being asked to do and how their contribution will shape the future. When employees can connect their role to a desired change, they commit to the changes and are invested in the outcomes of the transformational strategy.

Identifying individuals who will display model behaviors and encourage others to see the bigger picture is critical to achieving targeted outcomes and sustainable performance. These individuals are often informal leaders that influence the behavior of others and have knowledge that can be used to bring forth or support innovative ideas that drive efficiency and make change sustainable. They can help identify which team members will be affected by change and how the dynamics of a given team will impede or accelerate progress. Leveraging these individuals, their insights and experience is key to the change process.

With any change comes resistance. For change to be implemented successfully, it is equally important to identify individuals who do not embrace change and educate them on the benefits the changes will yield. By listening to these employees and addressing their concerns, leaders can mitigate resistance and turn detractors into supporters.

Building Momentum for Your Transformation Capability

People may want to be a part of a transformation, but if what they're being asked to take on is overwhelming and complicated, it will make it harder for the changes to be adopted and sustained. Change doesn't need to feel impossible to achieve and it shouldn't require a significant amount of effort.

To begin this transformation journey, you should:

- Establish a shared vision of transformation within your organization. This approach will help to curb change-related stress and confusion regarding the way forward.
- Leverage data to create a high-level view of the organization. Rather than focusing on a broad problem, conduct an objective assessment and diagnose the challenges at hand with quantifiable data.
- Share the data with colleagues and include them in developing the change strategy. This will also help you come out ahead of detractors and promote buy-in.
- Demonstrate why. After you build your strategy, share data with stakeholders to explain why changes are critical for reaching organizational goals to promote their buy-in.
- Invest in a strategy that overcomes your organization's traditional barriers to change and recognize the essential role of leaders' sponsorship to accelerate change during disruption.
- Look for ways to proactively address inevitable resistance as a part of your transformation strategy.

Change within healthcare is no longer an option; it's a necessity for long-term viability. As a result, leaders must create a culture that embraces the imperative of change for progress and enables employees to use their talents to successfully execute continuous transformation.

Callout Box Header

To create a culture that understands change is an opportunity to achieve growth and better outcomes, leaders must:

Think differently.

Remember that continuous change is necessary. Resistance, exhaustion and failure are optional.

Plan differently.

Anchor your organization's change strategy around a continuous need to improve versus the traditional concept of change as a one-time solution.

Act differently.

Promote change as a continuous, always-on effort and identify individuals who can appropriately lead others through change.



huronconsultinggroup.com

© 2022 Huron Consulting Group Inc. and affiliates. Huron is a global consultancy and not a CPA firm, and does not provide attest services, audits, or other engagements in accordance with standards established by the AICPA or auditing standards promulgated by the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board ("PCAOB"). Huron is not a law firm; it does not offer, and is not authorized to provide, legal advice or counseling in any jurisdiction.
19-0414