

State-of-the-Art: Driving Organizational Change

-Lisa Henry, CEO, Greenway Group

Continuous learning is a priority at Greenway. To that end, I completed a course recently at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management in Evanston, IL on Driving Organizational Change.

The impetus for taking the class was to revitalize the effectiveness of change initiatives at our client's companies with state-of-the-art change management strategies. The success of every engagement we are involved with, from a merger or acquisition to designing and launching new strategic practice initiatives, depends upon successful adoption and implementation of some type of organizational change. This is precisely where great new ideas and initiatives tend to stall or fail.

We used our own business challenges as a platform for putting the latest theories and tools into practice. There are a myriad of change management models that we studied that all contain a version of 5 common elements. The emphasis in all of them is active engagement and on-going communications with the people effected by the change. Change messaging is not one and done. This can't be short cut. **Hope is not a strategy for successfully implementing organizational change!**

Universal Elements of Organizational Change Models

Anticipate and Define the Needed Organizational Change

- Understand how the business practice landscape and business strategy act as the guiding force for most change agendas
- Define what the desired state of change is and how this differs from the current state
- Recognize the impact of change on the entire organizational ecosystem

Plan for Organizational Change

- Prepare communications about the rationale and potential impact on stakeholders
- Identify institutional enablers and barriers to change based on the history and culture of the organization
- Collect and synthesize key data to guide the direction and impact of change plans
- Identify and address key stakeholders' concerns

Implementing the Change

- Use advocacy and influence to promote and drive the change agenda with key stakeholders
- Actively manage resistance to proposed change
- Link change management plans to related project management plans
- Build and deliver change implementation plans addressing communications, education, and accountability

Sustaining Organizational Change

- Address the personal impact of change on the targets of change
- Identify key change metrics and create a system for monitoring progress and success
- Cascading sponsorship for change to throughout the firm; top to bottom.

The course on Driving Organizational Change at Kellogg provided me with new insights from professors and classmates/colleagues. We left the campus with a fresh perspective and ready to better help our clients build "change champions" at their firms.

At Greenway, we continue to include a 'change launch plan' in our proposals for our clients. Since this is where many companies fall short in implementing new initiatives this is increasingly recognized as a high value phase of our work.

For more information about successfully driving organizational change at your firm, contact [Greenway Group](#).