

12 Tips for Change

Whether a startup or a major firm, the more precise the planning and communications efforts, the better the results, according to Javidi, whose clients have included Dupont, Ford Motors, GlaxoSmithKline, IBM, John Deere, Mallinckrodt, Nortel Networks, Prudential Health Care and Union Carbide. Consider these 12 steps:

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1. What are the drivers of change (strategic redirection, restructuring, quality, technology, competition, downsizing, new products or services, social and political, etc.)?
2. Select the top four. Prioritize. You can't do everything.
3. Develop a strategy to address each of these change drivers.
4. Determine which operations must change to support the strategy.
5. Align the leadership and transition teams.
6. Define each member's involvement and decision-making authority.
7. Conduct a force field analysis: what are the current forces in the organization that may support or hinder implementation?
8. Analyze the impact changes will have on people, relationships, the organization as a whole, the market, supply chains, etc.
9. Develop a timeline, with measurement and tracking mechanisms.
10. Identify your key constituencies and stakeholder groups (internal and external) and develop short-term and long-term communications plans for each. Conduct benchmarking research on your reputation before implementation. Develop a strategic communications plan linked to the overall change plan. Track progress at regular intervals so you can refine your messages as needed.
11. Implement, evaluate, and reward people for their achievements.
12. Have a continuous renewal plan in place to ensure your evolution continues ahead of the competition.

Javidi noted that every step requires smart, strategic communications to reduce rumors, focus issues and ensure alignment of the many forces at work in driving change. If you are implementing a change program and need more data on the critical communications part of it, simply hit Reply and let me know the specifics. I'll get back to you right away