



Change Management Plan

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What is organizational change management & what does this mean to First Nations?

As first nations people we have problems with any kind of change due to the stigma instilled upon us by Indian & Northern Affairs. For over 100 years we followed the rules in order to keep our villages in some form of progression which resulted in first nations becoming experts in managing poverty.

As we move into the new era of technology, First Nations are once again hit with another major change. In many cases First Nations did not have the expertise at the local level to manage this monumental change in order to compete in the real world.

Historical change management

- Unknowingly First Nations experienced INAC change processes for over 60 years that were INAC driven with no involvement of First Nations. These changes included:
- The Election process
- The Welfare process
- Downsizing of INAC offices throughout B.C.
- Down loading of programs to First Nations without proper budget
- Withholding budgets
- Training in Financial management – Banff School of Management

New Technologies

- Without trained personnel, First Nations villages will become stagnate with less & less opportunities and more dependency on AANDC;
- New technologies, new markets and labor opportunities have opened up yet First Nations remain at the lower end of the labor market scale;
- Innovative technologies has placed AANDC processes & procedures on the chopping block. Is it time for First Nations to take the lead in designing best practices for organizational change management?
- The most successful First Nations Communities are those who focused on capacity building through new technology training with a focus on a young workforce who are very comfortable working in this electronic age;

Change Management Major Hurdles

- For First Nations adapting to change is extremely hard, so we tend to put road blocks in front of ourselves when in fact the real issue is trust, we do not trust anyone;
- There are three major hurdles we need to overcome:
 - The first is “Change Fatigue”, too many changes made, rolled out too fast or put in place without sufficient preparation and all changes are driven from the top down with no involvement of local personnel or elected officials;
 - The second is “Lack of Capacity”, to carry out the change and ensure that such changes can be sustained over time, targets were unrealistic and some leaders tried to move too fast;
 - The third is “Lack of understanding”, changes made with little input from frontline workers who are expected to implement the change and were unable to voice their concern that they did not agree with the change based on past practices;

Management of Change

- Best practices for the management of change is to ensure that health, safety and environmental risks are controlled;
- Four key factors to consider are:
 - Status of facilities
 - Documentation
 - Personnel
 - Operations
- Change management can be extremely transformational and if done strategically can become a positive permanent feature of how your community is viewed;

How to lead your team through change

- As First Nations we are oral & visual learners, we need to see & hear how these changes will happen and what the end result will be; we tend to be very critical of ourselves and in many cases set the bar too high; How should we approach this?
 - We create a plan;
 - We must identify & understand the end goal; define why we need to do this;
 - Communication is key;
 - We need to identify key players; who will take the lead;
 - We must learn to delegate tasks;
 - We have to set realistic goals & objectives;
 - We have to manage expectations;
 - We must hold people accountable;

Key skills for effective change management

- Today First Nations have created an amazing pool of professionals such as Auditors, Doctors, Nurses, Teachers, Engineers, Planners, Biologist, Psychologist, Masters of Business Administration, Accountants, Chief Executive Officers, Chief Administrative Officer, Chief Financial Officers, Red Seal Trade Specialists and the list goes on and on; yet we have been unable to put a dent in the overall labor market across Canada;
- This pool of professionals is very much a process of change management for First Nations, at the time we only considered it part of a process; we saw it as capacity building;
- The key skills we need to effect change are; personal resilience, trust, how to network, coaching, forcing clarity, managing others uncertainty, organization culture and how to follow through;

Lead with organizational culture

- For First Nations culture is everything, so change will create resistance throughout the organization;
- How can you affect change without viewing the culture as the legacy of the past;
- We have to tap into the way people think, behave, work and feel by using these traits to initiate change; bring them into the fold;
- Change can be very emotional, good team leaders use this emotional energy to align the proposed changes so that people are part of the process from the start;
- Organizational culture is critical to the success of change management;

Tone at the top

- All successful change management initiatives start at the top which is strongly supported or led by your most senior staff;
- Vision is a key component to initiate change in any organization;
- What is the vision of your elected leaders, where do they want to go, how do they want to get there and who will benefit;
- What is the vision of your senior staff, does their vision align with the elected leaders;

Involvement every layer

- Rolling out change will be smoother if everyone is involved; this includes participation by all personnel and elected officials;
- Frontline workers are very knowledgeable and can identify potential glitches, technical and logistic issues that must be addressed and they know how the public may react;
- Everyone is more invested in the plan when they have had a hand in developing it;
- Keep in mind your organization is a diverse group of people with different personalities and opinions who will work towards a common goal if they are included at the start;
- Change management may mean you have to go slow to go fast!

The rational & emotional case

- Most times First Nations respond to calls to action that engage their hearts as well as their minds;
- Stating that you want to grow the organization over the next three years through change is fine, but without showing people how this will happen, you will not get buy in moving forward;
- Making the case for major change on the sole basis of strategic direction does not work for First Nations;

Act your way into “new” thinking

- When making change, your leaders must become clear communicators as they will have a mandate to deliver the new process;
- Senior leaders and elected officials must visibly model the new changes themselves, right from the start, because employees will believe real change is occurring only when they see it happening at the top;
- Leaders must adopt three specific behaviors, they are:
 - -make major visible decisions in days instead of weeks or months;
 - -Spend time with people at the frontline
 - -Ensure the middle and lower employees have direct contact with everyone;

Engage, engage, engage

- As First , Nation leaders, we have to learn how to engage our own employees, we have mastered the engagement process with outside entities and we must learn how to apply this to our organization;
- We tend to believe that once we have conveyed a strong message of change, our people will know what to do, nothing can be further from the truth;
- Real change requires constant communication from the top;
- The more kinds of communication you can incorporate the more effective the change management will be for the entire organization;

Lead outside the lines

- Change has the best chance of flowing through the organization when everyone with authority and influence is involved;
- This includes those who hold formal positions of power, the company's recognized leaders including those people whose power is more informal and is related primarily to their expertise or their personal qualities;
- Companies that have succeeded at implementing major change used their informal leaders early in the process;

Assess and adapt

- When involved in change management for First Nations, it will take a number of years to see the transformation; take your time;
- It is important to measure the success of your change management process before moving on;
- You must take the time to find out what is working, what is not working and how to adjust your next steps accordingly;
- Leaders must support the process of change throughout its life cycle, for example we do not throw away the process after every election, the change management plan must be a living process;

First Nation Change Management

- In 1960, First Nations began the move to change management without realizing it;
- Through the Constitutional Express, (the train to Ottawa) First Nations brought to light the Injustices of the very basic human rights of Indigenous Peoples; this triggered the Truth & Reconciliation Process; it also triggered the first investigations into the treatment of First Nations children in Residential Schools; then came the election process that provided change to custom elections; First Nations began to demand the closure of Indian Affairs offices; First Nations began speaking out against Economic Development ventures happening within the boundaries of their Indian Reserves; herein, began the blockading of companies and government crown corporations doing business on Indian Reserves; First Nations began to demand a review of the Indian Act;
- These were monumental changes which triggered push back from Indian & Northern Affairs;

Indian & Northern Affairs Reaction

- Due to the demands for change from First Nations across Canada, INAC began the closure of their offices throughout B.C. and Canada;
- With this came the downloading of programs to First Nations; the issue here was that INAC did not provide the same amount of funding for programs that they had access to when they administered the programs;
- Not all program funding was released to First Nations who agreed to take over their own programs. This resulted in huge program deficits as First Nations tried to provide the same services INAC provided; this made First Nations look incompetent; First Nations communities began to collapse financially;
- Knowing this would happen, INAC, offered a Financial Management Training program through the Banff School of Management;

Economic Opportunities

- As a result of INAC'S push back, First Nations demanded consultation before any economic venture was established within the boundaries of their reserves;
- This resulted in Governments & Companies been forced to negotiate Framework Agreements or Protocols before commencing any work in their territories;
- It was Companies who came around first as they realized First Nations were not going to go away; this was one of the largest change management strategies of First Nations that pushed them to the forefront as they began to take their rightful place as the real negotiators of their own lands;
- After 100 years of standing back and watching the Federal & Provincial Governments extract Natural Resources from Indian Reserves, opportunities were becoming available to First Nations to form partnerships and business ventures;

First Nations Funding

- Since the inception of the Indian Act, Non-First Nations people have always believed we are wards of the Crown; that everything is provided to us; that we are unable to look after ourselves; that we all live on Welfare and that most of us are not educated;
- It is the opinion of many Canadians, it is not for us to change the mindset of people across Canada, it is a Government one;
- Many people across Canada do not realize that the all the funding from the extraction of Natural Resources across Canada came from First Nation Lands; this funding was used to set up both the Federal & Provincial Governments, their Cities, Towns and Villages throughout Canada; a very small percentage of these funds were allocated to First Nation Indian Bands; little did we know that funding we received was from Natural Resource extracted from our own lands; so who are the real wards of the crown?

Acknowledging Change

- As First Nations people we have survived the test of time; we have no where to go but up; nothing can stand in our way; we are resilient;
- Regardless of the roadblocks placed in front of us, we have found a way to make it work; we survived the shortage of funds, the welfare process, downloading of programs, election processes, policy development, lack of capital, huge infrastructure deficiencies, lack of governance funding, poor housing, the list is endless; yet we have persevered;
- We continue carry ourselves with great humility in spite of the hardships; we have become experts in managing poverty; it is time for us to toot our own horns, turn to the person beside you and acknowledge them for the “Change Management” strategies they have taken to bring their community to where they are today.

Gitlaxt'aamiks Village Government Process

- After five years in treaty, GVG realized we were not using the treaty to our benefit and still using INAC processes and procedures;
- The real opportunity to do things our way was still very new & scary; herein enters a new CAO who had 30 plus years of experience doing it the INAC way and who was ready to use the treaty for a monumental change process;
- At no time throughout this process did the CAO use the word change but rather the words, "new process";
- It was important not rock the boat too much as there were many informal leaders within the organization who continually referred to, "this is how we do it"
- Herein began the organizational change;

Elected official process

- Governance process changes included;
- Committee of the whole meetings
- One employee concept
- New governance procedure manual
- Activity log and annual workplan
- New travel policy
- Elected official training

Administration process

- Administration change process included;
- Implementing directorate – dream team
- Signing authority to directors – primary signatures
- Budgets assigned to each employee – autonomy
- Capacity building – all employees
- Budget training – cashflows & workplans
- New employee policy manual
- New wage rate structure

Organization process

- Communication strategy
- Public meeting process – every two months
- Access to information – all programs
- Community capacity building
- Employment & training
- Municipal type government training
- Joined UBCM & LGMA

SUMMARY – DANCING IN BOTH WORLDS

- Change management for First Nations is very uncomfortable and can create major dissention within the organization;
- If we do not move with the times, we will continue to be on the outside looking in;
- The 94 calls to action for Truth & Reconciliation is an extraordinary example of change, which will be a long process, and if we do not keep it alive the entire process will fail;
- It is time for first nations to take the lead in the change management process; we have survived every atrocity placed in front of us;
- The very foundation of our culture & language that has allowed us to show the world we can “Dance in both Worlds”