



How To Manage Business Transformation And Keep Your Sanity

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Transforming a business is a lot like changing the tires on a truck while it is slamming down the highway at 90 miles an hour. The business world doesn't stop just because you need to optimize your operations. No, your business still needs to be able to quickly respond to customer demands with high quality service delivery even when it's in the midst of great transformation.



In fact, your business must be positioned to implement new capabilities and modify operations on a dime, regardless of what is going on behind the scenes. But, during times of significant change, it is not unusual for work (particularly that which crosses organizational boundaries) to get "*hung-up*" by resource constraints and political *red tape*. After all, no one wants to be the one that winds up with the short end of the stick!

Clearly, organizing work into a portfolio of projects and programs reduces the obstacles to quick response by offering a different perspective on the way transformation results are achieved. Resource issues and ownership challenges are resolved during the project planning stage, when the executive leadership is present and involved in priority-setting and project sourcing. Done right, transformation project teams will be cross-functional in structure and share common "*team-based*" goals.

But, there are implications for driving change in this way, including:

1. **An awareness program will be necessary** to expose all of the firm's personnel to this new way of organizing and performing transformation work within the business. Indeed, the approach will need to be de-mystified in order to eliminate any possibility of misinterpretations or perception of threat.
2. **Portfolio-Based Project Management "Next Practices" must be selected** and put into place in order to ensure the smooth implementation of this concept. You will want to be sure that the best approaches to transformation are being adopted to ensure the best possible results.
3. **Staff must be properly trained** in project management (and their role in project team participation). Like any new skill, your team will need to be taught the basics before you can expect them to perform.
4. The business should **be deliberate in establishing a common project management language**. In this way, your people won't miss a beat as the concepts are being institutionalized.
5. Once in place, **project management skills must be further developed** and nurtured in order to fully realize the potential of this transformation management approach. Indeed, it just the beginning of this new philosophy. So, be prepared to continue to educate and coach.

To close, this new transformation model represents a dramatic departure for most businesses in the way in which the work environment is optimized (i.e., most businesses are organized by function and it is those functional boundaries that dictate the way that work is partitioned, assigned and adjusted over time). But, managing your transformation as a portfolio of projects may be the best way to drive change, while maintaining your sanity.

As always, please feel free to continue to drive the discussion by offering your ideas and comments below or reach-out to me directly. It's an important topic that deserves more attention.