

# Maintaining Your Team's Change Commitment



## Five Executive Actions for Maintaining Commitment

Change management initiatives often start off with the best intentions and some easy, early victories. It is our experience that problems can occur as enthusiasm wanes after the low hanging fruit or obvious issues are addressed within the process. As change managers return to their day to day tasks, it is easy to lose clarity, focus and enthusiasm. Commitment can drop off dramatically.

If corrective action is not taken within one to three months and the commitment dip is not addressed, there is little likelihood that the initiative will achieve its objectives. All the resources that have been dedicated to improvement, money, executive time, organizational morale are wasted.

Here are some strategies to build on early successes, while maintaining momentum and direction to keep things on track:

### Open and Honest Communication

Management teams don't always have all the answers when embarking on change. However, what can be done is for management to be forthright about the impact of the changes. Being accessible, being tenacious about listening and prepared to engage with employees in supportive discussions is a key factor.

### Walk Your Talk All The Way

Derailment of change initiatives can occur when employees perceive there to be two sets of rules and behaviours - one for them and one for senior leaders. As management, we lose our most valuable asset – credibility – if we “Don't Walk Our Talk”. Employees want to see those words backed up by behaviours for the duration of the change not just the first month.

### Realistic on Objectives and Resources

Achieving realistic objectives is the best feedback that employees can get in a change initiative and leads to a positive mindset. Feedback has replaced Wheaties as the “Breakfast of Champions”. Feedback properly communicated and regularly delivered will help ensure momentum. Also, recognize that employees have regular work to do, aside from making the change a success. They will need the resources to do both jobs well. The availability of adequate resources is a key component to successfully achieving change.

### Don't Go to Autopilot

Ok, a lot of work has been done. The plan is in place and clearly communicates and prioritizes the objectives. Now don't mistakenly assume all that is needed is to say “Go” and that your team will stay committed and carry out the change. As you execute your change initiative, you will find certain adjustments are necessary. Your Strategic plan (you do have it written, right?) is a living document and must be continually revisited as you learn and discover unanticipated problems and opportunities.

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## Get Your Middle Core Involved

Based on having a solid, well thought out plan; having the senior team fully on board and openly advocating the change process before launch is a given. Research indicates though that one success factor that can't be overlooked is early involvement of middle management. The middle level of management are integral to any change process as they have a much higher factor of everyday leadership "touches" with all employees than many of the senior team have. Therefore they can provide much greater impact to grounding the new thinking among frontline personnel. The difference between highly performing organizations and less successful ones in effective change management processes is higher performing organizations get broad organization-wide responsiveness through involving middle management in the first 90 days.

## Conclusion and Why Is This Important?

Managing change comes up on any headache list compiled by executive management when they isolate on impediments to organizational and leadership success factors. Newport Group provides senior management the preliminary step in showing companies where the problem is and then what can be done to make the changes more successful. By following our custom solutions, you will keep your team highly committed and focused on making change in your organization a successful process from start to finish.

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