



Healthcare Rx – Part VII
Tools for Organizational Transformation
By Marty Jacobs
July 8, 2011

Implementing transformational change in an organization can be a daunting task. Current statistics indicate that nearly 70% of all change efforts fail. That's an extraordinary waste of resources. So why is it that so many fail? There is no simple answer to that question – it could be lack of planning, poor communication, no sense of urgency, no clear direction, or all of the above. In this final article of this series on organizational learning, I will share some tools that I have used to help keep organizational transformation efforts on track.

The first is a tool developed by Harold L. Sirkin, Perry Keenan, and Alan Jackson and published in the October 2005 issue of the *Harvard Business Review* called the DICE Framework. This framework outlines four factors that will determine the outcome of any transformation initiative. These factors are:

1. Duration: this can be either the duration of the project, if it is short, or the amount of time between reviews of milestones.
2. Integrity: this is the ability of the project team to complete the initiative on time and is based on members' skills and traits relative to the project's requirements.
3. Commitment: this refers to the level of visible backing from influential executives as well as the level of enthusiasm of those implementing and affected by the change effort.
4. Effort: This means the amount of work over and above the usual level that the change initiative demands of employees.

This model measures these four factors during the span of the project to evaluate the likelihood of success or failure. It provides a very concrete method for assessing milestones and determining the need for course corrections.

Assessing readiness and addressing gaps isn't enough, though. Good planning can help reduce the potential for failure, and John Kotter developed a simple yet elegant model in "Winning at Change" published in the Fall 1998 issue of *Leader to Leader* that he calls Eight Steps to Transform Your Organization:

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1. Establish a Sense of Urgency: change cannot happen without the buy-in of those who need to implement the change, and if they don't understand the need for change, they are likely to maintain the status quo.
2. Form a Powerful Guiding Coalition: a change effort will be more successful if the whole system is represented by the team assembled to lead the effort and if individual members possess the requisite skills to lead change.
3. Create a Vision: the vision must be a shared vision that reflects the collective aspirations of the whole system.
4. Communicate the Vision: communicating the vision for the change effort must be a two-way street that develops commitment rather than compliance.
5. Empower Others to Act on the Vision: the guiding coalition can set an example by modeling new behaviors and by encouraging others to eliminate barriers to change and to take risks.
6. Plan for and Create Short-Term Wins: change often fails because it feels titanic in proportion, so it helps to set milestones and celebrate successes along the way, in addition to assessing for needed course corrections.
7. Consolidate Improvements and Produce Still More Change: as small changes are successfully implemented and recognized, momentum will build for additional changes and data demonstrating improvements will spur the effort on.
8. Institutionalize New Approaches: create the infrastructure that supports and sustains the new systems and be sure to build the new behaviors into leadership development and succession.

For more extensive planning tools *Beyond Change Management* and *The Change Leader's Roadmap* both by Dean and Linda Ackerman are essential resources. *Beyond Change Management* introduces the concept of conscious transformation as a proactive approach to transformational change, and its main focus is building change leadership competency. Sections of the book discuss the leader's mindset as a leverage point for change and challenge a leader to examine their fundamental assumptions about reality. There are also a number of tools that can help build a leader's capacity to successfully lead transformational change. Finally the authors outline in detail their Change Process Model, listing specific activities to undertake as an organization moves through transformational change.

The Change Leader's Roadmap builds on the theories and models in *Beyond Change Management* and breaks the transformational process down into three stages. Each stage is then further broken down into a number of phases to make what might otherwise feel like an overwhelming proposition more manageable. At the end of each chapter are a list of questions to answer and activities to undertake. This book is truly a roadmap worth purchasing for every organization's glove compartment.

Ultimately, the best approach to change management is one that is multidimensional, drawing from a variety of frameworks and weaving them together to create a fit unique to your own organization. Until then, we may end up scratching our heads wondering how we ended up back where we started.

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