Seven Critical Needs to Implement and Sustain Successful Change on Your Team

Successful organizational change can be a challenge for leaders.

Even when leaders see the need and benefits of changing a process or a platform, the entire team must ultimately buy-in and make a commitment to adapt if the changes are to have a lasting and positive impact on productivity and results.

According to Gartner, **46% of CIOs feel that culture is the most significant barrier to the success of their change plans...**

And it is the gap in understanding between C-suite and entry-level employees that contributes to lack of their commitment to changed behaviors.

That resistance to change is often the result of people who have become un-coachable. People who aren't coachable simply don't want to change.

They are complacent rather than being committed to improvement.

They resist and complain... because when we feel pushed in a direction – without being given proper understanding of why – we often push back.

And it is that push-back... that lack of willingness to modify our beliefs and behaviors... that is often the reason for failed change initiatives.

Staying Coachable is about two things:

- wanting to be BETTER

- and being WILLING to change.

That willingness is seldom inspired by command-and-control management.

Instead, people are moved to modify their behaviors when they are introduced to a series of powerful questions that can lead them to WANT TO CHANGE.

Conversations with key individuals will help to gain initial buy-in and can move some people from complacency to commitment.

But even after you have had those important conversations and inspired a sense of enthusiasm and commitment from your team, there is more to do...

To ensure the successful implementation and sustained impact of change initiatives or mergers, leaders must address seven critical needs. These needs

serve as the foundation for guiding teams through transformation and ensuring that the changes become an integrated part of the organization's culture.

When leadership begins a change initiative or undergoes a merger, there are seven critical things that are required to ensure sustained success:

To Implement and Sustain Change, You Need:

1   A champion who supports the vision of what could be

(Who will own responsibility for the initiative and provide examples to stakeholders of what the goal ultimately looks like for the team?)

A change initiative requires a visionary champion who not only supports the proposed changes but also embodies the vision of what could be. This individual is someone who takes ownership of the initiative, inspiring others through their commitment and example.

The champion serves as a guiding light, illuminating the path toward the desired goal. They provide stakeholders with tangible examples of what success looks like for the team, fostering enthusiasm and confidence in the change.

2   Communication about the need prompting change

(How will you ensure that everyone learns what issues have led to this being necessary, and what is the desired impact of the changes in 3-6 months?)

Communication lies at the heart of successful change management. Leaders must effectively communicate the need for change, outlining the specific issues that have necessitated the transformation.

Clear communication helps everyone understand the reasons behind the changes and the potential impact they can bring. Additionally, leaders should share a clear vision of the desired outcomes within the next 3 to 6 months. This timeframe creates a sense of urgency and allows employees to visualize the positive changes on the horizon.

3   Stakeholders to become "what if" ambassadors

(Who are the key 20% of the team you can reach out to and recruit to spread excitement about the positive impact the changes will have?)

Identifying key stakeholders and recruiting them as "what if" ambassadors is crucial. These ambassadors, comprising approximately 20% of the team, become advocates for the change. – because they constantly ask "what if we could…"

They help spread excitement and positivity by sharing the benefits and opportunities the changes will bring. Engaging stakeholders early on ensures a sense of ownership and involvement, fostering a culture of collaboration and mutual support.

4   Training to build new skills and competence

(How will you ensure a comfort level with the new platform or processes and provide training and support for the skills that this change requires?)

For change to take root, employees need to acquire new skills and competencies. Providing training that not only imparts the necessary skills but also builds comfort and confidence in the new processes is vital.

This training should be ongoing and accessible, offering employees the resources they need to adapt successfully. Leaders must ensure that their teams feel adequately prepared to embrace the changes with competence.

5   A commitment by leader to make it an ongoing priority

(What evidence of resources is there for the team to believe that this is a lasting and meaningful implementation that they should not shrug off and ignore?)

A leader's commitment plays a pivotal role in change implementation. Teams must perceive that the change is more than a passing phase—it should be a lasting and meaningful transformation.

Leaders should allocate necessary resources and demonstrate unwavering support, showing that the change is a priority for the organization's future. This commitment instills confidence and motivation among the team, reinforcing their belief in the initiative.

6   A clear metric to measure progress and results

(What numbers can you anticipate using as evidence of meaningful milestones for the project to create early wins and sustain momentum?)

To gauge progress and maintain momentum, leaders need clear metrics to measure the success of the change initiative.

Identifying meaningful milestones and quantifiable indicators early on provides a sense of direction and achievement. These metrics offer tangible evidence of the initiative's impact, creating a cycle of early wins that sustains enthusiasm and momentum throughout the process.

7   Rewards to encourage the right habits

(How will you celebrate progress along the way and reward examples of behaviors that contribute to the successful implementation of the changes?)

Recognizing and rewarding progress along the change journey reinforces positive behaviors. Celebrating small wins and acknowledging individuals who contribute to the successful implementation of changes fosters a culture of appreciation and engagement.

Rewards can be both intrinsic, such as recognition and praise, and extrinsic, such as incentives or promotions. These rewards encourage the team to align their actions with the organization's evolving goals.

These seven critical needs are a vital part of ensuring a successful and sustained change in your organization.

If you plan to implement change is some form throughout your organization, these seven important questions must be answered clearly for your team if you want to lead change effectively.

And if you are undergoing a change now, and you have had any issues at all with resistance or lack of commitment from your people, it is because you have not answered these seven questions adequately in the minds of those who are slow to accept the changes that you feel are necessary.

The quality of your leadership – regardless of your title – that will determine how well your teammates take ownership of the change to make it work.
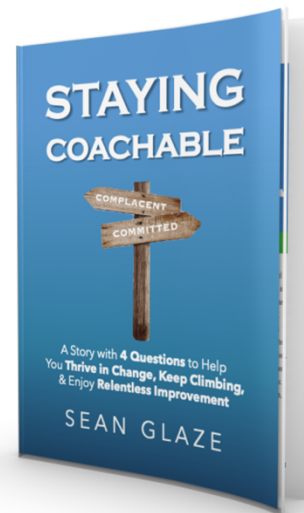
Successful change implementation and sustainability require careful planning and attention to these seven crucial needs. Effective leadership involves not only charting the course for change but also fostering a collaborative, motivated, and adaptable team.

By addressing these needs, leaders can guide their organizations through transformational phases and ensure that change becomes an integrated and enduring part of the organizational culture.

Want to learn how to **help your people become more willing to change?**

The questions that inspire someone to *Stay Coachable* are relevant and useful regardless of industry or circumstance.

Being intentional is the key to effective leadership.

If complacency has become a concern for some of your people, using the right questions is the key to inspiring their willingness to change.

SEAN'S SHORT BIO

Sean Glaze is a speaker and author who works with organizations to develop Effective Leaders and Winning Teammates.

His programs and books have helped clients like Cisco, John Deere, and Emory University to increase team collaboration, boost productivity, and build more positive and profitable workplace cultures.

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