

Getting Out the Gate: Driving Internal Change

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Inertia is a difficult force to overcome. Driving internal change is dependent on a company's ability to mobilize behind an objective, make continual progress, and see the project through to the end. And no one person can enact change on their own; to truly be successful, change must have support throughout the entire organization. Almost every company has struggled with internal change. Even with a brilliant strategy and enthusiastic leadership, all too often those leaders will find themselves in the frustrating position of being within sight of the finish line but unable to reach it. This is rarely due to shortcomings of individuals or of the plan itself, but rather due to the nature of the beast. Change is *hard*.



Typically, the leadership of a company has a clear picture of where the business needs to be in a certain timeframe. Grow this division to \$500M in revenues in 5 years, or double the volume growth rate of a particular product line by next fiscal year. With a goal in mind, the management team sets to devising a plan to reach that goal, or maybe brings in an outside consultant to provide unbiased expertise. A plan is wrought, everyone seems to be on board, but soon it's apparent that something's not working. Progress reaches a plateau and won't budge for weeks. Meetings are spent rehashing the same old issues instead of focusing on what's next. Before long, the project is abandoned and it's back to the drawing table. What went wrong?

Unsuccessful internal change is generally the result of a variety of factors which compound to prevent real change from ever getting out of the gate. Change requires organization, planning, socialization, flexibility, and dedication. It requires an understanding that it's not going to be easy, and that there may be bumps along the way. It requires accountability, tracking, risk management, and good old fashioned hard work. Most of all, change requires confidence. *Everyone* involved must believe that they, as individuals and as a team, have the ability to

Companies need fast, significant transformation to advance performance. Getting the most important strategic initiatives done is a challenge for most companies due to resource constraints or missing expertise. To improve profits, launch new products, or execute internal change, the best companies seek out experts, best practices and unbiased leadership.

DataKey Difference: Strengthens and energizes client organizations by becoming part of the team to accelerate key initiatives.

"With DataKey, we were able to rapidly establish a disciplined approach to business project management that was methodical, thorough, and very effective for our team. This is why our company uses DataKey in so many areas."

– EVP Worldwide, Fortune 1000 Company

push through difficult or uncomfortable situations in order to reach a common goal.

To *drive successful change* throughout your organization:

- Start with a comprehensive plan. Detailed, measureable, achievable goals are great, but also consider risks and countermeasures to anticipate and resolve problems before they happen. Do you foresee clashes in the personalities involved or opposition to tinkering with long-standing processes? The more you are prepared for in advance, the easier it will be to address issues as they surface.
- Set your team up for success with the right tools to assign responsibility and track progress against goals. Goals should have clear ownership by individuals. Regular status meetings give everyone the chance to share successes and will keep each team member accountable for delivering on time.
- Before implementing a plan, socialize it with all of the key stakeholders. Make sure that everyone the plan depends on is bought in, from the top of the management chain all the way to the mail room. Even an entry-level employee can undermine a major initiative if there is not broad support and dedication established.
- Make it a priority. Management needs to be vocal about why this initiative is important and how it will benefit everyone within the company, and also needs to solicit (and react to) feedback. Employees must have confidence that the project is supported by the people at the top, and that those people will do what it takes to make sure it's successful, even if it means taking constructive criticism.
- Always be looking to improve. Once the process is complete, reflect back on which aspects were successful, which weren't, and why. Document this learning and be sure to incorporate the lessons from this project into the next.

DataKey Difference: Strengthens and energizes client organizations by becoming part of the team to accelerate key initiatives. Sometimes change requires an outside catalyst to really make it stick. DataKey integrates unbiased leadership and world-class expertise directly into your team to get the results you need fast. With proven tools, dedicated capacity, and best practice experience, DataKey can help your team hit the ground running.

"Thank you, DataKey. As an outside resource, you enabled our management team to openly address different opinions on strategy and skillfully weave them into an actionable plan."

*– Chief Operating Officer,
Mid-Market Company*

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