

Be transparent with your changes

All organizations go through change in order to survive and, ultimately, thrive. But, in the end, it's how that change is implemented that differentiates and determines the degree to which it's successful.

It's common in too many organizations to have a culture at the top that promotes keeping the "why" and "how" behind changes under wraps. But doing so inevitably produces consequences and negatively affects the return on investment.

Kinaxis is a small, though growing, organization. It applied big ideas to how it approached the dramatic change it wanted to make to its business model.

One of the most important insights of COO John Sicard and his executive team was recognizing the importance of anticipating employee resistance and putting strategies in place to address it. On this front, they were largely successful, by implementing a sound communications plan grounded in openness and honesty.

They used multiple platforms for communicating with staff and continued to use these strategies well after implementation, having embedded them into the new corporate culture.



ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

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Marketing was also a big part of the transformational plan and it changed the Kinaxis corporate image from one that mirrored its competitors to one that was edgy and memorable.

This was about taking educated risks that, for the most part, paid off big time. Along the way, Kinaxis ingeniously differentiated itself from competitors and created a special niche in the marketplace.

Sicard outlined a number of the lessons learned, the most compelling being "Don't blink." When a clearly thought out vision

has been articulated, it's critical to stay true to it, no matter what entices you to back-track. This doesn't mean there won't be any mistakes made along the way. Re-evaluating strategy is inevitable but it means not deviating from the end goal.

Accepting that mistakes will happen and sharing what has been learned contributed greatly to the success of the Kinaxis change initiative.

It's an important reminder for organizations that failure is not about the people behind the decision but about one decision or event and the real failure is in not acknowledging it and communicating the learning.

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