



ENABLING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN PRACTICE

Tower Hamlets

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Few of us love change “on principle”. Though some of us do. Even just to stay awake. But aside from a select few (about 2.5%), change can come charged with fear: loss of position, security, authority. Check out how Everett Rogers divides us folks in terms of our appetite for innovation – and maybe have a guess around where you, or some of your colleagues might find yourself... You’ll see that the pure innovators are a teensy minority. So don’t kick yourself if that’s not where you are. In fact, don’t kick yourself wherever you are, because the good news is, if you don’t want to be there, you can move. And you can help others move, as well. Now how good is that.

So, how can change be managed as a desirable, or, at worst, acceptable experience to others? There are three magic ingredients to this:

1. Creating a shared vision

Comfort and status quo are some of the most significant barriers to change. So make sure your teams are **communicating, in a clear and frequent way**, *why* things need to change. We have the luxury of an infinite number of good reasons: unmet patient demand, patient satisfaction (something we don’t always like to be held accountable to), competitive pressures, technological advances that move faster than we can react... We are certainly not lacking burning platforms.

And then, **describe your vision for the change**. What will people start doing? What will they stop? What does everyone need to learn to make change happen? The clearer the vision, the clearer the ask.

With that, **make the first steps super simple and super clear**. Good restaurants know that you always invest in starters and desserts: first and last impressions are what keep you coming back. Or not.

2. Understanding your stakeholders

The easiest ways to manage your stakeholders – aka your colleagues – is to **understand how much the change proposed might affect each of them**. The higher the impact on the individual, the more thoughtful your work will need to be.

An easy way to prioritize who to focus on is to **make a list of the people impacted by the change proposed**, and rate their level of commitment to this change. An easy tool to do this is attached; for each of the people impacted by the change, mark the level of commitment *necessary* with an O. And then mark each person's *actual* level of commitment with an X. Do this for everyone. Then give the most attention in your planning efforts to the places where your arrows are longest, and make them shorter. But re Donald Trump, probably just give up.

And, lastly, **understand potential reasons for resistance**. Listen *hard*. This will keep you safe, and earn trust. How satisfied are your stakeholders with their job? What's at risk for them? What will they need to learn? What are they likely to lose, and gain? And if you want help to broker these conversations, we have people who can support you and your teams – so please just ask! **Click here to download document**.

3. Developing an action plan

Make sure you think about **who should participate in the change** (from the list you made above). Think about how to attain **buy in**. Allow for **mourning** –there will always be losses, and there must be time for mourning. (I struggle with this! So need to pay extra attention.) Plan how and when you are going to **communicate** – and then stick to it, come rain or shine! And think about what training is needed, when, and where.

To make this go more smoothly, it helps **to know informal networks** – who can help you make this happen? Who has extra strong influence, which of the leaders you know can accept your change and make it happen more smoothly, purely through expressing acceptance? Exploit your ~~assets~~ friends!

Then focus on **building a critical mass** – numbers DO sway opinions. Ten administrators CAN change a senior partner's decisions. Totally. So get cracking (not in the way they mean on Love Island), and find friends (not in the way they mean on Love Island).

Create emotional acceptance – hearts and bellies are ten times stronger than minds. So let them speak and share discomfort, because no-one fights harder than someone who does not feel seen or heard. Sometimes just the act of listening to a concern puts it to bed.

And then be a credible ninja. Deliver what you promise. When you promise. Keep comms rolling. And **align and integrate your timelines**.

It's super cool that Tower Hamlets is leading change as it is (Tower Hamlets being *you*, of course). It's equally cool that we know how change happens, how it works, and thus can help it happen better, and more frequently. In Deming's words:

It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory.

Virginia