

Leaders can no longer afford to ignore change management when undergoing transformation or business change

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The ability to deliver business change is a source of competitive advantage

Organisations are getting better at retaining corporate memory, and less forgiving as a result when strategy and business change is done badly. This is down to a number of factors, of which only some are within a CEO's control – the increased rate with which changes come round, the need for greater speed in execution and greater democratisation of information all make performance during business change much more transparent. To employees, shareholders and the market.

Strategy to Execution, not Strategy AND Execution

As a result, gone are the days where organisations can afford to take a 'tag team' approach to strategy – where the CEO makes a strategic decision and the COO is accountable for executing it. Organisations are learning that a lot of value is lost in the breakdown between decision (getting projects started) and execution (capturing the value intended from those projects). Delegating change often leads to a lack of accountability between initial decision-makers and execution-leaders.

Leaders cannot delegate change

This has meant that today, increasingly difficult decisions are made by leaders of each part of the organisation – because there is less and less homogeneity across an organisation, negating the ability to make a macro-level decision that can apply across the board. This points to the need to develop leadership teams that act together, where leaders stick to the same principles, timelines and rationale, regardless of the scale of the business changes they need to make within their own part of the organisation. Otherwise strategy targets quickly unravel, and can even result in dis-benefits.

The ability to deliver change unlocks true value

Individuals across the whole leadership team need to take difficult decisions. The COO can play a critical role in supporting colleagues on the leadership team, by bringing the capability and capacity to 'operationalise' those changes. And in the process step out of the shadows of 'cost control' and join in on the 'value' mandate.