

June 2014 Change Management: People First

"We cannot change anything until we accept it." – Carl Jung

Have you ever heard the joke, "All of our change initiatives would have gone great if it weren't for the people involved?" Most of us can probably relate to that on some level and have likely been involved in some very challenging personal and professional change situations. Successful change is dependent on elements focused around the needs of human beings and not just getting "things" done.

Many organizations continue to haphazardly develop and implement new business changes without thoughtful consideration of how employees must embrace and adopt the change before the organization can obtain the desired outcomes. An effective change management strategy should include consistent processes which help employees understand, cope and thrive in the changing environment.

So how do you meet your business needs while being sensitive to the emotional challenges change brings to employees? One change management model called "**ADKAR**" focuses on the people side of change and how to facilitate change one person at a time. The five-step ADKAR model provides key considerations which must be addressed *prior* to making workplace changes. Each element of the model must be thoroughly completed and should also be followed in a sequential manner in order for successful change to take place.

1. **A for Awareness** - Create an understanding why the change is necessary and the risks of not changing. Some questions employees will want to know is: *Why is the change necessary? Why is the change happening now? What's wrong with what we are doing today? What's in it for me?*
2. **D for Desire** - Create the desire to support and take part in the change. The *nature of the change*, the *credibility of the person leading the change*, the *history of how the organization manages change*, and the *employee's personal situation and intrinsic motivation* will contribute to their level of desire.
3. **K for Knowledge** - Provide training and education on the needed skills and behaviors so employees know how to change and what to do. Some considerations are: *What is the current knowledge base of the employee? What is their capacity and capability to gain additional knowledge? Are there adequate resources available for education and training?*
4. **A for Ability** - Assess if the employee has the ability to implement new skills and behaviors to demonstrate achievement of the change. Some factors which may impact an employee's ability to implement change are: *psychological blocks, physical abilities, intellectual abilities, time available to develop needed skills, and availability of resources to support skill development.*
5. **R for Reinforcement** - Create the ability and environment to sustain the change and keep it going. These efforts should focus on providing *meaningful recognition and rewards, removing punitive consequences* and establishing *accountability systems*.

The ADKAR model is a simple yet powerful model comprised of five building blocks for successful change. Contact an [Organizational Development facilitator](#) with Human Resources for assistance with change management.