



A reader asks: I know you've done a lot of reengineering projects, so I want to ask your advice. I'm struggling with selecting an internal project leader for our planned reengineering, and I was wondering what skills would be most important. What is the most difficult part to get done, the process redesign or coordinating the technology projects that will be part of the reengineering?

Dave's answer: There's a third component, often referred to as "change management," but that really means "people management." While the typical reengineering modifications relate primarily to the process and the tools, it is the people you need to be most concerned about. The changes are going to have a direct and dramatic impact on how people perform their work. It is a natural reaction to resist change, and you should expect lots of

it. However, don't let resistance sway you from implementing the right process model and (enabling) tool set.

The key to successful reengineering is employee acceptance. It is just as important as the reengineering plan itself. There are a number of proven techniques that can be employed to minimize resistance and help the organization work through it when it occurs. Here are a few guidelines:

1. Get people involved in the change process. The more you can make this "their plan," the more acceptance you'll get. The key is to get them involved early and allow them to work out as many of the details as possible. With the right guidance, your people will make good decisions and create plans that are equal to (or even better than) management's. The critical difference is that they will embrace the idea if they are allowed to come up with it, and they will resist it if management imposes it on them.

2. Provide some training or facilitation to those involved. I've found that many large companies now have change management as a standard training program offered through their HR or training organization. Sometimes it is internally developed and presented; other times they use outside resources. My preferred approach is to provide one level of training or facilitation to the management team (to prepare them and to provide skills for dealing with resistance) and another level for the "troops" (to help them deal with change and become positive contributors). If your company does not currently have this training capability, there are change management trainers and consultants that can help you.

3. Communicate, communicate, and communicate. One of the biggest challenges related to change management is dealing with rumors and fear about what exactly will happen. The solution is to keep everyone informed and up to date. As part of your effort, assign someone (or a team) to handle communications. Create a Web site on your intranet. Send out a weekly e-mail newsletter. Set up a bulletin board in the lunchroom and post a hard copy of the weekly newsletter, the project plan, and other key information. When it comes to managing change, you can't communicate too much.

For an in-depth article describing this team process, send me an e-mail and ask for the "Team Approach" article. I'll e-mail it back to you. ♦

Have a tough question? Submit your question to Dave by e-mail at dave.brown@SupportCenterU.com. Dave will respond to all inquiries, and if your question is selected for publication, you'll receive a complimentary copy of his book, *Optimizing Support Center Staffing*.

Dave Brown is a management consultant, teacher, and writer. He teaches management training programs for Support Center University (www.SupportCenterU.com). He also consults with selected clients to establish world-class service operations and is considered an expert in the area of process improvement, staffing models, and change management. Reach Dave at his office in Boulder, Colorado at 303-494-4932 or dave.brown@SupportCenterU.com.