

San Pasa's Tips on
Managing Change: The Focus on Values

First:

Before major change is introduced into an organization—private sector businesses, civilian government agencies, military organizations, nonprofit agencies, etc.—three kinds of analysis should be conducted: **strategic**, **operational**, and **behavioral**. These analyses should examine of **values** in each realm. As used here, changes in values imply there will be *changes in relationships and changes in how things are done*. Ask these questions:

- o What are our **present values**? What are the **new values** stemming from new circumstances, such as competition, technologies, financial issues, human resource challenges, opportunities for expansion, changes in industry standards, politics, global and environmental issues, etc.?
- o How can **differences** between old and new values be reconciled? Should they be? Should old values be abandoned entirely? Modified? Should new values be adopted? As presented? In modified form?
- o What are the strategic, operational and behavioral **implications** of possible value changes? What relationships are affected and how? For how long? How will ways of doing things change? With what impacts? How can any old values no longer appropriate be let go with the *least* disruption, cost and pain?
- o What are our **assumptions** about values, old and new? What assumptions are driving our behavior?

Then:

Use “triage” to sort present values and potential new values and the *changes* they bring. For example, list present values:

- (1) old values **essential** to the organization (“keepers”)—reaffirm these;

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(2) old values **clearly outmoded** and ready to be discarded—figure out how to drop them (gracefully, if possible);

(3) old values which **may or may not be replaced**. This last group should be ranked in order of importance. Then, the 80/20 Rule should be applied to select the most important values—that is, the values most likely to be successfully modified and retained. Why keep them? What modifications are needed? What are the costs (people, money, mission, etc.)?

Similarly, list new values:

(1) new values which more or less **“fit”** easily with the present (old) value system (low or no cost to adopt or adapt)—affirm and figure out how to implement these;

(2) new values which **do not fit at all** and, for all practical purposes, probably never will—figure out the implications of *not* adopting these;

(3) new **values with potential benefits** but with a “price” to be paid to adopt them. This last category should be ranked in order of importance. Then, the 80/20 Rule should be applied to select the most important values, that is, the ones most likely to be beneficial. Why adopt them? What, if any, modifications are needed? What are the costs (people, money, mission, etc.)?

Review and analysis of organizational values at the executive level should lead to similar reviews and analyses at the middle management level where compliance can be factored into performance evaluations. Middle management is where the work of enlisting staff commitment is done. (*A reminder: What gets rewarded gets done.*)

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Then:

Check it out: Do people understand the changes being introduced and the reasons for them? Create and publicize new models and examples of the changes based on the revised set of values. Make sure management and other leaders **demonstrate** the value-based behaviors sought from the rest of the organization.

Institute a forum to openly discuss and examine new values and their implications for and effects on people and on the organization environment. Use methods that invite participation, brainstorming for example, to gain support for the implementation of revised values and the changes that follow.

Create measurements of progress. How well are changes being implemented? Are values changing? Are the impacts, costs, results as expected? If not, what (if anything) needs to be done?



A few examples of changes requiring re-examining values:

From gas-guzzling cars to fuel efficient cars, hybrids and mass transportation
From no or inadequate safety standards to stringent safety requirements
From a brick-and-mortar presence to an Internet “store front”
From physical classroom learning to electronic classroom learning
From one employer for life to multiple employers
From fighting major wars to anti-insurgent and anti-terrorist fighting
From keep-it-forever to throw-it-away-after-using
From “nuclear” families to “extended” families
From face-to-face hometown banking to electronic international banking
From huge warehouse supplies to just-in-time provisioning
From doctor-in-the-office to remote consolation and diagnosis
From do it all in house to teaming with suppliers and outsourcing
From institutional computers to every home and every student computers
From a manufacturing based economy to a service based economy

End.