**Solution**

# What...

Planning and facilitating change efforts that get the intended results by adopting proven change tactics and fostering a positive mindset about embracing new ideas.

# Why...

Changes for individuals and entire organizations are inevitable, normal, and necessary. Yet, experts on change reveal that most individuals – and groups of people - struggle with change. In organizations, research support that large sweeping transformational change efforts fail approximately 70% of the time.

We can all be proud to be part of an organization that is committed to always innovating, evolving, responding, and improving.

Each past change helps us to be more adaptable when future ones arise. This allows us to be armed with more confidence - and shift from anxiety to excitement - as we face each new opportunity and challenge ahead - together.

# How...

To achieve ongoing progress requires us to **facilitate change well** and **be open to embracing new ideas**.

Change is facilitated well when it is approached as a collaborative and cooperative process in which leaders engage employees in crafting the changes that impact their work.

Quite simply, we are better at changing when we design it and do it together.

There are proven tactics that support successful changes. These tactics can become more familiar and useful to leaders, teams, and employees over time.

**Facilitate change efforts well by:**

▶ Adopting an **Improvement Method**, such as Plan-Do-Study-Adjust, to create a common approach, tools, and language for change efforts (SEE PDSA Template).

▶ Using **Validation Tactics** to monitor the impact or progress of changes. Validation tactics include data analysis, results of surveys, and 1:1 purposeful rounding conversations to check in with patients and employees to hear first-hand how changes are affecting them. (SEE Validation SOLUTION).

▶ Scheduling **Vital Time** which is dedicated time spent by individual leaders or teams to have an uninterrupted focus on important, significant activities that are future- and improvement-focused. (See Vital Time SOLUTION)

▶ Understand more about how individuals and groups change, and how to identify and overcome barriers to successful change efforts. (See more details on pp 3-7)

**Fostering a positive mindset:**

▶ This means that everyone is encouraged to give changes an honest try and that new ideas or processes aren't dismissed just because they're new.
  ▪ While it is true that some people adopt changes before others, when people strive more often to be in the group that is willing to go first, this makes them available to lend a helpful hand to coworkers who may be struggling with the change. Often it is the members of the employee-driven teams that are championing the changes, that are willing to "go first," yet, another group of employees will also be "early adopters" of certain changes. That is enough to create momentum for change.
  ▪ It is unhelpful to actively fight change or encourage dissent or negativity among peers. Instead, encourage people to ask questions to seek understanding about the change and turn around naysaying thoughts.

▶ As new ideas are being embraced, encourage people to speak up with constructive and helpful feedback on how the changes are going. Not all changes are designed or implemented perfectly right from the start which is why feedback about what's working and what's not is a necessary part of the change process. People can also be encouraged to provide input or ideas for needed or upcoming changes too.

> " *The secret of change is to focus all of your energy,*
>
> *not on fighting the old, but on building the new.* "
>
> *- Socrates*

# #1 - The power and distraction of the "whirlwind"

**What it is** - The "whirlwind" is day-to-day operations – or the work it takes to maintain the **current state**. Some refer to it as "the real work" or "the day job." It is often driven by urgency. It is often re-active. Whirlwind activities compete for time, attention, and energy necessary to move forward toward goals, improvements, and necessary changes that lead you to a better **future state**.

**How to overcome it** -

► Create "Vital Time" - dedicated time out of the whirlwind focused on moving the organization forward and higher. Schedule time out of the whirlwind each day to focus on positive, proactive, results-oriented, IMPORTANT, SIGNIFICANT activities that support change, goal and/or improvement efforts.
► Engage and empower employees to self-manage the day-to-day operations and contribute to moving the organization forward and higher
► Adopt, and adhere to, a consistent cadence of goal setting, action planning, and execution activities (See Goal Cycle SOLUTION)

# #2 - Variation in individual behavior, performance, and contributions

**What it is** – There is variation in how each individual in the organization behaves and performs, and contributes toward the change, goals, and/or improvement efforts. Some employees will behave or perform in ways that are in keeping with high standards and contribute in ways that are helpful and supportive of improvements and change efforts. Yet, some will not; to varying degrees. In particular, the behaviors, performance, and contributions below what is desired or needed to meet goals or achieve improvements or standards, can derail attempts at successful change efforts.

**What to do about it** - Frequent feedback – formal and informal – from leaders, combined with informal feedback from peers, are the vital tactics for elevating behaviors, performance, and contributions.

## #3 - Inability to diffuse the innovation to the critical masses

**What it is** - Individuals will adopt changes at their own pace, based on many factors. Successful and quick diffusion, or spread, of changes into the organization, depends on how successfully and quickly each individual adopts the change.

> **Adoption** is an individual process detailing the series of stages one undergoes from first hearing about an innovation, standard, or change to finally adopting it.

> **Diffusion** is defined as the process in which an innovation, standard, or change is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system. Diffusion signifies a group phenomenon, which suggests how an innovation, standard, or change spreads.

**What to do about it:**

**Campaigns or "Top of Mind" Tactics** - Campaigns are a very useful tactic to promote diffusion. Campaigns can be used by the team(s) at an organization-wide level and/or by individual leaders at a department-specific level. Campaigns are frequent, fun, creative reminders - such as providing visual cues on flyers or whiteboards - or standards-related recognition at daily huddles or scenarios at staff meetings. (See the separate SOLUTION on Campaigns).

**Validation-Feedback Loop - The "Validation-Feedback Loop"** is the practice of observing or inquiring about the standards – with a spirit of curiosity, not criticism. Then, in response to what is learned, providing specific feedback. Most frequently, this feedback would be provided in-the-moment, such as giving a compliment after observing a situation where standards were met, or improvement was noticed – or a call out, if the standard was not met or could be improved upon. This is often "the work of leaders" – however, all employees can learn to effectively utilize the validation-feedback loop (aka, peer-to-peer feedback or accountability).

**Keep going**. In the early stages of change, "negativity will scream at you and positivity will only whisper." This is normal human behavior. It doesn't mean that the change isn't going well or shouldn't proceed. Keep going (study and adjust, study and adjust ….). Most change efforts are short-changed or stopped before they reach their intended results or the people who need to adopt the change.

# #4 - Inability to transfer changes into operations

**What it is** – Most changes are appropriately spearheaded by a team of people that represent all the people that will have to make the change (e.g., use the new technology, achieve the new standards, follow the new protocol, etc.). Once the team has done the work of planning the change, then the implementation or execution of that planned change requires "a transfer of that change" from that small team to everyone in day-to-day operations.

That transfer, or handoff, from a conceptual idea, crafted in the minds of the team members, into the reality of integrating that into the current day-to-day operations change present challenges and be met with resistance. If that transfer does not go well, the change will not go well.

**What to do about it:**

After organization-wide changes are introduced though an organization-wide training and/or other activities, individual leaders can "localize" and "personalize" the meaning of these changes when they "grab the baton" in follow up by engaging employees in individual or group discussions at huddles, staff meeting, and/or during rounding sessions regarding how best to apply the standards in the specific department or job.

Adopt and adhere to an **Improvement Method**, such as Plan-Do-Study-Adjust, to create a common approach, tools, and language to guide change efforts, especially those beyond the planning phase (SEE PDSA Template).

As well, the tactics that promote diffusion (as described for barrier #3) also improve the ability to transfer changes from the team into day-to-day operations.

# #5 - The weight of "baggage"

**What it is** - Baggage is often personal. Baggage is a negative emotional reaction that an individual (or group of individuals) within the organization carry - sometimes for years – related to a past situation. This baggage can prevent them from moving forward with the organizational changes. Baggage is often used as their rationale for opting out of the changes that are expected of all.

**What to do about it:**

▶ Organize efforts for individuals to contemplate if they have baggage and consider how they can put it down. Individuals could consider these questions or actions: What baggage are you carrying? The longer you carry it, the heavier it gets. What's the impact of carrying it any longer? If you don't want to carry it for ten more years, why even carry it for one more day. Practice putting it down for just one day, and then one week. Put an effort in to recognizing when you are resisting change -- and then, contemplate what is leading to that resistance. That is baggage. Let go of it. Notice how much better it feels.

▶ Organization group activities to identify baggage and to "let it go" symbolically (e.g., shredding, burning, burying, launching balloons, etc.)

## #6 - Dysfunction at the top of the hierarchy

**What it is** - While many change take the efforts of everyone in the organization, what is specifically happening (or not happening) by those at the top of the organization's hierarchy can foster or inhibit the efforts towards achieving the very changes that were defined there.

These "dysfunctions" of senior leadership can be related to their failure to clearly define the organization's strategies and goals, failure to define, train to, and hold leaders accountable to defined leadership responsibilities, creating an overly burdensome and slow bureaucracy, behaviors that are not in keeping with standards, relationships that are troubled within the team, and/or lack of transparency.

**What to do about it:**

Efforts by the senior leadership team to evaluate their team functioning (recommended semi-annually) and ongoingly take actions to monitor and improve their functioning.

## #7 - Organizational change fatigue

**What it is** - A general sense of apathy or passive resignation towards organizational changes by individuals or teams.

**What to do about it:**

▶ Gain a deeper understanding of humans and change and utilize this understanding as changes are being planned and implemented.

▶ Proactively include efforts focus on increasing personal resiliency and wellbeing

▶ Communicate – actually, over communicate - with a simplistic and dependable approach. The unknown creates fear, which adds to resistance and change fatigue.

▶ Take an in-person approach, when possible, to meetings and trainings on changes. Human interaction is a key force in overcoming resistance and speed of change.