

Workflow: Planning, Measuring and Leading

Toolkit 1.5

Leading for Change and Improvement

target audience

Farm managers.

what it is

Leading and managing change is the intentional and planned approach to making a lasting change and improvement. People are often averse to change because it requires them to adapt and to modify habitual behaviour. Therefore, mapping out how to move successfully from how/where things are now, to how/where you want them to be, needs to be planned and managed.

why it is important

As a manager or owner of the business it is your role to initiate the continuous improvement (CI) journey and lead and manage the change required in the business to implement it successfully. This is often easier said than done. People are often resistant to change, even if it is for the better, and especially if they are not involved in decisions and are just expected to adapt. As a leader/manager, you are asking people to move from the comfort of what they know, challenge the status quo, and change their approach, including their knowledge, skills, behaviour, and attitude.

success factors

Leading and managing change should be intentional and planned, and it is important that the leaders and managers have some understanding on how to initiate and manage a big change successfully. In short:

- **Step 1:** Mobilise and Motivate – Initiate change and mobilise and motivate the organisation towards a new vision.
- **Step 2:** Implement a Number of Best Practices – Implement a number of best practices (focussed improvement, quality, maintenance, etc.) and manage the structured journey for each of the initiatives you decide have high priority. Initially, you would aim at achieving quick wins and celebrating them; that will motivate you and your team to maintain momentum and tackle those areas that will take more time and perseverance to show results.
- **Step 3:** Embed Best Practice Practices – Embed best practice practices, i.e., achieve a level where the old habits have truly been replaced permanently by best practice. This includes

establishing resilience, in both people and in your best practice processes, so that, even when the business is stressed and under pressure, best practice prevails.

execution steps

In his book "Leading Change", John Kotter proposes an eight stage change model. These models, of which there are many, have the advantage of making us think about how to lead an organisation on an improvement journey, and also emphasise that change will not just happen – it requires intentional leadership. Kotter's steps are:

1. **Establish a Sense of Urgency** – Define a clear reason/imperative for change, e.g., becoming and remaining competitive. People change for one of two reasons, either the current situation is intolerable, or the prize/benefit of making a change is powerful and motivating.
2. **Form a Strong Group of "Believers"** – Assemble a group of people with enough power to lead the change effort and form them into a group that will endorse, support, and drive the change and improvement. This could include broader stakeholders, such as CPA members, cooperative members, strategic partners etc. This may be complicated if there are many stakeholders, and some stakeholders may even feel threatened, but do not take a short cut; it's worth the upfront effort to get key players on board.
3. **Create a Vision** – Create a vision of the new future and develop a strategy to achieve that vision.
4. **Communicate the Vision** – Use every vehicle possible to communicate the new vision and plans to all employees, and lead by example.
5. **Empower others to Act on the Vision** – Change any system or structure that undermines the vision and remove any obstacle to change. Train employees and empower them to change.
6. **Plan for and Create Short-term Wins** – Plan for quick and visible performance improvements and ensure that they occur. Recognise and reward employees involved in these improvements.
7. **Consolidate Improvements and Produce Still More Change** – Change systems, structures and policies that do not fit the vision. Hire, promote and develop employees who can implement the vision. Reinvigorate the process however necessary.
8. **Institutionalise / Embed New Approaches** – Ensure that the changes become embedded in the organisation's culture, behaviour of employees and day-to-day activities and procedures.

assessment questions

Please Note: There is no minimum / maximum amount of questions you can add

1.	Have you articulated a powerful reason and motivation for change? Ideally this should be documented.
2.	Do you have a powerful enough group of people who fully agree on the reasons for change, the ultimate vision/goal, and the way forward, and what evidence do you have of this?

3.	Do you have a clear route map of the most important changes (focused improvement) you need to make? That is, not only the vision or ultimate objective, but also the steps to get there.
4.	Do you have a variety of formal communication channels and approaches, such as management talks, team talks, formal improvement initiatives per team or area of improvement, posters, visual measurement etc.?
5.	Are your supervisors and teams empowered to execute and implement the change initiatives? Evidence of this includes daily performance reviews, team talks, Gemba walks, and teams updating their own visual score boards.
6.	Do you have plans and evidence of success of "quick win" initiatives?
7.	Do you have a list of persistent problem areas which are preventing you from embedding the change, and plans to mitigate these issues?
8.	Do you have a record of improvement, evidenced by performance measurement?
9.	Do you have longer term improvement and change plans which may take more serious effort and resources?
10.	Are you doing external benchmarking as evidence that you are measuring your competitiveness, efficiency, and practice against your competitors?

resources

1.	Assessing change readiness guideline.
2.	<i>Kotter's 8-step Change Model</i> (Kotter's leading change process steps and key actions per step)
3.	Assessing change readiness guideline.