

6 WAYS FOR LEADERS TO CREATE ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

BY BILL HOGG

Helping leaders navigate organizational change is one of my favourite activities as a [leadership consultant](#). There is no doubt that forward thinking organizations understand that change will always be part of doing business, especially as new technologies and ways to do business emerge in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

As I have discussed in previous posts such as [How To Get Your Team To Buy Into Organizational Change](#) and [How Transformative Leaders Make Organizational Change Stick](#), leaders themselves need to be transformative in order to inspire higher performance that create customer-focused cultures and create long-term, profitable relationships with customers. However, the process of getting to this point is often a difficult one.

6 Ways to Create Transformative Organizational Change

Here are 6 ways you can create organizational change that will stick for the long term and be the transformational leader that you envision yourself being;

1. **Create clarity by linking change to business strategies:** The question “why” is perhaps one of the most powerful questions when it comes to organizational change. Expect to be asked why change is necessary, and be ready with an answer. Your team will be more open to change when it is tied directly to current business strategies and their personal success. Providing this type of clarity will put your team at ease, aid understanding, and help get them on board with the changes to come. From a business strategy perspective, it is also important to clarify the team responsible for leading change, and to define roles, structures, and decision making protocols.
2. **Be realistic and give time for change to take place:** Change will not happen overnight. It takes time for people to internalize change, accept it and then get onboard from a personal and professional perspective. It is also important to account for current projects and strategies and address how change will impact these initiatives.
3. **Address current organizational culture:** Any change made internally has a direct impact on organizational culture. How new directives impact culture needs to be part of the change conversation you have with your team. [Organizational culture](#) has a lot of power and impact on change, and you cannot afford to overlook this or you will have difficulty with employee engagement and getting people to buy into your new vision.
4. **Be willing to change yourself:** Real [transformative change](#) is possible when leaders are onboard. You can't fake it -- your team will see right through you, risking disengagement from the change process. You need to be open and be willing to change your mindset, behaviour and style to model change for the organization. Actions speak louder than words.

PEOPLE HAVE AN EMOTIONAL REACTION TO CHANGE, ESPECIALLY IF IT IMPACTS THEIR ROLE IN THE ORGANIZATION.

187 Willow Farm Lane
Aurora, Ontario L4G 6K5
(905) 841-3191
bill@billhogg.ca
www.billhogg.ca



BILL
HOGG
& ASSOCIATES

5. **Understand the human dynamics of the situation:** It is natural for people to have an emotional reaction to change, especially if it impacts their role in your organization. They need to know how any changes will affect them personally. This is why leaders need to be in tune with the emotional dynamics that come with proposed change. It is important that you craft your message and design your actions in a manner that minimizes negative emotional reactions, and have a plan in place to address issues when they arise -- and they will arise.
6. **Open and engaging communication:** If you keep things close to the vest, people may question your motives and reasons for change. Be transparent and communicate why change is necessary, addressing how it will positively impact your team and their ability to achieve their objectives. Open dialogues helps put people at ease, especially when change is on the horizon. Remember, even positive change is a threat to the status quo and can make people feel uneasy with their job and role in the organization.

How you approach change is just as important as what you want to change in your organization. If you want to be a [transformative leader](#) and create long lasting organizational change, you need to approach it in a way which minimizes negative reactions, is aligned with business strategies and corporate cultures, and is inclusive in nature.

Transformational Leadership Expert | Professional Speaker | Performance Excelsator™



Bill is the "just do it" guy who has walked in your shoes. Senior leaders at organizations like Anheuser-Busch InBev, The Bay, Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, Pita Pit, RBH, State Farm Insurance, Toronto International Film Festival and ServiceOntario hire Bill to navigate change and influence and inspire higher performing teams that deliver exceptional customer service, higher productivity and improve profits.

Bill provides world class executive consulting, dynamic keynote presentations and transformative workshops.

For additional information email bill@billhogg.ca or visit us online at www.billhogg.ca where you can sign up to receive an article like this each month or download [Bill's 1-sheet](#).

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