

Your team produced a great new design for the future.

**YOU
CAN'T WAIT**
to show your employees.
YOU KNOW
they'll give it their
FULL SUPPORT.

(Sure they will.)



Ever try to herd cats?

Employees won't automatically embrace even the best ideas. And even a great design is only as good as its implementation.

Even if you could change your business by yourself, at some point your employees would have to embrace your new way of doing things.

After all, they do the work. They come face to face with customers. They make or break your productivity and service goals.

That's why Quantum helps you guide your organization to the change at every step of their methodology.

There is no magic formula. But it can be done, if you commit to doing it.



It ain't easy!

THE ISSUE OF CHANGE

Design is the easy part of transformation projects. *Making the design a reality is the real challenge.* Many factors influence the success of these projects such as a well thought out methodology, selecting the right people, using wide scale participation, paying attention to all dimensions (especially the human one), effective project identification and planning, etc.

But the most difficult long-term aspect of implementation is gaining employees' endorsement of the proposed changes. The larger the scope of the project and degree of change called for, the more likely the organization will respond negatively. Organizations tend to have a built in immune response against new ideas, especially those that hit upon people's assumptions, values, beliefs and behaviors (i.e. culture) and their jobs.

Changing the status quo is like herding cats. There is no such thing as a direct path or a detailed roadmap or a ready answer. Employees are not placid animals that will just mindlessly follow a leader. Like cats, they are often independent, have ideas and opinions of their own, travel at their own pace, hold back and resist going any place they do not want to go.

QUANTUM'S SEVEN RULES FOR HERDING CATS

#1: Leaders and Champions Are Mandatory.

Powerful, effective leadership must be present to champion the change. Although most organizations assume that leadership has to come strictly from the top of the organization, we participated in a massive transformation led by an upper middle management team that survived five changes of senior management. That is unusual. But having a champion or champions is mandatory. Without a leader, the trail is unclear.

#2: Dissatisfaction with Today Must Be Present or Be Developed.

First you must help the "cats" understand why today's success will not last or why today's problems must be fixed. Employees need to understand what is happening externally within the marketplace, to understand the results of the organization relative to customers' needs, the threats to the organization from new or old competitors and why change is necessary.

This message needs to begin in the early stages of the project (formation and exploration in Quantum's methodology) and be reiterated many times throughout the project's life. Not surprisingly, achieving change in a successful organization is far more difficult than in a troubled one. Wet, cold, miserable cats are more likely to follow someone to another place than are comfortable, dry, fat cats.

#3: Present The Design As Your Vision For The Future.

Building on your messages of why today has to change, the new design must be communicated and championed as soon as practical after approval. It must be related to the issues of today and be sold as a vision of where the organization is going.

In our brochure on the Human Dimensions, we talk about the need for the participation of your organization in developing the design. We refer to it as a secret weapon. Your Design Team and many members of your Specialty Teams will become vocal champions of the approved design *if you approve the vast majority of their recommendations.*

They are best at explaining the details, why ideas were accepted or rejected, what the new design should do for employees and customers, etc. As a leader, your job is to echo, affirm and support their work.

#4: Plan the First Steps In Detail and the Rest in Broader Timeframes.

Employees have now heard the reasons for change and the view of the future. But how does the organization get there? A fair question especially if there are some changes that will not happen for a long period of time.

It is absolutely critical that you do not plunge right into implementation before you identify, plan and integrate the various projects that need to be managed in order to make the vision real.

By planning and integrating the projects in detail for the first year and in broader timeframes for the remaining time, you are now armed with the information the organization needs and you then can lay out the trail more clearly.

Most people are unable to understand and project long term changes. However, nearly all employees can understand what is going to happen in the next three, six, nine or twelve months when given detailed information from project plans, especially those which can achieve quick results or victories. When achieved, these quick victories reinforce design, show progress and give people a reason to believe that design can become reality.

#5: Implement, Monitor & Celebrate Success.

It is critical to monitor project implementation and to measure results in terms of your initial goals. If you were enhancing revenue, measure revenue and communicate the results.

If you were changing jobs and training people to work differently, communicate who has been trained, interview them for their opinions and measure results.

Whatever you were trying to accomplish, communicate the process as it is happening, its results as they occur and acknowledge any blips on the radar screen.

Where you have successes, celebrate them by whatever means highlights them to employees. Above all, **COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE AND CELEBRATE!!**

#6: Expect Detours.

More often than not, plans or some aspect of design will need to be adjusted due to changing conditions or issues such as a system not being ready on time or employees needing more training, etc.

The key to success is managing the implementation process to assure the approved design is not killed by a thousand small decisions. Instead, consciously modify design only as appropriate to avoid tearing apart the fabric of the entire design.

You must also tell the organization what happened and why a design change is necessary. For example, “the laboratory test we conducted showed that we are not ready to implement the new process without making X changes to the system.”

One of the most powerful actions that you can take is one of “mea culpa”; “we made a mistake, but we will correct it asap, so please bear with us” when it is appropriate. This does not negate the overall design, but acknowledges errors can occur along the way that will lead to course corrections.

So the herd of cats knows the general direction, but understands that the trail may take small detours now and then.

#7: Expect resistance.

About 20% of your organization will “sign-up” pretty quickly; 20% will resist to the end; and the rest need to be won over. Since resistance is natural, you need to have patience and allow people time to adjust, to accept and to move on.

However, there is a point at which all cats have to move in the same, general direction. They may be at the end of the herd, may meow the whole way, but sooner or later, they must move forward or be cut out of the herd. If you have followed rules 1- 6, this should be easier to do and will affect only a few cats.

Your job as trail boss is to help people cope and change. The following are strategies that help reduce resistance and build positive momentum:

- Follow a comprehensive, never-ending communications strategy and programs.
- Develop the appropriate training and education to prepare people for new tasks, processes, systems and environments.

- Redesign measures and reward systems to reinforce the desired focus, behaviors, skills and results.
- Define the desired cultural norms and model desired behaviors at the top of the organization.
- Align the interfaces with other parts of the organization (*see our brochure on Human Dimensions*).
- Acknowledge the difficulty of change.
- Provide change management, stress management or other appropriate personal training.
- At the right time, hold people accountable for implementing and adjusting to the changes.

SUMMARY

With these rules you can head your herd into the sunset, content that eventually the majority of the cats will get to the final destination under your guidance. It will not be a straight path or an easy one, but it will be worthwhile.

Quantum has worked on many successful change projects. *We have also seen projects fail in spite of good intentions and a great design.* The lessons we have learned as actual leaders and as consultants can be very helpful to you. As one client states it, “Quantum’s distinguishing difference from other consultants is first, that they have had real jobs and, second, they will walk away from assignments where they cannot contribute effectively.”

If Quantum facilitates the design and implementation stages of your project, most of the rules of “herding cats” will automatically be in place. If you already have a design and need additional help (especially in transition and implementation), we would be happy to speak with you.



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