PRACTICE NOTES

Centre for Disability Employment Research & Practice

We're In This Together

Change creates anxiety, particularly amongst clients and family. To make change easier, you need to focus on educating clients and family and help them develop strong advocacy skills. I'm guessing that you are changing because the whole system has changed.

That being the case, I'm pretty sure clients and family are looking for someone they can trust to inform, educate and support them.

Community

As you change your organisation, you will change your relationship with the community. It's important that you involve and inform the community. Better still, partner with the community and show them how you add value to the larger community.

Space

Not the stuff above us, but the stuff around you. Change is a marathon, not a sprint so give yourself, staff, clients and families time to breathe, take it all in and recoup and move on to that bright shiny future.

Provider Change Starts at the Top

It might sound like an obvious statement, but in reality we still see the mistakes of the past being repeated when it comes to organisational evolution. Notice, I didn't refer to it as organisational change, because frankly change in successful organisations is an evolution. Evolution learns from its past and evolves to meet the current operating environment.

Easy Right - Ah No!

You had better have a clear vision and you better get everyone on the bus. A good place to start is to remove any anxiety within staff and clients about where we are going. One very good CEO we know opened his door to everyone (one at a time) to come through and talk about their fears and future.

Change will inevitably mean that some staff will leave to

CDERP

Throw Out Your Dead

Policies that is!

Often when organisations make a break for it and decide to invest in change, they create new settings and policies to enable change. Good in theory, but the reality is that organisations fail because they start in the wrong place.

Who hasn't worked for an organisation that has a 700 page SOP that new staff are required to read in their first week and sign off acknowledging that they understand them.

That should be your first clue and is certainly a marker for failure. If your current systems need to evolve to meet a new market of client reality, what makes you think that you can achieve that by keeping the old policies and practices?

Start by doing this; get a blank sheet of paper and write "page One" on it.

Second, write down what it is you are trying to change or direction that you want to go.

Third, What existing policies support that change? Keep those.

Fourth, See where I'm going with this?

pursue other employment opportunities. That's ok and it's part of getting the right people on the bus, but more importantly getting the wrong people off the bus. Good people will leave, but equally people who don't share your vision will leave. It's an opportunity for renewal, so grasp it and move forward.

Time to train the staff in your new ways!

And this is were it goes wrong. Too many times I've seen organisations train their staff and then let them at it, only to see the whole thing fall in a hole. That's when I get phone calls - we spent the money, trained the staff and nothing changed! Notice that heading on the left of this page? If you didn't go there, then that was your first mistake.

Ok, so how do we go there and what happened to my enthusiastic staff? Firstly, it's not uncommon for us to talk to the staff during our ongoing support and discover that their bosses still want them to do their old job plus the new stuff. I've actually had staff explode over that very situation and leave with management wondering why they got angry and left.

A good starting point is to use Value Stream Mapping (VSM) to create a present state map so that you actually know what goes on day to day. We're throwing out the dead!