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point of VIEW

SUCCESSFULLY USING TRAINING AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS TO IMPLEMENT CHANGE

BUSINESS CONSULTANTS | DEEP TECHNOLOGISTS

Changes that affect a financial institution can come from a number of sources. Some changes are driven by the institution's own desire to grow, evolve or become more efficient, while other changes are driven by forces beyond the institution's control, such as a change in regulations or new legal requirements.

Prior to introducing any change to an organization, several external and internal factors need to be taken into consideration.

> *"Training and internal communications – and how to design and institute an efficient, yet comprehensive program to successfully implement change – will be a focus of this paper."*

THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

Externally, institutions should be concerned with:

1. How the change will impact customer experience;
2. How to educate customers about the change; and
3. How to ensure that there is no negative impact to the institution's brand and reputation.

Internally, institutions should focus on:

1. Educating resources;
2. Providing reference materials and support when resources have questions;
3. Ensuring that the institution's resources are being provided with consistent messaging to be delivered to the customers; and
4. Minimizing the impact the change has on business, to whatever extent possible.

Creating an Efficient Yet Comprehensive Training and Communications Program

While external and internal factors are both critical to the success of any change implementation, they should be tackled independently to mitigate complexity, ensure proper execution, and increase the likelihood of success.

To that end, the focus of the following sections will be on key internal factors – training and internal communications – and how to design and institute an efficient, yet comprehensive program to successfully implement change.

The Challenge

How do you build a training and communications program to ensure that everyone receives the appropriate information and consistent messaging, while limiting the impact to the business line(s) and customer?

Pairing training and Communications

Training and internal communications should go hand in hand. While training provides a platform to disseminate foundational knowledge to all the necessary resources, an effective internal communication structure serves as a channel to reinforce the new information and provide sustainable, ongoing support long after the training is complete.

Supplementing broad training that educates and communicates the necessary change required with more focused training to key resources or areas, both reinforces and inculcates the changes into the organization.

The goal is to instill information and messaging through persistent and targeted instruction.

Training Program

It is advantageous to think of training as a pyramid made up of different layers or separate building blocks.

LAYER 1 - BROAD LEVEL TRAINING

The broadest training for the largest audience sits at the bottom of the pyramid.

This training should be a general exposure at a level where everyone can comprehend the material, but it should still call-out specific take-away lessons of importance.

For example, if the training is being provided due to regulatory requirements, ensure that all information required for everyone to know (e.g., the definition of Customer Due Diligence) is contained in this initial layer or block of training.

Providing a few broad examples and a representative case study or two is also advantageous and increases the retention of the material. Please keep in mind that additional changes may arise, or there may be turnover of staff. As such, it is also beneficial to provide "refreshers" on pertinent and foundational topics.

LAYER 2 - FOCUSED TRAINING

The second layer of training should be rolled out to key roles and rely more heavily on additional examples and more specific, representative case studies.

Focused training should be customized for specific lines of business (LOBs), especially if similar trainings are being rolled out enterprise-wide. The examples used should be more focused and relatable to the appropriate audience. This layer of training should also be as interactive as possible, utilizing various case study scenarios and live examples.

> *"The second level of training, or the Focused Level of training, should consist mostly of real world examples and/ or case studies. Training that is conducted in a more practical manner has a higher retention rate and is more engaging for the audience."*

In lieu of asking people to read through material and regurgitate the content at the end of a training session to pass a test, the use of an interactive program that asks the training audience to answer questions as they progress, or create simple visual process diagrams by moving certain illustrations into their proper place or order, will ensure maximum retention and understanding.

It is necessary to create as many layers of this kind of training as needed to ensure that the entire audience is engaged and receives the necessary training. It is also important to keep in mind that the material needs to be LOB-specific so that it is engaging to the audience and therefore an efficient use of time.

Engagement and retention is higher when people take multiple, short windows of training that are specific to their situation and their roles, rather than asking participants to take one long window of training that contains information that isn't pertinent to their function.

LAYER 3 - PROCESS AND PROCEDURE-SPECIFIC TRAINING

No matter how many sub-layers there are in the second level of training, the final layer of training is typically provided to the smallest number of people and should be based entirely on actual examples and case studies.

The purpose of this layer is to ensure the appropriate resources know exactly what processes and procedures to follow to fulfill their role in any given scenario.

Ultimately, not all resources need the same level of training. By creating multiple layers of training materials, the overall training program can be arranged to create unique sets of materials for different groups of resources. This way, people are not wasting time learning and being tested on knowledge they do not need, but instead can focus their time and energy on the competencies needed to perform their functions.

When training is created in such a way, it can be delivered in person, via e-learning platforms, or by leveraging a combination of the two.

Communication Plan

A layered training approach should be incorporated with an overall communication plan. While this approach is not a pyramid-like training, it does involve multiple layers of people and communication channels to ensure the greatest number of touch points and that everyone is receiving consistent messaging.

The Tone From the Top is a key driver to initiating conversation about any change that is occurring and why the required change is important.

When a communication is sent from senior executives, people are more likely to pay attention, take the message seriously, and comply with the change. Tone From the Top communication also shows commitment from the executives to the institution and its people.

While the Tone From the Top message is used to initiate the conversation about change, the feedback loop is essential to ensure that messaging is received, questions are answered, and updates flow through to resources in an efficient manner.

> *"The importance and value of a cohesive communications plan can easily be overlooked. Given the culture of how people communicate today, messages have to be delivered from multiple directions, across multiple platforms, and multiple times to ensure that the information is retained"*

The feedback loop provides an avenue for the front lines to provide feedback regarding the change, and potentially raise other points or issues that had not previously been considered. Using this feedback to provide tailored messaging will also increase its retention rate.

The feedback loop should be constructed using a multi-channel approach. While emails have come to be the main form of communication with large groups of people, consider setting up weekly group calls or meetings, online forums, or even reaching out directly to single members of each team so that questions or concerns can be raised and addressed.

Lastly, using the feedback loop, Trickle-Up Messaging should also be leveraged. Junior-level resources are more likely to read senior executive communications and attend organized calls to gather information. It is important that these resources are empowered to share what they learn with their team members and superiors.

Not only does this provide a good opportunity for the junior resources to gain visibility, but they can also be leveraged for additional dialogue and feedback, further facilitating the feedback loop and potentially raising new ideas not previously considered.

Trickle-Up Messaging can also come from customers. As the change is implemented and the front lines continue to work with their customers, the customer voice will ultimately make its way back into the feedback loop. Incorporating the voice of the customer allows for a better understanding of how the change has affected the customer, and if adjustments are needed to improve customer experience.

SCENARIO: A Recent Example of Effectively Paired Training and Communications Plans

A new regulation was published by a U.S. regulatory body that requires specific information to be collected from the client. In order to ensure compliance with the new regulation, Bank ABC decided to roll out enterprise-wide training, using an e-learning system. The training consisted of four training courses in total.

The initial course was a 30-minute broad training course that went out to the appropriate resources across all lines of business.

A second course was specific to the line of business and lasted approximately 20 minutes. Fewer resources were required to take the secondary course as the focus was on processes and procedures.

The third training course was also line of business-specific and lasted approximately 30 minutes. This course contained more examples and case studies. Because of its specificity, this course was rolled out to resources that were responsible for quality control / checking the information gathered by the front lines from the clients.

The fourth and final training course focused on validating the data obtained by the LOBs and exercises demonstrating how to use other resources to confirm information.

To accompany the rollout of this multi-layered training, Bank ABC also created and published a training library. This library contained the following:

- Case studies
- Videos showing examples of how to collect the necessary information
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Quick Reference Guides
- Samples of complete documents to serve as accurate examples
- Decision trees
- Talking points for interacting with customers
- Links to external sites that contained additional information on the new regulation
- An open forum for questions

Biweekly calls were also organized with a group of "champions" to represent each relevant team. These calls were scheduled for 15 minutes, every other Friday and used as a way to disseminate updated information and allow for questions to be brought up to the group.

By using these two programs together, Bank ABC successfully trained more than 1,500 people and achieved compliance with the regulatory change.

Conclusion

A layered approach to training and internal communications is key to successful change implementation. Layered training materials allow for a more focused and efficient use of time for the training audience, and a layered approach to communications allows for the greatest number of touch points while emphasizing the importance of the change.

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An uncommon blend of business savvy
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achieve sustainable success.