

# MANAGING CHANGE IN AN ORGANIZATION

Any organization undergoing transition is in the process of managing change. To manage change effectively, the organization's leaders should look forward and ask themselves important questions, including:

1. **Goals:** What results are we trying to achieve? What does success look like for us? How will we achieve them?
2. **Governance:** Who makes decisions, and at what levels of the organization? What decisions should the Board of Directors make? What decisions should the chief executive and the staff make?
3. **Capabilities:** What capabilities do we need to be successful in achieving our goals?
4. **Structure:** How should we structure ourselves to optimize our effectiveness?
5. **Culture:** What kind of culture do we want? What values do we want to guide our behavior?
6. **Feedback:** How do we measure our performance? How can we design "learning loops" so that the right people have the right information at the right time?
7. **Continuous improvement:** How can we best assure that we are continuously improving the services and products we deliver?

A skilled outside consultant can be invaluable in helping an organization navigate change and address these different questions. The consultant can provide insights into where the organization is currently – and where it needs to evolve – in order to operate at a higher level. An outside consultant can also provide immense value by guiding the process and providing the perspective to focus the organization on the right things in the right sequence – so that the process of change occurs in a careful, thoughtful way – and to keep the process moving.

## Three Principles of our Change Management Model

When people ask me to describe our change management model at LRI, I tell them it boils down to three principles.

### 1: Focus on the First Five Percent

I have written before about the "First Five Percent." That's my approach to change management that says the quality of the first five percent determines what happens in the rest of the process.

What you do to gather champions, set expectations, how extensively you engage stakeholders, and how well you paint a picture for people of the decision-making process will go a long way toward guaranteeing a successful outcome.

Let me emphasize the importance of engaging many people early on – those who will be affected by the decision and those whose expertise can help. Even when ideological stances are strong, early engagement is always the better approach (as opposed to shutting people out of the process).

## 2: Focus on Defining the Root Problem

Solutions don't matter unless you define the problem correctly. We emphasize a systems approach. Too often people say things like: "We need better products," or "we need more sales, or "staff isn't working hard enough," without looking at the reasons why. Very often, the answer lies in looking in the mirror – at what you're doing or not doing. One systems approach is to look at the organization's core values – the things essential for its success. You can make tough decisions look easy if you ground them in well-understood core values.

## 3: Find a Good Guide

An experienced guide can set the tone, keep an open mind, identify key issues, articulate points of agreement, and keep things moving. A guide should be able to offer models and examples from other organizations. The courage to handle uncertainty and adversity is also important, along with a healthy sense of humor. Good, experienced guides are hard to find. But they are absolutely essential to our model.

## About Our Firm

Leading Resources Inc. (LRI) was founded in 1998 in California and is dedicated to developing leaders and leading organizations. LRI has grown steadily since its founding and serves clients in California, across the United States, and around the world. LRI's practice areas include:

- [Strategic Planning](#): giving voice to vision, shaping priorities, and defining performance measures;
- [Leadership Development](#): increasing leadership skills through individual and team assessment, training, and coaching;
- [Performance Management](#): enabling people to utilize information to improve performance;
- [Governance Development](#): facilitating the adoption of best governance practices and developing clear decision-making roles and responsibilities.

We work with Boards of Directors, executives, and management teams to achieve higher levels of performance by:

- Facilitating strategic planning processes to assure that leaders share a common vision of where the organization is going and what results it intends to achieve.
- Helping to clarify what the Board and executive staff need to do to achieve those results.
- Developing feedback loops so that performance measures are used at all levels to help people make decisions.
- Coaching Boards of Directors and leaders in the skills of effective governance, decision making, leadership, and management.
- Assuring that roles and responsibilities are clarified at each level.

To learn more about our services, call 1-800-598-7662 or [Contact Us Online](#).