



IN THIS EDITION

Vol 2 · No 1 · FEBRUARY 2010 EDITION

Drop the status quo	1
Our next publication	2

EDITORIAL

In this very first issue of the year, I want to take this opportunity to wish you an excellent 2010 with plenty of opportunities and new growth at all levels.

And this New Year will present its share of tough challenges, that's for sure. However, the context seems to be changing since we're noticing some signs of recovery that favour a different approach to achieving business objectives. To be better prepared to rise to the organizational challenges that we'll be facing, our first e-newsletter in 2010 addresses change—a constant reality that must be faced on an everyday basis. Being able to adapt to change and managing change are key to implementing your corporate strategy.

Because we want to keep you informed about as many topics as possible, we'll be publishing five e-newsletters in 2010 with the next issues scheduled for April, June, September, and November.

We hope these e-newsletters will stimulate your thinking and provide support for your daily operations.

I wish you a pleasant read and invite you to come and see us!

Isabelle Côté, President

DROP THE STATUS QUO

The business world is constantly evolving: The arrival of a new competitor or a change in customer consumption can happen at any time, radically impacting your company's reality. Even if this reality is different from one industry or company to the next, some major trends are specifically linked to an era or a country. We'll therefore discuss the issue of change in Québec business from different angles: How can today's changes be explained; if change is so important, why is it so difficult to bring it about; and finally, how to successfully introduce change within an organization.

How can Today's Changes be Explained?

Countless change factors can explain current issues, but some are more significant, common or recurrent. We'll discuss the most relevant ones, since we can't cover them all.

- **Demographic Movements:** The ageing population—at the heart of many discussions in Québec—is bringing about major changes in the operations of many companies. Let's consider labour shortages, the new category of older workers, and the growing popularity of semi-retired workers to name but a few. Demographic changes also include characteristics specific to the new generations of workers that employers must deal with: The importance of work/life balance, higher education, etc. Demographic movements are a source of change and concern absolutely all employers. **Do some of these elements ring a bell? Certainly, because they're the most significant and most common change factor.**
- **Difficulty in Differentiating One's Company and Tougher Competition:** In spite of the fact that we're evolving in a highly technological environment and maybe because technology has often made life easier for us, we try to avoid routine or simple tasks that a computer can do. We devote our efforts on **activities that add value** and act as a differentiator. The same can be said for companies that—if they want to stand out in their market—must convince their customers that their expertise goes a lot further than what technology can do. **We sell more and more experiences and**

ideas than analyses and software. It therefore represents an important change for any company's positioning and way of doing things.

- **The Importance of Technology:** With efforts devoted to activities that help us stand out, systems must be able to do everything—from routine and simple tasks to data processing. **It is therefore important for companies to be perceived as technological leaders** and ensure that they are constantly looking for new solutions to improve technologies currently in place.
- **Customer Relations:** Since we must sell experience, trust, or satisfaction, customer satisfaction becomes all-important and can determine the success or failure of companies. Today, **the focus is on the trust that customers have in companies and on the long-term relationships that can thus develop—in short, customer relationships.** It is a major step forward: Depending on the industry or geographic market, bad customer experiences can even lead to legal proceedings. For example, companies are vulnerable to class actions if they don't meet their obligations or provide a product or service that doesn't fulfil their promise.

If the change is so important, why is it so hard to introduce? Even if we're faced more than ever with changes from all quarters, some are easier to adapt to or impose. Three main causes are at the heart of this resistance to change:

- **Individual causes:** Changes to employees points of reference that make them question their job security if expectations towards employees' have been largely modified (e.g. employees responsibilities have changed so much that they wonder if they will be able to take up the challenge or if their new duties will give them satisfaction);
- **Collective causes:** When changes don't match corporate values (i.e. the group identity is changed);
- **Organizational causes:** Changes to work conditions or to the organizational structure; employees have the impression that they have changed employer.

In order to constantly innovate and input new ideas and ways of doing things, you should introduce these philosophies and practices in your workplace so that they become the foundation for your corporate culture.



And so, without there being a change management project, it is critical to facilitate constant communications, brainstorming sessions, and pioneering initiatives to change the status quo and ensure the mobility of your resources who will be better equipped to face future changes that you will need to make.

Therefore, it is important to always **align changes on the corporate culture and structure** to overcome resistance to change that stem from collective or organizational causes.

So, how do you successfully introduce change within your organization? At all costs, you must resolve critical issues and overcome opposition linked to individual causes that often arise during periods of uncertainty or adaptation.

Here are some tips on how to bring about change within your organization and thus overcome most of the resistance that opposes change:

- **Rally employees; get them to buy-in:** Discuss upcoming changes, specifically the reasons behind these changes and their importance for the company's future. If employees understand the validity of these changes, they will be more receptive. This is possible by building up the trust in employees and their abilities;
- **Encourage group collaboration to extend mutual influence:** If just one person is convinced of the benefits of a project, s/he will rally other persons to her/his point of view;
- **Communicate throughout the project's phases:** You can communicate at all levels, on an individual or group basis, with all resources who face change. The key to success is constant communication throughout the project to ensure the sharing of mistakes and successes while following the group's progress. Communication must be established from the outset to set up the winning conditions to achieve objectives.

Careful though, these simple procedures shouldn't just be followed once the change management project is underway. In fact, companies need to be in constant evolution, since the status quo is their worst enemy. In order to constantly innovate and input new ideas and ways of doing things, you should introduce these philosophies and practices in your workplace so that they become the foundation for your corporate culture. And so, without there being a change management project, it is critical to facilitate constant communications, brainstorming sessions, and pioneering initiatives to change the status quo and ensure the mobility of

your resources who will be better equipped to face future changes that you will need to make.

On this point, **SSA offers several solutions, including an Idea Management Program** so that employees feel more involved in the constant innovation process of your organization and, when changes need to be introduced, they will be more receptive if they were the ones who came up with the idea. **SSA can provide training for the implementation of such a program, as well as guide you through the different steps during its deployment and ongoing management.**

Moreover, **our new tool for operational resiliency can help you assess your team's ability to quickly and efficiently adapt to change.** Once your resiliency rating is determined, you'll receive our experts' advice. We can then help you prioritize improvement initiatives, rally your team and build your customer relations. **Visit our website to find out your resiliency rating.**

THE TEAM INFO-SOLUTIONS



GESTION DU CHANGEMENT
VALORISATION DES ÉQUIPES

500 Place d'Armes
Suite 2900
Montreal, QC
H2Y 2W2

514.288.6388

www.ssasolutions.com

info@ssasolutions.com

OUR NEXT E-NEWSLETTER: A New Generation of Workers... with Experience

In our next e-newsletter, we'll talk about an increasingly popular topic in Québec: Older workers who remain longer on the job market or come back to it.

How to interact with this new category of workers? What challenges do they represent for your company? How to facilitate their return to the job market and how can your company benefit from their experience and expertise?

These are issues that you'll probably be faced with over the next few years and therefore concern you directly.