

Organizational Change & Agility: Key Considerations

“Change or Die” proclaimed Jack Welch, the former CEO of General Electric. Never has that expression been truer than today, amid a pandemic that, for some, has presented incredible challenges, and for others has led to amazing opportunities. This brief article lists **six key factors** (*Figure 1*) in establishing the baseline **to create and amplify meaningful change in the organization**.

Fig 1. Organizational Change & Agility: Key Considerations



1. Embrace Agility — While Respecting Due Diligence.

There is a lot of momentum and buzz around being agile in today’s turbulent business world. However, that doesn’t mean it should be at the expense of performing due diligence where necessary. Agile is typically associated with the technology sector, and in our current landscape, it has become increasingly more imperative that the entire organization is agile and

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adaptable. Put a different way, **the organization needs to become more efficient at change management**. Similarly, respect company values, legal and ethical requirements, and client/customer relationships while flexing your change muscles more adeptly.

Ask: “Where does my team, division or organization need to flex more quickly – and what risks need to be mitigated in the environments around us as we change?”

2. Engage with your Employees.

Now, more than ever, it is critical to understand what your employee base needs from the organization in terms of their development. Organizations that adopt a **“Person First, Employee Second”** mantra will win the war for talent. Compassion, listening sessions, and action plans that involve employees will promote a sense of belonging, unity, and collaboration that enables employees to feel valued, that their voices are heard, and ultimately will help the organization retain its best talent.

Begin: by reviewing your organization’s development planning process and forms. Do your development plans support the person first – and then the employee’s or organization’s learning needs?

3. Develop Organizational Resilience.

We often talk about resilience as a personal trait, and rightly so. Training your employees to be resilient is a positive move to promote awareness and develop skills that empower the employee to overcome obstacles in their careers. But what about the organization’s resilience? Which parts of your organization bounce back quickly and which seem to be stagnant? Is Organizational Resilience even being discussed amongst the leaders?

Being intentional about building resilience enables the organization to endure and persevere through the most challenging issues, not only now, but in the future. Also, it will prepare the organization to capitalize on opportunities as they arise.

Action: Collaborate with your divisional leadership team to begin discussing pockets of Resilience and Resistance. Build a plan to strengthen resilience and mitigate resistance.

Competitive businesses are under increasing pressure to transform rapidly and to stay relevant in our fast-paced, technology-rich world.

This means making big bets on new technologies and undertaking transformational efforts to streamline processes and unlock efficiencies. In the excitement, and sometimes chaos, of these efforts, organizations underestimate the impacts on people, one of the biggest assets for any business.

That’s where Organizational Effectiveness (OE) comes in!

Unify Organizational Effectiveness Practice (OE) is about optimizing the potential of [people](#).

We shape the strategy and tools to help organizations realize change, partnering with leaders and change agents across the organization to align structures, processes, and teams to meet - and even surpass - pressing strategic business objectives.

We utilize [data](#) to achieve people-centric results.

4. Boost Organizational Culture.

Organizations that **pay attention to their employees**, those that really lean in and engage with them, will strengthen their work culture while increasing engagement and retention, especially with their critical talent.

Peter Drucker long ago said “Culture eats strategy for breakfast” implying that culture is the secret sauce that keeps employees motivated and clients happy.

Ask: What are the top three things your organization can do right now to boost morale and engagement? What should you STOP doing?

5. Encourage Innovation.

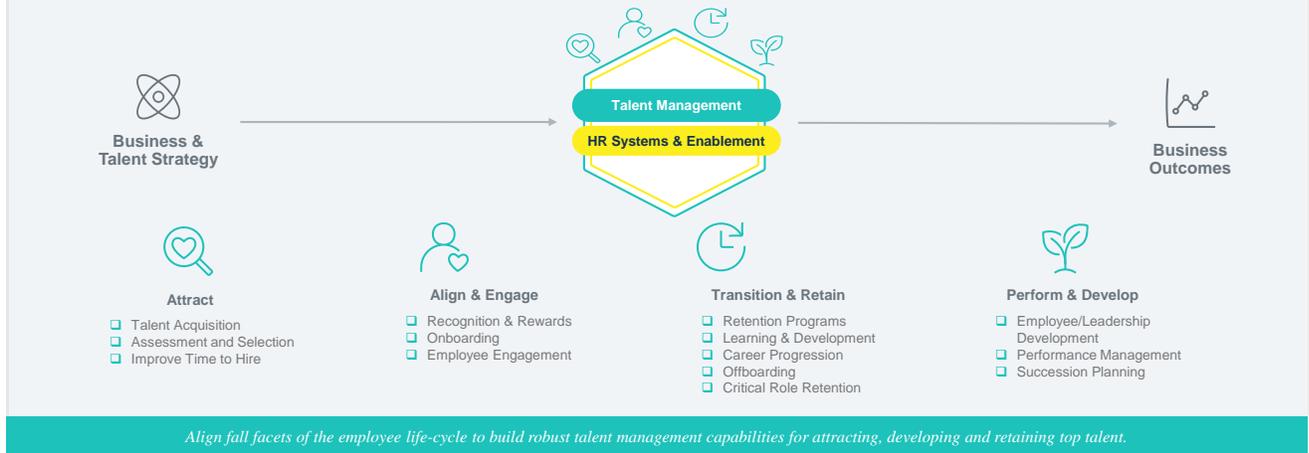
In times of crisis, there is sometimes no alternative to be creative in solving problems. In a recent Harvard Business Review study, examples of Innovation were cited of soldiers in World War II creating homemade patches to repair planes and jeeps; of astronauts on Apollo 13 devising ingenious solutions to repair damaged parts to their space module; and of a US-based fast-food chain developing nearly a dozen changes to its drive-through process to enhance safety and efficiency. All these examples were borne out of necessity but can also be **cultivated with intentional direction and encouragement**.

Action: What has your organization done recently to breed Innovation? Do leadership behaviors enable and support Innovation? Or stifle it?

6. Enablement – Align Talent Strategy, Culture, and Talent Management Systems.

Unify Consulting’s Organizational Effectiveness experts use probing questions to **creatively and collaboratively solve our client’s Talent challenges**. We help leaders align business and people strategies to co-create an actionable and measurable Talent Strategy that drives results and engagement. We’ve solved people and business challenges that plague all sizes and types of businesses – and position client’s People Teams to deliver results. **Unify’s strategy is culture**. We’re here to help you align and position your talent to achieve today’s more challenging business problems.

Fig 2. Aligning Talent Strategy and Talent Management Systems



In summary, for an organization to flourish in challenging times, or indeed times of great opportunity, it is **prudent to focus on those areas that provide agility** in the face of seemingly unsurmountable obstacles, and engage with employees to develop, and promote a resilient organization that can weather any storm. Moreover, the organization can **bolster its culture** by taking measures that promote awareness and action to ensure the durability of its employees by empowering them to be creative and innovative in addressing problems as they arise.

Sources:

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