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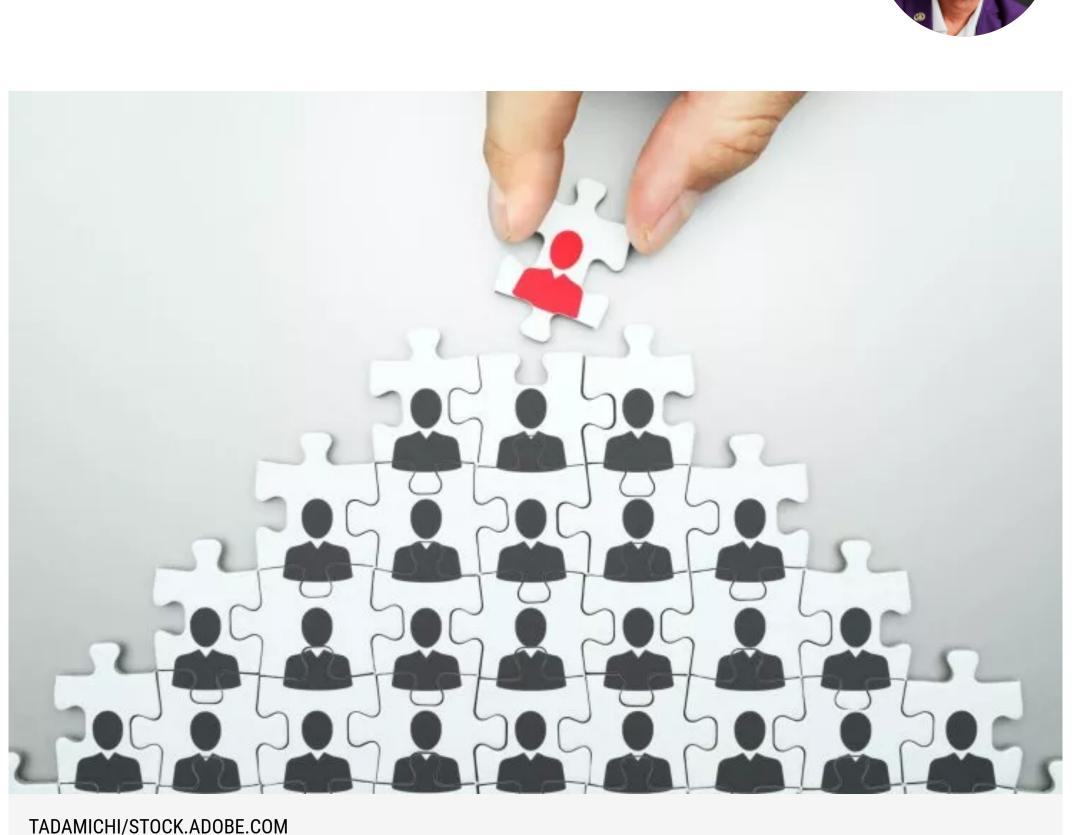


## **EXPERTS**

# Four Things To Consider When Implementing Organizational Change

Once issues and potential solutions are identified, a change readiness assessment is a key element in scoping potential pitfalls prior to implementation.

**GREG HILL**, *FOUNDER, RRS* ON 3/28/23 AT 10:36 AM EDT





#### EXPERTS



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he clock strikes midnight. Confetti rains down as the band triumphantly breaks into their traditional rendition of Auld Lang Syne. Optimism for the upcoming year is projected by the corporate revelers; however, nagging concerns about workplace change lurk in the dark closets of their minds. The constant drastic swing from one strategy to the next has created change fatigue.

Despite the stellar performance metrics from the previous year, rumors of a sweeping change within the organization have spread amongst team members far and wide. New management brings with it new ideas, and new strategies can breed fear among stakeholders. Their anxiety is palpable, and their productivity reflects it. The thought

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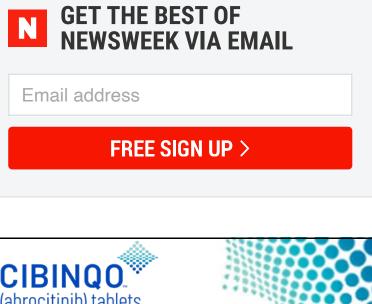
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Trump Would Love an Indictment BY JEFF CHARLES

echoes through their minds: How will corporate changes impact me (and potentially my family) this time?

Fresh from the celebratory hangover, wholesale changes are dispassionately announced by upper management in a predictable maneuver to placate an insatiable board of directors and shareholders. A smoothly performing, previously successful organization has been dramatically changed in the name of progress and job justification for decision makers. The pendulum of change has swung.



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Much of the fear stems from being left in the dark, isolated from input but bearing the brunt of the impact of change. As leaders, it is critical that our stakeholders — especially our employees — are an active part of the change process from its inception.

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The first step in change management starts at the baseline. Where are we and where do we want to be in the future? Employees of all levels in the chain of command should offer valuable input into this conversation. Many with long tenure can speak to "been there, done that '' initiatives that have failed in the past that needn't be revisited. Lower-level employees are more inclined to look for incremental solutions rather than costly sweeping overhauls of which executives may be unaware. Ultimately, transparency and participation must be a part of the change management methodology.

Once issues and potential solutions are identified, a change readiness assessment is a key element in scoping potential pitfalls prior to implementation. Questions that should be addressed: Is this change necessary? Is this change incremental? Will the qualitative disadvantages of soft issues outweigh the potential quantitative benefits? Are we hiring staff positions based on quick, short-term needs as opposed to positioning for long-term strategic growth? Unless these questions can be answered affirmatively, sponsors of change must step back and reevaluate.



When it is decided that adjustments must be implemented, here are a few things to bear in mind:

• A positive culture based on trust must come first and foremost. Acceptance should follow if the members of the organization see and understand the advantages for themselves personally as well as the company.

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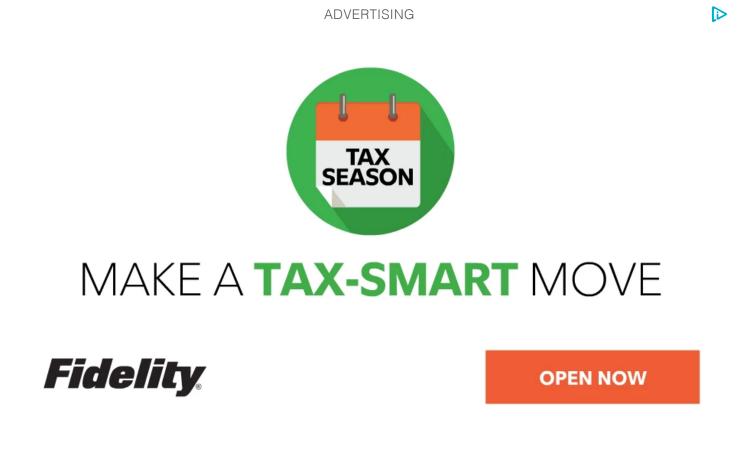
• Be transparent in your communications during the entire process. Avoid blindsiding employees, especially if it involves a potential layoff or role elimination. Others in the organization are observing and will likely view job security as shaky/based on the perceived whims of upper management and not performance-based. Your essential employees may begin updating their resumes and searching job sites if their livelihoods

feel threatened.

• When implementing change that requires personnel re-alignment or downsizing, concentrate on rewarding talent, performance and loyalty. Again, your employees are watching closely. If they see mediocrity rewarded and excellence overlooked, disenfranchisement could soon follow.

• Develop and implement a system to measure realistic effectiveness from the outset. Analyzing not only data but consistently eliciting shareholder feedback is fundamental not only for strategic planning but for staff morale and buy-in as well. This should be evaluated at appropriate intervals moving forward. All too often, changes are abandoned without consideration of incremental benchmarks built into the strategy.

Change in an ever-evolving business world is not only essential but expected. Companies that understand and factor in the long-term effects of the organization's culture and attitude can ultimately navigate the necessary change successfully. By reducing the swing of the pendulum, veteran employees can enjoy a synergetic relationship while helping the company grow.



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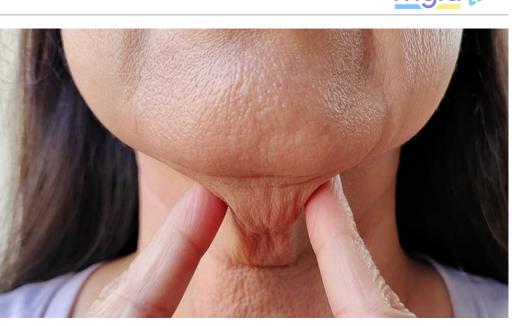
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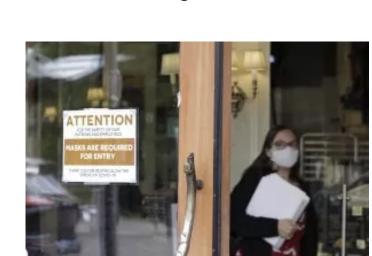
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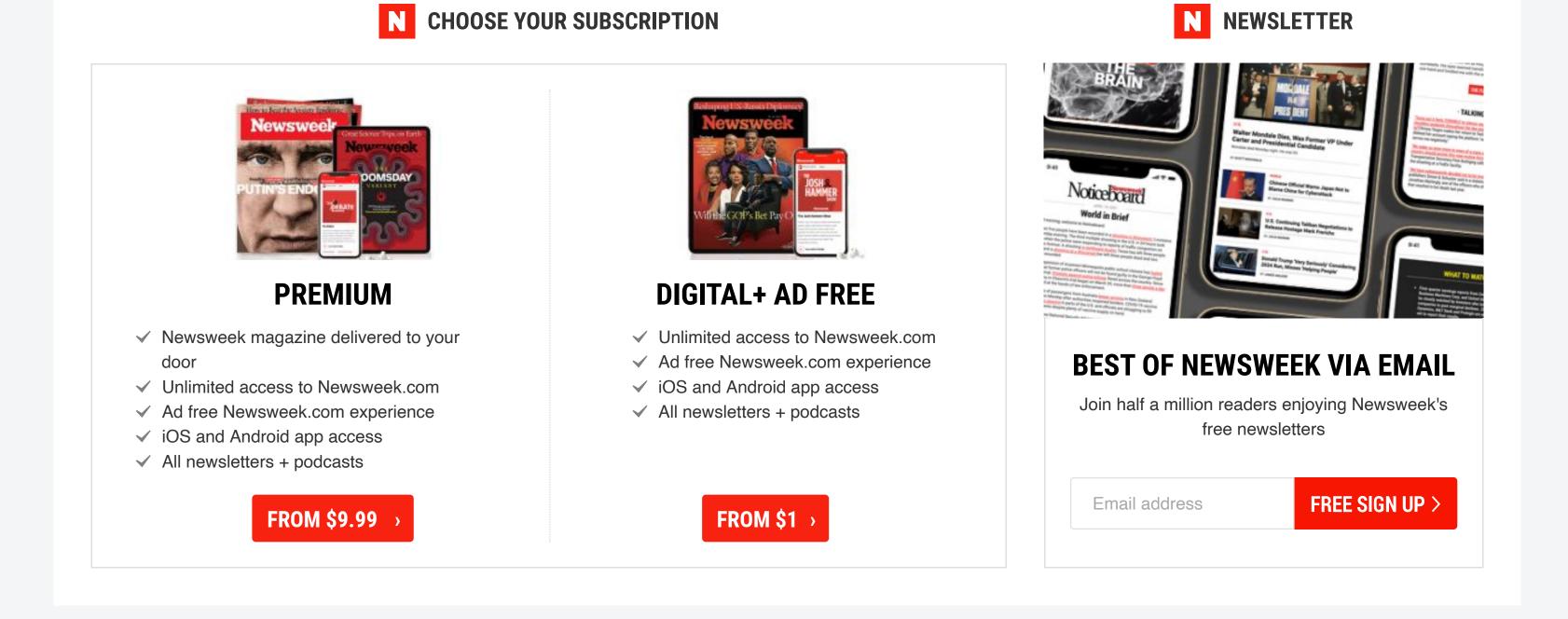
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