Lessons Learned during a Large Change Project

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Lesson 1: create sense of urgency

In order to change, it is key to create a sense of urgency.

Explain why we need to change. What are the threads? What can happen if we do not change?

Have an honest discussion!
Our problem: losing business

We lose business (online survey research market), because our customers consider us too expensive.

It is difficult to explain the differences in quality sufficiently to justify the price difference.
Scope and goal of the project

- Externally financed new assignments
- Market research of people or households
- Online surveys (CAWI) with/out paper surveys (PAPI)
- No face-to-face (CAPI), nor by phone interviewing (CATI)

GOAL: halve quotation

*Covering our costs. Offering a base quality.*

*Additional quality is on request*
Lesson 2: see, feel, change

Another lesson of John Kotter: 

**see, feel, change**

throughout the change process

Some possibilities:

- Show the current process
- Measure the current performance
- Invite customer to explain the problem
- Show impact of solutions implemented
Looking for root causes (analysis workshop)

End-to-end process is shown on 11 Ao-prints!

Requires a lot of effort
Requires a lot of money
Requires a lot of rework

TIMWOODS (waste)
Looking for solutions (improvements workshop)
Lesson 3: standardization is key

Standards allow to detect deviations quickly.

As Toyota workers say, standardized work helps identify problems: "this is not up to standard, so I have a problem"

Continuous improvement is to work from a standard, experiment, measure results, and modify the standard if successful.
Intake and performance (clear split)
Core team with Shared Services

Shared Service

- Core team
  - Statistical analyses
  - Draw sample and weigh response
  - Build survey
  - Manage survey
  - Print & mail
  - Digitalize surveys
  - Monitoring and analyses
  - Communication
  - Typing
  - Statistical support
Snapshot quotation menu (in Dutch)

Quotation generated based on parameters and menu options

Default is base quality (green boxes)

Customer can choose additional services
Lesson 4: experiment and fail often

Learn from mistakes, fast and often

Startup thinking (Eric Ries): Build – Measure – Learn

Productive failures = the capacity to learn faster from your customer than the others
Experiment: quotation much cheaper

Quotation lower due to:
- Customer can choose options
- Standardize products, both on contents and on costs
- Clear split between intake and production (less rework)
- Combine similar activities and reduce handovers
- Reduce postage costs (48 → 72 hours)

Quotations are now standardized. Promotes transparency and comparison. Results in further improvements.
Lesson 5: expect resistance

Regardless, still expect resistance

Respect it

Deal with it

“Who Moved My Cheese? An Amazing Way to Deal with Change in Your Work and in Your Life” by Dr. Spencer Johnson

“Respect Existence or Expect Resistance” graffiti on a wall
Examples of resistance we encountered

- People think in exceptions and obstacles (a lot of no’s and buts), less in opportunities and possibilities
- The golden standard (quality above all). Everything is unique, standardization is not possible
- As soon as it becomes real, it becomes scary
- Do not try to arrange everything in advance. Surprise yourself!
- Do not be afraid. Start experimenting!
Lesson 6: re-use good ideas

"Good artists copy, great artists steal."
- Pablo Picasso
Apply solutions everywhere

Solutions can also be applied to:

- Regular statistics
- Market research of companies
- Personal (CAPI) and phone interviewing (CATI)
- Non-survey research projects