



IMPACT STORY

Multinational Pharmaceutical Company

ExperiencePoint®



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New Change Leadership Competencies Equip High-Potential Managers to Tackle Complex Post-Merger Integration

About the Biotech Manufacturing Facility

This global pharmaceutical firm's state-of-the-art biotech production facility leverages novel technology to quickly scale up and meet the demands of widespread population health needs.

Challenge

Every organization goes through change. Sometimes it's the ongoing or project-driven change that's simply a by-product of living and operating in an increasingly complex, continually shifting environment. But sometimes it's change on a massive scale—one that reverberates at every level.

The Head of Human Resources at a biotech manufacturing facility is intimately familiar with both.

When your business involves manufacturing pharmaceuticals that people depend on to live normal, productive lives, you have to regularly introduce new concepts and new ways of doing things in order to be able to support both the needs of the consumers and the needs of the business. And that means change management competencies are always in demand.

Having previously served as Head of HR at another pharmaceutical company, this HR leader understood the importance of change management as a key competency and the value of having a common language for change. **The difference at this company, though, was that instead of a series of specific change projects, the organization itself would be dealing with one big change.**

The company had recently broken ground on a state-of-the-art biotech facility that would bring new opportunities for rapid production, but also change at a huge scale. The company brought this leader on board to apply what he'd learned in a very stable biotech manufacturing environment to this new startup—one that would quickly grow from 200 to 800 employees.

"The whole site has been a change," he says, "in terms of introducing operational excellence, better processes and better practices. This was about going through the transitions from startup to operational to mature to profitable. Not to mention, you can't do the same things you do to run a company with 800 people as you did when there were 200 people."

He knew that he would have to apply all the tools and lessons from his previous experiences to make this change work.

Solution

When the leader first faced the question of how to introduce change management competencies at the previous biotech company he worked for, he had a solution already in mind. In 2006, while in an Executive MBA program, he'd had the opportunity to participate in a change simulation experience that had stuck with him. That program was ExperienceChange™.

"I was already a fan of the work of John Kotter, so I liked that ExperienceChange™ mirrored that. From that standpoint alone, I was already halfway through the door."

Soon after, the leader participated in ExperiencePoint's train-the-trainer program and became certified to facilitate ExperienceChange™. For that implementation, ExperiencePoint worked with the company's existing change methodology, Prosci's ADKAR® model, mapping the model and embedding the templates into the ExperienceChange™ simulation. **The program became the cornerstone of how the company would introduce change management as a competency and help teams initiate change projects.**

With that experience under his belt, he was confident that ExperienceChange™ was the right solution for the unique challenge faced by his new employer. It, too, had an existing change model in place—called Change X—and again, ExperiencePoint worked with him to map that model to the ExperienceChange™ model.

The simulation is now being used with a new program, which stemmed from yet another significant change that will have a dramatic impact on the company. In 2015 it sold this portion of the business to a global, specialty biopharmaceutical company. For this new program, 20 high-potential managers have been identified to take on key responsibilities involved with the integration of the two companies.

“They’re taking on visible day-one readiness projects for the integration, which will begin in the fourth quarter,” the leader says. “We feel their potential is very strong, and we also had retention concerns with all of this change going on, so we wanted to engage them and let them know we’re going to need their help.”

In addition to being paired up with senior leader mentors, the managers will participate in three weeks of competency development during the third quarter to prepare them for their responsibilities. The curriculum comprises change management training, including the ExperienceChange™ simulation, along with training in other key competency areas, such as project management fundamentals, leadership and presentation skills.

And while there’s always some level of anxiety involved in any business integration, the change management competency work this leader is doing is helping to replace that anxiety with excitement.

Results

Since those first implementations at his previous employer back in 2009, the HR leader has now facilitated more than 114 user experiences of ExperienceChange™, and the impact has been

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powerful. Looking back at his time there, for example, he points to several key project successes. In addition to using the ExperienceChange™ model as a guiding force to build their plans, he says, “We saw tangible results with the specific high-stakes change projects.”

Those results were substantial. Between an idle inventory reduction project and several other initiatives, the company realized \$20 million in savings through increased production and decreased working capital.

And now at this new startup, he says, “There are so many stories within the story.”

One that stands out is the success of the company’s initiative to move from silo-ed functional areas to a segment-based approach that brings together different areas with a common goal and objectives.

“Leadership from all these different functional departments—quality, engineering, maintenance, procurement, operations—now meet as a primary group,” he says. “We also changed reporting relationships. It’s been a significant change, but it was successful, and it led to the breaking down of silos. People now say, ‘This is our team and we have come together for the greater good.’”

The new program for managing the merger process is also taking off as the managers ramp up for the integration in the fourth quarter. **In fact, it’s been so successful that participants are eager to get started, and that’s helping to ease some of those initial retention concerns.**

“They’re bought in and excited,” says the HR leader. “They’re asking us, ‘What’s my project? What am I going to do?’”

That’s a good sign for the future since big changes will keep coming. While the company shipped 3 million doses of its innovative product in 2014, it expects to ship 40 million doses per year in the next four or five years.

Overall, the leader says that from his first introduction to ExperienceChange™ back in 2006 to today, it's been a positive, growing experience for him as well as his participants.

"I teach all the classes, because that continues to educate me on what's happening with change and what obstacles people are having."

He also says that he continues to be wowed by the ExperiencePoint experience, particularly after having the opportunity to see the "nerve center" in action at the Toronto offices.

"There are simulations going on all across the globe, and people are there providing top-notch customer service whenever someone needs it," he says. "It's been cool to see ExperiencePoint grow over the years, but also to see that they've maintained their focus on being really good at what they do. There's been no drop-off in service as they continue to grow."

From his vantage point, it seems that the more things change, the more some things, thankfully, never do.

About ExperienceChange™

ExperienceChange™ is an expert-guided experience that teaches a best-practice model for managing change. Backed by over 20 years of change research and industry insights, the experience enables leaders and managers to practice leading change and engage with the behaviors, tools and skills sets that make change happen.

ExperienceChange™ is the trusted tool for Fortune 500's and the world's leading business schools. It's the cornerstone of change initiatives that transform, leadership programs that enable, and learning events that inspire.

About ExperiencePoint

At ExperiencePoint, we're passionate about how people work together to get stuff done. We're an award winning training company that develops business simulations for leadership development in the areas of change and innovation. We're known for realistic simulation experiences that challenge people to roll up their sleeves and learn the Whats, Whys and Hows of leading change and innovation.