MODULE 11

Change Management for Professional Association Strengthening

2nd EDITION 2019
Acknowledgments

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Where to find the complete the Professional Association Strengthening manual:

The complete set of Professional Association Strengthening modules can be downloaded for no fee at: www.StrongProfAssoc.org.

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Change Management for Professional Association Strengthening

Professional associations (PAs) undergo many changes throughout its life. Growth from a few members to a large organization, increases in resources, and shrinking of revenue or membership are examples of changes that need to be managed. Leaders and members of the association have roles to play in managing such changes, whether they are positive or negative. The purpose of this module is to define change management, explain the need for change management, identify reasons that PAs undergo change, outline different methods to manage change, and define roles each member of the association can play in helping strengthen the PA for long-term success.

Introduction

Just like there is no single model for strengthening professional associations, each association will undergo different changes throughout its life cycle. Such changes need to be well managed to ensure the association has the resources to keep serving its members, implementing programs, and maintaining its reputation. Changes can be driven by internal or external factors and can be positive or negative. Key aspects of change management include leadership skills, organizational systems, and capabilities to manage change regardless of the cause.

Defining Change Management

Change Management is a structured process to manage the different situations an organization will experience through time, taking into account human elements of change and ensuring the entire organization is able to effectively manage and adapt to changeable environments over time. The whole team must be part of the change management process, as any organizational change affects the entire professional association, including leadership, staff, volunteers, and members.

Although basic principles apply across all associations, change management may be different and must be tailored to fit each professional association’s specific needs and capacities, depending on size, resources, staffing and external relationships with partners. Additionally, the ability of individuals to manage change within the association as well as how to address changes coming from outside the association is critical. Individuals’ resistance and other aspects, such as culture, structure and routines of the association will determine how successful change management will be.

Change occurs in any organization many times throughout its existence. Associations need to continuously adapt to internal and external changes at each stage to ensure their sustainability and success. Change management processes and techniques help associations develop ways to overcome the barriers to change and to weather whatever changes come.

Causes of Change

Professional associations are influenced by and need to adapt to changes caused by many factors including:

- Establishing a new professional association
- Growth or loss of Membership
- Increase or loss of Revenue
- Changes in Program scope
- Shortage of Human Resources or need to manage professional staff
- Shifts in Political environment
- Changes in Donor objectives
- Publicity, positive or negative
Many factors can require change in a professional association. Shifting donor priorities, fewer members of the profession, changes in government regulations or program failure can lead to critical challenges for the association. A significant influx of revenue, in the form of a program grant, for example, can be a positive change for an association, but it requires management to ensure the association is well equipped to handle alterations in structure, staffing and systems required to fulfill the obligations of the grant. A large increase in membership requires systems and processes to manage member information and dues; these requirements might mean the organization must change to accommodate this growth. The original management team and volunteers may be unable to handle this growth alone but have a key role to play in a strategy to help the association navigate through the required changes.

Loss of membership or revenue streams may require changes in strategy, staffing, and skills to strengthen the resource mobilization capacity of the organization. Change management methodologies help associations initiate and navigate change so that the leadership guides the association through the change, instead of responding to or being pushed to change by external forces.

Barriers to Change Management

In the ever-changing global development environment, change is occurring rapidly. The international health community has shifted from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals, shifting activities, objectives, and indicators of success in health programs. Donors are shifting priorities, which leads organizations to shift program priorities; professional associations are growing rapidly in many countries; and constant adaptation to this landscape can be exhausting for professional associations, creating barriers to change management, which include:

- Change fatigue
- Lack of leadership skills to institute, direct and sustain change over time
- Change from top down only
- Natural human tendency for inertia
- Perceptions of blame
- Lack of understanding of why change is necessary and what is expected
- Resistance to changes that will affect individuals

Many association leaders are experts in their field of practice but don’t have the required skills to direct change. Change management fails when change is dictated from the leadership without clear communication across the organization. Every member of the team must be well informed and have a role to play in change management for the association to be truly successful in navigating change.

Change can cause disruption to an organization and lead to instability of leadership, management, and staffing. Fear of personal consequences can lead to great resistance to undertaking or participating in any change management. A clear understanding of the need for change, how the association will be assessed and what metrics will be used to decide on specific changes to the association’s management and staffing will help to elevate uncertainty.

Change Principles

According to the 5 Capabilities approach in capacity development of organizations, one of the capabilities of successful associations is the “capability to learn and adjust to shifting trends and conditions.” Associations must be able to assess trends or changes in its environment and anticipate these changes to adapt effectively. The association will need to document and learn from mistakes as well as from, to establish a culture in which change is valued.
Preparing for and executing effective change methods requires key steps. John P. Kotter, PhD of Harvard Business School, a pioneer of change management, developed an 8-Step Process for Leading Change:

1. Establish a Sense of Urgency
2. Create the Guiding Coalition
3. Develop a Vision and Strategy
4. Communicate the Change Vision
5. Empower Employees for Broad-Based Action
6. Generate Short-Term Wins
7. Consolidate Gains and Produce More Change
8. Anchor New Approaches in the Culture

The Change Management Model identifies four stages of change management:

9. Determine the Need for Change
10. Prepare and Plan for Change
11. Implement the Change
12. Sustain the Change

The Deming Cycle of Plan-Do-Check-Act outlines four stages as:

- Plan – Establish objectives and processes
- Do – Implement the plan, execute the process, make the product
- Check – Study results and compare against expected results
- Act – Enact new standards

Change Methodologies

Change management experts have identified principles necessary for successful change management. They are related to those above and include the steps and practices in the methodologies described below.

There are many models professional associations can use to implement change management systems. Many of these models are successfully used in large corporations and in small, non-profit organizations. Each association should evaluate which model is right for them, depending on their stage of development, and should consider using several. Each model has several core elements in common, which are key steps to success. Associations should be flexible and tailor these methods to their circumstances while utilizing a structured change management approach to guide the team and provide common goals, objectives, and milestones.

Change management models include:

- Lewin’s Change Management Model, that breaks down change into manageable stages.
- McKinsey’s 7 S Model, that helps identify what areas of the organization need to change.
- Kotter’s Theory, that drives change at the leadership level.
- The ADKAR Model, that focuses on individuals in the association that are managing change.
Details on these models and links to more information can be found in Appendix 1.

Management Practices to Effectively Navigate Change

Managers of professional associations have key priorities when managing change. They include:

- **Setting the direction** for the association, ensuring there is clarity around shared goals and vision for the association
- **Providing clarity and meaning** for employees, volunteers, and members and clarifying roles for each
- **Creating an environment** where feedback is welcomed, where new ideas and creativity are incorporated into the change management process, whether internally or from outside the association
- **Ensuring the association’s operations** are strong and well-functioning throughout the change process to ensure that all deliverables are met
- **Measuring success of change process**, which should include human and business measures.

Organizations are as good as the people who make them, sharing its culture, values, beliefs, customs, traditions, and meanings. It is important to acknowledge this fact when strengthening or creating a professional association and when navigating through a change process. A culture of change that includes each member of the team, whether the Board President or the association member in a rural facility, will be most successful. Each person has a role to play in maintaining the association’s strength for the long term.

Summary

Professional associations, like other organizations, must be prepared for change and should incorporate change management into its culture and strategy. Everyone associated with the professional association has a role to play in successful change management. Various methodologies can be used to help associations navigate change. Core principles help associations ensure that change is embraced, effective and sustainable to make the association productive and able to serve its members and the public for many years.

**REFERENCES**

1. The 5 Capabilities Approach in Capacity Development of Organizations Version 2.1
2. Ten Guiding Principles of Change Management, DeAnne Aguirre, Gary Neilson, Andrew Tipping
APPENDIX 1

1. Lewin’s Change Management Model - Manageable Stages of Change

Lewin's model uses three stages, emphasizes processes and people involved in change:

**LEWIN’S CHANGE MODEL**

Lewin’s Three Stage Change Process – Practical Steps

- **Unfreeze**
  - Determines what needs to change
  - Ensure there is strong support from management
  - Create the need for change
  - Manage and understand the doubts and concerns

- **Change**
  - Communicate often
  - Dispel rumors
  - Empower action
  - Involve people in the process

- **Refreeze**
  - Anchor the changes into the culture
  - Develop ways to sustain the change
  - Provide support and training
  - Celebrate successes

Unfreezing is a necessary step to ensure everyone understands what needs to change and the benefits of such change.

Change implementation can be challenging for everyone. Constant communication, reminders of why the change is important, updates on progress and feedback will help each member of the team navigate this phase.

Refreeze is the time to lock the changes in place, making them part of the association’s culture. Positive rewards for changed behavior and for participating in the change process can help ensure that changes are widely accepted. Refreezing does not mean that change will not continue; it is an ongoing process for all associations.

2. The McKinsey 7-S Model – Assessing What Changes Need to be Made

The McKinsey 7-S model is a tool to analyze the development of various aspects of the professional association and how they affect each other. It is useful to design a strategy plan, to determine what kinds of change the association requires to be more effective, and to identify weaknesses that require most attention.
Questions to ask and record when assessing each part of the association:

Evaluate Strategy
- What are your objectives and strategies to achieve them?
- How competitive is the association compared with other organizations doing similar work in the sector?
- How does the association attract, serve, and retain members?
- How can you adapt your strategy to be more competitive or attractive to members?

Review Structure
- How is the association structured (departments, teams, leadership, management, etc.)?
- How are departments and/or teams organized and managed?
- Who makes decisions?
- How are they carried out and communicated to the team?
- How does the team communicate? How often? Through what channels?

Analyze Systems
- What are the core systems in the association (HR, finance, program management, team management, Board relations etc.)?
- How are these systems and/or processes documented?
- How are they updated, by whom and how often? Are they currently up to date and accurate?
- How do you track and assess the results of these processes?
- Who has access to these systems?

Record Shared Values
- What are the core association values?
- What is the association’s culture? Does it reflect the culture of its members?

Note Style
- How are departments and teams managed?
- How engaged and active is this management/leadership?
- Is this style effective? Are teams getting results?
- Does the association’s style foster competition or collaboration?

List Staff
- Review staff list and note required tasks and skill set of each staff.
- Does each staff have written job descriptions, including the president and executive leadership?
- What positions are filled? Are the skills sets of each staff adequate for the position?
- Does someone need to be hired or can a volunteer fill in?
- Who will be hired first or next?

Assess Skills
- Do your employees or volunteers have the necessary skills to do their job to the desired quality?
- What specific skills are lacking?
- How important are these missing skills? Are they required to fulfil the association’s core mission or the implement priority programs?
- What tools do you use to assess skills?
- What is the association known for doing well, and what skills does that require? For example, if your association is known for Continuing Medical Education programs, what skills are required of your staff and leadership to implement those programs. Are any skills lacking that would make the CME program better?

Once each of the 7 S's are analyzed, examine how they affect each other. Ensure that leadership and management are involved to get a more accurate assessment. Plan incremental changes to some of the areas so that regular operation of the association is not disrupted and that staff does not feel alienated from the change process. Then work on other areas that need to be changed.
3. Kotter’s theory – Creating Urgency and Leadership for Change

Kotter’s theory addresses the human element of change and focuses on the leadership skills necessary to inspire and manage change. Much like the Kotter 8-Steps approach above, Kotter’s theory creates a sense of urgency and the leadership support necessary to move the organization toward change.

To create a sense of urgency:
- Engage a core group within the association to start the change conversation; this group can include association members.
- Review SWOT analysis and use it to start the discussion of needed changes.

To build a core coalition:
- Gather a group of key stakeholders from among the association’s leaders, volunteers, and members.
- Ensure they are from various levels of leadership and management with different skills sets.
- Ask them for a commitment to change.
- Include members of the association to ensure that their voice is heard in the change process.

To form a strategic vision:
- Define the changes you’re working toward and the vision you seek to achieve.
- Don’t be too detailed or make the change seem too complicated at this stage.
- Summarize in writing the values you are working towards, the changes you seek to make and expected outcomes; keep the summary short and concise so everyone is clear about the vision.

To bring everyone on board:
- Promote the change vision to the whole association, including employees and volunteers, to convince them that change is necessary;
- Be open to feedback and questions; host meetings, discussion forums and provide other ways for the association stakeholders to communicate with the change coalition.

To remove barriers and reduce friction:
- Identify barriers to change, including the natural human resistance to change.
- Determine if employees and volunteers have the necessary skills, technology, time, and manpower.
- Analyze staffing, structure, and processes to identify these barriers and address them as soon as possible.

To generate short-term wins:
- Present and praise the team for short-term wins associated with change.
- Sometimes these wins are developing and sticking with the change management plan or getting the whole team onboard.
- Try to plan out milestones in advance, but measure and highlight changes as they happen.
- Reward those who stick with the change management plan.

To sustain acceleration:
- Take stock of successes and failures.
- Make adjustments in the plan as necessary.
- Set new goals once old ones are reached.
- Sustain momentum and encourage team to stick with the plan.

To set your changes in stone:
- Document change management plan, goals, and milestones as they are met.
- Update formal processes to reflect new change.
- Promote success of change; announce and recognize the change coalition and their contribution.
- Repeat for the next phase of changes.
Kotter’s approach is focused on top-down leadership. It is highly recommended that it be supplemented with other approaches that encourage more input and feedback from every employee or volunteer to ensure that everyone involved in the association is a change champion. The ADKAR model is one such methodology.

4. The ADKAR model – Employee Focused, Incremental Change

The ADKAR change management model focuses on the individuals managing change. It focuses on reaching five goals and can be used to plan out change at the individual and organizational level. It may be useful in combination with other methodologies and for use with a range of stakeholders at various levels of engagement with the organization. It is an effective method for small, frequent changes that are less disruptive. They can be planned out over time to achieve larger change over time. The focus on people implementing the change ensures involvement from the whole team.

The five goals are:
1. Awareness of the need to change
2. Desire to participate and support the change
3. Knowledge on how to change
4. Ability to implement required skills and behaviors
5. Reinforcement to sustain the change

Awareness
- All employees need to understand why changes are necessary. Open communication on the current state of the association, proposed changes and benefits are essential.
- Changes need to be justified with evidence to ensure everyone understands why changes are needed and that changes are not being driven by opinions or attitudes of one or a few people within the association. This will ensure that everyone buys into the change process and that changes are not serving any one person, but the association as a whole.

Desire
- Inspiring change addressed both logic and emotion. A total commitment to change requires both.
- To ensure that employees desire change, present them with the benefits of the change that are relevant to them. Give them real examples of how the change will improve their position.
- Listen to feedback and incorporate any useful ideas; this will spread responsibility for creating change and give employees ownership of the success.

Knowledge
- Make sure that everyone in the association knows and understands the change process, how it will be carried out and what their role is.
- Break down the change into steps.
- Provide necessary guidance to each team member to fulfill their part in the process.

Ability
- Ability is different from knowledge in that it ensures that team members not only know what to do but that they have the necessary skills and tools to complete their tasks.
- Assess whether each team member has the knowledge and skills to carry out the assignment.
- Documenting a process that anyone can follow will help ensure that everyone has the same knowledge and that changes are consistent and measurable.

Reinforcement
- Reinforce change by providing incentives and rewards to make sure that change is maintained until it becomes the norm for the association.
- It is important to identify mistakes early and correct them promptly so that they do not become normal.

Other change management methodologies can be found at Process Street (https://www.process.st/change-management-models/).