T7 - Digital Transformations

Gotham

bootstrap in Metropolis

JUST TRASH IT.

THE CASE OF METROPOLIS TRAFFIC PLAN

This bootstrap is a post mortem report that will walk you through a change management project that has been a complete failure: the implementation of a new traffic plan in Metropolis.

You'll find hereunder various pieces of information (in bits and pieces) that you are welcome to rearrange, classify, interpret and analyze, in order to understand the pitfalls encountered by Metropolis Town Hall.

This activity is meant to help you foresee the issues you are likely to encounter when promoting and leading change: you can thus avoid them, by taking the right steps!

No deliverable is expected for the bootstrap, but we advise you not to squeeze this activity, especially the JARVISS entitled "Change Management", that will help you strategyze your actions

Case study context

Some years ago, Metropolis underwent a major change when deciding to modify its traffic plan, for a more environmental and pedestrian friendly one.

Limiting the possibility to park downtown, enforcing police controls and fees, imposing a toll for large vehicles, creating an app that lets you know when you can ride your car, implementing a card for toll payment: these are few examples of what was done in Metropolis to ease the pressure of cars in the center of the city.

The Town Hall team in charge of this (R)evolution deployed huge efforts for very poor results.

This is not an in-depth analysis of what happened: the team started analyzing the feedbacks, but then realized that they had no specific process for data collection, and did not finish the task.

Perceptions

**What was observed before, during and after changes where implemented?**

These are unformal impressions gathered among the employees and users (citizens), with no specific feedback process, it was left unprocessed: thus: you'll probably need to classify and analyze information before you can gain insight in it.

- Internal teams impacted by the changes did not follow the move, they didn't trust the change management team

- The information issued was messy and not regularly pushed, the employees and the users were informed alike, same contents, same timing

- The employees had no idea whatsoever about why a change was needed, and thus resisted forcefully

- The users and employees had no clear view of a timeline for the project, it looked very messy.

- Even those who are usually "early adopters" did not join in, because they had no clear sense of "why" the change was needed

- The employees were under the impression that layouts were lingering, and thus were afraid of changes

- People complained that they did not know where they headed for, nor what they were supposed to do

- People complained that they were not trained to use the new tools and thus were not able to perform well and were discouraged

- The staff did not believe in those changes being necessary

- The staff (management and front line employees) all found various reasons for not accepting the new situation

- People complained the change period was messy, uncomfortable, inefficient and stressing

- After the changes were implemented, the users complained that the situation was even more messy than before, that the service quality had dropped

- There were strikes, demonstrations, both from users and staff alike, but for different reasons

- These strikes were left untreated, no one tried to mitigate the issues

- Some rare cases of success were left undocumented, and thus discouraged the few brave ones who had embraced change

Accountability

The top management, who tried to organize a retrospective by themselves, came up with some more structured feedback, ideas and propositions and blamed the direction for:

- Allowing too much complexity – Getting bogged down into too much detail instead of keeping an eye on the bigger picture

- Failing to build a substantial coalition – failing to create momentum through effective teams that drive the change

- Not understanding the need for a clear vision – If you don't know where you are going, how do you know how to get there? If people cannot see the direction, they are lost and will resort back to the old way of working

- Failing to clearly communicate the vision – No Vision means no future goal to drive towards

- Permitting roadblocks against the vision – Not understanding potential roadblocks, and not acting on them when they arise permits long term failure

- Not planning and getting short-term wins – It's a long process and without quick wins that everyone can see, morale suffers

- Declaring victory too soon – The minute Leaders stop enforcing the message, and things fall back. – it's a long process

- Not anchoring changes in corporate culture – If a change programme incorporates a quick implementation and then nothing to reinforce this, it will positively 100% fail!
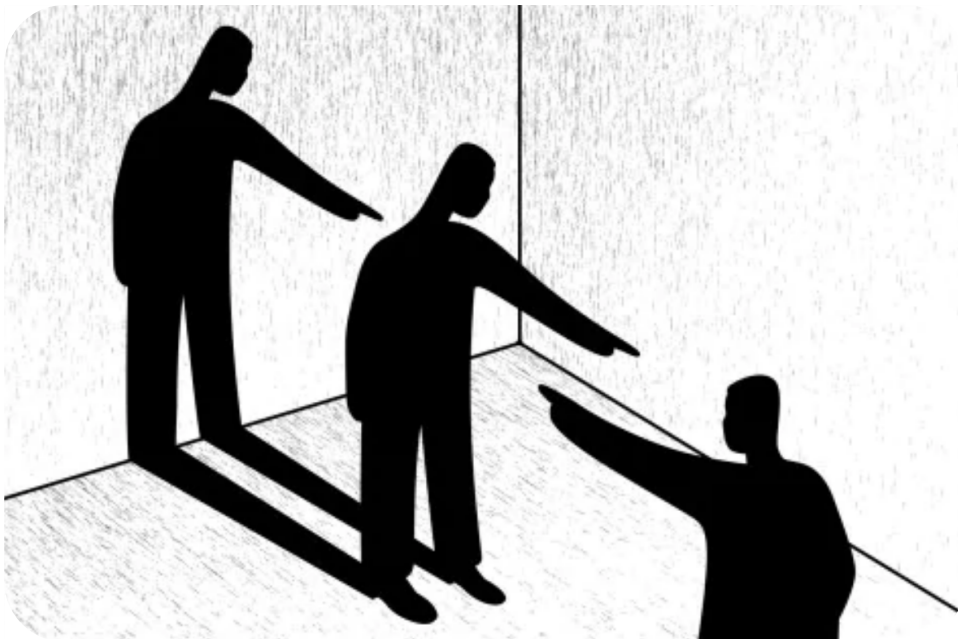
EXTRAS

Other elements that were brought to our attention by the middle management:

- Lack of Proper Planning
  You have to assign roles to individuals who are responsible for the change so all duties are covered. The timeline for the change is also a key component. You need to plan for downtime or difficulties in completing regular work tasks while the change occurs.

- Low Employee Morale
  For example, when you are changing your organizational structure from a flat structure in which all employees are encouraged to give feedback and help make decisions to a top-down structure in which all power and decision-making is in your hands. You can expect that employee morale will take a big hit as your staff members realizes they are losing the power to have a real say in how things are done.

  Low morale becomes a barrier to your organizational change because your staff is likely to resist the changes. That resistance will make it difficult for you to facilitate a smooth transition and may impact productivity and efficiency as well.

- Lack of Consensus
  If you fail to get everyone on board with corporate changes, you are likely to face barriers during the process. The decision to implement changes should come from the top level of the organization. All management level staff needs to be on board and able to deal with the changes or you may face dissent within the staff.

- Adopting New Technology
  One challenge is integrating new technology with your existing platforms in a way that doesn't cause huge logistical issues. Another challenge is getting your staff up to date on how to use the new technology.

  If we don't believe that new technology will make their jobs easier, we will question why you are making the changes.

- Failing to Communicate
  Employees want to know what's going on, whether it is positive or negative news. The feeling of uncertainty when management doesn't communicate disrupts work and makes employees feel as if they aren't a part of the decision.

TRAILS

Below are the top five obstacles to change management success, as reported by the 2018 edition of Best Practices in Change Management:

1. Lack of executive support and active sponsorship

2. Inadequate change management buy-in and resourcing

3. Resistance and lack of support for the specific solution

4. Change-resistant culture and organizational structure

5. Change saturation and lack of prioritization

> Find more online about obstacles to change management!

In order to help Gotham City implement its new garbage collection plan, you need to be cautious about the elements that caused such a huge failure in Metropolis: you have a chance to avoid the pitfalls, now that you know them!

You definitely need to learn more about change management, before you actually start working on your deliverables for the project.