

Aventus Partners Knowledge Series

In support of Leaders transitioning
to a new organisation structure



The Transition Saga

Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat. - Art of war - Sun Tzu

You are the CEO of a Company that is in the business of selling and servicing heavy industrial equipment.

As a part of your broader strategy you have redesigned your organization's structure. This has required integration of the sales and after market verticals at the regional level, bringing them under a new role of - Regional Business Manager.

As a result, the role of the existing Regional Manager has now transformed from that of a pure sales manager to a Quasi Business manager.

Your vision is that this change has the potential to drastically enhance customer focus within the organisation, consequently leading to retention and

mining of key accounts and thereby doubling the organisation's top line. All this, with the same team compliment.

You are aware that the stakes are high and you certainly don't want to be in a situation 9 months down the road - realising that 3 out of 6 Regional Managers are experiencing difficulties in transitioning from a pure functional to a business role.

You have thought through the situation, talked to people who have gone through /seen/facilitated /advised in similar situations and this is what you summarise:

To be successful in similar situations, organisations need to have processes that address the employees' knowledge and skills, as well as their intent (self belief and motivation) to transition to a new role.

Interventions are required at both the individual and systemic level.

Individual Level Interventions

At an individual/ employee level, you will need to ensure that:

1. All the key people including the role holders, their superiors and key internal stakeholders are aligned in terms of the revised role, its challenges and requirements (including skill requirements)
2. Role holders and their superiors understand and acknowledge the skill gaps that exist at an individual level. It is also essential to understand the existing role holders' habitual behavioural patterns (traits), his self belief and motivators and therefore the role these are likely to play during his transition process.
3. Development plans are created to address the gaps identified in the areas of skill, knowledge and behaviours. It is important to use a judicious mix of "on the job" learning as well as formal development sessions.
4. Specific plans are drawn keeping in mind the role holders who might have the skills but do not have the self belief that the transition is going to be easy.
5. Progress is periodically assessed and supported (basis performance measures as well as demonstrated behaviours).

You can ensure the above through:

- Structured, one on one discussions with the individual role holders
- Structured group session/s that will include all role holders, their immediate superiors, and the Leadership team members (including cross functional members)
- Using past performance data , running a multi source feedback system

The criticality of your intent and the message that accompanies these processes cannot be underestimated. As an organisation you have to be sensitive to the individual role holder and his needs in helping him adapt to these changes.

Maximum failure occurred if:

- There is a non alignment among the stake holders in terms of the revised role, its challenges and requirements including skill requirements,
- There is low self belief among the individual role holders at the beginning of the process which is left unaddressed by the organisation whilst it busied itself with fixing skills related issues only.

Systemic Level Interventions

At the systemic/ organisational level you will need to ensure that there is:

1. Clarity in definition of the role, its interfaces as well as boundaries and reporting relationships (direct and matrixed). Grey zones need to be kept at a minimum;
2. Clarity in knowledge and skills and the action/behaviours of role holders;
3. Precision in defining performance goals and objectives for the new role;
4. System/s to assess, communicate and reward demonstrated behaviour and performance consistently.

Success lies in (your ability to plan) detail

For E.g. If you know that a new pay plan needs to be designed ((both fixed and variable). The new behaviours (way of working) that you want to encourage in your Regional Managers will be influenced by this and will in turn influence the pay plan design.

Now, the question of significance is:

Should the new incentive plan for the Regional Managers be based on their individual targets or group targets?

If yes,

What should the weightage be for each?

In that case,

Should there be multiple plans that reward individual performance and organisation performance?

Therefore,

Who all should get included in the plan?

You know there is a lot to do, and you also know enough to start working on the road map now!

The general who wins the battle makes many calculations in his temple before the battle is fought. The general who loses makes but few calculations beforehand.

Art of war – Sun Tzu



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