

## Change Management for an Enterprise-wide System Change at a Leading Public Utility

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### Summary

The largest electric company in the US, sought to control costs and improve efficiency by updating its Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS). The company fundamentally changed the way it delivered HR Services, and as an executive said “bring it into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. “ The time for updating the system was right for the company for several reasons:

- It required a central source of data reducing compliance and regulatory risk.
- The central source of data created opportunities for better insights into workforce requirements.
- Quality of the work would go up due to increased self-service and reduced relay of information leading to increased accuracy by removing possible points for error.
- Increased capacity of high value resources for maximized use on more strategic functions.
- Greater employee satisfaction concerning their engagement with Human Resources.

### Challenges

Reach 30,000+ employees and contractors with varying degrees of internet access - the organizations primary means of communication. The change process involved not only information of the changes to the HRIS, but also training, and process changes.

Gauging impact to the changes not only across the various lines of business but also hierarchically within the organization added complexity and required a comprehensive analysis of the organization before developing a strategy to deliver the support required to mitigate concerns, and ensure adoption so the company realized the investment it made in the technology.

Resistance to change was strong as the existing solution had been in place for nearly 10 years and for many in the organization this is the only system they’ve known. The human resource (HR) organization recognized the potential of the new solution but knew they faced headwinds in adoption, and realized to be successful they needed strong change management execution.

### Benefits from HR Update

- Productivity gains for HR and the lines of business as functions are automated freeing up capacity for more technical issues
- Real time data and analytics
- Centralized location for information – reduction in risk for safety and compliance
- Optimization of tools, people and processes
- Long term labor cost savings

Most employees worked remotely without ready access to computers and emails and this fact compounded the complexity in identifying methods for engaging and training these employees.

Multiple change efforts were taking place at the utility so the ability to rise above the noise was vital to successfully engaging and educating the stakeholders.

### **SagaciousThink Provided**

The utility recognized change management was required if the rollout of the new system was going to be successful. SagaciousThink led the change effort and developed a multipronged strategy:

Ensured the program team had the resources they required to successfully deliver the implementation

Identified stakeholder groups and determine their unique needs, recognizing that not all needs were equal, nor was impact from the system changes.

Ensured alignment and optimization of existing processes, and identify any gaps that needed to be filled

Create ownership within the organization for the tool, the processes and the information.

Creation of Human Resource IT (HRIT) advocates throughout the organization, that relished the opportunity to contribute and provide an end user's perspective. *Their engagement increased the ability to target information while garnering key insights used to prioritize improvements.*

Appraised leadership of the changes and the impact and opportunities to their organization. *Without leader support in a very hierarchical organization, the adoption of the new system would have been hampered and failed to meet its desired objectives.*

Provided multiple touch points for employees to learn and respond to the upcoming changes.

### **Key Takeaways**

Take time at the beginning of the initiative to understand the stakeholder landscape is critical for success

Targeted engagement at all levels of the organization is vital

Leverage existing engagement tools but seek out informal options and grow organic alternatives – never rely on the standards

Account for information and communication overload on the part of the employees

Create imbedded champions and gain powerful allies and advocates

Leverage strong employee engagement to create further opportunities for HR

Training is vital for the immediate release but so is easy to access long term support

Trained employees and managers on the system changes and provided them learning aids to use once the system was fully functional.

Created new ways for HR to engage its stakeholders such as the first ever HR Technology Fair, which generate such positive reviews HR elected to take the show on the road throughout the utility's territory. It showcased not only the new system improvements but other tools that HR offered in a holistic view that was deemed much needed by the end users.

Measured progress, ensured the company could identify the ROI and the impacts made by the change.

**Feedback from the utility's leadership regarding the work performed by SagaciousThink, LLC:**

You made so many valuable contributions to the ... Program. You were a large part of the success we achieved – HR, Program Manager

You set the bar for me on Change. I appreciate all the support and efforts. – Sr. Director IT

You have been a tremendous champion for everything Training. The CM Plan was executed with intelligence and precision. Overall, a critical team member! – Training Lead

I am echoing Joe's feedback to you today - I too am hearing from multiple sources about the fantastic work you are doing. Congratulations! – Change Partner/Continuous Improvement

**SagaciousThink, LLC** is a consultancy headquartered in the Bay Area. We support companies tackling operational challenges by providing interim operations executives, or advising on business process re-engineering, change management, global expansion. We recognize that while companies face common problems, each company is unique and the solutions developed should meet those qualities and requirements. We want to hear from you.

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