

Implementing strategy and managing change: uk fire and rescue

[Business](#), [Management](#)



The paper "Implementing Strategy and Managing Change: UK Fire and Rescue" is a good example of a case study on management. Various changes in the environment such as legal requirements, changes in statutes such as the Fire & Rescue Services Act can prompt organizations to change and adjust their internal structures, objectives, and workforce attitudes. Both private and public sector organizations need to respond to such needs by planning the changes to be implemented and implementing them. In the case of the UK Fire & Rescue Department, the legislature prompts them to accept and undertake a broader scope of responsibilities in nonfire related rescues falling outside of fire incidents. Whilst this requirement remains a matter of choice, the government and public expectations impose a moral requirement to undertake these non-fire incidents with as much the fire-related incidents. However, the need for expanded duties is not perceived favorably by all employees in the department. Some feel that they should strictly perform only the fire-related rescues stated in the Fire and Rescue Act. This paper discusses the changes needed in workforce behavior as well as managerial practices needed to be in place to cater to this new changing environment.

- Understanding Change Management

Change can be planned or unplanned and organizations have to be well prepared to face both types of change. In implementing change, the key success factor needs to be taken into consideration if the change is to be delivered effectively. People within the organization need to be mobilized towards a shared vision and there should be a focus on fulfilling ethical

responsibilities to all stakeholders. There should also be a commitment to measuring the progress being made through the change being implemented. Doherty & Horne (2002), propose that transformational management & change to consist of three key aspects. It should first develop a vision of change that captures the attention of the organization. Secondly, the change plans should be communicated to the organizations. Finally, the leaders and change agents should negotiate consensus and commitment to the change program (Doherty & Horne, 2002). It is important to note that change can only be effectively implemented with strong leaders who can be visionary to map and chart a course to where the change should lead. These leaders should fully support, facilitate, and assure the followers to embrace the change. But in most cases, it is common to face resistance to change as members of organizations go through various reactions to change from disengagement, disidentification, disenchantment, and disorientation (Nelson & Quick, 2000).

- Process of Implementing Change

The starting point of a change program should be to have a proper analysis carried out to establish the state at which the organization currently is and where it should reach after the change takes place (Doherty & Horne, 2002). According to Weiss (2001), evaluating and understanding the employee readiness for change is important as well. When faced with change, people go through a number of phases starting from 1) ignoring and go through 2) attending, 3) planning, 4) executing, and 5) embedding the changes. The process of change can be split into 3 key phases as Planning, Implementing,

and Consolidating. For public organizations of the scale of Fire and Rescue department, the need for planning change has to be on a national scale and depicted in documented plans such as the London Safety Plan, 2008-2011.

In the planning phase, it is important that a realistic assessment of organizational strengths and weaknesses is carried out and the desired change is encapsulated into a clean and concise vision statement. The change should be communicated to all stakeholders and the objective measures which are put in place to measure the effectiveness of change should be clearly explained to the members of the organization. Another aspect of change is to prioritize the activities related to change and include new skill acquisitions and retraining as a top priority to assure members that they are a part of the state after the change and not to be adversely affected by the change. It is beneficial to apply a transitional approach to change, if the situation permits, where people have time to gradually adjust to the change being implemented in a step by step manner. A cornerstone of a successful change program is being honest and open with the rest of the members of the organization (Doherty & Horne, 2002). Lastly, the process of change implementation has to attend to the consolidation of change. There should be proper monitoring systems and performance measures that are transparent and justifiable in place to assess the headway made by the organization undergoing change. These measurement plans should have milestones marked for celebrating which can improve workforce morale and also mark the reaching of a certain phase in the change program.

Best Practices in Managing Change Implementing change must be done to minimize resistance and maximize the speed and agility in response. By applying best practices, organizations can avoid mistakes that other organizations have made and also acquire the knowledge of those who have achieved success in implementing change. The following are some of the best practices which the UK Fire and Rescue Department can apply to their change management programs.

- Create a clear vision of the state to be achieved through the change.
- Implement awareness campaigns to communicate change plans.
- Appoint change agents across various levels of the organization.
- Support and total commitment to change of the leaders.
- Allocation of resources to retraining and new skill acquisitions required to sustain the change.
- Having clear and transparent performance measures in place to gauge the effectiveness of the change programs.

By incorporating some or all of these best practices into the change process, the chances of making the effort more effective increase significantly.

1. Implementing and Monitoring Change at the UK Fire & Rescue Department

To implement change within UK Fire and Rescue Department, and alter the mindset of the organizational members, a new vision for the department should be created to encapsulate the new expectations from the Fire & Rescue Department. The expansions of duties from Fire and Rescue management to a broader framework of fire management including

resilience building, risk mitigation, fire management, and rescue as well as nonfire rescues must become a part of the organizational goals. These activities should then be built into performance management measures and monitored and evaluated continuously. A good example is the Performance Report and Action Plan (PR&AP) which serves a number of purposes. This planning tool allows the organization to report performance over the last year and carry out internal and external assessments. It also facilitates gauging the financial position and allows us to seek a view on any changes we are advocating.

Conclusion Implementing change is not a choice but a prerequisite if organizations are to survive changes in the environment and forge ahead. Change management is a systematic process and by adhering to a recognized process, the effectiveness of the change program can be increased. Similarly, by incorporating best practices, the organizations can benefit from learning points of those other firms which have incorporated change successfully. Most importantly, having relevant performance management measures in place to monitor change rates and effectiveness must be addressed in delivering change.