

EFFECTIVE STEPS IN IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

Brief Description:

This breakout session discussed sources of, challenges with, and effective steps in implementing change [e.g. (i) identified need for change, (ii) management support, (iii) initial change starting point, (iv) employee involvement & effective communication, (v) implementation & adaptation, (vi) assess how it's working & if the change delivered intended results, (vii) adjustments made & removal of barriers to change, (viii) final acceptance & anchor the change].

Activity summaries for 1. “sources of change”; 2. “challenges with implementing change” and 3. “a scenario” are included below:

1. Sources of change:

Changes in drinking water system

- New features (e.g. automation, new zones, upgraded security)
- New infrastructure and redundancy
- New equipment, back-up power and redundancy
- Aging infrastructure and failures (e.g. leaks, watermain breaks, frozen services, flooding of infrastructure)
- New or updated programs (e.g. flushing, lead service replacement, corrosion control)
- Process and operational changes
- Source water changes – new sources, protection of; or contamination and poor water quality
- Emerging contaminants
- Classification of system
- Discoloured water
- Procedure changes (e.g. watermain disinfection procedure)

Government / regulatory

- Inspection program focus changes
- New regulations and updates
- Updates to policies, procedures, forms
- Lab results and actions expected
- Administrative burden – increase in paperwork / documentation

Organizational change

- Elections / new councils – new endorsements
- Reorganization - “more with less” departmental changes (time constraints)
- Cost vs. efficiency
- New shift hours

Staff

- Diversity in staff (e.g. generational, cultural)
- Turnover
- New positions
- Retirements
- New / younger employees
- Short-staffed – competing province-wide for staff
- Increased operator responsibilities
- Communications
- Suggestions for improvement
- Increase in education and knowledge sharing

Resources / funding

- Increase in funds (approved capital budgets)
- Decrease in funds
- Resources are more expensive
- Energy savings

Communities

- Urban sprawl
- Aging population
- Population growth
- Meeting future demand

Climate change

- Resiliency considerations for extreme weather and flooding

Utilities collaborating / working together

Technology

- Availability of new technology
- SCADA failures and loss of data

Emergencies

- Lessons from others: Walkerton tragedy
- Lessons from own emergencies

2. Challenges with implementing change:

Selling of change

- Employees / customers not seeing the benefits, not buying in
- Changing people's minds
- Organization / reorganization
 - Management vs. labour perspectives
- Finding the right incentives
- Generational differences – may require tailored messaging to different perspectives and attitudes
- Limitations of legislative requirements (may prevent / limit change)

Resistance to change

- Lack of cooperation / acceptance – dragging employees along, dragging time
- Discouraging leaders of change, facing:
 - “uphill battle”, “brick wall”, not many “jumping on board”, “tug-of-war”, “pushback”, “red tape”
- Unhappiness – stress, anger and frustration
- Not interesting
- Obstructionists / stubborn
- Fear of change / of unknown / uncertainty of future

Resistance to new technology

- Confusion with new technology
- Lack of IT support

Communications

- Poor communications – unclear or inconsistent
- Poor understanding of information

Lack of resources (financial, time, people, equipment, aging infrastructure)

- Lack of council buy-in and support
- Lack of financial support
- Lack of management buy-in
- Lack of manpower
- Crumbling and failing infrastructure
- Changing conditions: environmental quality, drought, decreasing water levels, infrastructure failing, population growing

- Larger changes are more difficult and require resources
- Loss of senior staff and knowledge
- Geography (northern communities have access to fewer / limited resources)
- Staff turnover
- Lower morale and change in staff
- Workload, “many hats”, and lack of time to implement
- Data overload, increasing paperwork with no time
- Having to sell that sometimes opportunities outweigh the cost

Training / steep learning curve

- Ensuring correct interpretation and knowledge transfer
- Training new staff and mentoring

3. Scenario:

A senior staff member at your municipality has recognized the value of having implemented a management system at the water utility. You're now seen as the DWQMS expert, and you're asked to lead the implementation of the standard at another department, so that they can realize the same benefits.

You're asked what you need to ensure the DWQMS implementation in this other department is successful.

Business Case / Cost-benefit

- proof of need

Project charter / plan

- Goals, objectives, targets, scope
- Work breakdown / plan
- Timelines / schedule
- What are we managing – details for the plan
- Ensure correct model; keep it simple

Gap analysis

- Current state vs. desired future evaluation
- Review history of existing system

Resources

- Project Lead / stewardship role with authority to implement (who covers project lead's normal position while person leads this project?)
- Financial – material
- People – project team
- Time – staff, management, project team
- Existing QMS in Water as template
- Technology – intuitive software

Management / Council Support, Commitment, Buy-in

- Guidance
- Policy statement

Staff Support, Buy-in

- Participation and involvement
- Cooperation
- “don't take things personal”

Risk Assessment

- Understand the operation, processes, regulatory requirements
- Review historical events
- Listing of equipment (and potential failures)
- Obtain input from all levels of staff (all perspectives)

Document control (access to all)

- Operational Plan
- Roles, responsibilities, authorities (w/ job descriptions)
- Essential supplies and services
- Sampling & Monitoring / instrument calibration
- Standard information
- Procedures
- Diagrams
- Standard information
- Tracking records (past and present)

Change management

- Manage consequences of change – ensure existing regulatory requirements are still met (e.g. effluent protection plan)
- Effective and timely communication plan for:
 - Staff
 - Stakeholders
 - Management
 - Owner / council
- Track changes that are being implemented
- Check-in with staff on how well things are going

Education, mentoring & training

- Training needs
- Knowledge shared

Evaluation / verification / audit of effectiveness

- Management Reviews
- All staff: What's working well?
- All staff: What's not working well?
- Adjust to feedback

Celebrate when it's done!

Maintenance of system



