

9 Tips for Activating Change

Change has become the only constant in business. And too many leaders are doing it poorly. Teams are exhausted and disappointed. When leaders activate – rather than just lead – change, it creates ease, and scale. Because leading the change becomes everyone’s job.



Distinguish vision from plan

Craft a clear vision - a sense of where we’re headed and why. Communicate this before you have a plan. Because the team needs time to get inspired. And they’ll help you build the plan.



Invite, don’t compel

Don’t give your team instructions to follow. Their doing so creates resentment and limits their potential. Invite them to join the journey toward your vision. They’ll bring ideas and creativity beyond what you’d have crafted on your own.



Anticipate their needs

Communicate the outcomes you need, but recognize what they may need to deliver. Support, training, tools – what will they need to bring this change to life? Anticipate this early. Assure them you’re considering them. You’ll win them over fast.



Ask great and open questions

Don’t ask for validation or assurance. Ask questions that invite them to inform the path. How will we make this successful? What might we try? What have you observed that must inform our approach? Capture their intelligence to round out yours.



Run small experiments

Overthought and overwrought plans are overrated. Be agile. Plan in short bursts - think days over months. Plan just a step or two ahead and test your hypotheses early and often. First guesses always leave gaps. Create space to learn.



Communicate in the absence of updates

When there’s nothing specific to say, say that. When leaders say nothing at all for too long, their teams construct their own stories. This never ends well. An update that says there’s nothing new is still a valid update.



Empower action for scale

With confidence your team is aligned to a shared vision, don’t bottleneck action by requiring permission for everything. Give them parameters and invite them to test and learn on their own. This is where activation starts to spread.



Create loops

Agile, short-term plans are only as valuable as the feedback and learning returned. Have regular dialog with your team to understand what’s working, what’s missing, and what needs to be tweaked. Value insight – not the “rightness” of your first idea.



Celebrate tiny wins

Victory begets victory. Create lots of moments to celebrate. Don’t lower the bar. But find actions and behaviors to celebrate and recognize. Bring life to joy.