

The role of executive leadership in successful tech implementations

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Change is never easy. This is especially true in the case of construction technology implementations (<https://ineight.com/solutions/integrated-project-controls/>)
utm_source=Infrastructure_Magazine&utm_medium=Industry_Ads&utm_campaign=2108-TP-APAC-IM&utm_term=article&utm_content=integrated_project_controls). Though often characterised as large and disruptive, this adjustment is vital to flourishing in an increasingly competitive industry. Technology, people and processes will all be impacted by the implementation of new tools. This is why it is crucial that executive leadership is prepared to effectively address all three areas to ensure successful implementation for all.

Technology

First, it is important to select the right technology which meets your business needs, provides efficiencies, and aligns with your company vision. A selection committee can be very helpful with such decisions, and should be clearly established to evaluate various technology solutions.

This committee should be made up of not just IT personnel but also people from the business who will be most affected by the new tools. This group should assess each solution's ability to meet business needs and add value. Establishing business requirements that are must-haves versus nice-to-haves will help guide discussions and demonstrations.

It falls on executive leadership to ensure the technology aligns with the overall company vision. It is important to communicate the big picture goals with the selection committee who can easily become focused on or distracted by very specific features and functionality. Goals like seeking to standardise across projects or divisions, eliminating disparate systems which create duplicate data entry, providing centralised reporting, and becoming a more data driven organisation are higher level needs that must be considered when selecting a technology provider.

Construction technology is rapidly evolving, and you want to make sure when partnering with a provider that their vision aligns with yours. It is unlikely you will find a technology that meets every single business requirement straight out of the box, so look for the company that most closely aligns with your overall goals and has plans to get you to your desired future state the fastest.

People

Change management is defined by Prosci as the application of a structured process and set of tools for leading the *people side* of change to achieve a desired outcome, therefore, understanding the importance of change management and how it can be applied within your organisation to transition people from a current state to the desired future state is critical for executive leadership.

The first two stages of change are defined as **awareness**, meaning people must be aware of the need for change, and **desire**, meaning they must have the desire to support the change before moving forward. Executive leadership can drastically impact how quickly people possess these by enthusiastically communicating their support upfront for the change and building a strong coalition of managers who also support it. Leadership must be very clear in sharing their vision for the future as well as the various business reasons for the implementation.

Studies have shown that messages about the business reasons for change are best received when they come directly from executive leadership, therefore, it should not be assumed that these messages will trickle down effectively if you communicate them only to managers, expecting a cascade effect to be sufficient.

A company-wide announcement via a town-hall meeting – considered the most effective way – or a carefully crafted email should be created. Either should address the following: what is changing, how the change aligns with the company vision, how the change will address problems or opportunities, why it must be done now and what the risks are of not changing.

Employees tend to look to their managers for instruction and information about how a change is going and how it will affect them. It is imperative to leverage the influence those managers possess to positively reinforce the implementation. This is most effectively done by taking the time to build strong management support of the change early on.

Executive leadership can best do this by creating a steering committee early on, made up of key managers who will then hold regularly scheduled meetings to monitor progress, address areas of risk and resistance, express concerns and align on expectations.

Leadership should be trained in resistance management techniques in order to identify and address any hesitancy among managers. Should manager push back become apparent at any time, leaders will need to address it quickly and directly with one-on-one meetings to answer questions and quell any fears. That being said, it is also important to clearly communicate that resistance among managers is not acceptable, and that there will be no "opt-out option" for managers who simply choose not to participate. It's a team effort, after all, and all hands need to be fully on board.

In order to maintain momentum as people progress through the stages of change, leaders should remain engaged throughout the implementation by participating in steering committee meetings, encouraging feedback and timely resolution of any issues, as well as removing any bottlenecks to smooth the path for all.

In addition, recognising and reinforcing positive behaviour while continuing to dissuade team members from push back should be an ongoing activity. Look for quick wins and opportunities to celebrate successes with the rest of the organisation. This will keep things moving in a positive direction.

Encouraging accountability for changes down the organisation's structure cannot be understated. Measurable results, such as adoption rates, should be established and tracked by executive leadership. Reviews of adoption metrics or other key performance indicators linked to the implementation should be worked into regular manager meetings or operational meetings. The most successful implementations track these metrics just like they would do on any of their construction projects, addressing any instances of poor performance directly in operation meetings.

Processes

Even with the most innovative technology, companies may struggle to reap full benefits if they are not adopted in conjunction with sound processes. Construction technology has advanced to enable highly sophisticated reporting and analytics (https://ineight.com/products/ineight-report/?utm_source=Infrastructure_Magazine&utm_medium=Industry_Ads&utm_campaign=2108-TP-APAC-IM&utm_term=article&utm_content=ineight_report), which, when implemented, can correctly provide tremendous insights.

Standardisation and documentation of business specific procedures will drive the most effective use of technology and highest return on investment. Executive leadership should dedicate the required resources to define processes mapped directly to new technology. Ensure processes are well-defined by setting that as an expectation from the beginning. Require the formalised documentation of standard processes as a milestone in the implementation schedule and assign steering committee members to review completed procedures to achieve full buy-in. End-user training that incorporates business specific processes will be more productive and result in higher adoption rates.

To experience the most positive and effective tech changes, executive leadership must be the most strongly and outwardly supportive of an implementation, setting an example for all others to follow. By consistently promoting the benefits of the change through all communications and actions, leadership will be taking a strong and active role. This will not only ensure changes are made, but are made in the most positive, lasting manner for team members across the organisation.

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¹ *Best Practices in Change Management*, Prosci, 10th Edition, 2018.

² *Best Practices in Change Management*, Prosci, 10th Edition, 2018.

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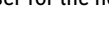
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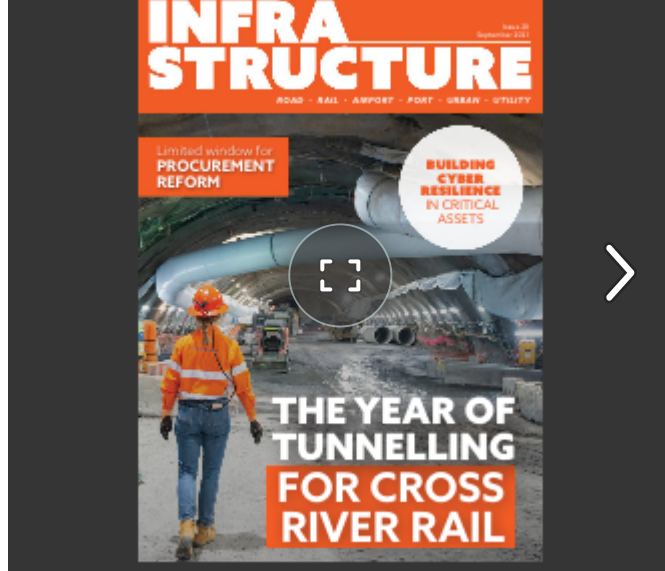
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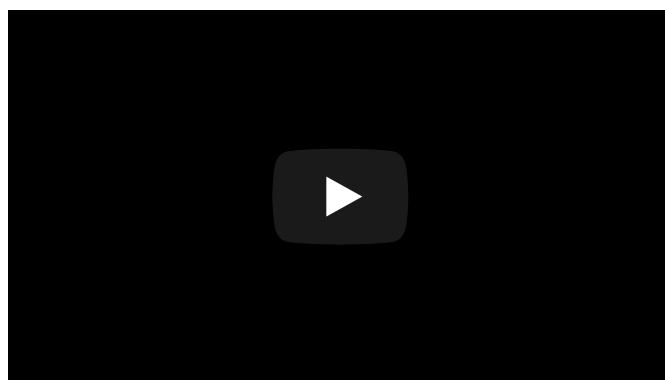
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