

How to Make a Movex Project Succeed

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In my last article (August, 2003), I discussed the three components of a Movex project, Scope, Time and Resources, and how ignoring the interrelation between them can set up a project for failure.

Even the best project manager can sometimes find the time component creeping, seemingly for no reason. The hidden component is resistance to change.

A boss once told me, "We aren't in the software business, we are in the change business. We sell change." Most companies, in fact, buy new software packages in hopes that the change will make them more competitive, more efficient and more profitable, and to take advantage of the "best business practices" offered by Movex software.

Reasons for Resistance

Resistance to change is human nature, and both management and the project manager must address this resistance and actively take steps to convert this resistance. Sometimes the staff themselves don't understand the reasons for their resistance. Some of the reasons for resistance are:

- **Fear of redundancy/layoff** – While this is usually more of a concern with automating manufacturing processes, it can be a concern when implementing a package like Movex. Will 10 customer service reps still be needed with this new, more efficient software?
- **Fear of failure/unknown** – There is always a fear with some people that they will not be able to adjust to new and different workloads. Some feel uncomfortable changing familiar routines.
- **Fear of losing status/power** – Often certain people in an organization, especially those who have been there a long time, are known as "the expert" on the legacy system, and enjoy a certain status and prestige accordingly. Often, the existing workflow and paper flow gives an individual control or power over the process. They fear that new processes will make their job or position less critical or important.
- **Fear of no longer being "expert"** – When an individual is familiar with the legacy system, and know how to make it work for them, they can fear the new system. Everybody makes mistakes with a new system, and it takes time to learn; in the meantime, an employee can be temporarily incompetent and this leads to feelings of anxiety, resentment and doubt, when they can't get the information they need from Movex. Sometimes even the most enthusiastic supporters early on will become vocal complainers when the system goes live and they are having trouble with the new ways ("It doesn't work").
- **Fear of loss** – A new system means giving something up; the old ways of doing things. Many people are reluctant to let go of things that matter to them, that they are familiar with.

Types of Resistance

Some types of resistance will be obvious; others may not be. The project manager working with the process owners may be in the best position to recognize these symptoms, but usually don't have the authority to deal with the resistance. This is where cooperation between the project manager and upper management is essential.

- **Passive resistance** – Sometimes even the employee doesn't realize he/she is resisting the process and can be outwardly supportive. But somehow, his/her responsibilities keep getting delayed.
- **Too busy to help with implementation** – Sometimes resistance can appear in key employees being too busy to make the decisions necessary, to train, or to work with the business consultant on definitions and setup. Management can be of assistance in this case in setting priorities, getting the key person the necessary help, etc.

- **Criticizing new software** – Some people don't like to give up the familiar and will be very vocal in criticizing Movex for not providing the same features as the legacy system.
- **Not making an effort to learn** – Some people will be afraid to ask questions and will go through the training without being proactive about asking questions or thinking about how to make the new software do what's necessary to complete their job.
- **Delaying implementation** – Some people will miss deadlines, have excuses, exaggerate problems in order to create obstacles for implementation.
- **Morale problems** – An unhappy person can bad-mouth Movex to others and create a great deal of resistance.
- **Working around software** – This can take place either before or after implementation, with people going to great lengths to work around Movex and create reports and processes duplicating their old processes, even if Movex has a better, different solution.
- **Refusing ownership** – This will appear when a process owner will be very passive and simply take the Movex consultant's suggestions without taking the responsibility for making the process work for them. Then, when they go live, they can complain that Movex "doesn't work".

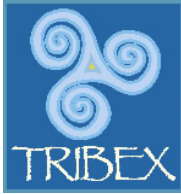
Changing Resistance into Energy

The success of your Movex project will depend in large measure on how you handle this resistance. Instead of "managing" it, or seeing resistance as something to overcome, you will be more successful by recognizing it as a potentially positive force, and channeling its energy and passion to make change more palatable and even desirable to employees.

- **Change attitude towards resistance, see as source of energy** - Resistance is energy. It represents passion – what people care about. Getting people to care about the benefits of Movex and how it can help them do their job, can transform this resistance into enthusiasm.
- **Form partnership** - Finding ways to show public appreciation for the skills your employees bring to the organization can relieve fears. Encourage employees to accept additional responsibilities in their new work. Create an atmosphere in which risk-taking is encouraged, well-intentioned mistakes are not merely tolerated but celebrated, and people are rewarded for speaking out and sharing their concerns, insights, and ideas.
- **Include key people from beginning** – Implex helps the process of including key people to gain buy-in from the beginning. Make these key people responsible for communicating with their group and being responsible for identifying morale and resistance problems.
- **Educate about benefits to company as a whole** – Make sure every employee sees the benefits (better customer service, lower costs, etc) from this change.
- **Encourage expression of objections, grieving, venting** - The first step in managing resistance is to acknowledge openly what you and others are losing. A structured opportunity to focus on what employees will be leaving behind will help them move on.
- **Encourage solutions** - Encourage users to communicate shortcuts, tips and techniques they've found, and ways to make life easier. Encourage users in the Implex stage to suggest improvements to item numbers, order types, etc which will work better with Movex, rather than duplicate the old process; and reward them for these ideas.
- **Encourage risk-taking** – When employees came up with ideas, no matter how unconventional, encourage them to try them out as long as they are consistent with the organization's vision and goals
- **Forgive mistakes** – Have a blooper contest and get employees to look at the lighter side of mistakes.
- **Training, pilots, cheat sheets, tools** - Make sure training is adequate and done both as an introduction and again in detail with real company data in the Movex test environment shortly before the go-live. Don't shortchange pilots and make sure everyone participates. Acknowledge that some people learn better in a one-on-one training session. Use cheat sheets for processes and commonly used Movex programs. Encourage setup of personal menus before go-live.
- **Encourage suggestions for improvement, prioritize** – Make sure there is a feedback loop for Movex enhance-

ments after the users have had a chance to get familiar with the software, and then prioritize them with the users in the context of business priorities. This will give them a sense of ownership, even if all recommendations are not implemented.

•**Reward ownership, compensate** – Tie the success of the process to personal training plans, annual review, and other well-established business processes.



Tribex Consulting is a coalition of Intenia-trained Movex Business and Technical consultants, who have joined together to provide expertise in training, modifications, installations, and support of Movex customers. They offer low rates, fast implementation and turn around, and excellent communication at all times. Small jobs to large projects.

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