



Managing People through Change

*Priming the Organisation for
Transformative Growth*

RESEARCH INSIGHTS

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MANAGING PEOPLE THROUGH CHANGE

As external disruption gathers pace, change management has gone from being a once-in-a-while process to a tool that drives continuous internal transformation. Today, business transformation comes in many forms and has multiple drivers. However, it has one common end-goal: priming the organisation for the next cycle of growth. In the final analysis, what separates the winners from the also-rans is the ability to adapt and respond to a fast-evolving workforce. After all, the ability to carry along one's people is fundamental to any transformation exercise. Recently, **IMA India** and **Project Management Institute (PMI)** undertook a collaborative research project to understand the dynamics at play as businesses prepare for an increasingly uncertain future. This paper, which draws on the longer study, **'Reinventing the Business for Transformative Growth,'** highlights some practices that companies might adopt as they seek to get the best out of their most precious resource: people.

MOULDING THE WORKFORCE...

The work environment has been upended in the last two years. If there is *one* aspect of internal transformation that matters more than any other, it is the ability to evolve with and empower one's workforce. In a nutshell, this means *providing employees with the resources, opportunities and authority needed to function effectively in a shifting environment*. Not only does this drive productivity, it also improves engagement and retention.

Employees' attitudes and approach to work are evolving

Typically, a firm will *already possess* most of the talent it needs to carry it along its transformation journey. But to produce the best possible outcomes, people require continuous support and encouragement. Nearly all the CEOs we interviewed for our study say that they are investing in training programmes that enhance collaboration and productivity in a hybrid environment.

Most companies have a solid base of employees but may need to augment their skills

Crane Process Flow Technologies, a global provider of highly engineered products and systems, is testament to this changing dynamic. Crane's culture is built around nurturing its internal talent through holistic training. Its standard approach is to enable 70% of learning on the job, 20% via mentorships and training modules and 10% via external sources. This has yielded rich outcomes: despite multiple lockdowns and the three waves of Covid, a major project launched in 2018 will be completed this year, less than a year behind schedule.

Learning on the job is a big focus area for Crane

Continental Auto Components India is transitioning its product portfolio from one centred around tyres and other mechanical parts to a digital/software-driven one. To help ease this transition for the over-40,000 employees working in its traditional lines of business, it has set up an in-house academy, the Continental Institute of Technology. With over 5,000 different training modules on offer, the Institute will help ensure that many workers, who might otherwise have become unemployable, will be able to stay on.

Continental is focusing more strongly than ever on training

...AND SHIFTING HIRING PRACTICES

With a growing focus on internal training, companies are becoming more open to hiring from 'non-traditional' talent pools. Before the

New approaches to hiring – looking

pandemic, a **leading drug manufacturer** would hire *only* experienced domain specialists. Today, it has let go of such strictures and is instead sourcing talent fresh out of university and taking in interns with little or no prior experience. This approach allows it to up-skill people to *suit its specific needs*, while helping to bridge not only its own but also the industry's yawning skill-gaps. Many of these recruits, it has discovered, are curious to learn, bring a fresh perspective to the table and are less judgemental than their older colleagues.

past the usual suspects...

As important as it is to retain one's top talent in an environment where attrition is a serious issue, *hiring right* is equally critical. In many companies, the hiring process is becoming strategic. For instance, while high IQ is important for many positions, EQ often matters more. Before hiring someone, companies like **Crane** conduct psychometric tests to ensure strong fit with specific roles.

...and seeking new types of skills and attributes

FOCUS ON THE SOFTER ELEMENTS...

For today's workforce, *the ultimate motivator is finding fulfilment and meaning in one's work*. This makes it imperative to build an environment that ignites people's passion and sense of purpose. This, in turn, requires a leadership cadre that is attentive, forward-thinking and people-focused. Fostering a culture of community and belonging allows people to be their best, most authentic selves while achieving purpose-driven work.

Drive a sense of purpose and a people-focused culture

On a related note, companies are investing more than ever in the health (including mental health) and safety of employees and their families. A side benefit, in some cases, is that *working for an organisation that truly cares can foster greater loyalty and commitment*. Recently, such efforts have ranged from securing oxygen concentrators, hospital beds and ambulance services, to developing in-house apps that track people's movement and which can alert them if they are at risk of infection. Finally, *strong, transparent and consistent communication is vital*. As companies navigate a harsh environment, keeping their employees informed about where the organisation stands and what it is going through, can be reassuring. *Over-* not under-communication, is the mantra today.

Invest in employee health and safety, and communicate both well and often

*This paper has been produced by IMA's in-house research team based on a longer report, 'Reinventing the Business for Transformative Growth,' published by IMA in collaboration with PMI, and which is available for download [here](#). This paper is meant for the exclusive consumption of IMA's Peer Group Forum members and may not be copied, shared or distributed without explicit permission. The paper, together with a podcast version is also available on the **IMA app**, which can be downloaded from Google [Playstore](#) and Apple [Appstore](#), and the Knowledge Centre of our website www.ima-india.com. IMA Forum members may log in using their personalised website access codes.*