

GRADS *of* LIFE

Leadership Accountability in a Skills-First Movement

Driving skills-first success hinges on aligned and visible leadership support

Overview

Leadership accountability is taking ownership for the decisions made and the outcomes achieved in the change process. This requires leadership to publicly give and take credit for successes and promptly address setbacks as the organization begins their skills-first journey.

A well-known challenge to change efforts is misaligned leadership who are not visibly recognized as champions of the change. Research suggests the degree to which employees embrace change is **dependent on their trust in management**, which requires strong consensus within the leadership team.¹ Executives can and must set the tone for change to enable enterprise-wide success.

Defining roles and responsibilities

Defining roles and responsibilities across all levels of leadership ensures a shared vision and strategy for change.

- Change cannot succeed without close collaboration among key change leaders. Assigning roles and naming each leader's individual impact on change efforts can increase the likelihood of adoption across the breadth of the organization. See Change Adoption curve stages [here](#).

Setting clear expectations across different levels of the organization builds shared accountability.

- It is imperative to engage leaders and ensure their early, genuine buy-in. This requires equipping senior leadership with the resources necessary to communicate the expected impact of the change on key stakeholder groups as well as tools to mitigate obstacles they may face.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Monitoring the progress of change initiatives allows leadership to recognize wins and respond to roadblocks.

- Actively leverage key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess performance, drive data-driven decision-making, and make real-time adjustments as necessary.
- Implement recognition programs to reward leaders who successfully contribute to skills-first initiatives.
- Consider incorporating skills-first goals into your existing performance management process.

Key Takeaways

- **Facilitate leadership alignment:** Make sure all leaders demonstrate commitment to adopting a skills-first approach and understand its importance and overall alignment to the company's strategic goals.
- **Establish a guiding coalition:** Appoint a group of influential individuals from various levels and areas of the organization with the responsibility of driving Skills-First change, garnering support, and addressing resistance.
- **Ensure ongoing monitoring and evaluation:** Regularly monitor the performance of skills-first practice adoption and the success of individual change initiatives against pre-determined objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs).

¹ JSTOR, Management Revue: Leading and Managing Organizational Change Initiatives. 2009.

Supporting Resources and Tools

Establish a Guiding Coalition Structure

The Guiding Coalition visual is an example structure that can serve as the north star of an organization’s Skills-First implementation, ensuring ongoing momentum.



Leadership Engagement Chart

This chart that lists examples of the common responsibilities and key activities of leadership parties in an organizational change.

Leadership Party	Responsibilities	
Executive Leadership	Pinnacle of a change management initiative; holds the Guiding Coalition and the Change Management Execution Team accountable for momentum and success	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocate and champion for change• Review outputs from Guiding Coalition• Address organizational barriers
Guiding Coalition	Body established to monitor the progress of the initiative; review data and provide guidance on mitigation and course correcting strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocate and champion for change• Communicate development and decisions• Provide feedback and continuous improvements
Change Management Execution Team	Responsible for the day-to-day management and execution of the rollout; works with all stakeholder groups to enable understanding, coordination, and institutionalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocate and champion for change• Develop overall change strategy• Execute implementation activities• Evolve strategy with organizational maturity along Adoption Curve
Human Resources (HR)	HR must be integrated in all implementation decisions as they will be at the center of both external hiring and internal mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure all HR processes updated• Provide oversight and review of HR related trainings and comms
People Managers	Integral to direct employee adoption; without manager communication, transparency, and unyielding support, the anchoring of the change will be compromised significantly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocate and champion for change• Serve as first point of contact for staff and provide support for them