Top-ten tips for leading change

Recognise that change will take time
You will have to overcome familiarity and dependence on established practices, which can lead to anxiety and resistance. Recognise these as natural parts of the change process.

Remember the people, as well as the process
Aligned and engaged people are required to deliver your processes. To create a success out of your business changes you will need to engage a number of individuals.

Expect false starts and hurdles
These are natural, but you will need to show tenacity and be clear on important points of change that are required. Resistance is a positive sign that people are taking change seriously. Embrace the engagement and discuss concerns and how you can overcome them.

Understand that productivity to slow at first
Productivity will slow as people are transitioning to the new way of doing things. Start with small wins. Don’t expect to achieve the grand plan all in one go. Set some achievable milestones, achieve them and build momentum.

Know that not everybody will ‘get it’ immediately
Take time to explain your aspirations and your goals. Just because it’s clear in your head doesn’t mean it’s clear to others. Likewise, your sense of urgency may not be matched by theirs. Keep reinforcing your ‘beacon’ – the place you want to be.

Personalise the benefit
Motivation to change can depend on the person’s perception of benefit. Focus on the positive benefits of change for clients and staff, not the negative consequences. Your people will naturally want to know what’s in it for them. Make sure you have a positive answer.

Vanquish your worst enemy
Experience can often be your worst enemy. Sometimes it’s difficult to forget how to do something the ‘old’ way. This can lead to backsliding. Develop novel ways of trying new things and rewarding success.

Timing is everything
Think about timing ‘nice-to-haves’ with those that you have to make. For example, the business may need to adopt regulatory changes. Is it wise to throw more change on top of an already stretched business? Maybe that’s not the ideal time to change.

Be realistic
The change you want will be harder and more complex than you think so you’ll need to set realistic goals. You can read about leading change in more depth in our guide Aligning your people.