

COUNTY SERVICE CENTER GROUP

CSCG MISSION STATEMENT:

The County Service Center Group is committed to maintaining a membership organization which promotes continuous learning and the exchange of information and ideas between California County Medi-Cal/Food Stamp Service Centers. We partner in an ongoing effort to improve work processes and deliver quality service in a professional, timely and efficient manner.

CSCG Member Counties:

- Contra Costa
- Sacramento
- San Francisco
- San Mateo
- Santa Barbara
- Santa Clara
- Santa Cruz
- Solano
- Sonoma
- Tulare
- Orange
- Monterey
- Riverside

Change Management-Engaging Employees in your Organizational Change

There has been a lot of talk around the water cooler about Change Management: What is it? What does it do? Should we have it? Do we have it?

Simply put, change management is a systematic approach to dealing with change brought on during business transformations. **A service center is a business transformation....**to say the least! Change is occurring. The question is: Do we deal with the changes pro-actively or re-actively?

Re-active change management results in 'process' or 'technology' change but creates a negative 'people' reaction. Why are we surprised when we do not account for the 'people' in change management that they ...do not change? FEAR is behind the 'negative' people changes. A service center itself is not the cause of anxiety among your personnel, it is the FEAR of how this change will impact them. Some common 'change' concerns are:

- Will my schedule change
- Can I do the work
- Will I like taking phone calls
- Will I be bored
- Will my supervisor change
- Will my commute be farther
- Will they know if I take too long on phone calls
- Will my clients be able to reach me

Internal change is successful only when the people involved approve of the change. They must understand and be thoroughly trained on the need for the change and the change itself. They must believe change is good for the organization and good for them. They must agree that the change being undertaken is the right change. Involving people in identifying issues and solutions helps create ownership and acceptance of the change. And, we must answer those fundamental 'FEAR' questions on how change will impact them.

Effecting change relies on people-executives, managers and individuals-building on the strengths and assets of their organization, understanding how their work will change both during and after the change program, and understanding how they will be measured and what successes and failures will mean for them.

Communicating change is a leadership responsibility requiring strength, support and direction. It is more than merely a system redesign and process change. Change strategy requires agreement on roles and responsibilities, consistent messages, and measures of progress and success. The visibility of leadership support is a primary factor in achieving universal approval for change

Should we have it—Do we have it? Yes and yes. Changing the way county governments think about providing the best possible support to their clients has led to large-scale transformations in Medi-Cal and Food Stamps programs. Re-engineering service delivery from a case management model to a task based model in a service center environment relies heavily on many of the principles of change management. Starting with a 'Strategy and Plan' we have built upon an approach to building a service center that not only brings in the specific 'call center' expertise required but also incorporates a change management process through the design and build committees that implement pro-active approaches to change. The key to success of a county service center build are the unique collaborative teams, consisting of county subject matter experts, county managers, line staff, and InTelegy call center experts. Obtaining and incorporating staff input is one vital component to success. Recognizing that we are not only in the service center business but also in the Change Management business is the other. As you incorporate other changes to your business, let's not forget that people make all the difference. Pro-actively accounting for these changes is the secret to success.

Ten Guiding Principles of Change Management

1. Address the human side of change systematically.
2. Change starts at the top and begins on day one.
3. Real change happens at the bottom.
4. Confront reality, demonstrate faith, and craft a vision.
5. Create ownership, not just buy-in.
6. Practice targeted over-communication.
7. Explicitly address culture and attack the culture center.
8. Assess the culture landscape early.
9. Prepare for the unexpected.
10. Speak to the individual as well as the institution.

Most leaders contemplating change know that people matter. It is all too tempting, however, to dwell on the plans and processes, which don't talk back and don't respond emotionally, than to face up to the more difficult, and more critical, human issues.

Source: Booz/Allen/Hamilton

Change Management in the Service Center

Although InTelegy is not a "change management" consulting firm, we do encourage activities that support the "Ten Guiding Principles of Change Management" documented on this page. Here are small ideas that have had a big impact in many of our service center build processes.

Change starts at the top- getting executive sponsor buy-in through a high level strategy and plan and then ongoing through executive oversight status reports ensures that the changes being developed are fully supported by the executive level team.

Real change happens at the bottom- we encourage participation on design and build committees by eligibility and clerical staff. Their role, besides subject matter experts, is to help build processes that are real and that will be embraced by their peers.

Confront reality- there have been several service center design processes that have included bringing staff from other service centers to the offices of the staff implementing the change, or sending staff to tour other service centers. These question and answer panels and site tours help staff confront the "reality" of the change when implementing a service center.

Practice targeted over-communication- there are several great examples of employee communication vehicles used in the service center builds. Intranet sites, emails from managers, newsletters and bulletin boards are some of the basic, but necessary tools. The CSCG member service centers have also used other fun and creative ideas to further communication and awareness about the service center. "Service Center Idol" or the "Voice of the Service Center" has been a contest used in most of the service center builds to identify the voice used for recording the service center phone menus. "Name the Service Center" and "Service Center Logo" contests have been used to brand the service center with a specific and descriptive name and logo used in client communications. These contests are fun for the staff participating but also go a long way to get the word out about the service center build and to bring staff closer to the project.

Prepare for the unexpected- even after 8 years there is always an unexpected twist in the development of a new county service center. Preparation means to be aware that the plans have to be flexible and responsive to the realities of the clients, staff, technology and facilities. Knowing early when issues or challenges arise is the only way to overcome these very real occurrences. The committee structure, supported by a good project plan, allows the service center builds the ability to know and react early.

-Carole Dotson
Director of Consulting

In The News: Service Center Updates

Orange County—Phase 1 Go-Live target for a Medi-Cal and Food Stamps service center is now set for late October 2010, with Phase 2 set for February 2011.

Santa Barbara—The BSC (for Medi-Cal and Food Stamps) has recently introduced a comprehensive Process Improvement Plan. This plan aims to help improve performance and to address the challenge of a rapidly expanding caseload. We have already seen some encouraging improvements with a significantly improved service level and substantial productivity improvements for both phone and task work in the last few months.

UPCOMING CSCG NEWS:

CSCG Quarterly Conference Call — Mark your calendars for the next CSCG conference call, Tuesday, May 11th at 11:00am. Topic: **Change Management: Case Studies**. Your invitation and conference call access information will arrive in your email inbox in early May. Contact [Margaret Condie](#) if more information is needed.