

## Case Study: Launching a Change Initiative through Focus Groups



### Overview

A CEO client with a depth of experience in leading change was concerned that the messages filtering up to the Management Team were not “the full truth.” The CEO along with the Management Team had done the things that typically launch a successful change programme. And yet, the completion of day-to-day work was suffering greatly as the organisation descended into a rumour mill. Talent Futures provided four focus groups at varying levels in the organisation, determined five impediments to success that were hindering progress, and assisted the organisation in adjusting their change initiative to better match the needs of the employees in order to embrace change for the organisation.

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### Prior to Partnering with Talent Futures

The organisation had structured a solid communications process on the change initiative. They had held a series of roundtables with employees covering:

- Why changes were needed
- The strategy for the organisation for the coming 1-3 years
- The process for restructure
- The likelihood of employee reduction in force (minimal)
- New opportunities for employees resulting from the changes

They also provided periodic updates on change progress. And yet, the completion of day-to-day work was suffering greatly as the organisation descended into a rumour mill.

### The Solution

Talent Futures proposed a day of four focus groups at varying levels in the organisation in order to provide a safe environment in which employees could discuss their views. The two consultants designed the focus groups based on the change documents provided by the client, facilitated each session, took notes, and provided a summary report.

Through this process, five impediments to change were discovered, which largely fell into two categories. Firstly, many of the employees had long tenure and still remembered the previous management team and their divisive handling of change. The transparent and communicative approach of the current management team was met with a “wait-and-see” response from these employees, while the optimism of less-tenured employees was effectively silenced. Secondly, the data and IT systems were woefully inadequate and the change programme, targeted at structure and management, was not seen to be concerned with the one thing that consistently and negatively impacted daily work.

The consultants recommended a multi-faceted culture change programme and outlined to the client how much of it could be conducted internally without external support. They also highlighted the importance of further work on the data strategy, and an additional communication stream was added and the changes in the IT team were prioritised.

By conducting externally-led focus groups early in the change process, the organisation made vital course corrections in their change plans that saved potential back-tracking and secured future success.