

EPISODE 24

8 Key Transformation Roles

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Hi, it's Rob Llewellyn here and welcome to episode twenty-four of transformation management. Thank you so much for joining me today. As always, I'm going to do my best to help you get better equipped to manage and lead transformation.

Transformation is a full-scale enterprise-wide journey, both in process and mindset, so it goes without saying that it needs full buy-in from the entire leadership team and the wider workforce.

Transformation is more about people than technology, so having the right individuals in place to lead the transformation is a matter of honestly assessing people's capabilities and shortcomings, then selecting those that are best suited for the job to be done.

While there are many roles that are important to transformation, I'm going to talk about eight of those key roles, each of which injects significant value into the undertaking, which in turn increases the odds of transformation success.

It's important to keep in mind that every organisation has its own unique set-up, so the names and responsibilities of roles will most certainly differ from one organisation to the next.

1. CEO

At the executive level, each leader will have their say, but transformation in most organisations needs to be spearheaded by one individual, which should be the CEO. In transformation, the most important role for the CEO to play is that of a visionary who shows the organisation the way by communicating a compelling story and being a visible and vocal advocate for the transformation.

The CEO needs to serve as the primary change agent in the business, who together with his or her leadership team, will establish alignment at all levels of the organisation, encouraging speed, agility, and accountability, as well as anchoring transformation through bold and rapid decision-making.

To build real value, CEOs need to be prepared to take risks - some of which might feel uncomfortable. But when that's the nature of stepping outside your comfort zone, CEOs need the courage to embrace that challenge and set an example to the people they lead.

The CEOs who succeed will be the ones who understand how to manage the risks that matter and avoid the traps that can de-rail transformation - all while pushing their leadership team and workforce to the limit.

They also need to ensure their leaders understand the difference between transformation and change, and steer them away from the delusion of transformation.

2. Chief Transformation Officer

With transformation being enterprise-wide, the role of the Chief Transformation Officer is vital for successful transformation. Typically reporting directly into the CEO, they're key to business model design, the value creation agenda, and operating model design.

The Transformation Officer is the orchestrator of transformation. With plenty of plates to keep spinning, they need capable managers to take care of the many different facets of transformation.

Transformation Officers take a holistic and big-picture approach to transformation and provide advice and guidance to line of business leaders and owners of initiatives. This leader needs ample supplies of not only cognitive intelligence, but also emotional, political and moral intelligence, and resilience.

While working closely with the Chief Innovation Officer, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Information Officer, they also have a strong rapport with other business and functional leaders. Depending on an organisation's structure, we shouldn't be surprised to see the Transformation Officer working closely with the likes of the Chief Digital Officer, Heads of Product, Chief Marketing Officer, etc. to ensure their ambitions are closely-aligned with the companies overarching transformation goals.

The Transformation Officer assesses the availability and readiness of resources within the organisation, and they also identify and close capability gaps sooner rather than later. They're responsible for incorporating agile ways of working to accelerate transformation, along with transformation portfolio definition and funding.

They need to ensure business transformation governance enjoys a clear decision-making hierarchy with the right people involved and have the right mandate to act on matters they oversee. They'll also ensure a pragmatic metrics framework is used to govern transformation performance.

From organisational change, through to business process and data management, competitive intelligence, and every other aspect of transformation, a good Chief Transformation Officer ensures they're all being managed by a safe pair of hands.

To do all of this well, they'll need a transformation office, and that's what I'm going to talk about next.

3. Head of Transformation Office

The person leading the Transformation Office is the Head of Transformation Office. This is the central nerve system for business transformation and is a vital component of the Chief Transformation Officer's organisation. Without a well-managed Transformation Office, transformation and the people leading it, will struggle to be successful.

The Head of Transformation Office will ensure that planning and execution is embodied by a sense of urgency and accountability, and that these and other characteristics become cultural habits as opposed to rules.

The transformation Office shouldn't be confused with traditional Project or Programme Management Offices. It disseminates transformation-related knowledge and best practices across the organisation and needs a mandate from the Chief Transformation Officer and CEO to challenge upward as well as downward. It should be able to impose consequences on those who fail to deliver as required, which the Chief Transformation Officer and the CEO needs to support.

To help avoid those unpleasant consequences, The Transformation Office keeps the pressure on initiative owners and coaches them when necessary.

The Transformation Office not only sets the schedule and the tone of the transformation, but it also keeps score, with consistent ways of measuring and tracking business value. It ensures everyone has access to the same simple rulebook and is trained to understand its unambiguous processes and policies.

The Head of Transformation Office also has a responsibility to ensure that efforts are not stifled by old-fashion bureaucracy that the company might have become accustomed to.

4. Chief Innovation Officer

The Chief Innovation Officer is in charge of managing the innovation process within an organisation. They'll be busy scouting and standardising market research methods for novel ideas and insights; strategic innovation; promoting open innovation; and introducing group tools and processes that encourage creative thinking.

The Chief Innovation Officer ensures people are trained on the skills they need to innovate and apply measures to track improvements in innovation and the skills underpinning them.

They'll be supporting business units in new product and service initiatives, which means acting as a methodology expert and facilitator for the most critical innovation teams across the company. They'll also encourage and train other managers to support innovation in their respective business units.

The Chief Innovation Officer will be identifying new market spaces by analysing trends and market disruptions and searching for new market opportunities, which in some cases will need to be developed at the corporate level.

They'll helping people generate ideas by setting up idea generation platforms, hackathons, and crowdsourcing - both inside and outside the organisation.

Owning and allocating a yearly budget to fund ideas that are either too risky for the business units, or outside their existing business boundaries, the Innovation Officer nourishes new ideas that might to some, seem unconventional and even crazy.

Working closely with the Chief Transformation Officer and Chief Information Officer, the Innovation Officer paves the way for potentially disruptive innovations that could be the seed to creating a new future for the company.

5. Programme, Project and PMO Managers

The ability to deliver has been a challenge for many organisations long before the words digital or transformation made it into corporate vocabulary. This is why good project and programme managers have so much value to bring to transformation. They live and breathe a sense of urgency which is sometimes alien to their operational counterparts who are accustomed to ticking over at a steady pace.

Programme managers support the implementation of transformation strategy in order to achieve business benefits. They focus on high-level specification and the why and what of transformation. They're less concerned with the success of each individual project, and more focused on the success of the overall programme they're managing.

Programme Managers will interact with project managers and individuals at higher leadership levels and undertake a much wider span of control than project managers. They need to understand the impact their programmes will have on other areas of the business and be focused on strategic thinking and the overall business processes.

Project Managers initiate and oversee projects and undertake a narrower span of control than programme managers. They focus on execution and implementation and provide programme managers with recommendations on requirements, time, cost and quality.

They work cross-functionally, and interact with subject matter experts, line managers, and other project managers.

Project Managers will use analytical thinking to evaluate issues, adjust plans, and solve problems as the project progresses, and they'll be focused on the short-term needs of internal or external customers.

Larger projects or programmes also tend to have a Project or Programme Management Office Manager, who's responsible for providing a range of services, which is of immense value to the project or programme manager.

6. Director of Analytics

The Director of Analytics needs to bring about access to the right data for people all across the organisation - from marketing and product professionals through to analysts and executives.

They have the responsibility of leading the data analytics and data warehousing departments, overseeing all activities and ensuring alignment with the company's vision and objectives. They orchestrate the management, development, and integration of data analytics and business intelligence.

The Director of Analytics sets out a strong analytics agenda and tables the right questions that need answering around data. As well as building the analytics team, which is tightly

integrated with the business functions, they'll also establish an enterprise-wide data-driven decision-making process.

They ensure that adequate people, technology, processes, and money is available to address the current and future analytics needs of the business. To do this effectively, they have a place on one of the organisation's senior level committees. This helps them influence data capabilities and competencies within the business and educate other leaders on the importance of data.

7. Chief Information Officer

Aside from business as usual, the CIO has a critical role to play in the transformation of business and they need to work closely with the Chief Transformation and Innovation Officers. This trio can work together to get the organisational support they need to innovate, experiment and prioritise the right areas of the business to focus on.

The CIO needs to build a team of people and partners who are equipped to enable the business to exploit new technologies and proactively contribute to the organisation's innovation agenda.

It's vital they structure their organisations in a way that enables them to spend their time on activities that are strategic to the business and not fall into the trap that many CIOs find themselves in, which is being bogged down with keeping the lights on.

Most CIOs will have some tough barriers to overcome such as removing functional silos, old ideas about roles and responsibilities, antiquated processes, and technology infrastructures that weren't designed to support an innovative and agile business.

While many CIOs have been given the mandate to innovate, their odds of success will be far greater if a well-equipped Innovation Officer is there to undertake that responsibility. They then work together with the Chief Transformation Officer - each bringing their individual strengths to the transformation table.

The CIO also needs to ensure the organisation has access to people who know how to exploit emerging technologies, which can enable innovation and business transformation to happen.

8. Operating Model Lead

The Operating Model Lead is responsible for shaping, defining and evolving the end-to-end operating model, and would likely report to the Chief Transformation Officer. Being responsible for designing and reinventing the target operating model, they would contribute significantly to the transformation roadmap.

They're responsible for the integrity of operating model and how different parts of the organisation will work well together, ultimately to enable the right customer experience.

The Operating Model Lead defines specific operating model capabilities and provides targeted design expertise. To do this well, they need to coordinate the activity across all business lines and functions, challenge existing practices and identify new and better ways of working - and make well-informed recommendations to senior stakeholders.

The Transformation Management Podcast Transcript

They work closely with the Transformation Delivery Leads to ensure alignment between Operating Model design and Transformation Delivery Projects.

The eight roles I've just described all need to serve as Change Agents who help facilitate shifts in mindsets and behaviours and act as role models for others throughout the organisation.

There are many other roles that are key to transformation success, and it's the responsibility of the people I've just described and their business and technology partners, to ensure they're filled with well-equipped individuals.

The Chief Marketing Officer, HR Leaders, Directors of Strategy, Line of Business Leaders, Line Managers, and so many other managers and leaders all have important roles to play on the transformation stage.

And let's also not forget the many subject matter experts who work in specialist areas such as business processes, app development, GDPR, marketing, IoT, Cloud, technology architecture, User Experience, Story-Telling, Conversational Brand Strategy, Forensics Analysis, Ethics Compliance, Digital Product Management, etc.

I appreciate you listening, and here's a quote to finish off the day from Reid Hoffman - the co-founder of LinkedIn.

“As an entrepreneur and investor, I prioritise construction and collaboration. Whether it's a five-person start-up or a global giant, the companies that are most productive are the ones whose employees operate with a shared sense of purpose and a clear set of policies for responding to changing conditions and new opportunities.”

What do your transformation leaders do to ensure employees across the enterprise operate with a shared sense of purpose?

I hope you enjoyed this episode. Thanks for listening - Take care and I'll catch you in the next episode of transformation management. Bye.