



Podcast

Change Management

Louise Fisher

Director HR
Xerox Global Services Europe

June 2008

Lori: Hello. I'm Lori Webster from Xerox Global Services, and I am delighted to participate in this podcast as part of an ongoing series. Be sure to visit Xerox dot com backlash thought leadership to download future podcasts.

Change management is complex for businesses, mitigating deployment risk and exposure are top of mind, yet there is more to look at. I'm here today with Louise Fisher, European Human Resources Director for Xerox Global Services and an expert on change management. Louise's topic, the Human Dimension; The Most important Thing About Outsourcing You're Likely to Forget. Hello, Louise. Thank you for joining us today.

Louise: Hi, Lori.

Lori: Tell us, Louise, what do you do in your current position at Xerox?

Louise: Well, I manage the HR function across Xerox Global Services in Europe, and there are three parts to that role in the main. The first part is traditional, normal, day-to-day HR. The second part is our team get involved in supporting large outsourcing deals, where there are people involved, and also acquisitions; and the third part is my role as a businessperson as part of the leadership team in XGS in Europe.

Lori: Are you also involved in document outsourcing?

Louise: I'm not personally involved, but clearly that's what our business is, but my team and my role is to support where there's outsourcing in document services. So we would get involved as part of the bid team, supporting a document outsource.

Lori: That's interesting. How complex is that?

Louise: Extremely complex. Whenever you're dealing with people, clearly there are complex issues, and across Europe there are even more complex issues because, potentially, you're dealing with cross-border transfers of people, as well.

Lori: So, what are some of the advantages to document outsourcing and the reasons for doing it?

Louise: Well, companies choose to outsource for a number of reasons. Traditionally, people have outsourced because of cost reductions, but these days more and more decisions are around technology investments. Perhaps the client can't invest in technology, so they will outsource because the partner has invested in that technology, or also because they recognize that they're not experts and they want to partner with somebody who is an expert in that particular space.

Lori: How about risks?

Louise: Well, outsourcing is all about risks. Customers expect you to manage those risks with them and for them in a partnership, and it's something that we do extremely well. We understand documents, we understand technology, and we work extremely well with clients, helping them manage those risks.

Lori: Of these risks, are any apt to be underestimated or underappreciated?

Louise: Yes, clearly, many of those risks are underappreciated and underestimated, and for me, obviously, it's the people risk that I focus on most. Xerox works globally to manage these risks with customers, and we work extremely well. We have shared processes. We have shared organizations and understandings that work with a customer.

However, there is the complexity in Europe that the rest of the globe doesn't have, and that's around the European legislation, which does protect employees in transfers of undertakings, as the legislation is called, so that those people's jobs are protected when an organization outsources work to a third party.

And my team had that specialty. We work with customers' HR departments to help them manage the consultation that they need to undergo, the consultation with their trade unions and their works councils, and we work as a partner with their HR teams to manage them and their people through that process.

Lori: What kinds of things are going through people's minds during an outsourcing scenario?

Louise: Well, it really depends what role you're playing in the outsourcing. If you're the decision maker, then clearly your thoughts are around, "Can I trust the partner? Will they deliver? Will my business be affected by the decision to outsource?" But if you're one of the people who is being outsourced, then your concerns are more personal to you. They're all around, "Well, who is this company? I never chose to work for them. Why am I suddenly being transferred to them?" or things material to them such as their pension or their terms and conditions. So a lot of fear is going through their minds at that time.

Lori: What can be done about that?

Louise: Well, what we would normally advise a customer's HR department to do is, up-front do lots and lots of communication, build trust, share what's happening as early on in the process as you feel able to, let people start to adjust to the change as soon as they can.

Lori: So, where do you begin?

Louise: Well, you get a fee for a client's culture when you start working with them during the bid process itself, even before you're granted the deal. You understand how they work, their hierarchy, their decision-making, their levels of autonomy, and you start putting your team together to fit the client's culture. For me, that's really key, that we have people who can work well in a customer's environment.

Once we've put a bid team together, we work globally using the same bid management process, and we'll work with the customer and quite often they have different processes themselves that they go through. They may have engaged external consultants to manage that process for them, and we have to work closely with those external consultants, as well. And we typically will work through that process 'til you're granted the deal, and then you start working through the transition process.

Once you finish the transition, you're then into working for that client, as a trusted partner, for the life of that contract, and you work with that client to start innovating, to start managing more change for that client, as you run that contract for them for those numbers of years.

Lori: Is it an ongoing practice to bring innovation to clients every day?

Louise: Well, it should be. We encourage all of our service delivery managers to think about how they can work with a client to innovate the solution, to look at things that could be done centrally or things that could be done locally in a different way, in a more effective way to take cost out of the business, or to innovate for that customer so that they can run their business more effectively.

Lori: And what kinds of things need to be communicated?

Louise: I would say everything. Don't hold back. Don't assume that people don't want to know these things. What we've done in the past is we've encouraged customers to set up Web sites or question-and-answer sessions so that you get a feel for what the employees and the business partners, who are making the decision to outsource, what their concerns are and, in that way, you can address them head-on.

Lori: If change management is executed as you've outlined, what are the benefits?

Louise: People come across or transfer to you and they're really motivated and hit the ground running and can perform in a motivated way from day one.

Lori: What happens in the ideal scenario?

Louise: Well, in an ideal scenario, you'll work with the customer very early on in their process and set up a change office, if it's a large-scale change program, or you'll have it as part of the service delivery or transition manager process as part of normal, day-to-day transition.

But not all customers think about change management and, therefore, part of our role is almost consultancy, advising the customer that they need to think about the change, and take the customer through that change and manage it with them on their behalf.

Lori: So it's beneficial to really get on board with managing change, well before change happens?

Louise: And to anticipate and to think about the things that the customer hasn't thought about and to think about the people issues. Those that are in the retained organization and those who are transferring to you will need to adapt to our processes or the new processes that are being implemented on behalf of that customer. And then general change, so they may have changed office, they may have changed desk, they may have to change the town that they work in, so general change needs to be managed, as well.

And, of course, there are the business benefits to managing change well, as well, that people are productive much earlier on in the process than they would have been had you not managed that change program, that the customer sees the innovation and the benefits that they're paying you to deliver for them much earlier on in the process.

Lori: What is Xerox doing to advance the art of change management into the future?

Louise: Well, we're working together as a global team to develop a transition management program, and that, TMP, as we're calling it, is being rolled out across Europe as we speak. And that will include a standard process that all of our transition managers will be trained in, and it clearly will include change management.

We believe that that will enable all of our operations to work together in a systematic way, whether that is global or whether it is regional or whether it is in a single country, so that the customer can feel confident that we're managing that outsource in a professional and trusting way.

Lori: Louise, is there anything else you'd like our listeners to know about change management?

Louise: I could sit here for hours talking about change management. There, it's clearly a huge, huge issue. I think the key things for me are, one, plan for change, two, set up a team to manage that change, and thirdly, don't forget the people. Communicate, communicate, and communicate again.

Lori: Thank you for your insights, Louise. If you'd like more information about the human dimension of change management and other topics, join us at Xerox dot com backlash thought leadership. I'm Lori Webster. On behalf of Xerox Global Services, thank you for listening.

[END OF RECORDING]