



# Making Change Stick

Transformational change. It doesn't happen from a speech or from a memo to all staff. It certainly doesn't happen from simply hanging a plaque with a shiny new set of organizational values on the wall. Yet, why do so many organizations act as though this is all it takes?

Often it's a lack of clarity or ability to define what the measurable desired outcomes should be and how the organization will achieve them. Many say "we really have to improve." And they mean it. But when asked what that improvement looks like, there's a real difficulty answering the question — and no clear idea of how to get there.

## Achieving Lasting Change

From our experience, it's clear the foundation for achieving lasting change starts with the support of executive leaders. Without it, change may be possible but it won't be sustainable. Leadership

sets the values, the values drive the behavior and the behavior drives performance.

The hospitals and organizations that are most successful in achieving sustainable change are those where leaders are engaged in the process and model the behaviors they want to see from staff.

In the same vein, we've also found that without the genuine support of the frontline, change isn't sustainable. While a visible and accessible executive team is critical to success, a top down approach won't lead to an engaged

frontline. Everyone — from nurses, physicians and midwives to unit clerks and environmental services staff — must feel ownership in the process and in the outcomes. If not, they may say all the right things and go through the motions, but they won't create a deep and sustainable culture change.

## All levels of an organization are engaged in creating change

1. Ensure the goals of the frontline and the goals of the organization are in complete alignment.

2. Reframe the role of leaders to one that uses organizational strategy to support the clinical work, rather than the other way around.
3. Create a coalition of agents of change who work at every level of the facility. Ensure this coalition includes direct reports of the CEO as well as many of their direct reports.
4. Ensure the frontline team is fully supported throughout the implementation process required for change.
5. Showcase and communicate early wins, often. Early wins help ensure your teams feel as though change is possible, so they don't gravitate back to familiar habits and the status

quo. They also help bring the skeptics onboard — so a clear process to communicate those wins is also critical.

5. Create clarity and understanding. When people are resistant to change, often it's because they fear what's happening is going to negatively affect them. Employees need to trust and respect their direct manager, trust and respect the organization and trust and respect the leadership team in order for change to stick.
6. Establish a safe place where employees can try new processes and break deeply embedded patterns — without the fear of reprisal or embarrassment.

It takes hard work to get through the difficult steps that a shift in culture requires. At every stage, it's important to remember that lasting change doesn't happen overnight. It takes consistency, persistence and visible leadership at all levels to make change possible on every shift and in every unit.



Working together to improve life.

#### **Salus Global - When Outcomes Matter**

*For more than a decade, Salus Global has been recognized as the world leader in helping healthcare organizations achieve better clinical, economic and operational outcomes. In partnership with our experienced team, our clients have seen significant reductions in adverse events, measurable reductions in costs and improved teamwork and communication across all disciplines.*



Working together to improve life.



#### Corporate Head Office:

Salus Global Corporation  
London, Ontario, Canada  
**T** 800.766.8301  
**E** info@salusglobal.com

#### United States Office:

Salus Global US Corp.  
New York, New York, USA  
**T** 800.354.1744

@salusglobal

salusglobal.com