Driving change is increasingly difficult; pressures for short and long-term success at odds, finds 2020 leadership study

‘Energy’ mindset identified as key to success

NEW YORK CITY, January 29, 2020 – Although most executives are investing in transformation, many have trouble gaining traction on those efforts, finds the just released Change 2020 study from Notion Consulting, a boutique leadership and transformation consulting firm.

Change 2020 revealed that many leaders make small tweaks to meet short-term objectives, but ultimately fail to shift mindsets, behaviors and generate energy for the long term. In fact, 100% of study participants noted they have experienced a transformation effort that focused on small changes and eventually failed.

“Across the board, too many leaders waste time ‘tinkering’ instead of driving transformation,” said Notion Consulting Founder and Senior Partner Christine Andrukonis. “Many struggled to balance their approach between achieving short- and long-term gains -- often due to financial and competitive pressures and competing priorities. As a result, they backed off from making major changes once the challenges became too burdensome. For true transformation to take place, leaders must think big and stay the course.”
In 2019, Notion Consulting conducted one-on-one interviews with 50 successful Fortune 500 corporate and entrepreneurial executives about their business challenges and what it takes to lead change in 2020. *Change 2020* is a compilation of these findings.

When asked to define transformation, 42% of leaders described it as big, major and dramatic. They saw it as a critical step toward the future, and more than 50% of leaders indicated that financial investment was a crucial make-or-break element of a transformation.

Leaders also cited resistance, lack of support, untapped potential and resource constraints as their biggest challenges. Forty-six percent of those interviewed cited resistance as a major barrier to success. “The biggest challenge for any change is to get people outside their comfort zones” and “shift the status quo,” said leaders, and without support from the “highest leader in the organization,” that barrier is not “overcome-able.”

Andrukonis cautions that leaders need to address these potential roadblocks head on if their transformation is to be successful.

One finding of note is that the most successful Fortune 500 change leaders emulate entrepreneurs, who rarely see themselves as change agents. “These leaders are simply fearless and do whatever it takes for their organization to move forward,” added Andrukonis.

**Successful leaders embrace an ‘energy’ mindset**

A key theme that recurred throughout the study was the idea of shifting energy. “Having an energy mindset was one success metric that kept cropping up when we interviewed executives,” said Senior Partner Diana Vienne of Notion Consulting. “Organizations ultimately drive change by shifting energy from negative to positive from fear to vision and from cost cutting to innovation.”

One hundred percent of respondents called out the importance of energy as a key factor in gaining momentum toward the future. Executives interviewed noted that “momentum comes about if the leader is able to articulate the change in a way that resonates, and the leader needs to be clear in his or her communications on what the outcome should be and how the team will work together to achieve it.”

Said Vienne, "Although the global business landscape continues to evolve and the pace required to keep up continues to accelerate, successful leaders understand that there are certain enduring truths that are fundamental to driving change."

These include leading with a strong vision, engaging hearts and minds, leveraging the energy of their people, and staying humble and flexible through challenging times.

*Change 2020* revealed some additional compelling themes, including the need to simultaneously move thoughtfully and efficiently, while building accountability, and rallying the team around a vision and a common purpose.
To read the full report and learn about the full 10 key levers for success, please click here.

**About Notion Consulting**

Notion Consulting is a boutique leadership and transformation consulting firm that helps leaders rapidly tackle their most complex business challenges through the right combination of organizational vision, leadership, talent, and engagement initiatives. Notion works with high-profile organizations like American Express, Cornell University, The Estee Lauder Companies, NFL, Otsuka, Pfizer, and Shiseido to imagine the future, reinvent themselves, attain growth objectives, transition leadership teams and merge cultures from acquired businesses. Established in 2015 and based in the New York City area, Notion has equipped more than 150,000 leaders and employees to drive change and positively impact the future of their companies and teams. Visit www.notionconsulting.com for more information and follow the company on Twitter and LinkedIn.

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