



Change
Management




DRIVING CHANGE TO SUPPORT A FLEET-WIDE EV CONVERSION

A major strategic initiative can impact business processes in unforeseen ways. Big, complex programs require a comprehensive change management approach to understand the details and identify the possible consequences. The road forward must fully consider the people, organization, and project.

When a company specializing in sanitation products and services set out to convert its North American fleet to electric vehicles, it faced more than technical hurdles. It also had to navigate employee habits and organizational obstacles.

The company brought in Integrated Project Management Company, Inc. (IPM) to create a broad, repeatable change management strategy to enable its sustainability goals.

RESTRICTIONS AND RESERVATIONS

 To support its goal of net-zero emissions, the company wanted to convert all its sales and service vehicles to electric. The plan was to convert 10,000 SUVs and trucks by 2030, starting with 1,000 in California by 2025. The company started there because EV infrastructure and adoption are farther along than most states.


However, California also has more employment restrictions than most states. Sales and service associates have to charge EVs during paid hours if they are on the road. For example, they can't charge while taking their lunch break; it has to be on company time. The human resources and legal departments needed to provide guidance. Meanwhile, charging at home means requesting reimbursement. The complicated process requires analyzing energy use data that doesn't always appear on utility bills or match what the vehicle system reports. The company's accounts payable staff would need to be trained and provide training.

Both company leaders and drivers were concerned about productivity and limited driving range. Employees were stressed about having to plan ahead for charging and the risk of getting stranded.

If the change management effort failed, drivers would work around inconveniences by using fast chargers (which cost more and are worse for EVs) or renting vehicles for long trips. These would reduce productivity and increase costs for the company.

Further complicating the endeavor were multiple vendors: the vehicle supplier, fleet management company, and up-fitter. Timelines were tight because many trucks and SUVs had already been ordered.

STRUCTURE AND STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

 IPM set out to design a comprehensive and repeatable change management strategy that would ease driver adoption and reduce costly workarounds.

First, a readiness assessment—combining IPM's POP (people, organization, project) Model and the company's internal change tools—revealed strengths to leverage. The POP Model explores, for instance, employees and leaders' enthusiasm, support, and

knowledge; how well the change is aligned to organizational goals and whether business processes and policies support the future state; and if the change will deliver the expected value and risks have been identified and mitigated.

Notably, the assessment found the EV transition supports the company's sustainability goals and executives support and often talk about the effort.



IPM developed a wide-ranging change management strategy covering communications, stakeholder engagement, and training. To keep the project teams informed and on track, IPM introduced Smartsheet. The tool also gives leadership and vendors visibility into activities and progress.

Frequent staff communications included monthly newsletters, tailored messaging in regular team meetings, and as-needed updates on charging logistics and policy changes. They sought feedback through surveys with the first round of drivers, which helped surface

issues to solve. IPM provided guidance to the fleet company about ways to provide extra support after they deliver each vehicle.

IPM helped the company and its vendors to develop and present training for drivers from vehicle ordering through charging reimbursement. They worked with corporate communications to publicize wins early and often. And managers were coached on company messaging and dealing with the needs of their teams, such as when rentals should be allowed for long trips.

ON THE ROAD TO SUCCESS



Despite the early skepticism, most drivers accepted the change. Surveys indicated 80 to 90 percent positive responses in areas such as training, communications, and support. These figures were higher than expected, as was the 74 percent response rate. Drivers said they understood why the company converted and where to go for answers to their EV questions.

The company is on track to complete its 2025 goal. Importantly, because IPM developed a fully documented change strategy and roadmap, the internal team is ready to lead future rounds of EV deployment.

