

## The Do's and Don'ts of Business Transformation in the Life Sciences

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On Oct. 12 Healthcare Businesswomen's Association hosted a panel exploring the successes and failures of business transformation in life sciences. The panelists, who have all thankfully lived to tell the tale, shared their transformation do's and don'ts based on pitfalls and successes of their endeavors.

Transformation truly touches every level of the organization – from the Senior Leader to the Summer Intern, and everyone is impacted differently. How you manage these varying levels and impacts is what defines the success or failure of your transformation initiatives.

### Here are 9 Transformation Do's and Don'ts:

#### The Do's:

1. **Assume it will take a while.** Transforming is not a quick or overnight process. It will take investment (of people and time).
2. **Communicate the vision and milestones on a consistent and frequent basis.** (Monthly is not too often) Even little wins help to keep the momentum moving forward and showcasing how this small accomplishments help to achieve the greater vision is wildly helpful to those in the organization.
3. **Attract and Retain leadership who share the vision.** You can never have too many advocates in your corner
4. **Communicate.** It's important to check in frequently with team leaders and team members about the current timelines, resources and personnel
5. **Have patience.** Recognize that different individuals are in different places in their transformation. Senior leadership may be very comfortable with transition at the same time that junior staff are learning about changes – that is OK and we need to be patient with each other, but we need to keep moving towards the goal
6. **Separate transformation from the day job.** Transformation has its own set of tasks that must be completed along with regular work – be sure to allow the time, resources and energy to accomplish this work
7. **Find your change agents.** Appoint a small team of highly change agile colleagues
8. **Be transparent.** Be as open as you can with your organization, you need them to stay focused on the work at hand,
9. **Continue to build trust.** People need to trust you first and then respect you

## The Don'ts:

1. **Don't rely exclusively on internal resources.** Transformation requires a bench of experienced players with a different perspective. A 3<sup>rd</sup> person point of view is essential.
2. **Don't give up.** Transformation may take years depending upon the size of the organization and the desired end state. Changing a culture or a global process is not done overnight. There are still people out there who do not know how to use a smartphone.
3. **Don't assume things will go smoothly.** They won't!
4. Don't spread rumors. If you 'didn't see it, don't say it' – rumors are difficult for everyone
5. **Don't assume.** Always clarify and if need be, clarify again – everyone is doing the best they can, but sometimes, information is updated and so need to check in again if your understanding seems flawed
6. **Don't neglect activities of daily living.** Have lunch, exercise, check in with colleagues – during transformation we are doing a lot of things 'for the first time' so it is good to build in a few things that remain constant through the transformation
7. **Don't lose sight of your career.** Don't partake in the politics and self-promotion and worry about your own job
8. **Don't read the big thick books.** Well, not too many of them anyway. Change management books are great but they won't give you the silver bullet
9. **Don't forget about the customer.** Often times during a transformation we're not communicating to the employee that we need to focus on the right things for the customer