

M & A Integration Advisor

Strategy Partners

Integration Coaching Points

Many managers are unprepared for the high pressure demands of integrating a merger or acquisition. Here are some coaching points:

- Make few promises and keep the ones you do make.
- Don't promise that things will remain the same. Let employees know that there will be change and that the interests of all employees will be considered and that they will be kept informed.
- Be as specific as possible. Give explanations in clear straightforward language.
- Be aware that people are hanging on every word you say, even in private conversations. Don't feed the rumor mill.
- Over communicate, more is better. People are increasingly hungry for information.
- Help people find the answers they need. Don't be responsible for giving them the runaround. Anticipate their needs and

“Be open and honest as there is much at stake for everyone involved.”

take the initiative to meet those needs.

- Pay attention to how something is said as well as the actual words. Be alert to implied meanings and hidden agendas.
- Be humble and respectful. Don't be arrogant or act superior. Make others feel important. Show empathy and patience.
- Act promptly and decisively. Provide a clear sense of direction and purpose. Mergers/Acquisitions present an opportunity to make bold moves. Reduce your employees' sense of ambiguity by providing clear leadership.
- Keep everyone focused. Make operational targets specific, measurable, and challenging. Set definite timetables. It is important is to set targets for the future that every one can support.
- Establish the organization's staffing quickly. Set up clear and well-defined reporting relationships. You cannot make all necessary decisions. Delegate authority and manage closely.

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A Successful Integration Plan Requires (in ranked order):

- Retention of Key Talent
- Honest Communication
- Integration of Cultures
- Management of Resistance

Upcoming In Future Issues:

- Integration Monitoring Systems
- Key Questions for Process Re-design
- Key Integration Components: Essentials for Effective Integration

About Strategy Partners

Strategy Partners is a merger and acquisition consulting firm specializing in integration planning and implementation. Successful integration planning needs to begin as early as the Due Diligence phase. Working with your management team, we develop detailed implementation action plans. Our involvement during the implementation phase is tailored to the client's needs. We con-

duct follow-up meetings with the implementation team to monitor progress and make mid-course corrections. We can also provide services as the "integration manager", executing a majority of the implementation action items. For more information, please contact us at 612-860-6984 or don@strategypartners.biz.

Merger & Acquisition Integration Strategic Planning & Implementation





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Integration Coaching Points (continued)

- Continue to reinforce the new company's rules, policies, and procedures. Make sure employees are informed of them and remind them of the rationale for them.
- Don't underestimate the time it takes to manage the change process in an integration. Small acquisitions can take just as much time as the big ones.
- Don't overwhelm the new management team with corporate staff showing up unannounced or unexplained.
- Be careful when replacing successful processes and procedures with new rules from the corporate parent. You may be throwing away a best practice.
- Be a role model for a positive attitude.
- Motivate. A merger/acquisition is a great opportunity to re-energize people and organizations.
- Minimize surprises. Unanticipated events generate the most stress on employees.
- Good integration require sound project management and discipline. Establish feedback loops and monitor closely.
- Trying to get it perfect is the biggest mistake of all. It paralyzes the organization. Communicate that you will make some mistakes and be prepared to take corrective actions.
- Get to know the other company. Determine the conflict points between the cultures and factor them into your plans.
- Ground your decisions in financial reality. Provide a process to put dollar signs on decision alternatives.
- Promote a sense of urgency. Set up a process that allows swift resolution of issues.
- You might be tempted to retain people in an attempt to be humane. It is actually kinder to let people know on the front end if they need to be looking for a job.
- Focus on the business strategy and satisfying your stakeholders. Sometimes the decisions will be unpopular but if they support the business plan they will be accepted.

In conclusion, the greatest errors in integration management are errors of omission. Critical mistakes are made in deciding to do nothing in an effort to avoid doing wrong. Be proactive and take charge of the situation. Now is the time to seize the opportunities and attack the problems. Be open and honest as there is much at stake for everyone involved.
