Recently I conducted a survey of subscribers to this site and asked this question:

"What is your single biggest issue in leading, managing or surviving change?"

As you would expect, there were many different responses about many different issues. The 3 most dominant issues were as follows:

1. Issues with sustaining the change (27%)
2. Issues with senior management not understanding/accepting the need for Change Management (18%)
3. Issues to do with culture and how to deal with "people being stuck" & "laggards" (11%)

Here is a representative cross-section of the responses I received together with the detailed answers I provided:

(1) Issues with sustaining the change (27%)

"One thing that I am continually up against is keeping the momentum and motivation up through the change"

The level of sustained energy and support of senior management (or lack of it) - bearing in mind John Kotter's maxim that 70% of management need to be on board and actively in support – is a major factor in sustaining momentum. In this context, senior management support needs to address the conflicts and politics- see:

http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/conflict-resolution-tips.html

Secondly, the extent to which the informal organisation has been involved AND their first line management/supervisors are involved - those of people who work in the "frontline".

In my experience - the frontline people nearly always have the leverage and the power to block things and the solutions - the key to this is approaching them the right way, asking the right questions, and keeping them continuously involved throughout all aspects and stages of the change process.

UK change practitioner Neil Farmer of Informal Networks has a superb track record of delivery (5 major corporate change programmes back-to-back) using the informal side of the organisation. Take a look at the sections on this on the link below and check out some of the many resource links on working with the informal organisation (many reference to Neil's site and publications):

http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/resistance-to-change.html

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"In the healthcare sector, I find that staff are simply exhausted with the dizzying pace of change and resource cutbacks… and the suffering economy. It's not that staff do not WANT to engage; but rather, they feel over-saturated with increasing and competing demands. Their buckets are empty!"

I have no easy answers for this, but to be constructive it may be worth taking a look at this material on "Change Readiness Assessments" - see:
http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/change-management-risk-assessment.html

And also taking a look at what is involved in creating a "culture of readiness for change" and the very specific leadership qualities that are needed to bring this about - see:
http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/leadership-qualities.html

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"A tool to help managers maintain the momentum once the change has begun. E.g. not losing sight of the vision, and maintaining the sense of urgency that will see the change implemented."

The first thing that immediately springs to mind for keeping people focused on the big picture and ensuring clear visible metrics on performance is having a clear benefit management strategy in place as per attached summary.

The page covering this on this site is here:

http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/benefits-of-change-management.html

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"People have 'change fatigue', they feel like they never get a chance to bed down one thing, but they are already on to the next. The organisation rarely says no to an opportunity and then struggles to prioritise. Our challenge is very much about managing change driven by rapid growth and expansion."

It feels to me as though what you are describing is an organisation that needs to undertake some form of "Change Readiness Assessments" - see:

http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/change-management-risk-assessment.html

Also it sounds as though the organisation need to develop a "culture of readiness for change" and this requires very specific leadership qualities - see:

http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/leadership-qualities.html

However, to bring this about you really do need top-level support and sponsorship.

One possible way to enlist that top level support is to identify some very specific, tangible and financial benefits that would arise if this happened, and to also identify some very some very specific, tangible and financial risks, threats and exposures (especially to senior executives) if this doesn't happen.

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(2) Issues with senior management not understanding/accepting the need for Change Management (18%)

"How to obtain stakeholder engagement when they 'just don't get it'?"

My suggestions are:

(1) To focus their minds on failure - the high likelihood of it - and I would seek to find ways of "grinding out" the personal impacts that failure will have on them - what it will cost them personally how and where they will have personal exposures if/when the initiative fails. In my experience, nothing focuses UK corporate senior management like the fear of a personal exposure! The bigger the exposure the more engagement/action you are likely to see!

(2) To show them how what they perceive to be "soft"/fuzzy people issues are directly and inextricably interlinked with hard financials - their hard financials - thus engagement with the CM process is essential to their interests.

You'll find useful material on this here (and on the links and resources on each page):

http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/change-management-implementation.html

I particularly recommend that you look at Peter Duschinsky's work which is featured here (and on his site) he is pioneered some services and tools that directly address this and expose senior execs to the likely/inevitable fallout of a failed initiative and he gives an assessment of the likelihood of this happening. (Peter is UK based.)

http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/change-equation.html

(3) To some extent, to bypass them, and focus on the other people who really matter and are key to a successful initiative - the informal organisation - those in the frontline at the point of service-delivery or product - creation AND their managers (i.e. the supervisors and first level line managers.

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organisation. Take a look at the sections on this on the link below and check out some of the many resource links on working with the informal organisation:

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"How do you calculate the return on investment (ROI) of change management? How do you know you've succeeded?"

The short answer is by having a clear benefit management strategy in place. The page covering this on this site is here:

http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/benefits-of-change-management.html

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"Helping my clients understand the necessity of dealing with the personal transformation part of change. Many times my clients understand and want to focus on the organizational change (i.e. a new software program, a new procedure, a new piece of equipment, etc.) but fail to consider the personal transformation (dealing with the loss, emotional states to be worked through, power lost or gained, etc.) issues."

"What would really help me would be an approach to getting leaders and managers to understand change management and rather than seeing it as fuzzy, huggy, one-off event or tool that will solve all the people challenges they are facing, understand the complexities, ongoing approach and their role in managing their people through the changes."

"There seems to be a reluctance among the leaders of my organization to even recognize that they have a problem with managing change. Any suggestions would be welcome."

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http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/failure.html
http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/change-management-facing-up-to-the-horror-of-it-all.html

(2) To show them how what they perceive to be "soft"/fuzzy people issues are directly and inextricably interlinked with hard financials - their hard financials - thus engagement with the CM process is essential to their interests.

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"Sure fire way to minimise the strength of the restraining forces and how to manage 'the politics' during change. How to keep the eye on the big picture without seeming insensitive to people's needs and feelings."

The first thing that immediately springs to mind for keeping your/their eye on the big picture is having a clear benefit management strategy in place as per attached summary.

The page covering this on this site is here:

http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/benefits-of-change-management.html

Secondly, the level of sustained energy and support of senior management (or lack of it) bearing in mind John Kotter's maxim that 70% of management need to be on board and actively in support. In this context, senior management support needs to address the conflicts and politics - see:

http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/conflict-resolution-tips.html

Thirdly, the extent to which the informal organisation has been involved AND their first line management/supervisors are involved - those of people who work in the "frontline".

In my experience - the frontline people nearly always have the leverage and the power to block things and the solutions - the key to this is approaching them the right way, asking the right questions, and keeping them continuously involved throughout all aspects and stages of the change process.

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(3) Issues to do with culture and how to deal with "people being stuck" & "laggards" (11%)

"How do you get the laggards to embrace the change (in a voluntary organisation)"

"I'm looking for are the breakthrough points where I might most productively work - the really key leverage point that might produce some exponential shifts which would show people that change 'can' happen."

"When I apply the CM practices to Government Automation (eGovernance Projects) and conduct the workshops, the one biggest challenge is to ensure that the Leadership (senior officers) and About-to-retire functionaries, who are most cynical, to sit through the workshop sessions. Can you specifically design some tools/ steps for addressing this challenge?"

The short answer from John Kotter is "don't bother" check the video at the top of this page:

http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/resistance-to-change.html

The long answer is that you move people towards a shared mindset by undertaking a simple cultural analysis as the first step in your change planning/initiation.

You will find plenty of resource here:

http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/organisational-culture.html
http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/programme-planning.html

But ultimately you can't win everyone over. One of the many benefits of the cultural analysis is that you identify the "regressive" and "subversive" subcultures very early on.

If you do all of this with a heavy involvement of your informal organisation - i.e.e non-management frontline people at the point of service delivery they will help you

overcome this. In my experience - the frontline people nearly always have the solutions - the key to this is approaching them the right way, asking the right questions, and keeping them continuously involved throughout all aspects and stages of the change process.

I also suggest you look at these pages and all of the resources and links included on these pages:

http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/change-management-templates-for-CEOs.html
http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/change-management-risk-assessment.html
http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/resistance-to-change.html

However, if it's too late in the day for all that, I'd follow Kotter's suggestion and just cut them out of the loop (to put it bluntly).

"The one area you could help with is - managing reluctance to change in a environment where the culture is to sit tight or fight change with group resistance."

The one thing that will move you towards a shared mindset is to undertake a simple cultural analysis as the first step in your change planning/initiation.

You will find plenty of resource here:
http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/organisational-culture.html
http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/programme-planning.html

[Also, I hope you will forgive me saying this, but this is a very significant aspect of what is addressed in detail in the Practitioners Masterclass materials!]

The big key to all this is to involve people from senior parts of your organisation (Kotter says you need 70% on board to succeed) and critically - involve people from the informal aspects of your organisation in this process AND keep them involved throughout the duration of the initiative.

I do strongly recommend that you involve all elements of your organisation in addressing this question and especially the "informal organisation" - those of your people who work in the "frontline" i.e. your lowest status employees and volunteers who operate at the delivery end of your services.

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http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/resistance-to-change.html

To take this a stage further, I have 2 further suggestions:

(1) To focus their minds on failure - the high likelihood of it - and I would seek to find ways of "grinding out" <u>the personal impacts that failure will have on them</u> - what it will cost them <u>personally </u>how and where they will have personal exposures if/when the initiative fails. In my experience, nothing focuses UK corporate senior management like the fear of a personal exposure! The bigger the exposure the more engagement/action you are likely to see!

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http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/change-equation.html

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"My question is as follows: "What are possible preparatory steps that will ensure a shared mindset on the need to change?"

"One of the biggest needs I have at this moment is a detailed planning process, that includes identifying the stakeholders, their role in the project, how the change will impact them and the expectations in regards to communications and how those communications will be managed."

The detailed planning process [and the one thing that will move you towards a shared mindset] is to undertake a simple cultural analysis as the first step in your change planning/initiation.

You will find plenty of resource here:

http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/organisational-culture.html
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http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/change-equation.html

Regarding the communication aspect of your question, you may find these links and other resources and link on these pages useful:

http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/communication-strategy.html
http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/effective-workplace-communication.html
http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/barriers-to-effective-communication.html

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Please do get in touch.

http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/contact-me.html

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