

Synovis Life Technologies Employee Inclusion in Managing Change

When Karen Gilles Larson became CEO of Synovis Life Technologies (called Bio-Vascular at the time), she discovered a demoralized workforce, hitting out at each other rather than working toward a better company. So Larson met all 100 employees in the cafeteria and emphasized the need for mutual respect to turn around the beleaguered St. Paul medical products manufacturer. "We're all in a boat, and we're going to row together," she said. Over the next few years, Larson transformed Synovis by investing in research and development and diversifying the company's product range, all the while keeping employees involved and informed. Today, Synovis is one of Minnesota's top business success stories. "Now we've got cash in the bank, we're growing the revenue and profits, and it's been under her leadership," says a longtime Synovis director."

How might Karen Larson and other leaders communicate and model their vision in ways that would bring about meaningful change? Companies can also learn from Karen, to create, communicate, and build employee commitment to enable the company's vision.

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YouSigma. (2008). "Synovis Life Technologies Employee Inclusion in Managing Change." From <http://www.yousigma.com>.