

How to Manage Change at Work

Last month we talked about embracing change and being open to new possibilities. This month's topic is about managing change in the workplace effectively.

As a leader or an employee, change can bring about opportunities and with it difficulties to work through. What are some of the factors that help bring about the best results when implementing change in the workplace?

Communicating

The most important factor is communication. Change leads from a known state to a new state of affairs and with that it brings uncertainty and often unexpected consequences. Communicating the vision is the leader's responsibility and the clearer the vision, the better.

- When communicating remember the Who, What, When, Where, and most importantly, the Why.
- Remember communication goes both ways and listening attentively and responding thoughtfully will bring new insights and improvements to the change.
- It takes 7 repetitions for most people to "get it". Don't expect instant results from one communication.
- Use communication to positively reinforce peoples' efforts towards the desired result.
- Use face to face communication over the telephone or e-mail. These electronic devices interfere with the 70% of communication that is non-verbal. Seeing peoples' reactions and body language will give you a clue of where the most resistance will be and gives people a chance to air their concerns.

Planning

Plan the change and establish the end goal with intermediate goals.

- Break down the change you want to see. This will give you a better idea of the time frame and effort that needs to be put into each step.
- Delegate, empower and allow people to give their input into the change. If someone comes up with a different way and it helps to support the goal, go with it. The success will be everyone's, not just the leaders.
- Anticipate problem areas and responses. This will keep you from scrambling and reacting when glitches appear.

Prioritizing

Prioritize your goals and methods from what is most important to what is expendable.

You don't always need a Cadillac when a Volkswagen will do.

- Change usually takes longer than we anticipate. Focus on the most important things first. Implement the steps of your plan and check progress frequently.
- Help others prioritize their tasks and time commitments to give time for the change process to be worked through. Take low value tasks off your plate and the plate of others to free up time.

Focus on these factors when implementing change and watch the positive energy flow!

Colleen Noyes, Munday Recruiting