



Supporting people through change

Give leaders a clear role

Ensure there is a clear role for leaders in directing the future for people in the organisation. During great change, leaders need to give people a sense of what the future will look like for the company and the people in it. Clarify this role as part of an overall presentation focusing on business goals.

Champion the middle managers

Middle managers always have a big role to play in change management. They're the ones who need to make it work. Recognise their role and give them all the support they need to make the connection between the strategic aims and the front-line people who have to deliver them.

Communicate, communicate, communicate

Failure to communicate is actually communicating failure. Organisations often fail to communicate because they're not sure their employees are going to like it or they're concerned that their story isn't complete. But if you don't tell people, they will find out for themselves and it's better for everyone if they find out from you.

Avoid management speak

You're speaking from the viewpoint of management yet you must avoid management speak. This does not mean avoiding the business case at a time of stress for people, it's all about finding a straightforward and honest way to present a business case that people can understand and relate to. Work on how you say what you want to say.

Restate the positives – people remember the negatives

Many people see change in organisations as negative. If you listen to and acknowledge employees' concerns, you can address the 'what's in it for me?' question that is uppermost in the minds of everyone, but not necessarily spoken. This gives you space to absorb the negativity while restating the positives for the business and the people in it.

Bring it to life

Give people a sense of what it's going to be like. What's the roadmap, how does everything else fit, how will working life be different for the company and the people within it? Bring the need for change to life in ways people can relate to.

Measure the benefits

Put a measurement process in place to establish the benefits of change. Showing people the benefits can help develop employee consensus and provide an outlet for more constructive opinion. As long as you avoid a blame culture, giving people the opportunity to feedback as part of a measurement process can revitalise their approach to the new aims of the business.

Recognise the adopters

While you're looking around to see who is adapting, it's important to recognise the early adopters. People who are changing and adapting deserve support and praise. If you can find a credible way of rewarding their approach, it could act as inspiration for others to follow.

Pilot, rehearse and test

Change is going to happen again, so start getting ready for the next change now. It doesn't have to be crisis management, but preparing key staff for their people management role during change can only be a good thing. Find the time during a stable period to pilot, rehearse and test managers' roles in change.