

NAVIGATING CHANGE

20 Tips for Navigating Change in Business

Organizations and people resist change. Change is hard. Change is scary. Change, however, can be good. It is necessary in this business climate that organizations be open and adaptable to change. Below are 20 tips to help you as you implement new strategies to communicate the process, receive feedback, and present change as making a positive impact on the organization and its employees.

1. For each strategy (depending on the size of the company) designate a group responsible for managing change.
2. Identify the employees, groups, processes, customers, vendors, etc. that will be effected by this change. Do not assume that any change is too small to concern a person or group. Lean to the other side, and assume that even a part – time individual will feel some impact and have an opinion about change.
3. For each item identified, develop a written document on how the change will affect them objectively. Will they have additional responsibilities or less, will they need new training, will they make less money or more, will they report to a new person, will they change departments or work in a new location.
4. Next, take each item and consider how they will be affected subjectively. Will they feel threatened? Will they feel that their job is at risk? Will they feel that they have been “demoted”? Will they feel they have not been understood? Consider whether they were knowledgeable of the change coming, a part of the discussion on the change, or if for strategic reasons, they were not aware of the change at all.
5. Considering the objective and subjective effects for each group, develop a communication plan that includes the following:
 - + Clarify the vision
 - + Identify the strategy necessary to achieve the vision
 - + Identify the objective changes that will take place
 - + Identify the “good” that will come from that change (increased productivity, less frustration, more profits, better communication, etc.)
 - + Identify the concerns that will come from the change (consider both objective and subjective lists)
6. Identify ways to mitigate the concerns identified in 5e. For instance, if a strategy will involve change of location, identify what benefits come from this - increased productivity, better facility, closer to main arteries, bigger work areas etc.
7. Identify the best way to communicate the change (in a group, individual meeting, company email, or combination of the above)
8. Identify the best person to communicate the change - ideally someone who has the trust of the group.
9. Allow a sufficient amount of time for discussion of the change - don't cut people off.

10. Get feedback about the change. Write it down in front of group/individual and note importance and that concerns will be discussed - measure if this has become a "HOT Topic" - if so communicate that their voice will be heard and they will get feedback on their comments
11. Allow open communication to continue as individuals think of other concerns - encourage emails, phone calls or meetings to discuss further. Develop process for anonymous comments to be communicated.
12. Collect all feedback and review – identify valid concerns and develop strategies to address.
13. Consider if additional meetings should be held to communicate reactions to change and any changes that will be made in response to concerns expressed.
14. Prepare a communication process as Execution of the Strategy begins which includes: start date, schedule of events and end date.
15. Measure and benchmark progress and change occurs.
16. Develop procedure to get feedback from effected groups on:
 - + How the change is going?
 - + How they perceive the change is achieving results?
 - + How are they feeling - is it better or worse than expected?
 - + Do they have any suggestions as the process evolves?
17. Communicate status of changes - continue to solicit feedback in a methodical manner and respond in a regular way such as weekly email as the strategy is implemented
18. When project is complete, communicate how results will be measured and communicated to team/individual.
19. Reward/congratulate team on successful implementation
20. Continue to communicate in timely manner, success of strategy, failures of strategy, learning of team, and appreciation for everyone's involvement.

Communicate, communicate, communicate. It is the key to successfully implementing change.

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