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How to Effectively Manage Change as a Team



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Change is a constant phenomenon. Small changes occur every day. In the workplace changes are efficiently catered to by an active leadership environment.

From time to time organizations have to adapt to major changes. A leadership change, a reorganization, a merger or acquisition, and or a pandemic can have catastrophic impact to people's lives when managed poorly.

To successfully manage major changes is difficult but presents both opportunities and challenges for every employee. To be prepared for such changes and maximize benefits in the process, leaders must be active, organized, strategic, and create a suitable safe environment for the workforce to thrive before, during, and after a major change.

As a leader you need to have clarity of your objectives and be prepared to tackle any eventualities for your team. It is essential to anticipate scenarios — both good and bad — and when facing such developments, leaders must show composure, empathy, and compassion to guide teams effectively through change.

It is recommended that leaders have an action plan with clear expectations and responsibilities for all stakeholders.

“The success of any organization is dependent on leaders who can bring teams together while maximizing the talent and strength of every individual.”

Maximizing Benefits from Change

Here are some steps leaders can take to successfully steer through any major change in an organization:

1. Start with a Detailed Plan

Help everyone understand that the business needs to accept changes, in some cases to survive and expand on the dynamics of the market that is causing the need for it. Innovation is key to success and it needs to be part of the culture.

“Innovation gives cause for positive change.
Change is life in motion.”

To have an effective plan, leaders should know the strengths of

employees and delegate responsibilities accordingly. They should also identify weaknesses in the workplace and actively work on them before jumping into transforming the organization.

2. Clarify the Business Objectives

As a leader, you should be aware of the organizational objectives and be clear about what the business stands to achieve from the upcoming change. You should confidently approach the change and be flexible enough to modify your techniques if required. Only through employee's active participation through the exchange of ideas and commitments, can you effectively attain goals.

“Domination and coercion tactics will get the job done when it comes to making changes, but not without causing employees to disengage, and leave; ultimately hurting your reputation.”

3. Communicate with Clarity

Communication is critical in times of change so that you gain the confidence of your team. Communication can be effective only if you keep all employees updated on developments and ensure that they understand the organization's objectives as well.

It is important to note here that communication is a two-way street.

You should engage your employees in the change process by listening to their ideas, concerns, comments, and suggestions. This will make them feel valued as a part of the organization and enhance their involvement in the transition.

4. Identify Key Performers

Every organization has a diverse culture, and it is the responsibility of leaders to identify the strengths and potential of each team member. Those members who are more receptive to change should be immediately made part of the change process. These members will be instrumental in ensuring a smooth transition during the change process and will sustain the morale of their respective teams.

The team members who are change advocates should be delegated important responsibilities to steer through the transition. Their job should be to mentor and get every other member of the team on board with the transition.

5. Aim for Realistic and Achievable Objectives

Although employees put in extra effort and time during changes in an organization, it is indeed a stressful and emotional time for them. Leaders should keep this in mind and aim for realistic targets. That is how you keep the team motivated and able to handle changes at an empathetic and compassionate pace.

We humans naturally don't like change. With unreasonable expectations, teams will be set up for failure and this will result in a discouraged workforce.

6. Manage Expectations

During the transition, employees might be uncertain at times about their roles and expectations from leaders. In such critical moments, a true leader will manage the expectations within the workforce.

An honest and open discussion will help in understanding what employees expect from leaders, and also what is expected from them.

7. Accountability and Recognition

The workforce must be equipped with the right training, resources, and authority to be able to hold themselves accountable for the valuable role they will play in the change process.

They must also be recognized and rewarded properly for their contributions so that they continue to be a vital part of the new organization. Don't just say thank you to those leading the charge for change, recognize them with rewards they value. Some value cash, others value extra vacation time.

“Every effort made to reward the members of the change cadres in an organization, is an investment in the success of the organization.”

A major change in an organization is an opportunity that must be maximized effectively. Any related challenges or concerns can be enthusiastically tackled with encouraging transparency, teamwork, bilaterally open and honest communication, and rewards for embracing change.

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