

Implementing Change in the workplace

Change

It's a word that has negative connotations for many people. In particular, change in the workplace. People resist change for a variety of reasons, but they can usually be categorised under one heading - fear. So how do you gain the support of your employees for even the most drastic of restructuring?

Planning

Introducing change involves more than the initial decision. Planning for introducing the change, communicating it to staff and managing the after-effects should all be part of the process.

Communicating

Preparing your employees for change should be viewed well beyond the announcement. When you're intending to introduce change, the planning process should involve input from the workforce on the best way to implement the change. You'll find they'll be far more committed to the change if they see that their perceptions have been considered and with a sense of 'ownership' over ideas and concepts, they will embrace the change with open arms. A key is to position the decision as 'progress' rather than 'change'. This way, your employees will focus on the positive side of the process. Your employees also need to understand the "bigger picture". There's no point introducing the "how" if they

don't appreciate the "why". Don't be afraid to discuss with your employees how you arrived at the decision to change and invite their input and feedback.

Facilitating and Supporting the change

Every one of your employees will react differently to change and during the process, it's important to provide support and training to facilitate the change. Open communication is also important at every stage, and giving employees a timeline and expected outcomes will ensure everyone is pulling in the same direction.

A step-by-step guide to change management

1. Consult with employees during the decision-making stage
2. Discuss with employees the reasons for the change
3. Ask for feedback on the proposed change
4. Clarify everyone's role in the change process
5. Involve employees in the implementation strategy
6. Develop a timeline on specific actions of implementation
7. Determine the priority of actions
8. Provide training on new systems or procedures
9. Review the progress of the change
10. Maintain open lines of communication

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