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Change Management

There is no way around it: change is unsettling. Whether expected or unexpected, it is easy to get swept up in the change and lose your sense of control. It is especially unnerving when this change occurs in the workplace. Employees may doubt their ability to learn new skills, lose the feeling of job security they once had, or simply lack faith in the change itself.

With the right mindset, an impending change does not have to mean a workplace disaster. It is important to be prepared and have a skilled change manager in place to aid in the transition. You, as an effective manager, must be able to understand the change, motivate employees to accept it and successfully guide them through implementation. Here are a few helpful hints in dealing with change in the workplace:

Understand reasons for change. In order for a company to remain relevant and productive, it needs to move with the business climate. Leaders of an organization need to continuously reassess how they approach matters as well as the services they offer. Success in the business world necessitates change; it is important that you know how to approach it.

Adapt quickly and communicate. The sooner you have a grasp on what is going to happen, the sooner you can calm employee apprehension and get them on the right track. Gather as much information as possible on the impending change and adapt quickly. It is understandable that employees will respond to the proposed change with a certain amount of anxiety and uncertainty, so it is very important to communicate the particulars clearly and encourage employees to ask questions. They are more likely to put trust in your management skills as well as the change itself if you offer information and welcome feedback.

Leave emotion at the door. Don't let your personal feelings affect your ability to lead. You may not always agree with the change, but it is your job to accept it and subsequently help others accept it. Remember that change is intended to improve the business and is implemented to help your company move forward. With your skillful leadership, it can do just that.

Motivate. Give employees a reason to work toward company goals. Despite any resistance you encounter, you must get them involved and outline possible outcomes. Active participation engages employees in the process and draws them together as a community working toward a common goal. Tie their individual goals to company objectives and illustrate how those goals can be one in the same. Even if the change presents a temporary setback or a negative effect that is more permanent, encourage them to follow through and create their own opportunities within the change. Help them understand the overall benefits that will result down the road.

Lead the way and then step back. A manager must take control and lead the way when it comes to managing change. Once employees have all the information, however, it is important to let them work toward the change. When employees take responsibility and have a hand in working toward the future of the company, it is much easier for them to accept any temporary discomfort. Their own achievements allow them to gain back some of the control they lost and strengthens their loyalty to the company. As a result, they are part of the change instead of a victim of it.

It is crucial to understand that whether or not you and your employees have control over change in the workplace, you do control how you react to it. Growth and change go hand in hand, and ultimately change is put in place to move the business forward. Without it, the business would become stagnant. It is your job to shake employees out of the comfortable predictability of their work lives and help them to become immersed in the process. With your confident facilitation of the change, the transition is likely to be a successful one.

“To the fearful change is threatening because it means that things may get worse. To the hopeful it is encouraging because things may get better. To the confident it is inspiring because the challenge exists to make things better.” King Whitney Jr.