

Ready for CHANGE?

Eight ideas for supporting your employees during times of transition



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Just like weather — which has many changing aspects — the workplace can have different conditions that can affect your employees. Change seems as inevitable as the occasional rainy day.

Change in the workplace has the potential to be challenging. Depending on the individual personalities on your team, responses to change can be highly distinct. One person can experience a drizzly day as gloomy, while another sees a partly cloudy day as a mostly sunny day.

The degree — or intensity — of the change can also affect an individual's response to it. Small changes may be met with relative tolerance, while larger changes may meet much more resistance. Different types of change include:

- New tasks or types of projects
- Use of new systems
- Personnel changes — a new coworker or a new manager
- Modification in the reporting structure
- Organization-wide changes, such as adjustments to the organization's goals or mission
- Move to a new office space
- An increase in work load

How much time people have to adjust to the idea of the change can also affect how individuals respond. If the change is abrupt and unexpected, your team has to deal with the shock while making the adjustments required of the change to keep functioning. This can be overwhelming.

1 > Acknowledge that change is difficult

Many of your team members have certain systems and routines in place that help them get their jobs done efficiently and effectively. And, as you can imagine, being told that they are going to have to do things a totally new way can be a bit discouraging. Acknowledging that change can be difficult is the first step to connecting with your team members, and also letting them know that you are sympathetic to their situation.

2 > Be positive while sharing

Sharing your personal feelings about the change can be helpful to your team. You can feel free to diplomatically share any resistance you have had in the past. Yet, be positive about the steps being taken to move forward in the future assuring your team that they will have your support every step of the way.



3 > Be transparent and timely

Provide any information that you have permission to share as soon as you are able. The first question on the forefront of many of your team members' minds is probably: what is the reason for the change? It can be helpful to know why something is happening. If it sounds reasonable and logical, most people are apt to adjust to the change more easily and feel better about any needed modifications. If at all possible, share the goals and decisions made by upper management and the logic behind it. You may find that your team is a little more understanding of the news.

4 > Communicate your plan for support for the team

In addition, be transparent about your plans to give your team backing during any times of change. Often, just knowing that someone has you covered can give you the confidence to succeed despite any actual or perceived difficulties. As you outline the type of support that will be available, you can also remind your employees to touch base with you as needed.

6 > Help let go of the past

Acknowledge how much has been accomplished by your team in the past. Let them know that you appreciate them for all their good work and for creating and maintaining the systems that allowed for so many successful outcomes. At the same time, send a clear message that you are starting afresh and you will need their help in the transition from the old to the new.

5 > Be open to outside help

Do not feel that you have to tackle it all yourself. During times of transition, you may need outside assistance to help your staff. Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can support you and your team with a number of resources to help with effective transitions. A supervisor consultation with a EAP professional is always available as you guide your employees through a change.

7 > Look to the future

Help your team see the positive aspects of the new change and how this could help your organization grow and evolve. Invite your team members to consider ways that have helped them manage past changes, and encourage them to use those same positive strategies for their current transition.

8 > Refresh your message of support from time to time

Remember to be aware of the need for support during the many stages and aspects of transitioning to the new routine. Remind your employees that you will do your best to advocate for their needs throughout this process of change.

24 hours a day

Employee Assistance Program

(800) 222-0364

TTY: (888) 262-7848

FOH4You.com

The EAP is a voluntary and confidential employee benefit available to you and your family at no cost.

