

Mastering Change in the Workplace

Issue 3, Page 1

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Hi and welcome
to this issue of
our newsletter.

A word from Gloria ...

As the days and economy become warmer, people are noticing that changes in the workplace are necessary.

For some, downsizing has (and continues to be), an important component in keeping the Company running, for others restructuring means that some staff have moved sideways or into other departments. Whatever the current concern in your place of business happens to be, it is important to realise that change at work is inevitable – but how it is managed can have the biggest impact in terms of future prospects for your Company.

To give management some tools to help facilitate this, I have written an article and developed a workshop that gives key insights and methodologies to elicit the most effective results. Please take the time to read them as they will certainly make you think! A key point is having an open door policy. This can help move staff through their resistance to change ahead. Simply by allowing them an opportunity to present their questions and concerns, you instil feelings of more confidence and respect. This can encourage staff to have positive suggestions/ideas on the changes you propose to make.

Kind regards

Gloria

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- A word from Gloria
- Article – Managing Change in the Workplace
- How to Manage Change in the Workplace Workshop
- Competition

Latest Article

This Managing Change article gives some insight into why people at work show such resistance to change, and how it affects their performance and viability in the workplace. It is amazing that fear underlies the resistance to this, but it does. Would it also surprise you that the sector affected most by change is usually the mid-management level? The good news is, this can be turned around by following a few simple techniques that are proven to help shift the fear and replace it with a buy-in – thereby ensuring the most positive outcome is likely!

If you would like some strategies to help shift the fear/apathy/entrenched attitudes that exist whenever change is mentioned, make sure you read this article.

New Workshop

This workshop is designed to assist leaders in implementing changes necessary at work. It provides participants with enhanced understanding of the human response to change, along with strategies and techniques to ensure change can be a positive and productive force in the workplace. This encompasses a variety of practical and experiential exercises, culminating in participants being well-equipped to plan and implement changes in their place of work.

Competition

This simply involves you emailing us at info@mastersofcommunication.co.nz and mentioning one of the main reasons people resist change at work. If your answer is correct, you will be put into the draw to win a mentoring session with Gloria to make you more effective at implementing changes necessary at your place of work.

Next Issue ***Teambuilding***



CHANGE IN THE WORKPLACE

Many companies throughout New Zealand are increasingly more puzzled as to why there is such resistance to change in the workplace.

Questions raised are:

Could it be that staff lack commitment to improve their industry?
Are staff members disgruntled?
Perhaps they just need to be more motivated?

If this sounds like your company, what can you – as a leader in your workplace - do to change this?

There are many reasons why there seems to be huge resistance to change. I think it is important to break this concept down so as to understand more fully what constitutes the enormity behind it.

Change in itself denotes the act or process of substitution, alteration or variation, thereby making something different. For most people this act of difference is threatening because it changes the status quo. Most of us like continuity, sameness and order because it is what we have come to expect. It asks nothing of us other than to be present. With change comes a threat, our perception of output and efficiency is suddenly being questioned and this creates fear. Whatever your position in the workplace, the premise is the same. When change is imminent - fear is present. In order to work with this so that change can be effected it is helpful to consider the following things:

Fear doesn't stop change – it stops our ability to embrace it.

Fear is a shadow that blocks true vision – we cannot see through it.

Fear is ingrained in us; just watch a TV Commercial on smoke alarms.

A lot of our decisions are based on fear. Just look at insurance companies they bet us that most of what we worry about will never happen. And they win to the tune of millions of dollars per year.

Fear exists in your workplace! Change or the prospect of change, creates a reaction that usually has fear as its basis. For staff the underlying feeling is that it's easier not to embrace change rather than to try, fail, feel rejected and found wanting.

For instance: when there's a new product to be launched: you approach staff with the exciting news, only to discover that you're not getting the reaction you hoped for. By recognising that staff aren't keen, and that its fear based this gives you a deeper understanding of how to pitch that 'workplace change' at them. What is fundamental to the success of the 'new system' is your understanding that as you peel away that top level of fear underneath are all the other successive layers of fear waiting to be unmasked, like:

Fear of looking incompetent to other colleagues,
Fear of not getting it right,
Fear of being demoted,
Fear of failing financially
Fear of losing the job
Fear of letting the family down

FEAR IS REAL and exists at every level in every organisation!

This is a possible reason why people hold back professionally. All of the perceived fears people have, involve either the past or the future. Simply put – it's either an experience or conditioning they've had or its fear of the unknown.

As A.J.Hackett (the famous Eiffel Tower Bungy Jumper) said recently "How can you be scared of something you don't know about yet?" But people can and they do.

For people to transcend fear, though they must move into a more positive emotional state.

Ways Management can Work with 'unspoken' fear and move the resistance from can't possibly do - to when do you need this done by?

Infuse staff with belief and support – make it possible for them to present questions/concerns without patronising them. Remember the 'change' is not new to you, you *have thought about it, worked with it, analysed it for some time* before presenting it to them.

Give attention to resistance presented – remember it is underpinned by fears they are holding. By treating the most inane resistance with compassion, you create the opportunity for fear to be replaced by acknowledgement that this 'new idea' could work.

Reinforce that though they are doing the best they can – (and you recognise this). The change will make things better for them and the company. Describing concrete examples is helpful at this point.

Make Time for ideas from staff. When staff are involved at inception level, they are more likely to feel valued than threatened.

A recent survey of 100 Companies showed that *change efforts* to date have largely failed with fewer than 15% of companies having successfully transformed themselves.

Findings showed that people in the workplace are sensitive to the emotions that undermine change and that facilitate change. There is need for empathy. Part of the problem, is that leaders expect that change will be incorporated through a written memo or email. This does not work.

The failure to lead by example is ingrained throughout many Companies. People at all levels within the workplace don't perceive that leading the way is their job, - it belongs to the CEO or the Company director, and therefore the mindset becomes "I won't do it – it's not my job". This situation is not specific to one particular group in the workplace, this occurs throughout industry. It seems that everyone is waiting for somebody else to do it.

This attitude has an effect on the collective group, and makes for a complete inertia when it comes to motivation for change in the workplace. The thinking becomes: why should I? Instead of how can I? Staff cannot make changes, where this style of leadership is present. And so we begin to see more clearly why

there is such reluctance to not going beyond only doing their job. There is a definite lack of people feeling valued, supported and encouraged.

What successful companies incorporating change use:

Good leadership which involves many facets of decision making, risk taking and successful communicating.

Inspired leadership these managers embrace the theory that they don't do business with business, they do business with people – and it all starts within their own workplace.

True Vision which encompasses making something happen, maintaining what works, and adding to what can be improved.

Effective change strategies that are implemented when adapting what works to new optimum conditions.

Their planning also includes the answers to some basic questions:

Why is change needed?

How involved are staff with this decision?

If not why not?

Who is going to benefit from this?

Who is going to lose from this?

How is this change going to be implemented?

How is this going to be measured?

What tangible results are we expecting?

What is there in the way of Prime Key Indicator's to show the effectiveness of this change?

Does workplace change improve the quality of working life? If so how?

Outlined below are some Critical Success Factors for effective change in the workplace

Necessary management behaviour: clear leadership and vision is required. Senior management must demonstrate a commitment to this and be actively involved. A team is only as good as its leader, if you are 'passing the buck'; motivation becomes diluted all the way down the line.

A strategy for implementation. The activity must be incorporated into the organisation's business plans and the means for continuous improvement established. Get staff feedback and input on this – an involved team feels valued.

Organisational Change requires an organisation structure that demands and harnesses the full potential of the workforce. A team structure provides the means for involvement and the power for quality improvement. Have checks and balances in place to measure this.

Communication for change. This provides the means of raising quality awareness and involvement by publicising achievements and recognising contributions to improvement. Anything you can positively focus on – DO !

Training and education Training and education should cover all employees as part of an ongoing process, with the scope and depth tailored to suit each group's needs. Make sure built into that is a feedback survey. Money on training is only as good as the staff's perception of their time in that training room.

Employee's involvement. Company-wide involvement in the process is a key determinant of a successful programme. Employees are part of your team, if you don't involve them – they are not going to feel respected or valued by you.

Process management and systems a documented system as part of a total quality strategy ensures that the organisation's processes are managed in a consistent manner.

Quality technologies Quality costing, benchmarking etc, provide the techniques to identify opportunities solve problems and enable continuous improvements and reductions in variation to be achieved.

For those who haven't experienced success where change is involved incorporation of these key ideas could lead to overcoming **the inertia before it really builds:**

Recognise when staff are struggling and offer support with that, whether it be one on one mentoring, or incentive based rewards

Set clear expectations – and make sure what you convey is understood by the team. To be 100% sure have it repeated back to you verbatim, or as an email.

Provide support for even the most basic of requests. To you it may be nothing; to a non-coping staff member it may be overcoming a huge 'fear' of what lies ahead.

Maintain excellent communication – make time for staff to converse with you. It might be that you allow 5 minutes for each person involved over a one week period. Make it non-threatening, and use some of the time to acknowledge what that person has already done for and contributed to the company

Have a 'launching' party – (in house) this could be a morning tea shout, simply by building recognition and acceptance of the pressure/ the staff are experiencing whether extrinsically or intrinsically, you promote good will.

All of this really points to **the culture of the company.**

This is reflected in 4 key areas and denotes what staff thinks about their place of work, whether change is afoot or not:

Respect
Equality
Informality
Flexibility

Respect

All too often, change is done to people, without anyone involving them in making the decisions or at least getting some of their input. This approach might be efficient in the short term, and it surely fits the old paradigm that effective leadership is all about being swift and decisive. It might even be required in emergencies, when the downside of delay clearly outweighs the benefits of involving others in the decision. Excluding these emergency situations, what's your approach on this? Do you tend to go forward single-handedly, and do things to people or in conjunction with them?

NOTHING CONVEYS RESPECT MORE THAN THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE THAT YOU TRUST OTHERS TO MAKE A GOOD (OR BETTER) DECISION.

Equality

In a meaningful workplace, there's no class system driving wedges between people. Everyone is a first class citizen. On paper, the organisation has structure with clearly delineated tasks / supervisors - but operationally speaking, everyone is on the same level. It's not 'us' and 'them' within the same workplace. It's just 'us. One way that change may be more acceptable to middle management and employees is to adopt a project mindset. Let specific initiatives become what pulls people together. Rather than having a traditional boss we have a facilitator and project sponsor.

Informality

Dialogue (about change) in an excessively formal workplace means that staff members are inhibited in speaking openly. Discussions can become more of a one-way flow with tradition and protocol deciding who gets all the airtime. Result: Many problems are left to simmer beneath the surface, either because people feel they can't bring them up or because they're not thoroughly addressed once they're uncovered. Also missed are opportunities to build relationships, seize opportunities, show appreciation or develop a shared vision. Communication is a top-down proposition. People have to go through 'channels' to get things done. All this can have a serious effect on implementing change in the work place.

Flexibility

In a meaningful workplace, the workplace mission and people come first and the rules are there only to the degree that they help. They're few in number, and they bend easily. This has nothing to do with having a 'loose' environment where people eagerly abuse the 'lack' of rules. It has everything to do with creating a workplace built on trust, support and freedom. This is essential when 'Change' is about to be implemented, as change by its nature necessitates support to take hold and flourish.

WHAT IS THE CULTURE IN YOUR WORKPLACE?

The Bottom Line

- Involve staff by joining with rather than doing to e.g., have periodic get togethers with colleagues to review progress and look ahead.
- Convey feedback regularly and appropriately by sharing information
- Communication – Having an informal time regularly where people can offload/discuss what is and isn't working
- Incentives – create an inter-office memo to ascertain what types of reward systems would be appreciated at your place of work.`
- Value staff by - articulating a clear message that creativity is not just permitted but absolutely vital to the health of the organisation.
- In newsletter and intranets include a section that profiles new developments.
- Redefine failure: As you and others pursue improvement and innovation – expect failure, when it comes – don't punish it, encourage more innovation.

Progress always involves risk: you can't steal second base and keep your foot on first.

- Frederick Wilcox



MANAGING CHANGE IN THE WORKPLACE WORKSHOP

Course Overview

“Managing Change in the Workplace” is designed to assist leaders to successfully guide their team through major changes at work. It provides participants with an enhanced understanding of the human response to change along with strategies and techniques to ensure change can be a positive and productive force in the workplace. Through a variety of practical and experiential exercises and self-assessments, participants learn to gain confidence and feel well equipped to plan and implement changes successfully within their own teams.

Course Topics

- ◆ Differentiating the 2 Types of Change
 - Handling On-going Change
 - Managing Specific Events
- ◆ Identifying 5 Key Areas of Resistance
- ◆ Strategies for Handling Opposition to Change
- ◆ 10 Most Common Fears Presented
- ◆ Ways to Counteract and Overcome Obstructive Behaviour
- ◆ Implementation of Organisational “X” Factors for Success
- ◆ Evaluating Your Own Organisation
 - Assessing Individual Attitude and Performance
 - Ranking Your Current Change Climate
- ◆ Critical Success Factors for Managing Change
- ◆ Planning for Change
 - Importance of Internal Communication Strategies
 - Identifying the Needs of Affected Individuals
- ◆ Implementing Changes
 - Understanding the Change Cycle
 - Developing the Change Plan
- ◆ The S.K.I.P Technique for Keeping on Track