

Health and well-being

FACT SHEET

KEY PRINCIPLES OF MANAGING CHANGE:

Introduction

Change management is a basic skill in which most leaders and managers need to be competent. There are very few working environments where change management is not important. This fact sheet takes a look at some basic principles of change management, and provides some tips on how those principles can be applied.

Five Key Principles

When leaders or managers are planning to manage change, there are five key principles that need to be kept in mind:

1. Different people react differently to change
2. Everyone has fundamental needs that have to be met
3. Change often involves a loss, and people go through the "loss curve"
4. Expectations need to be managed realistically
5. Fears have to be dealt with

Tips to apply the above principles when managing change:

Give people information - be open and honest about the facts, but don't give overoptimistic speculation, i.e. meet their OPENNESS needs, but in a way that does not set UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS.

For large groups, produce a communication strategy that ensures information is disseminated efficiently and comprehensively to everyone (don't let the grapevine take over), e.g.: tell everyone at the same time.

However, follow this up with individual interviews to produce a personal strategy for dealing with the change. This helps to recognise and deal appropriately with the INDIVIDUAL REACTION to change.

Give people choices to make, and be honest about the possible consequences of those choices, i.e. meet their CONTROL and INCLUSION needs

These principles are covered in depth on the
Champion in Health and Well-being Management.
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Give people time, to express their views, and support their decision making, providing coaching, counselling or information as appropriate, to help them through the LOSS CURVE.

Where the change involves a loss, identify what will or might replace that loss - loss is easier to cope with if there is something to replace it. This will help assuage potential FEARS.

Where it is possible to do so, give individuals opportunity to express their concerns and provide reassurances - also to help assuage potential FEARS.

Keep observing good management practice, such as making time for informal discussion and feedback (even though the pressure might seem that it is reasonable to let such things slip - during difficult change such practices are even more important).

Where you are embarking on a large change programmes, you should treat it as a project. That means you apply all the rigours of project management to the change process - producing plans, allocating resources, appointing a steering board and/or project sponsor etc..

The five principles above should form part of the project objectives.