

Working through the return

HOW CHANGE MANAGEMENT CAN HELP!



With an underlying concern about our health, we have moved, literally overnight, into a place where working from home is being considered the 'new norm'.





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Change Management

do we really need to do that much?

There's a big change happening:

- Everyone has been working at home
- Why? Because gathering in large groups is not safe
- And it's been stressful and full of uncertainties
- But now – everyone may be going back to work
- Where they will likely gather in larger groups – you know – meetings, lunch, getting coffee
- Which will (*still*) be stressful and full of uncertainties

So you bet – this is all about change management!



3 Key Components

JUST LIKE ANY WORKPLACE CHANGE

- 1 WHY:** the reasons this is happening
- 2 WHAT:** a compelling vision
- 3 HOW:** the path forward

These 3 components are at the core of every change management program.

3 Key Components

MANAGING WORKPLACE CHANGE



WHY

WHY IS THIS CHANGE HAPPENING?

External drivers – change in environment, COVID-19

Employee wellness and safety – more important than ever

The business needs to get going again – to be successful

Need to be flexible – what's next is not clear

New ways of working because of the pandemic

3 Key Components

MANAGING WORKPLACE CHANGE

WHAT EXACTLY IS GOING TO CHANGE?

HOW WILL THIS IMPACT ME? THE COMPANY?



WHAT

How we work, where we work, when we work, how we use the workplace

Help minimize stress of coming to work

Create a safe environment where employees are safe and can work effectively

Try to create a sense of normalcy

3 Key Components

MANAGING WORKPLACE CHANGE



HOW

HOW WILL I KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON?

What information will be provided – when, how, and from whom?

What is the schedule?

How can I provide feedback and give input?

How will my feedback be shared and used?

What decisions will I have an impact on?

What new training will be provided?

How do we engage employees to understand their concerns?

Illustrate/demonstrate how actions being taken will address both employee, management and organizational concerns and goal.

Together, these actions will give credibility/authenticity to organizational statements about 'we care about the wellness of our employees'.

Communications

BEFORE THE RETURN

How to Communicate:

1. Use online media – email, social media – for the day to day details
2. Use leadership webcasts for regular updates and major announcements
3. Don't be too technical – while this is a business issue, uncertainty and stress is at the individual level
4. Be consistent – messaging and cadence

What to Communicate

1. What is going on now.
2. When will we come back to work? And will we go back home again?
3. Who is returning to the office and when?
4. What will be different – what I see, where I sit, what I do, how I work?
5. What is being done to make the workplace safe - cleaning/sanitation, social distancing? How will I know this is being done?
6. What do I need to do that is different?
7. I ride the bus – can I still come back to work?
8. Where will I park? Enter the building? Find my desk?

Communications

THE RETURN BEGINS

How to Communicate:

1. Be candid, honest and positive
2. Stage the messages – not all the information is needed at the front door; some will be more relevant in individual and team spaces
3. Use multiple media – posters, handouts (using gloves), video
4. Use video instead of large group meetings or town halls

What to Communicate

1. Welcome back! We're glad you stayed safe and are here.
2. Here's who will be working in the office, who will be working remotely
3. Changes in work schedules/patterns
4. Changes in the workspace – individual, team, community
5. Employee safety: what is being done, how it will be communicated, what your individual role is
6. Protocols: definition, review, update
7. How you can share feedback and input
8. How we will continue to provide updates and information.

Communications

DAY 2: WE'RE WORKING

How to Communicate:

1. Be candid, honest and positive
2. Be consistent – messaging and cadence – to reinforce sense of order, normalcy
3. Be as specific as possible, i.e., relate social distancing to specific locations.
4. Use multiple media – posters, handouts (using gloves), video, desk drops, etc.
5. Focus on individual physical safety, effectiveness, and changes to the workplace
6. Provide regularly updated FAQ's to leadership
7. Share the successes, be honest about challenges
8. Facilitate team focused communication

What to Communicate

1. Current status – cleaning, safety, remote work program, working in the office
2. Upcoming changes – workspace, remote work, technology
3. Feedback: reminders of the process, answers and outcomes from feedback received
4. Overall business successes and effectiveness
5. Protocol review and updates

Tips and Best Practices

COMMUNICATIONS

1. Communicate, communicate, communicate
2. Keep the message and details consistent
3. Use language and terms employees can understand – this is a personal, human issue, not a technical problem
4. Use multiple methods of communication – email isn't the only way to get the message across
5. Create a central source for all information; update it on a regular cadence
6. Create a feedback mechanism for employees – and then respond to feedback; show how it can make a difference.
7. Do what you say you're going to do. If you say someone will get an answer, make sure they do.
8. Be authentic – if there isn't an answer, admit it. Don't make something up
9. Proactively ask questions – what's working, what's not working, are there new concerns, do employees still feel safe. This will build trust as well.

Tips and Best Practices

BUILDING TRUST

1. Be consistent with the sources you reference - there are many 'articles in the public press that are not completely accurate and may be misleading;
2. Changing information: information about COVID-19 changes almost daily; keep abreast of the changes and be candid with how changes may/may not impact your organization
3. Celebrate achievements: recognize employee and organizational successes; help make work positive.
4. Be honest: if something bad happens, acknowledge it right away; never hide anything.
5. Respond to feedback, follow up on questions.



Tips and Best Practices

THINGS TO BE READY FOR

1. Incorrect information: there are many articles and viewpoints in the popular press, some of which are not accurate. Be consistent in the resources you reference.
2. Uninformed leadership: Create and update FAQs for leadership so they do not get stuck in the elevator without an answer.
3. Leaders with 'all the answers': give leadership permission to say 'I don't know. But I know who does, and they will get back to you.' And then be sure someone gets back to the person with the question.
4. Things change: COVID-19 is not predictable; be prepared to address new information.



Tips and Best Practices

UNDERSTANDING RESISTANCE

Do not ignore it – it will only get worse if you do!
And respond based on these 3 levels

LEVEL 1: I don't understand it

- Involves lack of clarity about specific information - facts, figures, and ideas
- Solution: Provide additional details

LEVEL 2: I don't like it

- This is a more emotional response
- Solution: Respond on a human level – I understand your concern, and we are supporting you through this

LEVEL 3: I don't like you

- Extremely emotional response
- Solution: Requires time and trust; demonstrate genuine concern and that you/ATT have their best interest at heart.
- No facts

Ric Maurer, *Beyond the Wall of Resistance*



Tips and Best Practices

USING HUMOR

Humor can be an effective tool in making change easier. Careful attention needs to be paid to ensure it is 'respectful' of the COVID-19 situation and consistent with your organization's culture.





Questions?

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