

Leading Change Management

Change management is a process that a project leader may have to use to ensure individuals successfully transition with changes brought on by a project. Change management becomes part of the communication or training plan because this will describe who you need to engage with, what message you need to provide, how you are going to communicate, and when you are going to communicate.

DEFINITION OF CHANGE

Change is the process of moving from the current state to the future state. Managing the change with effective communication results in:

- Mitigated resistance
- On plan adoption
- Accelerated speed of change
- Achieved and sustained outcomes

TYPES OF BUSINESS CHANGE

Changes range from simple improvements to a current way of doing business all the way to very complex transformations in the way of doing business.

Developmental	Transitional	Transformational
Least Complex	Complex	Very Complex
An improvement to an existing way of operating	Dismantling current way of operating and systematically putting into place a newly-designed end state	Occurs when the old way of operating cannot achieve the strategies required to succeed moving forward

REACTIONS TO CHANGE

Individuals react differently to change, based on the ability and desire to change, the benefit or impact of the change, or the difficulty of the change. Each response requires a different reaction and level of communication.

Response	Addressing Reaction
Shock	We will support you through this process. You can do this.
Denial	Explain their role and how they can support the change.
Frustration	Listen to their concerns. Focus on how they will benefit from the change.
Depression	Find ways to engage them in optimizing the change.
Exploration	Encourage them to give constructive feedback.
Acceptance	Continue to monitor their response as more detail is rolled out.
Commitment	Ask them to help you champion the change and help others move through the change

ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL CHANGE MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. Assess the Scope of the Change

- How big is this change?
- Which people are affected and how will they respond?
- How much change is already going on or has recently taken place?
- What type of resistance can be expected?
- What are the benefits of the change?
- What are the challenges of the change?
- Who in your chain of command needs to be informed of the change?

2. Develop a Stakeholder Profile

You need to know who will be impacted by the project, what change they will experience, what they need to know about the change, and level of acceptance or resistance in planning your engagement.

Use this [Stakeholder Profile template](#) to identify the stakeholders who will be affected by the project, what change they will see, what information they will need to know to successfully adopt the change, and the resistance or acceptance anticipated. Use this information to create your Communication Timeline that has specific details on how and when you will communicate with these stakeholders.

3. Develop Key Messages in Plain Language

Use the change assessment to create a solid business case that clearly explains:

- Need/reason for the change
- Benefits to the individual of the change
- Changes that will take place
- Anticipated obstacles
- Project timeline

4. Develop a Communication Plan

Effective communication considers these three components: The audience. What is communicated. When it is communicated.

Use the [Project Communications Plan template](#) as a guide to coordinate your engagement. This template helps you schedule the different communication or training you need to do to reach different audiences impacted by the project. This can include reporting to leadership, outreach to those whose assistance you need to implement the change, and communication to those who will be impacted by the change. If you just need a timeline, use this [Communication Timeline template](#) to list your communications activities.

Use as much face-to-face communication as possible. This helps you immediately identify and respond to resistance. Make sure you provide clear and open lines of communication throughout the process.

5. Develop a Training Plan

Develop a training plan if individuals need to learn about how to use a new platform, technology, or business processes. This could include in-person or self-service training. It could include some way of measuring adoption or aptitude in adjusting to the changes. The training should incorporate the skills, knowledge, and behaviors necessary to implement the change.

Incorporate any outreach for training into your Communication Plan.

6. Measure Effectiveness of Communication

During the project, check in with those impacted by the change and those needing to know the state of the project to identify what changes you need to make in the messaging or frequency of outreach to make sure you are achieving the desired acceptance or response.

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING CHANGE

1. There is no one perfect way to communicate change
2. Be very clear on what is changing and why and how you explain it
3. Share information with others as soon as possible
4. Keep in mind that quantity is fine, but quality and consistency are crucial
5. Use a variety of communication channels and touch points
6. Don't confuse explaining project process with communicating change
7. Give people multiple opportunities to share concerns, ask questions, and offer ideas, and make following up with answers and updates a top priority