

Organisational Change

Types of Change

There are two types of organisational change: Incremental and Radical. It is important to decide which type of change you are facing, as the methods of dealing with each one is different.

Incremental change happens in steps, with the basis of the organisation remaining the same. An example of this type of change is an increase in production requirements. To handle incremental change you engage your best problem solving strategies. These skills are directed towards finding better plans, procedures and clarifications of roles.

Radical change is a significant change within the organisation, affecting its culture and values. Change of government is an example. When radical change happens there is some attention given to establishing the organisations new identity. It is important to consider: Who are we? And, why are we here? Problem solving will cause major difficulties unless the answer to these two important questions have been well established.

Phases of the Change Process

It is important to remember that change is a process and everyone progresses through it at their own rate. While it may seem scary or uncomfortable, you will eventually arrive at a resolution of your discomfort.

The OH NO! response. Denial or shock usually occurs quickly after receiving unwelcome news. As this subsides it is followed by self-doubt and resentment.

This starts the Resistance phase. It is not unusual for unsubstantiated rumours and hidden or open sabotage to be practiced at this time. Anger, frustration and irritability are common.

Sooner or later the inevitability of the change sinks in and the Acceptance phase occurs. Acceptance releases your energy which has been tied up in the struggle and introduces hope. This leads to the Opportunity phase, where creativity take over as new ideas are tried, accepted or rejected.

Critical Factors in Handling Change

Three factors will greatly influence how you handle change.

1. PREDICTABILITY

If you could see the change coming you may be a little more prepared than those who were caught unaware. Information about, and the pace at which the change will occur helps reduce much of the pressure in times of change. It is important to ask questions and expect answers!

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2. CONTROLABILITY

The more say you have in how the change will be handled, the more influential you will feel in the process.

3. PERSONAL POWER

Your effectiveness during a change will be moderated by:

- Feelings you have about yourself
- The degree of which you identify with the proposed change
- The support of people you have around you

Some Things to Look Out for:

Everyone reacts to change, but reactions are individual. Some things to watch out for are:

- Physical symptoms such as headaches, butter-fly stomach, grinding of teeth, pounding heart, sleeplessness and restlessness
- Finding it difficult to concentrate and noticing an increased error / accident rate
- Getting caught up in arguments and feeling critical or defensive
- An unexplained anxiousness or being easily upset or angry
- Having trouble maintaining your focus on the task in hand or not meeting deadlines
- Feeling you have lost your motivation being tired and apathetic, not wanting to go to work
- Finding that you are eating, drinking alcohol or smoking more than previously

Handling Change

- RECEIVE the news, listen and say nothing
- CENTRE, breathe deeply and tune into yourself
- NOTICE your reaction
- DECIDE:
 - o What type of change you have
 - o What information you need
 - o How much control of the process you will have
 - o Who are the people you can talk to about your feelings?
- RE-LISTEN, separate feelings and facts
- CLARIFY or FIND any missing information
- REPEAT the cycle until feelings and facts are understood
- DESIGN OPTIONS

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Tips for Managing Change

Watch your thinking

Find any positives in the situation, no matter how small. What new skills can you learn? How will this help you cope with other changes in life?

Recall when you have been through change before. There may be things that have worked in the past that can apply now

Watch out for 'what if' thinking and beware assuming the worst. For example "What if my new boss does not get on with me and.... makes life difficult andI lose my job.....". The future may not be as negative as the conclusions you may be jumping to!

Focus on what you do find satisfying at work. Remember, even though the structure around you is changing, the meaning you get from your work is still there.

Be wise...

Look after yourself

Now is the time to deliberately plan some enjoyable activities- watch a movie, find a good book, take a bath and get into some exercise.

Stay Connected

Avoid the temptation to withdraw from relationships at work- reach out, plan a lunch together and have some positive discussions about how you are

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