

Management of Change Template

Roadmap reference: Build better workplace culture

(Insert organisation name)

All workplaces need to implement changes from time to time whether it be to rectify problems, improve a process, leverage from new technology or introduce a new product or service. However, change can be experienced as threatening. Staff may worry that the change will effect their role and responsibilities and even their job security.

There are steps you can take to effectively manage change. Planning and implementing with care can help ensure the workplace remains psychologically safe and thriving during the turbulence and uncertainty of change. Using a structured approach to change is more likely to deliver your desired outcome.

The aim of a change management plan is to outline *how* you're going to introduce and embed a change into the workplace. A change in one part of the workplace has the potential to impact other areas. A structured plan helps to identify these ripple effects.

Management of Change

Successful management of change relies on careful consideration of the following steps:

1. Understand change
2. Plan change
3. Implement change
4. Communicate change
5. Manage resistance to change

Step 1. Understand the Change

To understand the change you want to make in your workplace and promote the benefits of the change, you should consider the following:

- What is the case for change?
- What are the benefits of change?
- How will change impact staff, customers and other stakeholders?
- How will change affect the way people work?
- What needs to be done to support the change?

Step 2. Plan the Intended Change

Any plan for change should reflect your workplace reality and the mode of communication that best reaches your intended audience. You need to consider:

- Involvement – who else can help you to design and implement the change? Do you need external experts or can you rely solely on internal resources?
- Support – change is most effective when you are able to gain support from those across the workplace. How can you achieve this?
- Impact – what goals do you want to achieve? What does a successful outcome look like and how will you measure the impact of the change when implemented?

Step 3. Implement the Change

It's important to consider exactly how you are going to make the change happen. The following steps can help you to implement a change in a positive way:

- Ensure all those involved in the change understand what is required from them and what the change means for them
- Agree on what success looks like and the criteria to measure this so it can be evaluated
- Map and identify all of the key stakeholders who will be involved and clearly define their level of involvement
- Identify any training needs that must be addressed in order to implement the change
- Enlist change agents ('influencers') who can help put the new practices into place and act as role models for the new approach
- Find ways to change people's habits so new practices become the norm
- Make sure everyone feels supported and listened to throughout the change process
- Not everyone benefits from change. Where change impacts people's livelihoods give them all the information they need (e.g. outplacement, notice periods, severance pay) at the earliest possible opportunity.

Step 4. Communicate the Change

Communication is key to successful change management. Clear, targeted and factual information helps people understand the case for change and the WIFM factor: what's in it for me? It's also important to set the right tone. It can be helpful to link the changes you're planning to your organisation's vision. This will help people understand the bigger picture and inspire them to be a part of the change.

Consider the following communication elements:

1. Awareness – of the need for change
2. Desire – to participate in and support it
3. Knowledge – of how to change
4. Ability – to change
5. Reinforcement – to sustain the change in the long term

Step 5. Resistance to Change

Leaders and managers are often the ones driving the change due to the potential benefits for the workplace, customers or employees. Some of the change is welcomed by employees (particularly if the benefits are clearly identified). However, some change is unwelcome or resisted, especially where it entails job losses, disrupts long-standing relationships or requires skills and competencies staff fear they don't have.

Managing change involves understanding the reasons why employees resist change and recognising this may be neither good or bad. Not all innovation and change is for the best or well-thought out. Giving employees a voice to provide feedback and contribute to changes which impact them is beneficial for the change process.

In some instances, it is a normal reaction for employees to resist change. It's important to understand why some employees may feel resistant to change including:

- Feelings of uncertainty and insecurity that reduce acceptance of change
- People selecting what they do and don't want to hear and then focussing on the negative whilst overlooking positives
- Misunderstandings about the nature of the change
- Ingrained habits - "we've always done it this way!"
- Feeling threatened about status, security, pay and relationships
- Denial of the existence of a problem in the first place

Some strategies to help strengthen employee commitment to change are:

- A compelling narrative for the case for change
- Don't promise more than can be delivered. Unrealistic promises can undermine the credibility of the case for change
- Be prepared to admit mistakes and use them as a learning opportunity
- Always try to look beneath the surface and continually ask "why?" of those who resist the change
- Engage in the difficult conversations early and directly
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