

## Simple Guidelines to Effectively Communicate Change



Following are some helpful guidelines for employers when planning strategic communication:

### **Determine how the organization has communicated in the past.**

If employers have never had an all-employee meeting, using that communication method to discuss an important message regarding change could cause anxiety and employees could be looking for the “hidden message.” If employers have used small group meetings, bulletin boards, or newsletters in the past, consider using those methods again.

### **Know what needs to be changed.**

Sounds simple! Make sure the details of what needs to be changed have been worked out and that all factors have been taken into consideration.

### **Recognize that the meaning of the change is far more important than the change itself.**

Address fears employees may have regarding the change. How will the change affect them, their job status, and their benefits? Address what impacts the employees.

### **Develop a unifying vision of the change that energizes and motivates employees.**

Employees must know the future of the organization. Let them in on what is important to the CEO. Is it service, safety, or quality? What drives the CEO and the organization?



Today, most organizations are experiencing change, both positive and negative. Some organizations are making strategic changes in their product lines, corporate directions, or operations.

### **Recognize that change cannot be perfectly planned.**

Acknowledge that everything cannot be planned. Encourage employees to find the areas that were unplanned and challenge them to find solutions. Make it fun.

### **Provide as much information to employees as is reasonably and prudently possible.**

Provide consistent, frequent, and reliable information. Try to head off the rumor mill by ensuring that any changes are communicated.

### **Anticipate possible resistance points.**

What employee objections can be foreseen? How is the change that is occurring going to affect their jobs? How can the changes be presented in a positive light?

### **Carefully consider the timing of the messages.**


Think about when to deliver any message regarding change. Delivering such a message in the beginning or middle of the week allows employees the opportunity to ask questions the remainder of the week. If the message is delivered on the last workday of the week, employees will not have access to anyone in the organization for several days so small questions may become large issues.

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Using these simple guidelines could help employers avoid problems when communicating change to the organization.

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