

Tips for Implementing Difficult Changes



Some of the types of difficult changes include:

- **Changes and technologies that reduce interpersonal contact.**
Some organizations seek to reduce the high cost of office space by having staff work from their homes. This change may be successful in reducing costs, but does not take into consideration the hidden cost to the employees that no longer interact personally with fellow employees. Communicating exclusively by computer rather than in person can cause isolation and be quite stressful.
- **Change that requires employees to use the computer for specific tasks and projects that had been done manually in the past.**
At first, there may be resistance because completing tasks via computer or other automated process may seem more complex and time consuming rather than more efficient. An employee might think, "This is a waste of time when there was nothing wrong with the old way of doing it."
- **Changes that track and monitor employee actions and performance.**
A cornerstone of continuous improvement activities is measuring performance prior to improving performance. Thus, a feeling that "big brother" is watching can become pervasive.
- **Work teams may reduce feelings of personal accomplishment.**
Changes in the delivery of products and services have increased the use of work teams. This change may remove the ability of employees to see what they have achieved individually.
- **Reduction in staff. Increasing costs, competitive pressures, and continuous improvement programs may affect staff size.**
The stress of these changes adds challenges to employee training programs.



Today, change in the workplace is the norm rather than the exception. Change may include downsizing, new technology, or improved processes and procedures to name a few. People may be resistant to change. Change may be stressful and difficult because people are used to doing things in a certain way or because the outcome of doing things a new way is unknown.

How can the organization facilitate the implementation of difficult changes?

Effective training can positively influence the effect of organizational changes, breaking down employee resistance and reducing stress. Here are a few tips to increase the chances of successful change:


- **Develop a training plan that identifies all audiences and needs.**
If you do not know where you are going, any road will take you there. To ensure a win/win situation, the plan must be developed prior to implementing the change.
- **Provide the resources needed to support the training.**
A million can be made or saved if a thousand is provided to sufficiently fund the training.
- **Secure top management commitment for the change and the training.**
Make sure top management understands why training is important, how it will affect all aspects of the operation, and the benefits that will be achieved.
- **Address issues, concerns, consequences, and expectations before the training.**
People will be more willing to support what they know. What they do not know will be left to their imaginations or the grapevine.
- **Allow adequate time for hands-on interface with the technology or change.**
Allowing employees to make mistakes in a non-threatening environment helps to reduce the fear of change. Be creative in developing games or contests to foster enthusiasm and enjoyment.
- **Allow for differences in people.**
Plan for the unexpected such as differences in learning style and speed as well as workload considerations.

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When planning organizational changes, it is important to include employee training in the plans. Such training will help to conquer resistance to change, reduce the related stress, and will greatly increase the chance of a successful change.

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