

Managing change



Change happens frequently in a workplace. If it isn't managed with thought and consideration, change can lead to significant stress at a range of levels within an organisation.

Communication

Good communication is essential for successful change management. A lack of clarity can breed rumours and cause significant distress for employees. Employees and/or their unions also have a legal right to be consulted about significant changes under their award, agreement or industrial relations legislation.

Make sure you communicate at every stage – clearly outline what you propose to do, seek input from employees and provide regular updates. Actions you can take include:

- Be transparent about the reasons for the changes and help people understand the background to any decisions being made.
- Openly acknowledge the likely impact of changes on employees

and outline what sort of practical and emotional support is available.

- Provide any key changes or decisions in writing.
- Implement changes in a timely manner and communicate any milestones.
- Ensure roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of employees are clear after a restructure.
- Encourage an open-door policy – give employees an opportunity to discuss any changes with managers/supervisors directly or within team meetings.

Employee consultation and feedback

Involving employees in any changes helps promote ownership of the process and outcomes. Employees are also well placed to provide workable ideas and suggestions for improvements.

- Offer employees an opportunity to get involved at the planning stage to increase their understanding and motivation.
- Develop systems for employees to provide feedback and suggestions

for fine-tuning as changes are implemented.

- Give people sufficient time to reflect on and respond to any proposals.
- If suggestions from employees are unworkable, discuss the reasons openly as part of the consultation process.

Review roles and provide support

- Make sure employees are informed of any modifications to their roles.
- Change job descriptions to match new roles and responsibilities, providing clarity and avoiding role conflict. Involve employees in this process wherever possible.
- Ensure employees feel confident and competent in their roles.
- Offer additional training and support where new skills are required.

