

Managing Organizational Change

In today's world, change is inevitable! Most people find change a difficult process to endure. Data shows that 80% of today's organizations report a significant decrease in morale during a substantive work-related change. This is largely because, humans have a natural avoidance of uncertainty and feeling out-of-control. Initial reactions to change are often denial, anger, and resistance. These reactions are normal responses to change and can feel exasperating when personnel are left out of the decision-making or planning process. Simply, when your team has no say or "by-in" in response to the change, their reactions will likely worsen morale.

Of course, experience does help. The more experience your organization has managing change, the more likely your team will handle it with ease. However, regardless of your experience level, the change management strategies listed below can help ease reactions and preserve your mission's success.

How to manage organizational change:

- **Acceptance.** Accept that change is tough and usually difficult to manage. Once a plan is in place to manage the change, give your team time to adjust. Allow mistakes and temporary productivity declines. According to research, during times of major transition, an individual's productivity level can drop by 3.6 hours a day. Be prepared for these losses and implement steps to move forward.
- **Share the why.** If you are unsure of the what, why, or when changes are taking place, seek out accurate information and share it with your team. Do not simply accept the gossip that you may hear around the water cooler that may leave you uninformed and fearful.
- **Don't be a victim.** Make a deliberate effort to embrace change, rather than becoming a victim to it. Studies show only 16% of an organization sees change as an opportunity; the other 84% see change as risk. Go against the grain and look for positive opportunities that might result from the imposed change. This will set you apart from many of your peers and allow others (and your supervisor) to notice your ability to succeed in difficult circumstances.
- **Focus on what you can control.** Embrace change as a new beginning. While you may not be able to control the organizational response to the change, you can control your own reaction to it. Take charge of your thoughts and actions and reframe the change in a positive light.

Change cannot be avoided! In order to successfully adapt to change, you must move past your initial reactions and help move your team forward. Failure to do this will likely result in decreased morale, cynicism, and ineffectiveness.

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