

4 WAYS TO NAVIGATE CHANGE

Fact Sheet

Implementing change is never painless, but you can make the journey easier by recognising where people are on the change curve and taking the right kind of action.

STAGE 1

At this stage, communication, listening and information are key.

When people are in shock or denial they need time to adjust. They'll need information to help them understand what is happening, but they don't want to be overwhelmed.

Reiterating what the actual change is, the effects it may have, and providing as much reassurance as possible, will all help to support individuals in stage 1.

STAGE 2

This stage really is the 'danger zone' for change.

At this point performance is at its lowest. There is a tendency to fixate on small issues or problems, often to the detriment of day to day tasks. Individuals may continue to perform tasks in the same way as before, even if this is no longer appropriate behaviour.

The leader's role, here, should be to lend an ear to the team member's concerns, demystify the myths and fads surrounding the change, empathise with them and encourage them to pass through this stage.

Don't be dismissive of the strength of feeling. It can be a frustrating time, but people will be reassured by the knowledge that others are experiencing the same feelings, and this can be used as the platform to move to the next stage.

STAGE 3

During the early part of this stage, energy and productivity remain low, but slowly begin to show signs of recovery. Everyone will have lots of questions and be curious about possibilities and opportunities. Normal topics of conversation resume, and a wry humour is often used when referring to behaviour earlier in the process.

Individuals will respond well to being given specific tasks or responsibilities, however communication remains key. Regular progress reports and praise help to cement the more buoyant mood. It is not uncommon for there to be a return to an earlier stage if the level of support suddenly drops.

Allow people time so they can learn and explore the change without too much pressure.



STAGE 4

Commitment is the final stage of the change curve, when productivity and emotional normality would have been completely restored. The team members feel more in control as they settle into their new roles.

Work activities return to normal as team members begin to co-operate whole heartedly. It's important for the leader to acknowledge and reward the team members for actively contributing, to keep them motivated and committed.

Repeat and reinforce objectives and strategy; build buy-in and create good feedback mechanisms, including rewarding people and celebrating successes.