Announcing Organizational Changes

Organizational change is tough, but what can be even tougher is communicating these changes to employees. Answering employees' questions, responding to their concerns and keeping the communication flowing in uncertain times are all key elements in announcing and implementing changes.

**Draft a clear communication plan.**

* Make a list of everything that must be communicated to employees about the change.
* Anticipate questions employees may have about the changes and be ready to answer them.
* Include the points you will address in the initial announcement as well as how you will continue to communicate with employees about changes as they begin to happen.
* Share or create this plan with others in management positions so that you deliver consistent messages to employees throughout.

**Set context, provide insight and don’t forget the WIIFM.**

* Describe what prompted the change (if applicable).
* Explain any specific problems the organization is encountering including how and why they need to be addressed. (If the organization is suffering from low profits, increased costs or poor employee morale, explain this to employees.)
* Highlight how the change will positively affect the organization (by increasing profits or improving the company’s reputation, for example).
* Stress how these changes will benefit the individual employees themselves.
* Describe how they can help the change/organization be successful.
* Continue to emphasize the benefits and employee expectations even after the announcement.

**Provide a time frame for the change.**

* Tell employees when changes will begin and how long they will take.
* If you are unsure of the exact time frame, be honest and let employees know when they can expect an answer.
* Set a regular communication cycle (updates, town halls, team meetings, etc.) throughout the time frame and stick to it.

**Share your own doubts and questions.**

* If there is information about the change that is confidential or has not yet been resolved, tell employees that you will let them know more once you can and try to give them a time when they might expect an answer to reduce speculation.

**Provide employees with the opportunity to ask questions or express doubts or difficulties they have with the changes.**

* Invite employees to speak with you or other management regularly about any concerns they have throughout the process.
* Answer difficult questions as honestly as you can.

**Communicate with managers and employees frequently as the changes take place.**

* Provide any new information that arises promptly.
* Notify employees if the plan changes and explain why it has changed.
* Be as open as possible throughout the process so that employees don’t feel they are being kept in the dark.