

Communicating and Managing Change

The primary goal of change management is to successfully implement new processes, products, and business strategies that align with the organization's goals. People managers play a vital role in the success of the change initiatives via consistent, transparent, and clear communication with their team members.

Change Management Process



1. Define

- Align expectations regarding the scope, timing and business impact of change, and identify key roles and factors for success.
- Identify precisely what is changing and how it ties in with corporate goals and strategy.
- Clarify the roles within your company of people who are managing change.
- Establish a project timeline, complete with task, the person responsible, and a deliverable date.



2. Plan

- Identify affected stakeholders, create communication plans, and identify and mitigate risks.
- Identify the people on your team who will be affected by the change.
- Create a communication plan for them that is consistent, clear, and timely.
- Identify any risks and create a plan to mitigate risks.
- Design plans for training if needed.



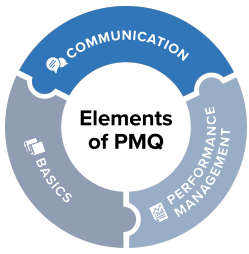
3. Implement

- Engage with leaders and associates to execute the change, roll out communication and training plans, and monitor and manage employee resistance.
- Roll out communication plan announcing the change.
- Begin training plans to process the change.
- Monitor and manage any employee resistance.
- Enact risk mitigation plans if needed.



4. Sustain

- Work with leaders and employees to track adoption and drive lasting change.
- Monitor how well the change is being adopted.
- Reinforce behaviors that support the change.
- Measure how the change is impacting the business.
- Make adjustments as needed.



Communication Mindsets

To avoid communication breakdowns, PMs should be aware of five change communication methodologies—from those that provide the greatest amount of information to those that provide the least

Spray and Pray

Managers shower employees with information, hoping they can sort significant from insignificant. The theory is that more information equates to better communication and decision-making. The problem is that employees may become overwhelmed with information and leave more confused than before.

Tell and Sell

Managers communicate a more limited set of messages, starting with key issues, and then sell employees on the wisdom of the approach. Employees are passive receivers, and feedback is not necessary. The problem is that employees are likely to have questions that remain unanswered.



Underscore and Explore

Managers develop a few core messages clearly linked to organizational success, and employees explore implications in a structured way. Managers listen for potential misunderstandings and obstacles. This strategy is generally the most effective because the communication is clear and concise and also allows for feedback.

Identify and Reply

Executives identify and reply to key employee concerns. This strategy emphasizes listening to employees; they set the agenda, while executives respond to rumors and innuendos. The problem is that this is a reactive response, not a proactive communication. In the meantime, the rumor mill is churning. Additionally, this forgoes the opportunity for leadership to ensure all key points and messages are communicated.

Withhold and Uphold

Executives withhold information until necessary; when confronted by rumors, they uphold the party line. Secrecy and control are implicit. The assumption is that employees are not sophisticated enough to grasp the big picture. The problem is that employees frequently get fed up and leave, with a trail of insults damaging the employer brand.