Growth Performance

MANAGER PLANNING TOOL

Change Communication Planner

When change is communicated well, people can adapt. When it isn't, the gap between what people hear and what they need to know creates rumour, anxiety, and resistance. Use this planner before any significant change communication to your team, whether the change is yours to lead or comes from above.

Two research-backed principles: People experiencing change ask two questions before any other: "Is my job safe?" and "Do I have to change who I am?" (Bridges, 2009). Address both, directly and early. Second: people need to hear important messages multiple times, in multiple formats, before they absorb them (Kotter, 1996).

THE CHANGE

WHAT IS CHANGING? (BE SPECIFIC AND CONCRETE):

WHAT IS NOT CHANGING? (EQUALLY IMPORTANT):

WHY IS THIS CHANGE HAPPENING?:

WHEN DOES IT TAKE EFFECT?

WHO DECIDED THIS?

IS THE DECISION FINAL?

☐ Yes, final ☐ Final in principle ☐ Still being shaped

IMPACT ON THIS TEAM

WHAT DOES THIS CHANGE MEAN SPECIFICALLY FOR THIS TEAM? (ROLES, WAYS OF WORKING, PRIORITIES, RELATIONSHIPS):

WHO ON THE TEAM WILL BE MOST AFFECTED AND HOW?

WHAT PRACTICAL SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE TO THE TEAM DURING THE TRANSITION?

WHAT I KNOW / WHAT I DON'T KNOW

One of the most credibility-damaging things a manager can do in change is pretend to have all the answers. Being honest about uncertainty builds trust, not undermines it.

WHAT I CAN TELL THE TEAM WITH CONFIDENCE:

WHAT I GENUINELY DON'T KNOW YET (AND WILL SAY SO):

HOW I'LL GET ANSWERS TO WHAT I DON'T KNOW, AND BY WHEN:

QUESTIONS I ANTICIPATE

Prepare for the questions your team will ask. Better to have thought about them than to be caught off-guard in the room.

#	QUESTION THEY'RE LIKELY TO ASK	MY RESPONSE / WHAT I'LL SAY
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

MY COMMUNICATION PLAN

FORMAT (TEAM MEETING, 1:1S, WRITTEN, ALL OF THE ABOVE):

SEQUENCE (WHO HEARS IT FIRST, SECOND, LAST):

FIRST COMMUNICATION: DATE

FOLLOW-UP UPDATE: DATE

REVIEW / CHECK-IN: DATE

HOW I'LL CREATE SPACE FOR QUESTIONS AND REACTIONS (NOT JUST BROADCAST):

HOW I'LL LISTEN FOR HOW PEOPLE ARE REALLY DOING (NOT JUST THE OFFICIAL RESPONSE):

AFTER THE COMMUNICATION

WHAT WENT WELL?

WHAT DID I UNDERESTIMATE?

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE CONVERSATION:

#	ACTION	OWNER	BY WHEN
1			
2			
3			

The transition takes longer than the change: The practical change may happen overnight. The psychological transition (people making sense of what it means for them) takes weeks or months. Check in with individuals 2 to 4 weeks after the initial communication. That's when the real concerns surface.

Want help putting this into practice?

Growth Performance builds the human advantage in an AI-driven world, with people, teams and leaders.

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