



Change: It's Constant and Inevitable Are you Ready?

Change has its own cycle. The phases of this cycle, and the implications for your department and the change you are attempting to implement, are significant. As an executive, the greatest focus must be placed on the *employees* throughout the change cycle, not the organization or the administrative details that drive it. Managing change is not about managing the inbox.

There are six stages in the change cycle.

The stages, symptoms of each stage and the executive solution follow:

Stage 1 - Loss: employees admit to themselves that, whether or not they perceive the change to be good or 'bad,' there will be a sense of loss of what "was."

Solution- Communicate frequently with employees, recognizing their sense of loss and validating it as legitimate, while focusing upon the future of the organization and the value of the change.

Stage 2 - Doubt: In this stage, employees doubt reality as you have presented it to them and struggle to find information about the change.

Solution- Be inclusive and make employees a part of the change process. This will recruit them to your cause and, for those who respond to this overture, advocates for change within the organization.

Stage 3 - Discomfort: You will recognize this stage by the discomfort, both physical and mental it brings to employees. The change and all it means has now become clear as they assimilate new information in a meaningful way. Involvement of the Employee Assistance Program may be appropriate for some at this stage.

Solution- One must lead by example, demonstrating to employees that one can function quite well outside the organizational comfort zone.

Stage 4 - Discovery: This represents the "light at the end of the tunnel." Employees can see the options and possibilities the change offers. They become optimistic and resistance fades.

Solution- At this stage, your employees are forward leaning in their thinking and actions. Encourage innovation and risk taking. After all, this is what you asked them to do.

Stage 5 - Understanding: Here, employees understand the change and are involved in it. They can identify its benefits and acknowledge its usefulness.

Solution- At this stage, employees should put their shoulder to the wheel and become a part of the new organization. It is critical at this juncture, to provide the resources needed to succeed.

Stage 6 - Integration: By the time you reach this stage, you have stopped looking at "the change" as something different because you have integrated its challenges and victories into your work environment.

MIPT can help you implement sustainable change in your organization or department. For additional information contact: David Cid at MIPT: 405.278.6316; cid@mipt.org