

Help Your Employee Cope with Change



Helping employees adapt to changes that affect them is a major part of a manager's job. By doing this effectively, you will minimize the unproductive time spent in adapting to new organizational structure, technology, techniques and workplace strategies.

George Fuller, author of *Win-Win Management: Leading People in the New Workplace*, advises managers to be prepared to answer a multitude of questions, some of which may not always be sensible and many of which will be repetitive. Your patience may will be tested at times, but don't forget that helping your employees adjust will make it easier when future changes take place. Fuller advises four ways to help employees adapt to change and stay motivated:

- Stay accessible. Whenever there is a change in the workplace, employee anxiety can run high. Make sure employees know that your door is open. Their constant questions can disrupt your work schedule, so you may need to come in a little earlier or stay later to concentrate on your own tasks.
- Explain the basis for change. Once employees understand reasons for change, they feel less threatened. The needs of employees will vary with the type of change. Some change may just be procedural and require little more than a brief explanation. Major events such as mergers and reorganizations will take a little more time.
- Don't undermine top management change by being critical. Be as forthright as possible. Avoid conveying a negative attitude. Even if you think senior management didn't handle the situation in the right way, don't put your career at risk or undermine any change by criticizing it.
- Show results. Point out the positive results after a change takes place. This makes it easier to convince employees to accept other changes in the future. Refer to a successful change if you meet resistance when introducing something new.

Has your group recently gone through a round of layoffs? How can you keep your employees motivated and focused on the job? Bob Nelson, author of *1,001 Ways to Energize Employees*, recommends six steps:

- Communicate all information to all employees all of the time.
- Gather employees from different levels and areas for a brown-bag lunch. Ask what they would change in the organization and how they'd change it.
- Encourage employees to improve one process, procedure or aspect of their job, every day.
- Give employees permission to say "yes" to customers and the resources to do so.
- Break down barriers between departments.
- Encourage employees to set aside time every day to focus uninterrupted on their highest priority tasks.



Your Employee Assistance Program

Anytime, any day, you have free, confidential access to professional consultants and online resources to help you be your best. To access these services, call or log on to get started.



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