

Navigating the Seas of Change

Organizational change can be hard, and the transition process may be mentally and emotionally draining on you and your employees. And even though we've all faced quite a bit of change as of late, it doesn't mean it gets any easier. It may be especially challenging when there's change in the midst of change, like losing or gaining employees during a pandemic, or someone being deployed just after assuming a new role on the team. While the seas of change can be rough, you can keep the wind in your sails and your crew on board with guidance from your Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Get yourself squared away. To be an effective captain as you steer the way through an organizational change for your staff, you must first fully understand and process the information, details, and next steps yourself. Often, leaders don't take the time to do this after learning about such changes and suddenly find themselves faced with questions they can't answer from confused, frustrated employees.

So, when your leadership announces a change, pay attention, and gather as much information as you can. Try to remember your first thoughts, how you felt, and what you wanted to know in that moment, as these are all good indicators of how your employees will likely feel and react when it's time for you to tell them about what lies ahead. The more knowledgeable and confident you are when delivering the news of a change, the better they may feel about where things are headed, how it affects them, and the role they play in making it a success.

Communicate with your crew. The best thing you can do to support employees through workplace transitions is connect with them regularly and keep them in the loop, even if there's nothing new to report.

The absence of consistent communication in a situation like this not only generates anxiety, it leaves people open to filling in the gaps on their own with things like speculation, rumors, and suspicion. Worse, an atmosphere of lingering uncertainty may prompt some employees to consider abandoning ship.

You may not be at liberty to share certain details or you may still be awaiting further details yourself, and that's okay. What's important is that you're transparent about what you do and don't know, and what you can and can't share. But be careful—stick to the information that is most essential to avoid overwhelming your staff with unnecessary minutiae.

Provide safe harbor. Be understanding and considerate of your employees' feelings and the effect that a change may be having on them. Let them know that you're available if they need to talk or ask questions. Depending on the type of change, you might consider having individual or group discussions about how people are doing or what they might need from you. What's most important is that you value your employees and validate their feelings, even if it's uncomfortable to hear them. The team may not all react or move forward in the same way or need the same level of support. Just knowing you're there for them can go a long way toward a higher level of trust and buy-in when it comes to change and transition in your organization.

Let the EAP be your first mate for all things change in the workplace. Resources, information, and expert guidance are just a phone call or a website away. Contact us any time, day or night, to speak with a licensed counselor or to schedule a management skills consultation.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a voluntary and confidential employee benefit available to eligible federal employees at no cost.

24 HOURS A DAY

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“Navigating
change is the
new stability.”

Sharon Weil