

10 Tips for Effective Change Communication

1. Prepare for change
2. Customize and target messages
3. Ensure change communications are timely
4. Listen and keep listening
5. Ensure face-to-face is effective
6. Support employees during change
7. Paint a picture of the future
8. Help managers to communicate change effectively
9. Maintain engagement during change
10. Measure results and celebrate success

"70% of change initiatives in organizations fail."
McKinsey & Company

Change communication tip 1- Prepare for change

Constant change has almost become a norm, so challenge the status quo regularly help employees become aware of the need for change, either now or in the future. Use staff quizzes to challenge the current situation. This is an example of a question you might include: "In our changing industry, which will be the most effective way to do business in the future? A, B or C?"

To ensure high participation, use a quiz format that is delivered directly onto targeted employee's computer screens with display recurrence options based on the user's response.

Change Comms tool = Targeted desktop messaging



Change communication tip 2 – Customize and target messages

Avoid a 'one size fits all' approach to change communication. During organizational change it is particularly important to customize and target messages to meet the needs of the different employee groups within your organization.

Change Comms tool = Desktop Quiz tool

Change communication tip 3 – Ensure change communications are timely

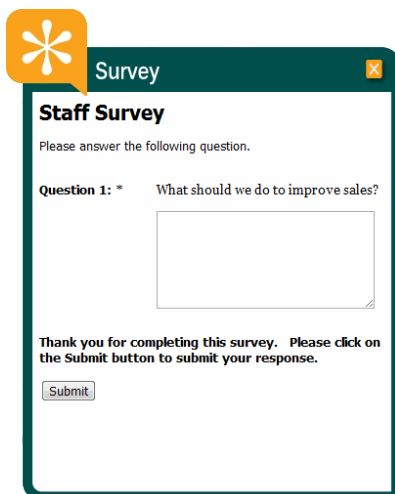
Fast and effective message cut-through. Use Desktop alerts as an effective way to draw employees' attention to important or urgent messages.

Prepare and pre-schedule messages. Set up change communications in advance to prepare for, and respond quickly to, staff feelings and feedback. During change, pre-schedule messages to ensure that employees hear about changes at the same time that you advise the market or the media.

Change SnapComms tool = SnapComms messaging scheduling & Desktop Alert tool

Change communication tip 4 – Listen and keep listening

Gauge employee attitudes to change. Survey employees to gauge their attitudes towards organizational changes and assess how well they understand them.



Keep your finger on the pulse. Survey employees regularly as a temperature check and test that your change strategies are working every step of the way. Target dedicated surveys to specific groups of staff (e.g. to check whether you are making progress with a resistant group).

Virtual meetings. Use online discussion forums to run 'virtual meetings' where employees can share ideas and opinions and, if they need to, let off steam (which may be necessary during the 'denial' and 'reaction' strategies of the change curve). Let people post ideas anonymously to find out what employees really think. Use secure forums that allow you to moderate conversation and target access rights to specific groups of employees

Manage rumors. When employees feel unsure they may clam up or communicate rumors. Discussion forums let them post their concerns and comments (anonymously if necessary) so that you understand and can address the rumors that are circulating. You could even name a dedicated forum 'the rumor mill' and encourage people to post any rumors they've heard so that the business can confirm or correct them.

Collect feedback and report on it. Include a section in the internal newsletter or a feature on the intranet called "Great feedback we're working with". Highlight how you are using staff's constructive comments to improve the business and the way you manage the change.

Change Comms tools = Internal Newsletter / SnagMag, Desktop Survey tool & Internal Social Media

Change communication tip 5 – Ensure face-to-face is effective

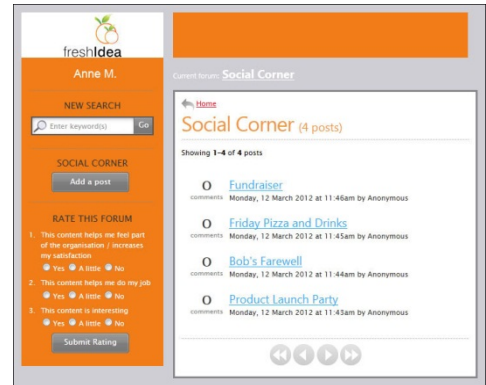
Ensure as many employees as possible attend face-to-face briefings. During times of change, it may be difficult to get everyone in a room at the same time. Provide alternative options for times and venues and monitor which employees are attending which sessions. This helps you plan your logistics (e.g. room sizes and catering) and close off specific time slots and locations as they fill up.

Change Comms tool = Targeted RSVP alert tool

Reinforce face-to-face executive communications. Get respected managers to blog about the change. Encourage staff to ask questions and raise issues both before and after face-to-face briefings. This will help managers address concerns and employees to buy into changes. Manager blogs will also help employees realize that managers are human too and that they are not forcing change on people simply to make life difficult.

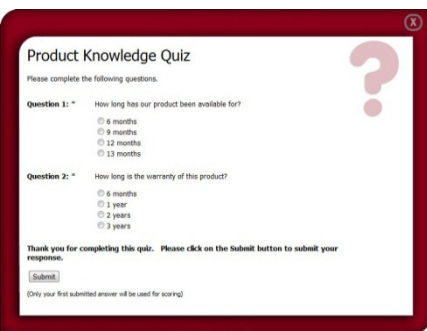
Measure and manage information cascade. Measure how well your managers are communicating with their teams. Use surveys and polls to understand how well each employee understands the main messages about the change and link the survey results back to individual managers as a measure of communications effectiveness. What gets measured usually gets focus and priority...

Change Comms tools = Desktop Survey tool, Internal Social Media & RSVP Alert



Change communication tip 6 – Support employees during change

Provide employee help desks. Set up online help desks for when employees want quick answers to their questions. Ensure alert notifications are automatically sent to moderators when a new question is posted. Staff will see a quick reply as a sign that the organization cares about them. By contrast, a slow reply may fuel dissatisfaction and anxiety.



Change Comms tool = Internal social media & desktop alert notifications

Change communication tip 7 – Paint a picture

Tell Stories. Include articles in the internal newsletter or on the intranet to show how employees are modeling new values or putting in place new strategies. If possible, allow them to submit their stories directly.

Change Comms tool = Internal Newsletter tool / SnapMag

Digital signage on screensavers. Pictures paint a thousand words. Use interactive screensaver messages to portray a positive picture of where the organization and its products are headed.

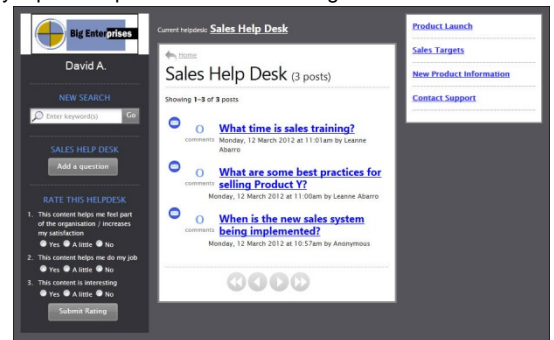
Broadcast them around your

organization to capture employee's imagination in an appealing, visual way.

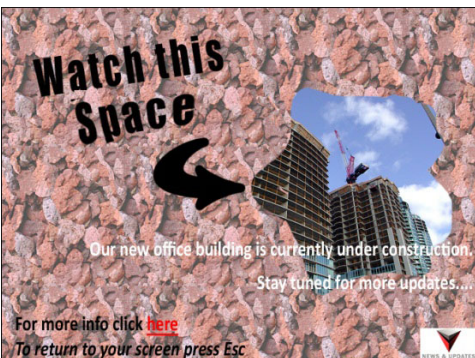
Change Comms tool = Screensaver Messaging tool

Scenario quizzes. Help employees visualize the change working for them. Ask scenario questions. For example, "The new XYZ technology will help me do A, B, C, or D or all of the above?" Offer prizes to encourage staff to take part. Include humorous or trick questions and answers to lighten the tone and make the staff quiz fun.

e Comms tool = Desktop Quiz



Change communication tip 8 – Make it easy for managers to communicate change effectively



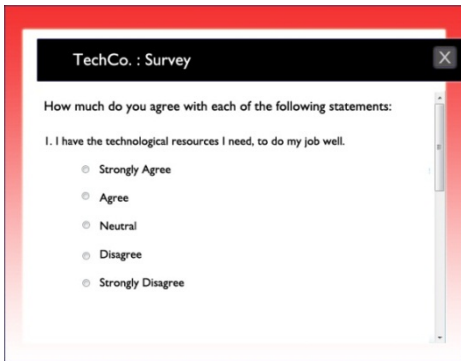
Provide secure discussion forums for managers to meet online to discuss strategies, share ideas and plan in an asynchronous way. This is especially useful when managers work in different locations.

Change Comms tool = Internal Social Media

Scrolling desktop news feeds. Set managers or their PAs up as news feed administrators and let them target and send their teams scrolling desktop updates. This is a good way to make sure that teams see information that is directly relevant to them as soon as it becomes available.

Change Comms tool = Desktop Newsfeeds

Video updates. Create video updates relevant to specific employee groups. Work with managers to make messages as relevant as possible to the different groups. Use reporting options to see which employees have watched the video.



Change Comms tool = Video Desktop Alerts

Provide advance notification. Update managers before their teams receive certain types of new information. This gives them time to plan how they will react when their teams hear news, and to be prepared to answer their possible questions.

Change Comms tools = Desktop Newsfeed & message scheduling/targeting

Change communication tip 9 – Ways to build employee engagement during change

Involve staff. Use Staff surveys to involve employees and find out their views. Consider letting employees respond anonymously for maximum candor. Every problem uncovered is a problem that you can address.

Change Comms tool = Desktop Surveys tool

Repeat key messages. Repeat your main messages in a range of ways to ensure that they don't become boring or are seen as 'wall paper'.

Change Comms tool = Multiple communication channels

Celebrate new beginnings. Allow employees to contribute their own articles to the internal newsletter or intranet. Encourage them to tell their own stories about how the changes are working for them.

Change Comms tool = Internal Newsletter / SnapMag

Inject fun and involve people Use a Staff quiz to ask employees to name new ways of working (e.g. new systems, projects) or suggest improvements. Offer prizes for the best ideas and recognize them using Screensaver Messages and articles in the internal newsletter.

Change Comms tool = Desktop Quiz

Change communication tip 10 – Measure results and celebrate success



Benchmark and track trends. Survey staff to assess what's working, measure attitudes, understanding and to track trends.

Monitor the tone of conversations. Monitor comments made in employee discussion forums. This can provide valuable, qualitative information that measures how employees are feeling and how well they are engaged in the organizational change.

Highlight and celebrate success. Screensaver messaging provides a visual, engaging way to highlight and celebrate success during the change. Target Screensaver Messages to specific employee groups to celebrate companywide successes as well as small local wins.

Profile success stories. Use an internal newsletter as an engaging way to document success. Encourage employees to submit articles that talk about what they have achieved (e.g. simpler ways of working, important milestones met).

Change Comms tools = Desktop Survey tool, Internal Social Media, Screensaver Messaging & Internal Newsletter / SnapMag

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