

MAKE CHANGE WORK™

Questions to Plan Your Communication

Effective communication is a critical component in any successful change. Done well, it creates understanding and support. Done poorly, it generates mistrust and resistance.

The following questions will help you identify the issues you must consider in planning your change communication.

- What performance, behavior, or thinking are we trying to change? Why are we trying to change it? Be as specific as possible.
- Why are we communicating? (provide information, change performance, etc.)
- What individuals or groups are stakeholders in this change? The employees and managers involved are obvious, but don't forget other internal groups, bargaining units, vendors, and even customers or the general public.
- What communication or information has been provided so far? Are we starting with a clean slate or dealing with existing information and perception?
- How will the change be positioned—big deal, gradual change, continuing movement toward excellence?
- What issues must be communicated to ensure understanding and support for the change? Are there strategic advantages we want to create? Is this a crisis that must be resolved or avoided?
- Why should the stakeholders involved care about the success or failure of this change? What will it mean for them? What are we expecting to be different as a result of the change? Why does that matter? What messages do people need to hear to make the communication meaningful?
- What should be the timing, frequency and method of communication for each stakeholder? Who is responsible for each component of the communication process? Who is the best person/group to take the lead at each step of the communication process? (See the Communication Planning spreadsheet for additional resources.)
- What communication tools should we utilize to make sure that the message is heard? (video, written, face-to-face, etc.)
- Should we conduct formal education and training sessions to ensure that the stakeholders involved have the information and tools they need to make the change work? Who will conduct the sessions? What materials should be provided? What medium should be used (face-to-face, web based, video based)?
- Do we need to provide additional or ongoing information resources to ensure that the change is reinforced and continued? (articles to read, ongoing training, individual to contact, on-line resources)
- How will progress and results be determined and communicated so that everyone knows that the desired change is working?
- What resources are needed to help supervisors and managers communicate the change to their individual team? (scripts, video, visuals, etc.)
- Do we need to maintain communication and training of new employees, supervisors, managers, leaders, and other stakeholders to ensure that the purpose of the change is not lost over time?

