



Bring Change to Life— with Help from Your Workforce

Date/Source: Summer 2009 Personnel Peeks (Reviewed October 2009)

Archived newsletters of the Personnel Peeks publication can be found on the MCHRMA site.

Survival these days depends on your organization's ability to change quickly, which depends on your employees. Memos and new mission statements won't produce results on their own. Change has to come from within your workforce. Here's what you need to bring your people on board:

Tell them why. You've got to set the stage for people. If employees don't know what's happening in your company and in your industry, they won't see any reason to do things differently. Share as much as you can about your finances, the problems your organization is facing and what's likely to happen if you all do nothing.

Focus on the long term. Change is a process, not a single event. Emphasize that it will take time, and to be successful people will have to look to the future. Remember that performance won't be transformed overnight. Once you've restructured, implemented new systems and launched new strategies, a learning curve will slow down the progress you're looking for. Don't be so impatient for results that you sabotage your efforts and those of your workforce.

Solicit and listen to feedback. Change works best when it's a collaborative, interactive process. Consider everyone who'll be affected, from front-line employees to senior management, as well as clients and other stakeholders. Provide them with updates on your progress. Ask them how it's going, and what could speed things along. If you've done a good job of selling the change and giving them the facts they need to bring it to life, their insights and opinions will prove invaluable.

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