

LEARNING TO ROLL WITH THE CHANGES

- Which camp do you belong to: the one that whole-heartedly believes change is good? Or are you in the other camp thinking, “Wait, nobody likes change...?”

Even though we might understand that change is inevitable, experiencing it as a positive or a negative depends so much on personal perspective.

Some folks are excited to move on to something new, and others would be content if things stayed exactly the way they are. So, how do you react to change that affects your performance at work? And how can you learn to support your team as you all navigate change together?

- Whether you're facing organizational transitions like departments merging or a rush of new business, or people-related transitions like a new manager or transfer of a favorite colleague, it helps to understand approaches that can create positive change experiences for yourself and others.

EMBRACING CHANGE AND LEADING THE WAY

Since change requires individual energy and emotional investments—managers and team leaders may find it best not to control and manage transitions for people, but instead, to help them understand the goals for the transitions and allow them to work through the process.

In other words, having confidence in the hoped for outcomes may help you and your coworkers accept the need for change in your organization.

Change leaders tend to take a positive approach to overcoming hurdles during times of change:

- They are curious and probe for understanding and meaning
- They are willing to adapt based on the situation and the needs of the team
- They know how to learn from every situation
- They are willing to try new things and balance risk with reward
- They don't judge others' reactions, and allow them to journey to their own acceptance

MOVING THROUGH THE PHASES OF CHANGE

If you have been willing to learn and adapt through change, perhaps you've noticed how embracing new opportunities instead of resisting change can lead you to explore new potential for your own personal development and career path.

At first, recognizing the feelings of loss that may occur in the early stages of change can lead to more understanding and compassion among team members and leaders. More camaraderie and communication can be a positive result.

As they say, necessity is the mother of invention. This can play out as the early news of impending change is accepted. You and your teammates could share a certain excitement for potential gains, even though you recognize the time spent in your previous comfort zone may be coming to an end.

In fact, this may be one of the interesting things about change: Instead of a beginning, it typically starts with an ending. People have to “let go” of the past before they can be open to the possibilities of the future. However, other people may be excited to explore, to ask questions and to grow. If this sounds like you, you could work on helping colleagues who may feel more uncertain or afraid of change.



SUCCESS BREEDS ENTHUSIASM

One strategy for making the most of the opportunities change can offer is to highlight new beginnings. Beginnings can feel more positive, like positioning the glass as half-full versus half empty.

With practice and time, as new routines and interactions become more comfortable with practice, an optimistic “can-do” attitude across the organization can be recognized—even leveraged. Team transitions can be a cause for regular sharing and collaboration around topics such as:

- How can we personally support each other through the changes to come?
- What would make the transition easier for each person affected?
- What worries do team members have, how can we ease anxiety?
- What is the best-case scenario once we get through this change?
- Who has experienced similar change before and what advice can they share?

You can set milestones for your own evolution through change as well, and recognize your personal and professional accomplishments. For example:

- What new skills have you learned?
- What helpful contacts have you made?
- What bonds have you strengthened?
- How have you enhanced your performance?
- What ideas have inspired you?
- What new doors might you open next as a result?

Success in making it through change can usher in a new era of bold growth strategies, not only for your company, but for you, too!

To learn more about models for change management and thriving through change at work, ask about our DeVryWORKS webinar, “Are You a Catalyst for Change?” which this article was based on. This learning presentation discusses barriers to change, how to overcome them, change leadership and more. Click here for upcoming webinar schedule.

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