

Thriving in the Face of Organizational Change

By Chelsey Beale, MBA



We get comfortable in our workspaces, confident in our knowledge and abilities, and performing like freaking rockstars. Then “pow,” out of nowhere, we find ourselves knee deep in a change experience, wondering if we have a recent copy of our resume uploaded on LinkedIn. Unexpected workplace changes can happen at any time, and the uncertainty that ensues can be scary. This scenario has likely happened to all of us at one time or another. Yet changes can also present us with unique opportunities to grow.

When you find yourself in the middle of a transformation, what you may not realize at the time is that you are taking part in an experience that is expanding your horizons. You may learn that you excel at a new skill, find your passion in a different role, or push yourself to achieve more than you ever imagined. Transitioning through a significant change event is a remarkable way to find out who you are and what you are really made of. Whether you are guiding people through the journey of a transformation or making your own transition, thriving is possible.

Change happens on a very personal stage and affects each of us in vastly different ways. Shifts at work can be emotionally taxing, but if your work life is going to be different because of an organizational change, you can make choices that will help you be successful in adopting new

habits and adjusting to your new role. While it may not seem so, you have control over how you respond and react to environmental changes, now can be a great opportunity to shine.

When you first get news of the shift, ask questions, and find out what you can do to help. The most difficult changes are the ones we don't understand, so seek out answers to support your awareness. Keep an open mind and stay optimistic. Encourage group discussions with employees and peers and do your best to model a cheerful outlook and offer honest and constructive feedback. As events progress, reassess your skills and industry knowledge to identify any gaps that may create barriers for you. Look for chances to close those openings with training and focus on your professional development.

Sometimes it takes a crisis to push us out of our comfort zones, so use change events as catalysts for career growth. When the future arrives, be engaged, bolster new business ideas, and show your support for the long-term success of the organization.

If you are a team leader during a transformational change, you have many different layers to navigate. In addition to the challenge of adjusting to the change on an individual scale, you must help others move through the process and thrive in an unfamiliar environment. Effective change management planning is the best way to set yourself and your team up for success while adding value to the whole organization. Change management at its core is simply preparing, equipping, and supporting the people who will be impacted by the organizational change. It begins and ends with communication, which must be done early and often. Speak about the change as transparently as possible, and ask for input and suggestions from your teammates. Share your vision of the desired future state and make sure you answer the WIIFM? (what's in it for me) questions.

Actively participate in meetings and discussions and be prepared to manage resistance from your team members with empathy. By being empathetic, seeing other people's perspective becomes instructive on how to fine tune the change management process to better address their fears. This ensures people are cared for by providing them with the coaching and knowledge needed to demonstrate excellence in their changing roles and tackle their concerns. Talk to individuals face-to-face about the impacts of the change and provide a continuous feedback loop for those who are affected. And don't forget to celebrate wins and recognize the behaviors that support long term change adoption and add value to you organization.

Change is constant and has become the new norm. In a time of global uncertainty, we must learn to be change warriors, using every opportunity to gain experience and thrive in the workplace. Whatever your role in the process, support those around you, stay positive, and adopt a change mindset. Change begins at the end of your comfort zone, so be ready and be bold!

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