**Communication Through Change Is Important**

**(You can fix stupid …. But I don’t think I should call it that)**

**The importance of communication**

I am currently working on a project that has a major impact on the company. Throughout this process I continue to hear a set of words that is not sitting well with me. I keep hearing ‘you can’t fix stupid’. Maybe fixing stupid is not the answer. Maybe fixing the lack of communication. Maybe fixing the lack of understanding. Maybe changing the way the messages of change is flowing down to the heart of the organization. Maybe adjust the process how changes are introduced to the production staff, who are most heavily impacted by them. Maybe these are the answers to fixing the ‘You can’t fix stupid problem’.

When big organizational changes take place, the employees most affected are on the front line/floor. These are the people that get the least amount of support and communication. Change is hard. In order to lesson the impact, leaders and bosses needed to COMMUICATE!

**Why communication through chance important**

In the change process, employees hold an important place because they are directly and indirectly affected by change. Therefore, employees react differently to change

then the leadership may. This is even more the case because employees may not have been part of the decision-making process. Change causes emotional reactions and has consequences that can be accepted, rejected or even ignored. Based on this, it is important to communicate as often as possible. This allows the team to work through their emotional reactions.

**Communication comes in many different forms**

Since everyone responds to change differently, it is important to use as many different types of communication to get the message across. Some methods of communication include:

* Verbal – in large groups
* Verbal in a small group or team setting
* Email outlining the change and the timeline
* Memo outlining the change and the timeline
* Video/VLOG (with closed captions)
* Closed organization Facebook Page LIVE or Instagram LIVE (use social media)
* Infographic
* Flyers/Posters
* Cheat Sheets, How To Guides, Step By Step Guides
* Train the Trainers – Peer Influencers & Early Adopters (mentorship)
* Easily accessible electronic new policies and procedures

Successful communication methods include active listening (when verbal) as well as empathy for the situation.

**Communicate, communicate, communicate**

Communicating often, in different forms, and at all levels, gives people a chance to digest the chance, as questions, and give feedback regarding the change and the message that is being put out by the organization.

It is also important that the communication comes from a leader or a person in power. A CEO or president. This gives the stakeholders and employees more faith in the change due to the credibility of the person it is coming from.

Another step in communication is if you can train the trainers, or early adopters, so that there can be an internal moral and attitude shift within the organization. With peer to peer mentorship, you can take the approach of not only top down, but bottom up. Change is easier when everyone ‘buys into’ the process, and people don’t feel that they are just being ‘told’ what is happening. If everyone is part of the change, then accepting it and adjusting to it, is more successful.

**In Closing**

Leaders and Managers are responsible for shaping the culture of an organization through change. A manager’s role goes beyond the day to day duties of the job. An effective manager creates a safe environment that fosters open communication, feedback, and a positive work environment while working through organizational change. Effective communication that allows people to digest the message and seek feedback to better understand the change helps create this environment.

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