



How to Navigate Organizational Change

Change. It's a way of life in organizations today.

No matter how much change employees have experienced in their careers, it's never easy. Large-scale changes, such as mergers and acquisitions, bring integration activities that may include site closures, relocations and staff reductions. In times of uncertainty, it's important to keep employees informed and engaged around the company's vision.

Vitiello Communications Group (VTLO), a global leader in business communications, offers the following seven steps to prepare you for success in leading change communication.

1. Read the horizon.

Proactive, engaged leaders know what's going on in their company and in their industry. Stay connected to people at all levels of the organization. Read blogs – especially those critical of your industry. Visit discussion boards where employees and customers vent. Set your RSS feed to the financial and global media outlets that cover your company. Be aware of internal and external rumors without contributing to them.

2. Form a core team that can weather obstacles to success.

In advance of a major change initiative, select the key people you can count on for support and who have solid cross-functional relationships. Over time, provide professional development experiences that expand their skills around communicating change initiatives. Be ready to deploy them throughout the organization when called upon to support change.

3. Chart your course.

Draft a strategic communication plan that addresses the audiences' need for information in logical increments of time. Stay close to the leadership team to gather data, understand nuance and represent the employees' point of view. Decide the communication channels that best serve leaders and employees before, during and after the announcement. Prepare key messages with the information you currently have and request that leaders be transparent about

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what is known, but refrain from speculation. In addition, keep in mind that media reports may leak the news. It's important to be ready to dispel rumors quickly.

4. Launch the program.

Whether you're launching an operational excellence program or announcing a major acquisition, employees will want more details once an announcement is made. Find opportunities for dialog that can help employees understand how the change affects their work group and themselves. As the change program progresses, course corrections are inevitable. Be sure to capture them in your strategic plan to keep it current.

5. Create a conduit.

It's critical that information flows swiftly and clearly – and in two directions. Communicators can facilitate the dialog between leaders and employees using existing channels such as intranet content, email messages, dedicated inboxes to gather questions, town halls and webcasts. Equip managers and supervisors to engage employees in discussion. Provide them with communication toolkits that help them convey information consistently, articulate the organization's vision for change, and gather employees' opinions, questions and perspectives.

6. Expect stormy weather.

Anticipate that any change will require an adjustment period as people absorb the information, react to it emotionally and adopt new behaviors. Effective change communication should help employees translate the new organizational strategy into "What's in it for me?" This will reduce distractions and ultimately drive the organization to stronger business performance. Realize that internal communications can very quickly become external with the press of the "send" or "share" button. Work with Public Affairs and Legal ahead of the launch to review your company's media relations policy and to develop a public statement even if you never need it.

7. Gauge progress.

Measure how far employees have come in understanding and acting on the organizational change and how much further there is to go. Collect employee feedback through surveys, spot polls, focus groups, online chat forums, dedicated email boxes, informal interaction and anecdotes gathered from colleagues. Provide regular updates of employees' opinions to leaders and allow them to inform and enhance your communication approach.

Communicating Change

We can help you navigate change to keep employees informed and engaged around your organization's vision.

Start the Conversation

Call or email us to arrange a free, 20-minute phone consultation.

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Talk With the Experts



Vitiello Communications Group (VTLO) is a global leader in business communications working with executives to engage people and inspire them to achieve great outcomes. Our client roster spans a range of highly regulated industries, including life sciences, healthcare, financial services, and conglomerates. VTLO is a certified woman-owned business by the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) and the State of New Jersey. For more information, please visit our website at www.vtlo.com.