SUPPORTING THE CHANGE JOURNEY
Part 2: Questions and Tactics

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Introduction

The first article in this series described how employees and volunteers of your nonprofit organization navigate a series of stages as they complete a change journey. As a nonprofit leader, you can help your organization change by:

- *Answering their questions*. Employee and volunteer questions will probably correspond to concerns they will have about the change. Each stage of the change journey will bring its own set of questions.
- *Using tactics to support their change journey*. Support each stage by using a variety of communication, leadership, and change management tactics to bring forth a sustainable change.

Feel free to refer to this companion infographic if you wish.

1. Awareness

The change journey begins with making employees and volunteers aware of the change you wish to make to the organization--and how they do their work. As they become aware, they will naturally turn to you to answer questions like these:

- What's the reason for the change?
- What happens if the change doesn't happen?
- When is the change happening?
- What is going to change?
- Will I have time to successfully make the change?

Consider these tactics to address awareness questions and concerns.

- *Secure active executive sponsorship*. Your organization's executive suite and board should be "on board" with the change. Communicate how these leaders have "skin in the game" in facilitating the change. The executive suite and board should visibly support the change and share their vision for what the change will look like in the organization. Communicate how leaders will be involved and accountable in the change process.

- *Equip managers and supervisors to discuss change with employees and volunteers*. Provide any necessary brainstorming discussions, training, guidance, and feedback so they can comfortably talk about the upcoming changes.

- *Share business information supporting the need for change*. Be transparent in sharing data supporting the need for change.

- *Plan adequate time for change*. Employees and volunteers will want to know that they will have the time they need to work the change into their other job responsibilities and existing deadlines.

2. Desire

To help employees and volunteers build a desire for the change, be prepared to answer these kinds of questions:

- What's in it for me?
- Will this adversely affect me in any way?
- What are risks and plans to minimize them?
- Do my leaders support this change?

In addition to answering these questions, consider using these tactics:

- *Leverage sponsors and opinion leaders*. Provide them with examples that depict how the change affects employee and volunteer jobs. Ask them to discuss the change with employees and volunteers.

- *Include employees and volunteers in the change process*. Use frequent conversations with sponsors and opinion leaders to elicit and respond to questions and concerns.

3. Tryout

During the tryout phase, you'll want to provide opportunities for staff and volunteers to mentally and physically try out the changes they will adopt. During this stage, they typically ask questions like these:

- What does the change look like in action?
- Has this change been successful before?
- How will this change my current work processes?
- What will I need to know to make this change successfully?

Consider using these tactics to address these questions and their underlying concerns before, during, and after training teaching staff and volunteers how to perform their jobs differently:

- *Demonstrate the change before any training begins*. Have sponsors, opinion leaders, and peers share examples of the change. Using town meetings, lunch and learns, field trips, stories, videos, and detailed prototypes, they:
    - Model what success future performance will look like.
    - Connect the change to personal benefits that resonate with employees and volunteers.
    - Continue building awareness and desire for change.

- *Provide relevant how-to interactive training*. During any training, instructors should
    - Facilitate interactive, hands-on exercises to build skills and knowledge.
    - Show how to use performance support materials back in the workplace, including any job aids, checklists, videos, or cheat sheets.
    - Encourage questions and dialog during the training.
    - Respond to adopters' concerns and opinions.

  Use these tactics across any type of training delivery, whether it's a traditional classroom, virtual classroom or eLearning.

- *Provide access to SMEs and opinion leaders after the training*. They will need to answer questions and address concerns as employees and volunteers return to the workplace.

4. Adoption

For change to be fully implemented and embraced by your employees and volunteers, continue to address their questions such as:

- What happens if I don't use the change?
- Why do I complete this task this way?
- Who will answer my questions in the workplace?
- How can I improve the performance of my new tasks?

To help employees and volunteers integrate the changes into their daily practices, provide the following:

- *Continued access to performance supports.* Use FAQs, checklists, and short videos to sustain new performance.

- *Adequate on-the-job technical support*. Help employees and volunteers fix any glitches as they arise on the job.

- *Valuable incentives*. Reward employees and volunteers for accepting the change and performing as desired. Use praise, recognition and rewards they find valuable.

- *Access to successful adopters.* Allow release time to communicate with subject matter experts, opinion leaders, and other satisfied peers.

5. Reinforcement

For long-term success of your change initiative, reinforce the change until it becomes institutionalized in your organization. Be prepared to answer these questions:

- Are my coworkers implementing the change?
- Is the change producing positive results?
- How can we improve the change?
- Are there consequences for not implementing the change?

- Am I receiving timely, relevant, actionable, constructive, and kind feedback about how I am doing?

Ensuring that employees and volunteers have no unanswered questions will help to support continued change as well as implementing these reinforcement tactics:

- *Continue communication after go-live*. For example, the project sponsor communication can continue to remind and reinforce the "why" behind the change and thanking employees and volunteers for their contributions. Begin continuous improvement efforts.

- *Celebrate and recognize continued successes.* Include successes large and small for all stakeholders. Focus on the impact of the change on the organization and its customers.

- *Remind them of available performance support.* Share available options such as job aids, checklists, FAQs, and short videos.

- *Solicit feedback from employees and volunteers.* Be sure to communicate what was done with their feedback to drive continuous improvement.

Conclusion

Change naturally brings out questions and concerns for anyone. It's important to plan early and strategize, so employees and volunteers have relevant information, support, and their questions addressed in a timely manner. By understanding the questions asked in each phase and implementing these tactics, nonprofit leaders can help their employees and volunteers have a smooth journey where the result is sustained change.

References

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