

TIP SHEET: DEALING WITH CHANGE IN THE WORKPLACE

Change is something that we all experience at some point in our lives. All change can be stressful, and changes that occur in the workplace can pose some unique challenges. However, with the right attitude and actions, you can find opportunities in change that lead to success!

Recognize that change does happen

Our own personal lives change as we grow older. Why should our careers and jobs be any different? Denying that change is or will be occurring and continuing to live in the past only makes things more difficult. The more we understand that change will happen, the less upset and surprised we will be when we encounter that change.

Be aware of your surroundings

Change is not a bad thing, and it can even be desirable. It's important to recognize that change can occur at any time or place, and stress can be reduced when we acknowledge that change can occur at work just as much as anywhere else.

Recognize the stages

When we experience change in our lives, we are going through a process with stages. Initially we may try to avoid the change or even pretend that nothing has changed. Being part of an organization, we sometimes have to ask ourselves, "What am I going to lose if I don't change?" and "How can I make this work?" Once we are able to answer those questions, and identify the costs and benefits, we can start to move forward to the stage of acceptance.

Communicate with others

Communication is always important, but especially so when you face change. A lack of communication from others can have a negative impact, while effective communications can have a positive one. You need information about the change, so that you can determine how it affects you. Talk to your manager and your co-workers. Avoid rumors, which are common during periods of change. Try talking to others who have experience similar changes. What difficulties did they experience and how did they deal with them? How can you adapt their experiences to your own situation? Insight from others can be valuable and helpful.

Do a self-assessment

What skills and strengths do you have? What talents do you bring to your team? Where areas do you need to improve? Understanding your own strengths and areas for development and knowing as much as you can about a new situation and expectations will make it easier to cope with change.

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Be flexible

Change requires flexibility. The better able you are to adapt to change, the greater your chances of being successful. After you complete your self-assessment, take a look at the requirements of your new situation. What skills do you have that you can apply to the new situation? In other words, instead of focusing on differences, focus on similarities. Think in the same way about how you can adapt your own skills to the new environment.

Continue to do your work

Regardless of any changes occurring around you, it is important to continue to focus on your work. Staying busy can be a doing familiar work can help during a period of change. If you have a new supervisor, a strong work ethic and a positive attitude can make a very positive impression.

Be positive in actions and attitude

Keeping a positive attitude can help you deal with many of the uncertainties of change. Instead of worrying about changes you will have to make, focus instead on how you can leverage your existing skills and experience. By looking for opportunities in a new organizational structure and becoming more involved, you will have an easier time adjusting.

Maintain your network

Your network of contacts, both inside and outside your organization, can serve a valuable function. They can be a sounding board and may be able to offer insight about how they've handles similar changes. Build your network by keeping in touch with school and college classmates, current and former co-workers, bosses, and subordinates and by meeting colleagues at conferences and conventions.

Be Resilient

The people that are best able to deal with changes in their lives believe in their ability to change. They understand that change is inevitable and look for opportunities in the change. Navigating changes in our work and personal lives builds resilience, our natural ability to grow from challenges that we face, which allows us to be prepared for the next challenge that lies ahead.