

Change Management 101

Communicating your change plan

Communicating your change plan to your stakeholders—individuals positively or negatively impacted by your change—is a critical step in getting buy-in for a change.

How to use this tool

This tool provides a set of guiding questions to consider as you develop a communication plan. Remember that one size does not fit all, and different types of stakeholders will likely require different types of communication plans.

Some tips:

- Communication is not a one-and-done event. Communicate throughout the change process.
- Communication isn't telling; it's two-way. Use your communication plan to create opportunities for feedback. Be transparent about whether feedback was incorporated or not and share your reasons.
- Don't limit yourself to verbal communications. Communicate by example and by coaching.



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Communication Plan

You can use the worksheet below to outline your communication plan. Remember that a communication plan is not just for the rollout stage of a change. You'll need to revisit your plan at the transition stage and as you reach your desired state.

Stakeholder group:	
Question being addressed	Answers
<p>Why change?</p> <p>Why this safety project? Why now?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize the problem and share who participated in developing a solution Share what options were explored and how this approach was chosen Communicate the benefits of the change. Share the evidence behind a new care practice Explain the risks of not changing 	
<p>What's in it for my stakeholder?</p> <p>Those impacted by the change will want to understand the personal benefits of the change. You'll need to explain how the change aligns with their priorities.</p> <p>Questions your stakeholder will want answered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the change make my job better? Help me to be a better care provider? Create a better patient experience? <p>People don't really fear change as much as they fear loss. Turn perceived losses into perceived gains.</p>	
<p>How will the change impact this stakeholder?</p> <p>As an example, staff will be very concerned about changes to their roles and responsibilities. They'll want to understand how workflows will change, and if there are new devices or software they'll need to learn about. They'll want to know if they'll have the time, resources, and supports required to</p>	

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Stakeholder group:	
Question being addressed	Answers
<p>implement the change. Will they be able to master any new skills required?</p> <p>Be clear about what will change and what won't change.</p> <p>As you think about your stakeholder, remember the SCARF needs:</p> <p>S: A need to maintain status</p> <p>C: A need for certainty</p> <p>A: A need for autonomy</p> <p>R: A need for relatedness</p> <p>F: A need for fairness</p> <p>(See Appendix A for SCARF tips)</p>	
<p>How and when will the change happen?</p> <p>Share information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall project plan • Timelines • Project status • Time to adoption (i.e., will there be a pilot phase?) • Next steps 	
<p>What are the details?</p> <p>Your communication plan is not a one-time-only announcement. Plan to provide regular updates, tailored to your individual stakeholders (remember SCARF!)</p> <p>Details that will matter include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the change means for the unit/work setting and for the organization • How staff will be supported throughout the change • When training will occur 	

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Stakeholder group:	
Question being addressed	Answers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If, and when, there will be opportunities to pilot the change• How feedback will be collected and acted upon• Who staff can go to with questions and concerns	

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APPENDIX A. Do you have the right SCARF?

S is for Status

How do you tackle resistance that can come from perceived loss of status?

Help people to feel confident that they can implement the change, celebrate successes, and help team members own the change process. Turn resisters into champions who you can count on to lead others.

C is for Certainty

How do you tackle resistance that can come from a perceived loss of certainty?

Communicate what's involved in the change. Be clear about why the change is occurring, what will be different and what will stay the same. Help people learn and practice new skills, if those are part of the change process.

A is for Autonomy

How do you tackle resistance that can come from perceived loss of autonomy?

Giving team members some say in the change process can help reduce this perceived loss. Help team members understand that their opinions and experiences are valued.

R is for relatedness

How do you tackle resistance that can come from perceived loss of relatedness?

Create opportunities to increase a sense of connection and shared interests, for example, providing opportunities for casual conversations (whether in-person or online). If new learning is involved, consider providing opportunities for coaching or mentoring and peer support groups.

F is for fairness

How do you tack resistance that can come from perceived loss of fairness?

Increasing communication can help team members see that decisions are being made thoughtfully with multiple inputs. Being clear about expectations and accountability can also go a long way. Helping teams to create their own "rules" as much as they can, can help team members own the change process.

Reference

Rock DJ. SCARF: A brain-based model for collaborating with and influencing others. [NeuroLeadership Journal. Issue 1: 2008.](#)

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