Overview

The Employee Change Workbook is designed for you to help employees when they are experiencing post-budget reduction changes. The workbook contains a series of questions and tips to help employees think through and better understand the change they are experiencing, their reactions to it, and how they can succeed during the change.

On the following pages you will find a workbook that employees can use to think about and establish a constructive plan for succeeding during post-budget reduction changes. Review the questions and tips in the workbook.

Feel free to make any necessary edits to fit your division or department and provide it to employees as a handout.
Succeeding During Change: Employee Workbook

Instructions

The pace of change is accelerating. If you are like most people, you’ve probably experienced a number of changes during the last several months, both at work and elsewhere in your life. All changes, large or small, positive or negative, can be disruptive. They require attention and energy to manage successfully.

Succeeding during change means...

- Being personally effective in your division or department during and after changes;
- Maintaining personal health and minimizing stress during changes;
- Helping others cope with changes successfully; and
- Becoming better equipped to handle future changes at work and outside of work.

When changes occur it can be helpful to step back and consider what is really going on and how you are responding. We have found that asking yourself four key questions can help increase your likelihood of success. The four key questions are:

1. What do I know about the changes (and what don’t I know)?
2. How do I feel about the changes?
3. What is within and outside my control/influence?
4. What will I do?

This workbook is divided into four sections, one for each of the key questions. Completing the workbook can help you prepare for or work through the changes you are experiencing. In each section you’ll find a few related questions followed by some helpful tips. We encourage you to complete the workbook a section at a time. Review the questions and tips in section, and then answer the questions as honestly as possible. As the changes progress, your knowledge about and reactions to them will almost certainly vary, so it can be beneficial to re-visit the questions in the future.

Tip: Discuss the changes with someone you trust. Another person can often provide a different perspective and may help you think through your reactions and plans. One useful strategy is to complete the workbook by yourself and then discuss your responses with a trusted colleague, friend, or manager.
Section I. What Do I Know About the Change?

*With the changes in mind, answer the following questions:*

1. What do I currently **know** about these changes?

2. What **remains the same** for me? What **changes** for me?

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<th>What Remains the Same for Me?</th>
<th>What Changes for Me?</th>
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3. How have I **learned** about the changes so far? How confident am I that my knowledge is accurate? How confident am I that my information “sources” are accurate?
4. **What questions** do I still have about the changes? What is uncertain or unclear to me?
   - Do I think someone has the answer (but hasn’t told me) or has the answer not been determined yet? 

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<th>Questions</th>
<th>Does someone else know the answer?</th>
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5. On a scale of 0 to 100 (see below), how big an impact do I think the changes will have on:
   - Me? ______
   - My Team? ______

![Impact Scale Diagram]

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Tips

Do not over-rely on the grapevine or assume your information sources are accurate. Consider whether other sources of information might be available. When possible, seek to confirm your understanding with those who have accurate information.

False hopes and exaggerated fears are fairly common when any meaningful change occurs. Changes are rarely as good or bad as they initially sound! Ask questions to increase your knowledge and give the change some time to play out.

Try to learn about the “whys” and not just the “whats.” Knowing why something is happening can often help put things in perspective. It can also help you succeed in the new environment.

Recognize and accept that some questions cannot be answered because final decisions haven’t been made. Even the best planned changes will have some inherent ambiguity. Sometimes people aren’t withholding answers…there just isn’t an answer yet! It can be useful to ask when those decisions are likely to be made and ask follow-up questions at that time.
Section II: How Do I Feel About the Changes?

With the changes in mind, answer these questions:

1. What am I likely to **gain** as a result of the changes? What do I feel is **positive** about the changes? How might the changes create **opportunities** for me?

2. What might I **lose** as a result of the changes? What am I **concerned** about?

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<tr>
<th>My Gains/Positives</th>
<th>My Losses/Concerns</th>
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3. How do I **feel** about the changes right now?
   - Enthusiastic – looking forward to where this goes
   - Comfortable – willing to give it a try
   - Uncertain – need to learn more (“wait and see”)
   - Concerned – not sure this is good (“troubled”)

How else would I **describe** my current reaction to the changes?
Tips

Recognize that almost all changes, whether positive or negative, encouraging or discouraging, are **disruptive**. It is normal to feel anxious, nervous, stressed, and perhaps a bit excited (if it’s an encouraging change). Moreover, all changes, even positive ones, typically have some losses associated with them (e.g., a promotion may mean you don’t get to spend as much time working with someone you like working with). Being aware of potential losses reduces surprises and can help you prepare for them.

Most changes, even initially discouraging changes, create **opportunities**. Be alert for them!

Recognize that your current reactions may be **influenced by other changes** you are or have experienced (including those outside of work). When you see a colleague apparently overreacting to a change, it may be that he or she is also dealing with other stresses in life that can make it tougher to adjust to the current change.

Don’t be surprised when your reactions **change over time**. As you learn more about the change, it will likely influence how you feel about it.

Voice your concerns. It is unlikely you are the only one with the concern. If leaders aren’t aware of concerns they can’t address them. But try to **voice your concerns constructively**; you are more likely to be heard!

Talk about the change and your reactions to it with people you trust. Talking with someone can help you think things through and develop constructive plans of action. Keeping your reactions to yourself isn’t **healthy**.
Questions, concerns, and opportunities emerge during every change effort. Some things you can personally **control** without anyone else’s permission or resources. For example, you choose how you respond to the change. Other things you cannot control, but you may be able to **influence** or affect. For example, you cannot control what your manager or divisional leaders do, but perhaps you could influence them. Finally, there are some things that you can **neither control nor influence**. For example, perhaps a final decision has been made that changed a process or reporting relationship in your area. It is important to be aware of what you can and cannot affect, so you can focus your efforts effectively and constructively.

With the changes in mind, answer the following questions...

1. What is **within** my influence/control?

2. What is **outside** my influence/control?

3. Where might I have **opportunities** to positively influence the changes?
Tips

Try to differentiate between things you may be able to influence or control and those things that you cannot. Look for opportunities to influence the change and your own success.

Focus the majority of your attention and energy on those areas that are within your control or at least that you can influence. Sure, everyone needs a little time to vent about things they don’t like and can’t change, but continuing to focus on them is highly unproductive and stressful!

Recognize that transition periods are times of unfreezing and therefore, may be the times when the greatest opportunities exist. Unfreezing means that some old ways are being let go, but often the new ways aren’t firmly established yet. Be alert for opportunities. Accept some ambiguity…it makes things a bit uncomfortable but can open up new doors!

Be alert for those issues, concerns and opportunities that others may be able to influence or control. See if they can help with issues that are outside your influence. Sometimes they’ll be able to help, while other times the issue may be outside their control as well.
You’ve identified what you know (and don’t know) about the changes, your current reactions to the changes, and what you can control/influence. The next logical question is what will you do?

Consider the following questions as you identify those things you plan to do (and avoid doing) to succeed during and after this change.

- What actions will I take to learn more about the change?
- What actions will I take to influence the change?
- What will I do to come to terms with those things I can’t influence or control? To cope with any stress I might have?
- What will I do to help ensure my future success?
- How can I help others through the change?

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<tr>
<th>LEARN</th>
<th>INFLUENCE</th>
<th>COPE</th>
<th>SUCCEED</th>
<th>HELP OTHERS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Things I'll Do</strong></td>
<td><strong>Things I'll Avoid Doing</strong></td>
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| Constructive/Helpful Actions for:  
  - Me  
  - My Colleagues/Teammates  
  - Our Department/Division/Institution | NOT Constructive/Helpful Actions for:  
  - Me  
  - My Colleagues/Teammates  
  - Our Department/Division/Institution |
| *Think: How is this constructive?* | *Think: Why should I avoid this?* |
**Tips**

Identify constructive actions that are within your control/influence.

Talk with your manager and others about what you can do to help the change succeed and similarly, what you can do to succeed in the new environment.

Learn what helps you when you are stressed. Think about what helped you in the past when you were going through periods of change. For example, who do you know that is a good “sounding board” for you?

If the changes don’t sound promising or aren’t going as you hoped, don’t give up too soon. Give change a chance. When you think about prior changes, you’ll notice that most of them probably didn’t turn out exactly as you thought they would.

Learn to “let go” of those things outside your control. It isn’t always easy to let go, but dwelling on things you can’t control is neither healthy nor productive.

Try to avoid seeking closure or “re-freezing” too soon. You don’t need a complete plan of action today...it would almost certainly change anyway! There’s always going to be some ambiguity during times of change.

Re-visit your plans as you learn more about the change (and your reactions change).

If after a period of time the change really isn’t working for you, and you’ve tried all you can to make it work, recognize that the fit may not be right. You may need to choose to do something else. Life’s too short to be unhappy and choosing to move on can create new opportunities. Just be sure that you don’t give up too soon or you may be shortchanging yourself.