

Quick Guide: Helping staff through change

In today's working environment the need for change is always present: it could be a merger; the need to change working practices; changing roles or systems; or introducing new software. Very often the word CHANGE brings out resistance and negativity in staff because they feel they are going to lose what they like and are familiar with, and it might take them outside their safety zone. The role of the First Line Manager/Team leader is vital if they are to help staff from the present, through the transition stage, to the future. So here are the **top ten tips** to help you:

- 1. Assess the facts.** **WHAT** is the change? **WHEN** does it have to happen? **WHY** is the change being made? **WHO** is going to be affected? **HOW** is it going to happen?
- 2. Believe in the change yourself.** And remain positive about it all when communicating with staff!
- 3. Don't blast the past or present.** Accept what was and is still good, and build on it for the future.
- 4. Sell the future.** Look for and communicate the opportunities for staff to learn new skills; develop into new roles; take on new responsibilities and promotion etc.
- 5. Consult staff.** It is easier to get buy-in and acceptance of change if staff are consulted along the way, so that nothing comes as a surprise.
- 6. Good communication is vital.** Think about regular Team Meetings and regular one to one meetings with all staff concerned. Sharpen up your presentation and listening skills.
- 7. Keep an open door.** This can be difficult in a busy environment so let staff know when your "surgery times" are, and stick to them.
- 8. Recognise and respect others' feelings.** Some people find it easy to talk about their worries and fears whilst others will only show these feelings through a change in behaviour. Remember – whatever the size of the change – big or small – it can affect everyone differently.
- 9. Identify training needs.** To overcome the fears of "Can I cope?" or "Will I be able to do this new role?" etc. plan the necessary training and remember that learning styles vary.
- 10. Remember to use the Five C's** so you can help staff through the transition: **C**onsider facts; **C**onsult staff; **C**ommunicate regularly; **C**heck things are working well; and **C**ongratulate staff when it has happened.

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