

Communicate-Change

MAKE CHANGE YOUR GAIN

Change. . . rapid change. . . is rampant throughout the work place and our lives. How we, as individuals or businesses, adapt to and lead change efforts reflect how successful we will be. A research study found that the top two reasons projects succeed are 1) executive support and 2) end user involvement.

Communicate-Change is a high-impact, nominal cost program specifically designed to increase the success and adoption of corporate change and technology initiatives.

When employees fail to adopt change, poor communications is generally cited as the #1 reason. Lack of effective involvement by the #1 person – the CEO or a senior leader – is the person most cited for not being involved enough with the change process. Research shows that adoption rates can be as low as 35 percent if change is handled poorly or as high as 145 percent when handled well.

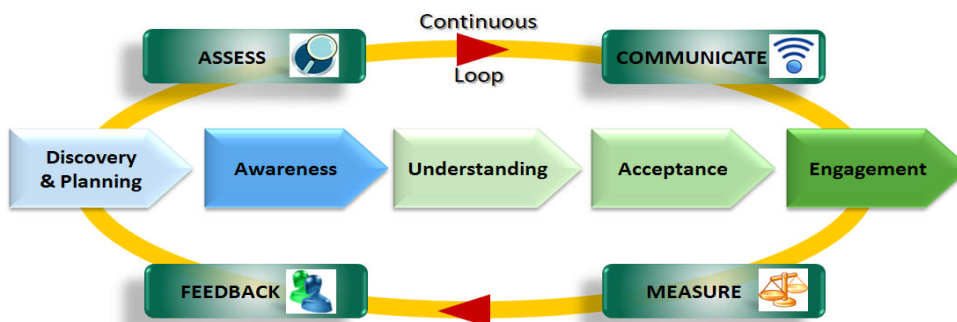
Productivity is initially impacted negatively and acceptance of the change must be achieved before productivity begins to rise again. The key is to get through “the valley of despair” – or bottoming out – as quickly as possible and “lock in” the new status quo.

The Difference

How Communicate-Change™ works is through a holistic, integrated communications and feedback methodology that focuses on end users. Following a structured approach to communicate early and often, it continually provides sufficient information to end users, first to create awareness and then understanding. Providing feedback mechanisms and two-way communications empower end users to, sooner than later, accept and embrace the change when they see how it benefits them. The result is more rapid acceptance and adoption of the change and higher productivity. Without the proper preparation, end users can sabotage a project’s success with adverse behavior.

A targeted, expertly segmented communications plan helps prepare people for change, accept the change and make the change work smoothly for them personally. The Communicate-Change™ custom road map, templates, assessment, ongoing coaching and talking points guide organization leaders to become successful change communicators. As each individual successfully makes his or her own change, then the organization changes more smoothly in the aggregate.

The Methodology



The Communicate-Change process addresses how to reach all end users in a segmented manner with the right message for each, depending on what aspects of the change affect each individual. At the same time, assessment and refinement of the communications plan are regularly conducted throughout the project and at project milestones. The key is feedback and tuning from all stakeholder groups impacted by the change from the beginning through post-deployment.

The Communicate-Change Core Elements

Stage 1

Discovery & Planning

- ▶ Change readiness assessment of end users
- ▶ One-on-one interviews with project team leaders & key members
- ▶ Literature review of technology
- ▶ Communications channels audit & measurement
- ▶ Message platform development
- ▶ Custom communications strategic plan & measurable objectives
- ▶ Communications budget
- ▶ Communications vehicle templates
- ▶ Sponsor & senior leadership coaching & talking points

Stage 2

Awareness

- ▶ End user segmentation
- ▶ User distribution database development
- ▶ Launch action plan & timeline
- ▶ Development of dedicated project resource with response mechanism
- ▶ Launch activity to end users (e.g. road show, webcast)
- ▶ Project knowledge & attitude benchmark survey
- ▶ Front-line manager coaching & talking points
- ▶ FAQs (ongoing)
- ▶ Progress dashboard

State-of-Change Analysis

Assessment starts at the beginning, usually during development of business requirements for a technology project or the earliest planning stage for corporate change. This includes the use of surveys, focus groups, visioning and/or one-on-one feedback techniques. Once gathered, the information helps determine the readiness of different groups for change and the best means of communicating only the change that impacts them. This change analysis drives the strategic direction of the project's communications plan for your organization. The ongoing assessments and feedback loop allows everyone—from executives to project leaders to end users—to work through the many phases of change.

Change Sponsors and Agents

Custom messaging and coaching are provided to sponsors (executives and senior leadership) and agents of change (front-line managers and influentials) to regularly communicate change with end users throughout the project life cycle.

■ **Executives and senior leadership** are vital in any change management program. As change sponsors, they must be visible throughout the project lifecycle and lead the charge for change. Study after study shows that lack of leadership in the change process is cited as among the top reason for a change failing to take place. A key element of the Communicate-Change process is coaching leaders and providing ongoing support with messaging, talking points, action items and next steps based on ongoing assessments and feedback loops.

■ **Front-line managers and influential peers** are typically the most important leaders in directly reaching end users making the change. Their communications and actions are critical as change agents in moving direct reports and colleagues along in the process. They, too, receive the same level of communications support.

Communicate-Change Delivers Results

Even basic change management communications is often ignored or put off until an announcement to end users gives them a training date. With no preparation, they can be shocked and resentful. While considered the **soft** side of an initiative, the **hard** reality is that the failure rate of IT projects still hovers around 70 percent, and these types of intangibles frequently contribute to the cause.

Intangibles are easy to eliminate from the budget, but allocating a rather small percent of a project budget to communicate change effectively is worth mitigating a potential and common 70 percent failure rate. Communicate-Change ensures that a technology investment isn't wasted and can improve productivity after a change is deployed.

The flexibility and adaptability of the Communicate-Change program matches your needs and budget. It's how you make change your gain.

About Us

MJ Hudak & Associates blends expertise in technology, communications and project management with an original change management communications methodology, combining years of hands-on experience with contemporary theory and research for these rapidly changing times.

Visit us at: www.communicate-change.com

The Communicate-Change Core Elements

Stage 3

Understanding

- ▶ Post-launch knowledge & attitude measurement
- ▶ Day 1 visioning analysis
- ▶ Pre-training action plan & timeline of activities
- ▶ Launch of ongoing communication vehicles by segment
- ▶ Sponsor activity/message
- ▶ Front-line manager activity
- ▶ Glossary of project terms & acronyms
- ▶ Progress dashboard

Stage 4

Acceptance

- ▶ Post-training knowledge & attitude measurement
- ▶ Visioning reassessment
- ▶ Training & post-training action plan & timeline of activities
- ▶ Front-line manager training & process review with end users
- ▶ FAQ updates from training feedback
- ▶ Key training tips by segment
- ▶ Ongoing communications by segment
- ▶ Progress dashboard

Stage 5

Engagement

- ▶ End user feedback on deployment
- ▶ End user testing of technology use & benefits
- ▶ Deployment & post-deployment action plan & timeline of activities



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