LEADING THROUGH CHALLENGES & CHANGE

Factsheet 3

During your time as a leader, your organisation will no doubt encounter challenges and periods of change. This can be difficult for you and your team, so it's good to have some strategies in place to get you through effectively.
When you are faced with a challenge or crisis, you often need to act quickly – sometimes even before you know everything about what is happening.Despite this, it's important to make sure that you bring your team along with you, so one of the key factors at this point is communication. Transparency is crucial, and information should be provided to everybody involved by every means possible.

Information is powerful because it:
- Reduces emotional distress caused by the unknown,
- Diminishes fear,
- Provides tactical guidance, and
- Demonstrates to employees that their leaders are concerned, involved, knowledgeable, and on top of the situation.

During challenging times, it's more important than ever for a leader to take charge and show that you are in control of the situation. Make sure that you are accessible, and that people know how to reach you with any
questions or concerns that they may have. Recognise the emotions attached to the situation, and show respect for people by listening to what they are telling you, as well as considering what is not being said.

As a challenge moves from an urgent crisis to a more 'normal' situation, you need to look at any changes this has brought or will bring to your organisation.

Managing change within your organisation is often strategically necessary but can fail more often than it succeeds. Be clear about the outcomes and end results you want to achieve, and be aware of the fact that what you say and do as a leader affects how people to respond, and in turn, how successful the process is. Although formal change processes may be put in place and there may be an understanding of the practical measures that need to take place, sometimes the human side of change can be forgotten. Effective leaders recognise the importance of engaging everyone involved in the change, and realise that people will need time to adapt. Effective change leadership is about leading people, not just processes. If you have 'buy-in' and commitment across the people involved, the change is more likely to produce the outcome you need.

Consider Officevibe's 5-step framework to leading through change:

1

Let go of what you can't control and take the lead on what you can. This enables you and your team to focus and adjust in order to achieve what's needed.

2

Think about reframing what change means to you. Change can be an opportunity to learn and grow, and brings the chance to explore new ground.

3

Communicate clearly at all stages, being honest and open with your team. Give them as much information as you are able to, and make sure you let them know what's happening, how it affects you and how it will affect them.

4

Create an action plan. Giving your team an understanding of which changes are taking place helps them build upon their existing strengths and skills, and in turn helps them to continue feeling motivated and engaged.

5

Don't forget to recognise the efforts of your team. Let them know that their positive response to the changes is valued and highlight specific instances where you valued their support and ability to adjust.

For further information you may find it helpful to refer to:

Leading through change: a 5-step framework - Officevibe

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