

OASIS Alert

Human Resources: Help Your Employees Buy In To Change

Tip: Explaining why the change is necessary is essential for managers.

The home care industry has undergone drastic changes in the past 15 years, including the debut of the OASIS and transition to OASIS-C, and the changes just keep coming. Anything new can be daunting to most people. Here's how you can help your team members be brave in the face of necessary and exciting changes in your company.

Though it's rarely easy, change is a necessary, beneficial and often exhilarating part of every career. Unfortunately, you may have a hard time telling that to your employees.

Strategy: You can help your staff members appreciate and even look forward to upcoming changes, says organizational growth specialist **Jim Kimberly**, founder of **Sapphire Consulting**.

Get started: First off, remember that any transition is a psychological process, and comfort will come in stages. You must allow your employees a reasonable amount of time to buy in to and adapt to something new, Kimberly says. Once you've prepared yourself for a long-term process, try Kimberly's expert advice for making the transition a little smoother:

Honor the old while welcoming the new. You should focus on honoring how your company used to do things as you outline your strategy for the future. Why? People need to feel their previous dedication and sweat have meant something before they are likely to embrace the new way, Kimberly says.

Explain your reasons for the change. No one wants to hear "just because" when you're talking about vast changes to their daily jobs. You must describe how the change will improve employees' lives and how it fits into your organization's vision and mission.

Try this: Tell employees what problem your company needs to fix (i.e., complying with a new regulation) and explain your solutions in a way that your staffers can understand. Make sure you are sensitive to the "winners" and "losers" of resources and access to power, Kimberly stresses.

Look at change from your employees' viewpoints. You understand why things are changing, but your staffers probably don't have your top level view. Try to present your new goals to them at their level. How: Explain exactly how life will be different. Tell them what they will or won't do every day. Craft scenarios of how things will change.

Accept that not everyone will be happy. You've had weeks or months to prepare for this transition, but your employees are still digesting the news -- and they may be worried that new changes are leading up to a layoff. Your job: Be ready for staff members' concerns and questions. Show them your research or documentation so that they can better understand why your company is making this decision.

Bottom line: Your employees don't have to agree with your decisions, but they'll be more willing to work with you if you can get their buy-in, Kimberly says. If you are honest about potential rough patches and check in with them frequently to assess how things are working, your transition is much more likely to be successful, he asserts.

Note: For more tips and strategies on running a successful home health agency, see Eli's Home Care Week. Information on subscribing is online at www.elihealthcare.com.