

## Managing Change

When a company needs to implement changes and the resultant new policies, how does it ensure everyone understands the new requirements, garner support and commitment and successfully manage the process?

Changes in processes and procedures require clear, comprehensive policies and procedure documents to ensure all employees understand and comply with them. Whether you are upgrading existing policies or creating new ones, here is a step-by-step process that can help you introduce new policies and procedures and ensure compliance.

### Prepare

As the owner/manager, you will likely oversee the entire process, from creating the required policies, communicating with staff, to ensuring compliance. It is important that you, or the employee designated to lead the process, be enthusiastic about the change being made and the benefits to be gained. If you do not care about or support the change, why should anybody else?

### Involve Staff

Change is difficult in any organization. A critical success factor is how well you communicate the objectives and how much you involve your employees in developing the solution. To do this well, you must first document your objectives, the alternative courses of action considered and the process followed in making the decision.

Next, you must share this information with your employees and ask for their input, so you can respond and possibly make changes to the plan. Consider having a staff meeting to encourage them to ask questions and discuss their concerns. This will help avoid back office discussions where employees complain about what is happening, without having an informed person there to answer or respond to the points raised. Keep in mind that back office talk drains momentum and will undermine the success of any project.



For example, if your company is implementing a technology-use policy:

- discuss the reasons for the change, such as the need to address security threats and vulnerabilities inherent in the use of certain technologies;
- detail the concerns such as regulatory compliance, network congestion or demand on bandwidth resources;

- explain the benefits such as protecting the company's information systems or reducing the threat of viruses;
- if the changes will have an impact on workflow processes, explain the impact on people's jobs and the training support that will be provided;
- explain any other changes that may be required upon implementation; and
- ask employees to provide their input and suggestions.

The more your employees understand why the changes are needed and the impact, the more they will be willing to accept and support these changes.

### Develop

The third step is to take the input and draft the new policy and procedures. A number of questions should be asked and then documented as part of the background to the actual policy, including:

- How will the new policy and procedures affect operations overall?
- Will they have an impact on anyone's job description or employment contract? If so, what steps need to be taken?
- How will the company monitor and enforce the new policy effectively? Outline the process that will be followed for noncompliance.
- How long should the policy be in place before it is reviewed again and possibly updated?

Keep in mind that when employees are involved in preparing or at least reviewing the proposed wording or intent of a new policy, they are more likely to take some ownership. They may also be able to identify missing or unworkable elements.

### Document

Once all these factors are considered, finalize the policy. Documentation of the policy is fundamental for a successful implementation. Guidelines for a good policy include:

- write in clear, concise and easy-to-understand language;
- address staff's needs and concerns; and
- keep it consistent with other company policies.

### Communicate

The company should use one or more ways to ensure all employees know about the new policies. To ensure it is available and easily accessible to everyone:



- display copies in key locations within the office;
- post it on the company's Intranet;
- insert it into the company's policy manual;
- include it in the manual for new employees;
- send an e-mail to staff; and
- roll it out at a staff meeting.

### Monitor Compliance

The company must be willing to monitor compliance and enforce it at all levels. If employees realize that another person is not adhering to the policy and there are no consequences, they will feel the policy cannot be important so they will also not comply. For this reason, it is important to take prompt action to deal with complaints or breaches.

### Schedule a Review

The most neglected part of implementing a new policy is ensuring it remains current. When a company creates a new policy, it should also create a review schedule indicating the review date, the person responsible for the review and how changes will be approved and communicated.

### Acknowledge

The last step in the successful implementation of new policies is to acknowledge when objectives are reached and celebrate the achievement. For example, invite everyone to lunch to show the company's appreciation for a job well done. Employees will remember the rewards and recognition and, most importantly, their resistance will be reduced the next time changes are required.

### This'n That at Logan Katz

Team LK was honored to participate in the 2011 H.O.P.E. Volleyball SummerFest, ([www.hopehelps.com](http://www.hopehelps.com)) an event that raises money for local charities. Check out our pictures on Facebook!

