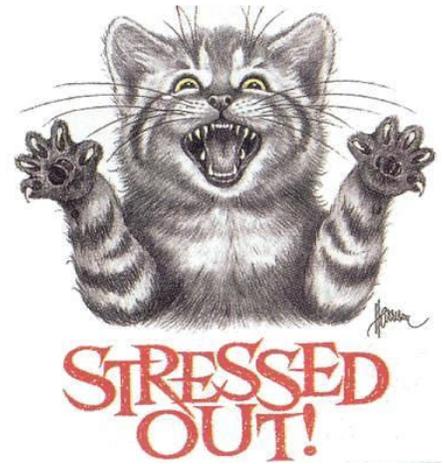


Coping With Change in the Workplace



No matter where you are in life, it's a certainty that change will be dropping by soon. Sometimes the impulse is to lock the door and pull down the shades. That's understandable. Change is a real stressor, even when it's positive.

But there's no hiding from the facts. The uncertainty of the airline industry requires a more adaptable and flexible workforce. Today, the ability to manage change plays an ever-increasing role in your work life and your mental well-being.

The Bombshell

Change can be exceptionally difficult to deal with, especially when it's unexpected. During these times, fear and anger often become our default responses. A transitional period in which you feel uncomfortable is natural. Forgive yourself for it. In the meantime, there are several things you can be doing to smooth the transition.

Clarify goals: Uncertainty can be a driver of fear and negativity. Determining the goals that are responsible for a particular change allows you to tailor your response and place your focus on results rather than emotion.

Resist snap judgments: Changes are sometimes thrust upon us with little notice or explanation, forcing us to act before we have complete information. It's frustrating to operate in the dark. Spending your energy on gathering information rather than mulling over outcomes will help you maintain peace of mind.

Try to see the big picture: Change always comes with some negative

effects. Separate the short-term crisis from longer-term consideration, and consider both the direct and indirect effects that change will have on your environment.

Troubleshoot: You are likely going to be operating with some unknown outcomes. Brainstorm possible scenarios and put together a plan to deal with trouble spots. This will save you headaches down the road and give you a sense of purpose and comfort in the meantime.

Use what you already know: Successful people are usually good at adapting their existing knowledge and skill sets to new situations; and you can be too. Chances are that you already have the necessary facts. Most changes are procedural, organizational or technological... leaving the underlying fundamentals untouched. When you're lost, begin by tapping into what you know.

Managing Expectations

No transition is smooth. Expect a certain amount of inconvenience and upheaval. Change tends to require one step backward for every two steps forward. Unexpected hurdles and misjudgments are the rule, not the exception, and working through the process can be a grind.

Accepting that the road is likely to be bumpy for a while will help you to keep frustrations at bay.

They've Made a Mistake!

Let's be honest, not all change is good. Sometimes ill-advised change is forced upon you without your consent or input. If the deed is done, the best you can do is let it go, adapt, and control the only thing you can... your reaction. Avoid the

temptation to sabotage the process either overtly or through inaction in order to teach decision makers a lesson. You'll most likely end up setting yourself up as the scapegoat should things go badly.

Contribute and help as best you can and let the change run its course. Bad decisions reveal themselves over time. Don't jeopardize your job or damage your reputation by "helping" others realize their mistake.

An Opportunity to Lead

Remaining positive and assured isn't easy in times of change, but it is these moments that define your professionalism. The next time workplace change turns your life upside down, take measure of the opportunities presented.

The ability to deal with change effectively is one of your strongest potential assets. Displaying a calm demeanor and a thoughtful results-oriented approach to change indicates a flexibility that is highly desirable by others seeking leadership in the workplace.

Your positive approach will not only rank you as the kind of co-worker others want to work with, but also tend to get you noticed for your leadership potential. Change is inevitable. Your response often determines whether it is a positive event or a negative one.