

CHANGE MANAGEMENT 101: HOW DOES THIS CHANGE MAKE ME FEEL?

This group exercise is designed to help team members affected by change understand how they feel about it. The exercise will take one hour to complete and requires 10 minutes of advance preparation time. If a significant change, such as an organisational restructure, is the topic of discussion, you may need to allow more than one hour for the exercise itself.

Using this exercise

This exercise should be run shortly after the announcement of a change in your team, department or organisation. You might also want to run it a second time, either during or after the implementation of the change, to find out how team members' feelings about it have evolved. During the exercise, team members identify which aspects of the change make them feel positive, negative and neutral emotions. The team then reflects on what might help them feel more positive about the aspects of the change that they currently associate with negative or neutral emotions.

What you'll need

- flip chart and pens
- Post-it™ notes
- pens for participants

Preparation (allow 10 minutes)

Before the exercise begins, write the following words on the first three pages of the flipchart under the headings 'negative emotions', 'neutral emotions' and 'positive emotions':

Negative emotions (to be written on the first page of the flip chart)

- frustrated
- angry
- worried
- concerned
- anxious

Neutral emotions (to be written on the second page of the flipchart)

- confused
- uncertain
- ambivalent
- apathetic
- undecided

Positive emotions (to be written on the third page of the flipchart)

- happy
- pleased
- relieved
- optimistic
- excited

What to do (allow 45 minutes)

1. Introduce the exercise and explain that you will be discussing aspects of the change that make team members feel positive, negative and neutral emotions.
2. Give each person a pad of Post-it™ notes and a pen.
3. Reveal the list of **negative words** on the first page of the flip chart. Invite team members to consider which aspects of the change make them feel any or all of these emotions. Ask team members to write each of these factors on separate Post-it™ notes, and to attach these to the first page of the flip chart.
4. Once all the Post-it™ notes have been attached to the flip chart, read each one out and then discuss it with the team. Why does this particular aspect of the change make some people feel this way? Do others feel differently about it? Draw on your knowledge of the change to address any concerns that are raised during the conversation, and to answer any questions that team members might have.
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 with the **neutral words** on the second page of the flipchart, and then the **positive words** on the third page.

Review (allow 15 minutes)

Ask team members to reflect on the aspects of the change that have been associated with **negative or neutral emotions** during this exercise. What would it take for team members to feel more positively about each aspect of the change?

Encourage team members to focus on **small-scale, practical steps** that could be undertaken relatively easily; these might be actions that team members could undertake independently, or that you, as a leader or manager, might need to take. Examples of these steps might be for team members to have access to **additional information** about the change or to relevant **development and support**.

Team members might also want to think about changes that could be made to **internal systems or procedures** that would make it easier for them to adapt to the change on a day-to-day, operational basis.

Once a set of relevant actions has been agreed, identify who should be responsible for implementing each one - for team member actions, **ask for a volunteer to take the lead** on putting each action into practice - and agree on an appropriate timeframe for doing this. Team members should create an **action plan** to record this information.

Finally, arrange to meet with the team again in **3-4 weeks' time** to review progress against each of the actions, and to find out how the team members are now feeling about the change in light of the steps that have been taken.