

Our change communications manifesto

Explain the benefits

The first question most people will ask is 'how am I affected?'. Make sure you know who needs to should be aware the change and how you will convince them about the benefits. Keep it simple and be very clear. Spend time thinking about what might cause concern or confusion.

Understand that change makes people uncomfortable

It's up to you to tell your employees and your customers (clients or service users) and stakeholders why the change is needed. The first and most important message is that everything possible will be done to make the change as seamless as possible. Context is important.

Demonstrate that you have thought about the change

Reassure people that all the practicalities have been carefully thought through. Ideally you will have worked with the people affected to make sure you have considered everything that's important.

Think about the timing carefully

Even the best-planned changes might have a few hiccups. Friday is rarely a good time to make a change because you might not have time to fix anything that doesn't go as planned. Think about what people will have to do once the change takes place. Give them time to get used to it. Reassure them that you will be on hand to address any concerns.

Follow up and report back

The relief of introducing a successful change can sometimes mean that this stage is forgotten. It is really important to check how people are getting on. If they are really happy tell as many people as you can. If there are things that can be improved then tell as many people as you can that you will make the improvements and when.

In a nutshell, then:

1. Talk about the benefits.
2. Reassure people that:
 - a. the change will go smoothly
 - b. the practical issues have been thought through.
3. Plan the implementation, and especially the timing, really carefully
4. Follow up and report back – make improvements if they are needed.