

5 KEYS TO COMMUNICATING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Change management always requires careful and thoughtful communication. But when there's a disruptive organizational change that involves job loss, getting it right is critical to maintaining trust and engagement.

Internal communications regarding layoffs are rife with euphemisms like "efficiencies" and "impacted employees." The intent there is a good one, but sometimes strikes employees as inauthentic. What they really want is for the company to be straight with them about what's happening and why.

Here are five ways to help employees understand and accept difficult change:

- 1 Honesty is more important than transparency**
At Tribe, when we speak of transparency, we emphasize honesty and timeliness over sharing every detail. Employees want to hear the truth, especially about the bad news. But if there are parts of the change that can't be communicated yet, simply say so. If possible, let employees know when you expect to be able to give them those answers.
- 2 Don't spring the news on them at the last minute**
In Tribe's national research with employees on change management communications, respondents stressed how important it was for them to have some advance notice of bad news. For some, this was to prepare logistically; for others emotionally.
- 3 Provide a go-to resource for accurate and current information**
The rumor mill will be running overtime in layoff situations, so counteract that with a page on your intranet or a microsite devoted to keeping employees in the loop. This is a good place to share the business reasons behind the organizational change along with timely updates as the process unfolds.
- 4 Establish two-way communication**
Offer at least one channel for employees to share questions and concerns, and put a process in place to respond. We sometimes recommend both a page where employees can post questions and read management's responses, and a survey that allows employees to give feedback anonymously. Both these channels also provide a temperature check for hot issues that might need to be addressed.
- 5 Make sure you're communicating with those who are staying**
Employees not affected by the layoffs will be watching to see how the company treats those who will be leaving. But they'll also be listening for what they can expect in the company's future. Engage them in the positive outcomes of the change and the opportunities it may create in their own futures. If handled well, the change can build employee alignment with the overall vision of the company.

Want to see more?

If you've got an organizational change afoot, Tribe can help. Please reach out to:

Steve Baskin
President and Chief Strategy Officer
(404) 256-5858
Steve@tribeinc.com

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- + Vision and Values
- + Internal Branding
- + Change Management
- + Recruiting and Retention
- + Training and Development

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