



Building a Change Team

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In business, change is inevitable. The ability to adapt to and embrace change is often the linchpin of success. "Embracing it requires a delicate balance of communication, vision and engagement," says Amanda Sexton, founder of [FocusWorks](https://focusworks.marketing/) (https://focusworks.marketing/), a boutique marketing agency in Morristown, New Jersey.

As business continues to shift and redefine itself, what hangs in the balance is the crucial partnership between entrepreneurs and their staff leaders. With the harmonious collaboration and empowerment of these leaders, businesses can transition through needed change to drive innovation.

We asked entrepreneurs for their best practices in engaging their leaders in change. Here is some of their advice.

Start With Transparency and Training

At FocusWorks, Sexton says that whenever change happens — be it new tools, systems, or processes — prioritizing transparency is essential.

"Before any implementation, I ensure my managers understand the 'why' behind the [change](https://www.nextavenue.org/have-no-fear-change-is-good/) (https://www.nextavenue.org/have-no-fear-change-is-good/)," she says. "This means diving deep into how it aligns with our overarching company goals, our values and the future trajectory we're aiming for."

"It's easier for individuals to rally behind a change when they perceive its bigger-picture relevance."

Secondly, you must invest in training. Best practices include interactive sessions where teams can ask questions, address concerns and get hands-on experience. "I've noticed that when managers feel

confident about using a new tool or system, they're not just more receptive; they become proactive advocates for it," Sexton says.

Focus on the Positives

"Change is the only constant, especially in the entrepreneurial world," says Jessica Frigon, the CEO of [Project Love](https://www.projectloveco.com/) (https://www.projectloveco.com/), a consultancy that helps businesses build a streamlined operational foundation. "Yet, it's often met with resistance, primarily due to the uncertainty and discomfort it brings."

To help convey the positives during challenging times, Frigon recommends providing team members with change empowerment toolkits that include key messages, frequently asked questions for team discussions and a feedback mechanism. "This not only empowers them to lead effectively but also to be empathetic listeners who can address team concerns," Frigon says.

What's more, a team that navigates change together grows stronger, fostering deeper connections and a more resilient work environment.

Open Lines of Communication

Prioritizing employee engagement is essential for entrepreneurs looking to help their leaders handle change effectively.

"First and foremost, communication must be honest and open," says Vikas Kaushik, CEO of [TechAhead](https://www.techaheadcorp.com/) (https://www.techaheadcorp.com/), a company that



engineers business growth for brands with digital and mobile transformations. "Providing regular explanations of the 'why' and 'how' of changes promotes buy-in and trust."

Kaushik also suggests giving workers a say in decisions. "Their thoughts and observations can be quite beneficial," he says. Staff participation in the change process not only guarantees a more seamless transition, it gives employees the authority to own the changes, turning the process into a cooperative effort to achieve success.

Explain the Benefits

Kristine Plantiga, the founder of [TherapieSEO](https://www.therapieseo.com/) (https://www.therapieseo.com/), a boutique marketing agency for therapists and coaches, says she explains how employees will personally benefit.

"These benefits could be reflected in their paycheck, schedule or responsibilities," she says

When they understand how their [work-life](https://www.nextavenue.org/how-to-find-worklife-bliss-not-worklife-balance/) (https://www.nextavenue.org/how-to-find-worklife-bliss-not-worklife-balance/) will improve, she also tells them how the change will benefit the company.

"I acknowledge that the transition may be awkward or uncomfortable, and we will most likely make mistakes — and that's okay," says Plantiga. "Good things take time, and the benefits of a change aren't always immediately felt."

Lead by Example

Andrew McLellan, CEO and founder of [Trellis Consulting](https://www.trellis.consulting/) (https://www.trellis.consulting/), which focuses on short-term projects for brands, says the biggest mistake he sees is leaders who say something is important during change management without showing it's essential, such as moving back to the office after being fully remote.

"If a CEO says, 'We need to be in the office for better collaboration,' and she isn't joining in, she is telling people something will improve the company without

actively showing commitment to seeing it through," says McLellan.

Saying that being in the office will enhance productivity without being the most visible example will make your employees wonder why they're even there, which may be one reason ending remote work is getting so much pushback.

Draw Out Dissent

One counterintuitive approach for managers trying to motivate change in the workplace is to draw out dissent intentionally. "With each change, something old is giving way to something new," says Pavini Moray, PhD, a [somatic leadership executive coach](https://www.pavinimoray.com/) (https://www.pavinimoray.com/) in Arden, North Carolina, and the [author](https://www.northatlanticbooks.com/shop/how-to-hold-power/) (https://www.northatlanticbooks.com/shop/how-to-hold-power/) of "How to Hold Power: A Somatic Approach to Becoming a Leader People Love and Respect."

Moray says that humans struggle with change because they have become comfortable with how things are, and things are now different. With every ending comes some level of grief. With every beginning comes a level of discomfort.

"It may be strange to think that employees need a moment of grief for the old software, the former policy or lack thereof, or the previous copy machine, but humans need time to process newness," Moray adds.

If a manager makes space for employees' feedback about what they will miss about the old system, that manager lays the foundation for introducing the new system's benefits. "By creating room for dissent, the manager makes consent, aka employee buy-in, possible," says Moray.

Celebrate Change

Lastly, celebrating small victories along the way is crucial. "No matter how minor, every milestone that leads us toward successful change adaptation is recognized and lauded," says Sexton. "This fosters a

culture where change isn't feared but celebrated as a stepping stone toward our collective growth."

By integrating these strategies, not only can businesses streamline operations and integrate improvements but also foster a culture where employee teams are on board with change and possibly even enthusiastic about it.

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