



HR Top Tips

Seven Skills to Manage Change

1. Managing conflict

Managers are unused to the rigorous and ceaseless questioning which true change brings. Often they are extremely uncomfortable with the idea of their work being analysed in anything other than a superficial way. The potential for dissension and conflict is high.

2. Interpersonal skills

Managers change from supervisors to coaches. They are there to provide resources, answer questions and look out for the long-term career development of the individual. How they deal with people is key to their day-to-day success and to the progression of their careers within the organisation.

3. Project management skills

Many aspects of change can be managed as discrete projects. A project management approach makes for easier integration of cross-functional staff within the change programme, promoting increased involvement, buy-in and understanding.

4. Leadership and flexibility

In organisations where the emerging emphasis is on horizontal cross-functioning and team-based management, managers need to coach employees and empower them to feel ownership of the various processes. This demands a flexible style of managing, with the manager sometimes giving firm directions in order to ensure that the process output conforms to customer expectations, while at other times stepping back and allowing team members to make decisions.

5. Managing processes

Functional orientation is now being replaced by process orientation. In the majority of process-based companies, managers are required to improve their business processes on an ongoing basis. They need to be able to use the tools of process simplification and redesign, which include benchmarking and process-mapping tools (such as systems dynamics, flowcharting and activity diagrams) and require understanding of the potential business benefits of IT applications.

6. Managing strategy

Process ownership is not solely concerned with the nitty-gritty of direct implementation. Managers also need to understand how their process aligns with strategic goals and performance measures.

7. Managing their own development

To meet a new challenge requires managers to think beyond position and develop comprehensive general skills that will allow them to respond flexibly to organisational needs. It is not surprising therefore, that people at all levels in organisations are seeing the opportunities for personal development. Indeed, it is increasingly regarded as a major part of what was once called the remuneration package.