



## 4 Tips to Gain Employee Acceptance to Change



**Change is a good thing, right? Maybe not to all, and if you don't have employee acceptance to change, the change is doomed to fail.**

Change — also known as continuous improvement — can make or break a business. A business can't grow without change, but without employee acceptance of the new idea/technology/process, the change can fail. Here are four tips that could help employees go from "That's never going to work" to "Count me in!"

### Explain

You understand why this is a great idea and now you need to explain it to others. This is a sales pitch. You are selling your idea to the employees. The world of answering an employee question with "Because I'm the boss and I say so" is long gone. (That answer still works for parents, though.) If this initiative is brand new to them, give them the broad strokes. If they have been involved, you can get more detailed.

### Listen, Listen, Listen

I cannot emphasize how important it is to listen to your employee's concerns (hence the triple listens). Firstly, they could think of something you didn't. They have a different perspective. They may make the idea better or help offset a future issue which hadn't been considered. The earlier you can include them in the initiative, the more ownership they will feel and the more likely they will accept the change. This does not mean it is decision by committee — you still know what is best for your company. Secondly, listening to your employee shows respect and respect goes a long way toward acceptance.

### Don't Get Defensive

This is easier said than done — don't get defensive when an employee gives negative feedback or reacts emotionally. Take a deep breath and keep listening and noting their concerns. Try to determine if the concerns are knee-jerk reactions or thoughtful insights. Knee-jerk reactions just need a little more time to process. Thoughtful insights can be helpful for the initiative. Also, know your audience — perhaps the employee has a tendency to say "no" before they

can say "yes." In the end, if you get defensive when they give feedback, it sends the message that their feedback is worthless and they will probably be more resistant or resentful of the change.



"What if we don't change at all ... and something magical just happens?"

### Explain Again

Now you have listened to the feedback and you can go back to your employees with the same idea, only with a different perspective. Perhaps the feedback was about the shop adding automation and the employees fear for their jobs. Now you can explain how the automation will help them excel at their jobs without anyone losing their job. Perhaps the feedback was that the change would be too hard or it won't work. Now you can get more in-depth on how it works, how it would be implemented and how it benefits the employees, the customer and the company.

People can change their minds. And those who accept the change initially can help you persuade the other employees to acceptance. It's all about clear, thoughtful and authentic communication. ⊕

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