

## Making Change Happen Through Communication

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Last week during some review time I decided to make a list of the relevant questions I had been asked since August last year about what I believe to be the most common pitfalls during the implementation of change. I have always been consistent in my reply. **Communication, COMMUNICATION, Communication.**

Oh how we have evolved in the art of communication from ug ug ugging at one another to the using the mastery of words to articulate stimulating stories that inspire and educate. Almost 7 billion of us around the world own a mobile communication device.

In the UK alone 93% of the population 64 million either own or use a mobile phone on a regular basis (Source Ofcom Q1 2015). Over and over again we are told it's good to talk so we do and usually about everything and everyone. Whether it's on the phone, texting, social media or face time we have instinctively learnt that these forms of exchanges are extremely effective. Why then do we still have gaps in how we do it back in the work place?



In my experience as a change agent, I believe much of it is because of the lack of education in how to communicate, what, to who and when. I would also like to add, as well as communication it's really important to coach your staff through the process of change itself and that includes the executive team if they haven't been exposed to it before. Sometimes introducing the change curve (Kubler-Ross 1960) shows everyone that you understand that not everything will be easy and why they may have some frustrations. Then collectively everything else is driven from the vision of the change, what happens when, to whom and what messages need to be sent.

It sounds simple doesn't it? In truth it can be if you prepare. Create a communication plan alongside the project plan because this is where the parallels occur. The project plan is a documented technique to implement and measure the success of the programme throughout. It stipulates the key stages of what will be happening and when. Much of your communication should take place before and after each stage, first to inform and share, second to celebrate and let everyone know what's coming up next.



1. Informing and sharing doesn't have to be complicated, it can be anything from a meeting to an update on the intranet site. Include what forms of communication you will undertake and let everyone know where to go to keep up to date.
2. Then all you need to do is celebrate the success of the implementation and let everyone know what's happening next. I say celebrate but this doesn't have to include balloons or banners unless you want it to. It must include what's been implemented, by whom, thank people for their efforts and advise everyone as to what is scheduled to happen next.

Sometimes we are surrounded by clichés and images portraying the happiest people conversing over the smallest things. Communication isn't just about talking it's about inclusion and being acknowledged Dalai Lama once said 'The best way to resolve any problem in the human world is for all sides to sit down and talk'. This applies to most things in life because change usually happens to either solve a problem or make things better talking about it is the easy part because it will help you bring everyone with you on your journey through the change.