



## A practical guide:

The Human Side of Change: Planning, Communicating, and Sustaining Transformation

If you have any questions or would like to book a FREE initial consultation,

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**by Linda Burke**



**Viewpoint HR**

In today's fast-paced business landscape, change is not just inevitable—it is vital for long-term success. Whether prompted by market shifts, mergers, restructures, financial pressures, or digital transformation, the success of any change initiative hinges on how well it is understood, communicated and supported by both leaders and employees.

Change can spark innovation, develop talent and unlock more business opportunities. Yet it also brings uncertainty. Concerns about job security, increased workloads, or declining service standards—especially in customer-facing roles—can quickly surface. Research consistently highlights poor communication and low engagement as leading reasons why change efforts fail. Resistance is a natural response when people feel excluded or unclear about what is happening.

Successful transformation begins with intentional leadership. When leaders lead with purpose, communicate openly, and address concerns directly, they lay the foundation for trust, alignment and resilience throughout the organisation. This all leads to creating a positive change culture.

Effective change rests on three core pillars: **Plan. Communicate. Sustain.**

## **1. Plan with Purpose**

Use the Five open questions framework —**Why, What, When, Who and How**—to shape a strategic and actionable plan.

### **Why is the change happening?**

- What are the key drivers? What are we aiming to achieve? Paint a compelling picture of the “new world.”
- How does it align with strategic goals, financial realities and market trends?
- What are the implications at organisational, team and individual levels?

**What is changing?**

- What needs to be done differently? What are the key and essential technology and process changes?
- Do we have the right skills, tools and resources in place?
- Are policies or processes due for review, revision and updating?

**Who is affected—and who needs to be engaged?**

- Does everyone know what they are supposed to do, how and when they are expected to contribute during the transformation process?
- Who needs to be consulted to engage with the plan and process?
- Who will experience the greatest change? Which roles are critical for the future business?

**When will the change take place?**

- What will be communicated—and when?
- Have likely resistance points been anticipated?
- How will updates be cascaded throughout the organisation?

**How will we know we are ready?**

- Can managers confidently explain the rationale and respond to concerns? What guidance is required?
- Are FAQs and communication materials clear and accessible?
- What practical implementation support is in place for both managers, teams and individuals?

**2. Communicate with Clarity and Consistency**

Bring people with you. Clear, consistent messaging that addresses the **Why, What, When, and Who**, tailored to your audiences, is essential.

- Be transparent about what is changing and why. Trust grows when people understand the big picture and their role within in.
- Acknowledge emotional responses. The Kübler-Ross change curve offers a useful guide to anticipate reactions and tailor support.

- Encourage two-way dialogue. Create space for one-to-one and group conversations, questions and personalised guidance. Avoid communication vacuums!

### 3. Sustain Momentum

Change does not end on implementation day. True transformation requires ongoing commitment and follow-through.

- **Monitor and evaluate progress.** Are goals being met? What is the mood across teams?
- **Stay responsive.** Adapt plans based on feedback and emerging needs.
- **Reinforce the shift.** Celebrate small wins, encourage continuous learning and embed new behaviours into everyday operations.

Handled with care, change becomes more than a disruption—it becomes a catalyst for agility, innovation and sustainable growth.

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