

Managing Workplace Change

Excerpt - Communication for Managing Workplace Change

Becker, F., Tennessen, C., and L. Dahl (1997) Workplace Change: *Managing Workplace Change*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University International Workplace Studies Program (IWSP).

*I wanted both the overall as well as the personal information
but the bottom line is me. How does this affect me?*

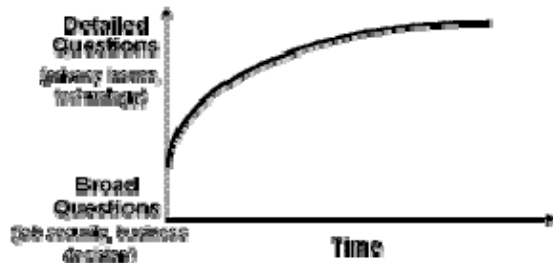
Employee at research site #4

Avoid Common Mistakes of Managing Workplace Change

- Don't rely on formal presentations and written materials.
- Don't assume that since you've "told them already," you don't need to tell them again.
- Don't assume that change management starts with move-in and stops after it. It begins when the project begins and continues after occupancy.
- Don't focus on the physical design and technology and short-circuit the cultural issues. Involving staff in the design process is not the same as involving them in a long-term cultural change process.

Selected Findings

How Do New Workplace Strategy Concerns Evolve During the Change Process?



- Be sure to tell employees in the initial change announcement whether there will be job losses or not. In an environment in which employees are not even certain whether they will have a job, it is unrealistic to expect them to be able to focus and prepare themselves for working in a new way.
- Communication needs to be two-way, providing both information to the employees and opportunities for the employees to express their concerns and opinions about the change. Holding just one large meeting to announce it is not enough.
- Information provided to employees needs to communicate not only general information about why the change is taking place and what the expected goals are but also the personal implications of the changes on the employees (e.g., location of their workstation, filing changes, changes to phone system, handling of supplies, mail handling, who will be located nearby, etc.).

Employees tend to have one primary concern: **What does it mean to me?**